

After Death 301

Chapter 301

I quickly hid under the bed, watching the person who came in....

It was the caretaker.

From the way Peter and Yasmin could walk around the Ford family so freely, it could be seen that there was something wrong with this caretaker.

The caretaker's name was Angel Ewing. She had been taking care of Michael and me ever since I came to the Ford family.

We called her Angel. She was 48 years old this year. She dressed plainly every day without much makeup, making her look somewhat old. But it was not difficult to see that her facial features were still delicate. She must have been a beauty when she was young.

Angel had a gentle personality and was also intelligent. She never talked much, but Lois trusted her very much, so she let her take care of me and Michael.

I hid under the bed and watched quietly.

Angel slowly walked to the bedside and silently looked at Michael, who was sleeping soundly on the bed.

Frowning, I hid cautiously.

A caretaker sneaking into the master's room in the middle of the night and staring at him so strangely was chilling to even think about.

"Angel, why are you still awake in the middle of the night? You scared me half to death!" Yasmin walked into the room and was startled by Angel.

The room was dim. Angel standing by the bed was indeed a bit scary.

"Those drugs... Are they really not harmful to Mr. Ford's health?" Angel asked in a low voice.

"After Stephanie's death, Michael was deeply affected. He has a tendency to fall into depression. He would've committed suicide if it weren't for you..." Yasmin sighed.

"We're doing this for his own good."

Angel nodded. "That's good. I'm just worried about Mr. Ford. Ms. Bailey, you should rest early too."

Angel turned to leave the room, but she stopped at the door.

I didn't know if it was my illusion, but I felt that Angel was looking in my direction.....

I clenched my fingers and took a deep breath, not daring to make a sound.

I felt that of all the people in the Ford family, I couldn't see through any of them anymore.

On the contrary, Michael, whom I once couldn't understand, had become the easiest to see through...

"Mike, don't blame me. You were the one who provoked me first. You asked for my help to get rid of Stephanie. You said that she was always clinging to you. I helped you, so you have to help me too." Yasmin sat by the bed, gently touching Michael's face. "Mike, I really love you..."

"You know what? I'm jealous of Stephanie. Why can she get your mother's approval, but I can't? Am I worse than her? If it weren't for your mother's disapproval, we might have gotten engaged and married a long time ago.

"If we were married, I wouldn't have had to go to such lengths. I was violated because of you. Now, I'm pregnant. This is what you owe me, and you will always owe me." Yasmin's voice turned from hoarse to hateful.

Frowning, I held my breath under the bed, afraid that Yasmin would discover me.

No wonder Michael wanted to keep Yasmin by his side. It was not only because he owed her his life but it was also out of guilt.

Michael said Yasmin's child wasn't his, so there had to be a story between them...

"Mike, you can only be mine. I don't care if Stephany is a real ghost or a fake her live any longer." Yasmin gritted her teeth.

one,

I can't let

She wanted to get rid of me because she felt guilty.

She was planning something big with Peter, and I was an obstacle.

"Have a good sleep. Soon after, I'll be living by your side as Stephanie." Yasmin laughed and got up to leave.

After making sure Yasmin had left, I breathed a sigh of relief.

Crawling out from under the bed, I glanced at Michael...

I used to think he was high and mighty, but he had always been manipulated. He was quite pitiful.

"Oh, Mike... Take good care of yourself." I shook my head and turned to leave.

When I quietly closed the door, I thought I saw Michael move, but I wasn't sure if I had seen it wrong.

Was he pretending to sleep?

After returning to my room, I continued to browse through my parents' accounts.

"Stephie has been diagnosed. Peter said it's Asperger's syndrome, a type of autism spectrum disorder. I don't know why my child is like this. I just hope she can grow up healthy and happy."

When I was five years old, my parents said I was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome. My only understanding of this condition was that it was characterized by social isolation and high IQ.

I scratched my head. Could it be that I was just socially isolated? My IQ... was just average. During my college entrance exam, I was just an ordinary good student even though I studied until midnight. I was still far from a genius like Steven.

Chapter 302

"Today is Stephie's first time being hospitalized for treatment. Peter said Stephie's condition isn't severe. She can live a normal life like else with proper treatment.

everyone

"Today is Stephie's second time being hospitalized for treatment. Peter said Stephie is getting better and is starting to play games with other kids.

"Today is Stephie's third time being hospitalized for treatment. Peter said Stephie's condition has worsened.

"Today, Georgie ran away from home. We searched for a long time before finding out that it had sneaked into the psychiatric hospital to look for Stephie.

"Georgie hasn't been eating or drinking since returning home. It's been lying at the door, looking sad. I know it's waiting for Stephie."

The photo was taken by my mother. Georgie was lying at the door with its head down, looking lonely.

My heart ached as I gently touched the photo with my fingers, wanting to touch Georgie.

I had no memories of Georgie, but seeing his photo still brought tears to my eyes.

"Peter said Stephie can return to a normal life now. We can take her home. I'm so happy. I cried all night yesterday. We can finally bring Stephie home."

According to the diary, I went to Peter for treatment three times. The final hospitalization lasted half a year, and the entire treatment process took a whole year. What did Peter do to me during that year? Why couldn't I remember anything?

It was like that part of my memory had been wiped clean from my mind. I couldn't remember a single thing...

"Stephie and Georgie."

After completing my first treatment at the psychiatric hospital, Georgie was still alive.

I successfully entered kindergarten. Although I was a bit socially isolated, I could still live a normal life with my friends and teachers.

When I was eight years old, the same year I met Steven, I was admitted to the psychiatric hospital once again.

The reason was that I stabbed a child at the orphanage. It was not fatal, but everyone was terrified.

According to the diary, I killed a chicken at the orphanage...

I rubbed my eyebrows, feeling a headache coming on as I looked at my mother's diary entries about me.

Was I so reckless as a child? Why would I kill a chicken?

The scariest thing was that looking at these entries made me feel like I was looking at someone else's life.

It was like the memories from that period didn't belong to me at all.

Who was I before I lost my memory?

Michael was wary and afraid of me, yet he said he loved me...

The person Steven was obsessed with, protected, and loved was also the me of that time...

Was I really much better back then than I was now?

I was lying despondently in bed. I stared at the ceiling, unable to fall asleep.

Strangely enough, I felt a bit jealous of myself.

Although I didn't know why I lost my memories, I found myself jealous of the version of me who still had those memories.

"Ms. Stephie, it's time for breakfast."

Around 7:30 am, Angel came and knocked on the door.

I didn't respond to her.

After another half hour, Angel came again. "Ms. Stephie, it's time for breakfast."

I reluctantly opened the door, only to see Michael standing outside.

"Stephie, come downstairs for breakfast." He was about to knock on the door, but he was relieved when he saw me open it. "Did you sleep well last night?"

I looked at Angel warily and asked Michael, "Did you sleep well last night?"

Angel subconsciously glanced at me. Out of Michael's sight, she made a hush gesture and gently shook her head.

I was stunned for a moment, my body stiffening.

What did she mean? Did she discover me in Michael's room last night?

Chapter 303

"Quite well." Michael nodded, trying to hold my hand.

I avoided Michael's hand and stood apathetically in place.

Michael lowered his eyes and turned to go downstairs.

Following him, I asked, "Mike, why do you think I'm Stephanie Carlson?"

Michael's steps faltered, and he looked back at me. "Because you are."

"What if someone else comes to you tomorrow claiming that she's Stephanie Carlson? Who will you choose?" I asked with a cold smile.

Michael was stunned. "That won't happen. I can recognize you."

I laughed.

Really?

Steven could recognize me quickly after seeing me, but I didn't believe Michael could do the same.

If Yasmin and Peter's plan really succeeded, would Steven and Michael still recognize me? Would they still trust me?

Michael opened his mouth as if he wanted to say something. But then, he lowered his eyes and turned to go downstairs.

As I was about to go downstairs, Angel stopped me and looked at me quizzically.

"Stephie, the cherry tree on Quemerley Street has blossomed."

I looked at Angel in confusion.

What did that mean?

Seeing my perplexed expression, Angel quickly let go of my hand and averted her gaze. She said calmly, "Ms. Stephie, it's time for breakfast."

As Angel turned to go downstairs, my legs felt stiff.

The cherry tree on Quemerley Street had blossomed?

It sounded like a secret message.

Was she exchanging a secret message with Stephanie or Stephany?

Was this caretaker a double agent?

"Ms. Stephie, try this sea bass. It's your favorite." Angel put the grilled sea bass in front of me during breakfast.

I furrowed my brows and looked at her. She knew I didn't eat sea bass.

Seeing that I wasn't eating, Angel said again, "Ms. Stephle, the weather is getting warmer.

You and Mr. Ford should go out for a walk and see the tulips getting warmer.

Michael interrupted in a deep voice, "Stephie is allergic cause difficulty breathing if it's severe."

They're beautiful."

large patches of

tulips. It can

“Oh, I forgot about that.” Angel nodded and turned to leave

Michael put the food on my plate and then took a towel to wipe my hands.

I subconsciously pulled my hand back, still feeling resistant to him deep down.

Mark remained silent and continued to serve me soup without a word.

Sitting across from me, Yasmin’s eyes were almost bulging out with jealousy as she watched
1. me.

I glared at Yasmin and whispered, “Mike, I want to eat a hard-boiled egg. Can you help me peel one?”

Michael reached for an egg and peeled it carefully, placing it in my bowl.

“Mike, I can’t eat with her watching me.” I propped my head up onto my hand and complained, the corners of my mouth curling up.

I was going to make things difficult. I wanted to stir things up.

Yasmin wanted to replace me, didn’t she? Before she did, I would cause as much trouble as I could.

Michael sighed, knowing I was causing trouble. But he still indulged me. He seemed helpless.

“Yasmin, I’m sorry. From now on, please have your meals in your room. I’ll have the caretaker send them to you.”

Yasmin clenched her fists in anger. “Mike, do you really hate me that much?”

“It’s not that he hates you, it’s me.” I put down the cutlery and looked at Yasmin.

“Seeing you makes me sick. I can’t eat.

“Stephany!” Yasmin got up angrily.

“Mike, she’s so mean,” I said with red-rimmed eyes, holding onto Michael’s arm.

Michael was stunned. He looked at me and then said, “Yasmin, Stephie is the lady of this house.”

Yasmin took a deep breath, obviously trying to endure it. “Okay. I’ll leave.”

As soon as Yasmin left, I immediately let go of Michael’s arm and wiped my hands with a disgusted look.

Michael sighed helplessly and didn’t say anything, continuing to serve me food.

“Don’t serve me anymore. I don’t want to eat the food you serve.” I ate an egg and drank some chowder. Then, I got up and left. “I’m going out for a walk. Don’t follow me.”

Chapter 304

Michael got up, seemingly wanting to say something...

He walked with me to the door. Seeing me glare at him angrily, he said softly, “Put on a coat. It’s still a bit

cold outside.”

Seeing that I remained silent, Michael took off his coat and carefully put it over my shoulders.

I found him to be quite masochistic. I had been so good to him before, but he had treated me like garbage. Now, he was so cautious about being nice to me.

“I don’t want to see you.” I turned and left.

Michael stood in place and did not follow. His figure appeared somewhat lonely.

He and Angel said something, but I didn’t hear it.

In any case, the Ford family was now... I started to have my doubts.

Angel was not as simple as she seemed. Michael was being schemed against by Yasmin and Peter. Michael’s mother had been away from Huma for years, and his father apparently had another woman outside. It was almost as if he were a transparent figure in the Ford family.

Now, the entire Ford family was relying on Michael alone.

“Stephany!” Just as I walked into the small garden, I heard Yasmin call me angrily.

I tugged on Michael’s coat, deliberately provoking her. “What? Can’t stand it? Then tell me what I want to

know.”

“If I tell you, will you leave?” Yasmin looked at me warily.

She finally compromised.

“Of course.” I nodded.

there’ll be a charity banquet.

“Fine...” Yasmin narrowed her eyes, which were full of malice. “In a few days The president of Crowdstar Group will attend in person. I have inside information and know which room he’ll be staying in at the hotel.”

“Why should I trust you?” I asked indifferently.

“You can bring a few people with you. You’re just discussing business, not doing anything shady. If I’m lying to you, you can always keep fighting me for Michael,” Yasmin said, gritting her teeth.

“Alright, give me the address.” I reached out to Yasmin for the room number.

Yasmin reluctantly took out her phone and typed out the room number and address. Then, she let me

take a photo of it.

I did and smiled at Yasmin. “I wish you success. May you and Mike have a happy life together.”

Yasmin gritted her teeth. “Don’t use sarcasm on me.”

I ignored her. Now that I had gotten what I wanted, I needed to leave the Ford residence as soon as possible and find a way to rescue Steven.

They used sedatives and fragrance oils every day. I had to cherish my hard-won life.

As I left the Ford residence, I called Ewan. He told me to find a place to hide and not to stand somewhere

too obvious.

I did miss something. I had underestimated Yasmin.

As soon as I left the Ford residence, Yasmin must have told Martin’s people.

I hadn’t gone far when a group of people on motorcycles appeared on the road.

I hid behind a trash can and waited for those people to pass before slowly coming out.

Martin had gone mad and wanted to take my life and my child’s life.

Suddenly, the sound of a motorcycle came from behind me.

One of the bikers accelerated and charged at me.

I dodged behind a lamp post, and the biker crashed into a utility pole.

The other bikers realized what was happening and turned back

I stood there, counting the time. Michael should be coming out soon.

“Three, two, one...”

A black car rushed over. Michael drove the car, knocking away the bikers, and opened the passenger door. “Stephie! Get in the car.”

The bikers smashed the driver’s side window with rods. Michael tried to block the attacks, but the rod hit his arm. Then, the attacker pulled out a knife and stabbed Michael.

“Mike!”

Michael grabbed the knife, his hand getting cut. He pushed the person away and slammed on the

accelerator, taking me away.

“Didn’t I tell you not to leave the Ford residence? Martin’s people won’t let you go,” Michael said nervously, looking at me. “Are you hurt?”

I ignored him and looked down without speaking.

Sighing, he said again, “Have you finished reading your parents’ diary?”

I shook my head. There were too many entries to read. How could I finish reading them so quickly?

“I watched the news this morning. There was another murder case at a garage. Someone was stabbed Spices were poured on his body, and stray dogs bit his body.”

I looked at Michael in shock.

In the Sunset Alley murder case, the suspect had already committed suicide by jumping off a building... Now, a similar case had appeared.

Was it a copycat murder or a serial killing?

“But what was different this time was that there was a miracle. The person who was stabbed didn’t die. Although his body was bitten by stray dogs, he was still breathing when the police found him. But it’s still uncertain whether he can be rescued.”

Chapter 305

I was stunned for a moment. Did the police actually announce that the victim was still alive? Weren’t they afraid that the killer would find out and go to the hospital to kill him again? Or did the police have their own plans?

“Let’s go to the hospital first,” I whispered.

Michael glanced at his arm and said in a low voice

“Let’s go to the hospital first.” I frowned.

Laughing, he drove to the hospital.

“I’m fine...”

“Stephie...” Michael looked at me. “You’re still worried about me, right? Just now...”

I frowned and looked at him. “If it were a dog that got stabbed, I’d be worried too.”

Michael seemed speechless and didn’t look happy.

However, since “Stephanie Carlson” died, Michael’s temper seemed to have improved a lot. If I had said such sarcastic things to him before, he probably would have gone mad already.

“As long as you’re with me, Martin’s people will think twice before making a move,” Michael said, implying that I should stay close to him.

gave a cold laugh. "Being with you seems like the most dangerous option. Why do you think Martin's people started tailing me the moment I left your house? Clearly, someone in your house sold me out."

Michael frowned. "Angel?"

I stared at him incredulously. "Are you insane? It's Yasmin!"

Michael chuckled. "I was just teasing you."

I thought there was something wrong with Michael, so I ignored him.

"You're doing it on purpose, aren't you?" Michael asked.

"I don't know what you're talking about." I felt irritated whenever Michael spoke now.

"You must know that someone from the Ford family might betray you. It'll be dangerous to go out."

Michael glanced at his arm, wincing in pain. Blood continued to trickle down his arm because the wound hadn't been bandaged.

I ignored him. After all, his wound was far from life-threatening.

"You know I won't let anything happen to you..." Michael's face started to pale.

He glanced at me. "Stephie, please help me stop the bleeding."

I glanced at him irritably. "It's not fatal. A little blood loss might even prevent infection."

Michael was speechless, his lips twitching slightly..

"Stephie... you intentionally led me out here alone. Is there something you want to tell me?" Michael looked at me with anticipation in his eyes.

I glanced at Michael. I did want to tell him about Yasmin's scheme against him.

However, based on Michael's previous behavior, I knew he wouldn't believe me. It would just be like wading off a duck's back. "Haven't you ever suspected Yasmin?"

Michael's gaze grew complicated as he looked at me, his eyes showing a hint of depth. After a long silence, he said, "I'm not a fool."

"Pfft..." I let out a mocking laugh.

He wasn't a fool?

"Take care of yourself." I didn't say much more. If he had ever suspected Yasmin, he should be cautious.

"Stephie, my wound is still bleeding." Michael reached out to me.

I examined his injury and pressed a tissue against it. "There, bear with it."

Michael gave a helpless laugh. "Stephie, I don't believe you don't have any feelings for me anymore."

Chapter 306

"You're overthinking this, Stephanie never had feelings for you from the start. She has someone she loves. and his name is Steven. She only thought you saved her, but the person who saved her wasn't you," I coldly interrupted Michael's fantasy.

Michael lowered his gaze and fell silent.

When the car stopped at Huma Hospital's parking lot, he finally said, "Stephie, the person you love isn't Steven. Trust me, just this once. Please... You don't love him. You fear and dread him. You once begged me to help you hide from him....."

I frowned. "Do you think I believe a single word you say?"

Between Steven and Michael, Steven's credibility was evidently higher.

"Stephie..." Michael grew anxious, finally able to experience the feeling of not being trusted. "Why can't you believe me? Steven is really dangerous. You tried so hard to hide from him. How could you love him? He's deceiving you, taking advantage of your memory loss to keep lying to you."

"Dr. Jones said Steven isn't a regular psychiatric patient. He lacks empathy and can't love anyone. His mind is filled with obsession, leaving no room for others."

I ignored Michael, who kept badmouthing Steven.

"Stephany?" As soon as we entered the hospital, Zion noticed me. "What happened? Are you hurt?"

I shook my head and pointed at Michael. "He is."

A nurse approached to examine Michael's injury and took him to the treatment room.

"It was Martin's men," I whispered.

Zion nodded. "You'd better stay at home."

"What are you doing here?" I asked.

"There's been another murder," Zion said, looking around cautiously. "I came to check the situation. The victim isn't dead yet and is being rescued. It's obvious the killer is not a professional."

"The killer panicked while trying to kill the victim and didn't confirm the victim was dead before sprinkling those spices and escaping."

I nodded. "So, if the victim survives, he can reveal the killer's identity?"

“The killer has already been caught on camera. The police are making an arrest. I suspect someone is orchestrating everything. With the victim still alive, we can expose the mastermind behind this,” Zion said

in a low voice.

“Look, here.” He handed me his findings. “This person is also a parent searching for his missing son, who is 18 years old and has been missing for three years.”

I paused for a moment, looking at Zion. “In both murder cases, the common thread is that the killers are desperate parents who lost their children.”

The killers were also victims.

“Were the children all lost around the same time?” I wondered if their disappearances were also linked to the mastermind.

“They weren’t lost at the same time, but there’s one common factor. All the missing children had the same issue,” Zion said, pointing to his head.

“Mental disability, or...” I was taken aback.

“Asperger’s syndrome.” Zion scanned the surroundings. “Some refer to it as a ‘genius illness’. Children with this condition are considered God’s favorites—either a genius or mentally disabled.”

Two extremes.

I took a deep breath and looked at Zion. “Asperger’s syndrome...”

Suddenly, my head was pounding, feeling like it was about to explode.

The missing children were all diagnosed with Asperger’s syndrome. According to my parents’ journal, I

was also diagnosed as a “problematic” child with Asperger’s syndrome.

But that didn’t seem right. Aside from being a bit socially isolated, I was neither a genius nor mentally

disabled. I felt like I was just an ordinary person, as ordinary as they came.

“Steven and Simeon also have this so-called genius illness,” Zion said helplessly, sitting nearby. “These

geniuses are different from us. They’re quite lonely, and nobody can understand them, yet they exhibit extraordinary talents in certain areas like art, mathematics, finance, chemistry, physics, and so on.”

My hands and feet were ice-cold, and a terrifying thought crossed my mind. Could someone be exploiting these genius children? And behind all this... was there an even greater conspiracy at play?

"What kind of business was the victim involved in?" I whispered.

"He was based overseas, supposedly in the health products industry," Zion replied with a cold laugh. "He was probably a leader in a pyramid scheme."

Chapter 307

Michael's wounds had been bandaged. He walked toward me. "Stephie, let's go home."

I was still in a daze and snapped back to reality. "You go by yourself..."

This murder case was becoming increasingly complex.

I had no idea how Steven was doing. He must be suffering terribly under Peter's control.

The asylum was not a place fit for people to live in.

"I'm the only one who can protect you." Michael frowned, gripping my wrist. "Don't be stubborn."

"I don't want to go back with you right now." I shook off his hand.

Seeing Yasmin would only make me angry. I had to find a way to attend tomorrow's charity banquet and

meet the president of Crowdstar Group.

"Have you asked Yasmin about the president of Crowdstar Group?" Michael threatened again when he

saw I wasn't cooperating.

I knew it.

I looked up at him. "Well, Yasmin is indeed a big mouth."

"I can introduce you to him, and your chances of success will be higher. You know that," Michael said

solemnly.

Mentioning the president of Crowdstar Group made Michael displeased. He envied the president and

harbored resentment toward him because this mysterious figure refused to meet him and did not give him the respect he thought he deserved. Yet, he had offered his help in the past.

Michael felt that the president was looking down on him.

"Are you really being so kind?" I sneered.

“Come home with me and stay by my side. I’ll introduce you to him,” Michael offered in a hushed tone.

I frowned, knowing compromise was my only choice for now.

“Stephany.” Zion walked over after finishing a phone call. “Jake’s case has been suddenly dropped. He admitted to intentionally provoking Steven. The police officer handling the case is my friend. After discussing it with him, he agreed to issue a letter of understanding and bring Steven back.”

I looked at Zion in surprise. “Really?”

Zion nodded, “Yes.”

Excitement coursed through me as I grabbed Zion’s arm. “Then let’s go now!”

Michael looked at me, his gaze complicated. He lowered his head and chuckled sarcastically.

Zion shook his head. “There’s a process to follow. It won’t be that quick. Don’t be hasty. I’ll try to expedite

things on my end.”

I nodded.

Even if Steven was released, I still had to meet the president of Crowdstar Group. Only he could ensure Steven’s and my safety.

Collaborating with this mysterious figure would secure Steven’s position within the Lincoln family and make him less vulnerable.

Michael’s driver took us home. During the drive, Michael and I sat quietly in the back seat.

He looked at me a few times, wanting to say something. “Stephie, finish reading your parents’ diary.”

I stayed quiet as that was my plan as well.

“Steven is on the guest list for tomorrow’s charity banquet, but... since he’s in the asylum and as his partner, you can’t attend if he’s absent.” Michael glanced at-me.

I looked at Michael warily, wondering how he would threaten me again.

“I’m on the guest list too. You can attend as my partner,” Michael offered..

I sneered, looking at the anxious and worried Yasmin waiting in the courtyard. “If I attend as your partner, what about Yasmin?”

Michael frowned, remaining silent.

As soon as we got out of the car, Yasmin rushed to us, looking worried and with tears in her eyes.

“Mike, I

heard you got hurt. What happened?”

“It’s fine.” Michael kept his distance from Yasmin.

“Mike, you promised I could go with you to the charity banquet tomorrow. Our outfits have arrived. Shall

we try them on?” Yasmin suggested quickly, afraid Michael would change his mind.

Clearly, Michael had promised Yasmin before.

He promised her but then tried to offer me the same thing. What a scumbag.

I huffed and turned to leave.

“Stephie...” Michael grabbed my wrist and looked at Yasmin

“I’m sorry, I must attend with my love.”

I was surprised that Michael wasn’t being nice to Yasmin today.

Chapter 308

Yasmin’s face turned pale. She had been trying so hard to climb the social ladder by clinging to Michael, but now, everything was ruined?

“Mike, you promised me...” Yasmin said with red eyes,

Michael remained silent and didn’t explain.

I tried hard to break free from Michael’s grip, but he refused to let go. “Stephanle, whether you can attend tomorrow’s charity banquet and meet the president of Crowdstar Group depends on how cooperative you

are today.”

Sure enough, he didn’t have that much patience. “Who else can take you to the charity banquet besides

me?”

I looked at Michael. “So what? Are you going to take both of us? Not a chance.”

Michael’s grip on my wrist tightened. “I’ll take you.”

Yasmin cried and ran away.

I sneered. “I’m really not interested.”

“Do you have any other choice?” Michael asked me.

To be honest, I really didn’t have any other choice.

“Alright, Mr. Ford. What are the conditions for taking me there?” I looked at Michael. He wouldn’t be so kind as to just take me there.

“Don’t have this attitude toward me, Stephie...” Michael begged me.

“What attitude should I have toward you?”

“Can we be like before?” Michael pleaded.

“You want me to please you like before?” I laughed. “Alright, keep on dreaming.”

I pushed Michael’s hand away and turned to leave.

Before doing anything, we had to always leave a way out for ourselves...

Michael had already blocked all his paths to me in the past.

I went back to my room and continued reading my parents’ diary on my bed.

“Today, Stephie fit in with the other kids like a regular child. It’s great to see her so happy.

“Here is Stephie’s first group photo.

“Stephie and Georgie.

“Stephie and Georgie are becoming closer. Georgie only listens to Stephie now.

“A child purposely brought a fierce dog, frightening Stephie. Georgie got injured while trying to protect Stephie.”

Most of the diary entries detailed the daily lives of Georgie and me growing up.

“Today, Stephie hid in the orphanage. Her dad couldn’t find her and was very anxious. This mischievous girl makes us so worried.

“Stephie made a friend!”

I could tell that my parents were very happy back then.

In the photograph, young Steven, Simeon, and I were on the playground, crouching in the bushes. We seemed to be up to something.

“Stephie, earthworms can regrow if cut in half. Why can’t people do the same?”

“When people die, they’re really gone.”

“What about souls? Could they exist in other forms? Could we capture them with calculations and then... put them into new bodies?”

Suddenly, my head started hurting again. A voice exploded in my mind.

Who brought up this topic?

Was it Steven?

Just then, someone knocked fiercely on the door.

“Stephany! Come out!” It was Yasmin.

Michael must have gone out. Otherwise, Yasmin wouldn’t be so bold.

I didn't want to deal with Stephany. My head ached, so I lay on my bed, trying to remember something.

Suddenly, the window moved, and the curtain blew in the wind.

Instinctively, I looked up and saw a half-hidden head with big, innocent, and aggrieved eyes staring at me.

"Stephie..."

My heart tightened like an electric shock. I stood up quickly, rubbing my eyes.

Was it just my imagination?

Chapter 309

He just showed half his face and was looking at me with aggrieved eyes.

I rubbed my eyes, making sure it wasn't my imagination. Then, I ran over nervously. "Steven..."

Seeing my fear, he pushed hard against the windowsill and jumped inside.

It was pretty cool, I had to say.

For a moment, it felt like we were back in our youth...

This kind of scene seemed to happen often in the past, but I forgot.

"How did you...escape?" I anxiously held his face, inspecting it carefully.

There were injuries at the corners of his mouth and eyes, as well as marks on his throat from being tied up. He had clearly been strapped....

I nervously checked his whole body. There were red marks on his wrists and ankles, as well as wounds on

his arms.

I felt a little panicky and raised my hand to lift his sweater, but Steven stopped me by holding my hands.

His voice was still hoarse with a hint of grievance. "Stephie, they wouldn't let me see you."

My eyes

yes reddened unconsciously. I whispered softly, "Let me see..."

Steven slowly released my hands as he looked down.

I lifted his sweater, revealing clear burn marks from electric shock patches on his well-defined abs. They

were just red marks, but it was evident what kind of treatment he had received at the asylum.

"What did they do to you?" I anxiously held his hand. "You..."

I was afraid that Peter might have brainwashed Steven and he wouldn't recognize me anymore.

Steven just shook his head, pulling me into his embrace. His voice trembled. "Stephie, I miss you."

I grabbed Steven's hand, not wanting to stay here anymore. "Let's go home."

"Stephie..." He gripped my hand tighter. "They know I'll come looking for you..."

My eyes reddened, knowing that Steven had escaped from the asylum.

"Jake has dropped the charges. We'll be able to pick you up soon. Why did you take the risk of escaping?"

I whispered. It must have been difficult for him to escape. He must have suffered many injuries.

Steven held my hand even tighter. "I'm afraid..."

Afraid of what?

"If the body is a container that traps the soul... I'm afraid..." Steven's voice was hoarse.

When the soul and body were separate, and the soul lost control of the body, it would be painful and helpless.

Psychiatrists always had medications and methods to prevent patients, even normal people, from controlling their own bodies.

Just like anesthesia... or the psychotropic drug gamma-hydroxybutyric acid, commonly known as "liquid

ecstasy".

"Stephie..." Steven was calling my name, but I could hear his panic.

"What did they do to you?" My voice started to tremble too. I panicked and examined his arms carefully.

Then, I found numerous needle marks.

That bastard, Peter....

Just because Steven was a "psychiatric patient, Peter could use psychotropic drugs on him recklessly.

And it was considered reasonable and legal.

"Stephie..." Steven held my face as if he wanted to imprint me on his soul.

Even if he didn't say anything, I already guessed that he was trying hard to remember me and imprint me

in his soul.

Peter must have started long ago. He was trying to control Steven, make him obedient, and use something to restrain him.

Just like what Peter said to Yasmin that night, he had ways to make Steven obedient. It was as if he could control everyone he wanted to control.

“Don’t be affected...” I gripped his wrist tightly.

He couldn’t be affected by the drugs..

But how could an ordinary person’s mental strength resist drugs?

It was impossible.

“Stephie...” His breathing became rapid.

I stood on my toes, holding Steven’s head and pressing against his forehead. “You won’t forget me, right?”

Steven fell silent for a while before shaking his head. “I won’t...”

He wouldn’t forget me, and he wouldn’t fail to recognize me.

Chapter 310

“Stephie, trust me. Steven tried hard to make me believe him.

“Okay.” I nodded.

I would believe you.

“Let’s go home...” I whispered.

Steven’s fingers were already trembling. I guessed that he couldn’t hold back anymore.

As expected, as soon as we walked out the door, Michael and the people from the asylum arrived.

They were right on time.

“He escaped from the asylum. I thought he’d come looking for you,” Michael said in a deep voice, his

frown deepening as he cast a cold gaze toward Steven.

“Jake has already dropped the charge. The formalities will be completed soon. I want to take him home.

He doesn’t need to be hospitalized!” I slowly tightened my grip on Steven’s hand.

I wouldn’t let him be taken away again.

“I’m sorry, our hospital has its own rules, Peter said as he entered from outside.

Peter seemed very calm, as if he had deliberately released a pet trying to escape and was waiting to take

him back.

He glanced deeply at Steven and smiled. “Steven, it’s time to go back. Have you forgotten what we talked

about?”

I subconsciously turned to Steven. "Don't listen to him. Don't look at him..."

I suspected Peter was hypnotizing Steven.

Steven's fingers stiffened, slowly releasing my hand.

My heart almost jumped to my throat. I frantically shook my head at Steven.

"Peter, you bastard! What did you do to him?" I went crazy and tried to hit Peter but was grabbed by the

collar from behind.

I turned around in shock and looked at Steven fearfully.

He pulled me into his embrace, holding me tightly.

It seemed like he couldn't hold back anymore, but protecting me had become his instinct.

My eyes burned with rage as I glared at Peter. "You lunatic..."

Peter frowned, seemingly also in disbelief. He lowered his voice and asked the doctor beside him, "What

dosage?"

"We've already increased the dosage..." The doctor replied anxiously.

Peter glanced at the time.

"Heh..." He sneered. "Once gamma-hydroxybutyric acid enters the body, the chemical components in the drug will induce the polarization effect of neurons, changing the positive and negative electrodes inside and outside the cell membrane..."

I stared at Peter warily, my breath trembling.

"This will cause ion channel blockage and slow down the transmission of messages between the brain. and the central nervous system..."

"Within a few minutes, normal people will experience a decrease in brain excitability and suppression of physical sensations. It's just like being drunk..."

I clenched my fists tightly and looked back at Steven with red eyes.

He could hardly stand up and was leaning against me, yet he was stubbornly protecting me. His eyes

were bloodshot.

"As his blood sugar levels rise, his breathing and heartbeat will slow down..." Peter calmly described what

Steven's condition should have been..

“But from the time we used psychotropic drugs reasonably during the onset of his illness until he escaped the asylum and found you, a total of 23 minutes had passed.”

What shocked Peter was Steven’s control over his own body and the high degree of concentration of his mental power.

For Peter, this was a terrifying phenomenon because no one could resist chemical drugs.

When injected with large doses of drugs, a person would enter a state of extreme dizziness, with their intelligence and memory gradually fading. They would be like an unconscious baby. They would be easy

to manipulate...

Furthermore, during Steven’s stay at the asylum, Peter not only controlled him with drugs but also employed psychological intervention and hypnosis therapy to cause mental disturbance.

“I want to see how long he can hold on.” Peter suddenly became interested and stopped the people.

around him from grabbing Steven.

He smiled at me and looked at the time. “Steven, come here.”

His voice was like the bell in Pavlov’s dog experiment, causing a person to lose consciousness and obey his commands gradually.

I knew Peter was provoking me.

He wanted me to know that human emotions could never resist chemical drugs.