

After Death 4

Chapter 4

Chloe Parker had left when Olivia was eight.

It was Jeff's birthday, and Olivia had been in high spirits, eager to return home and celebrate her father's birthday with her family. She never knew that what awaited her was her parents' divorce.

Olivia had chased after her mother, scrambling down the stairs and falling. She did not even realize that she had lost her shoes. All she cared about was clinging onto her mother's legs and crying, "Mom, don't go!"

The graceful woman bent down, stroked Olivia's cheeks, and said, "I'm sorry."

"Mom, I'm first in my grade. You haven't seen my test papers yet. You have to sign them. Don't leave me, Mom. I'll be a good girl. I promise I won't go to any more fun fairs. I won't make you mad. I'll listen to you. Please ..."

Hastily, young Olivia blubbered everything she could think of in hopes of making Chloe stay. In the end, Chloe simply told Olivia that her marriage with Olivia's father was not a happy one and that she had found her true happiness elsewhere.

Later, Olivia watched as a man she had never met helped Chloe place her luggage in a car, and they both left while holding each other's hands. She chased after their car for a mile without wearing any shoes before crashing heavily onto the ground.

Her feet and knees were scraped, and they bled as she stared at the gradually diminishing outline of the car that she could never reach.

At that time, she could not understand what had happened. Now that she was grown up, she knew that it was because her mother had been caught cheating on her father and simply decided to file for a divorce, leaving him with everything, including Olivia herself.

Chloe had never contacted Olivia, and the latter hated her with every fiber of her being. She even hoped that she would never have to meet Chloe again.

However, fate worked in mysterious ways, and Olivia could do nothing to stop it. Her throat went dry and her feet turned to lead.

Chloe knew what was on her daughter's mind. She approached Olivia and pulled her to sit beside her. "I know you hate me. You were very young back then. Lots of things weren't as simple as they seemed, so I wasn't able to explain them to you."

She caressed Olivia's cheeks and continued, "Look at you, all grown up now. Liv, now that I'm back, I'll be staying here permanently. I know something's happened to the Fordham family. It doesn't matter, though, because I'll take care of you."

It was then that Olivia knew the so-called hatred she harbored toward her mother was not worth mentioning at all. Her voice cracked as she called out, "Mom."

"My dear, since you're here already, you should stay and have dinner. Chris has taken good care of me for the past few years. He has a daughter who's older than you by two years. She's coming over with her fiancé for dinner. I'll introduce you to her later."

However, it was not in Olivia's plans to make herself part of Chloe's new family. She hastily interrupted her, "Mom, I'm here this time for my dad. My family's bankrupt now, and Dad just had a heart attack, but I don't have the money to pay for his surgery. Can you help me? I promise I'll return the money to you."

Chloe had not yet replied when they heard a familiar voice.

"Ms. Fordham, you truly are short of money, aren't you? Going so far as to come to my house for it."

It was like a slap to the face. Olivia looked incredulously over at the people standing by the door.

Who else could it be except Marina and Ethan?

Apparently, fate was toying around with her again. She never thought that her very own mother would be Marina's stepmother!

Olivia's husband and mother were now Marina's family. To make things worse, those two had caught her in the act of asking her mother for money.

Ethan noticed her uneasiness, but he remained calm and indifferent toward her.

Suddenly, a sharp cry pierced through the awkwardness in the air. Olivia noticed a maid pushing in a twin stroller. The moment the babies' cries started, Ethan was already picking up and soothing one of them skillfully.

They formed an eye-catching picture of a happy family of four. Olivia's child would have been this age too if it were alive.

She started regretting coming here. She felt as if she was being embarrassed and humiliated over and over again. Strangely, one of the babies could not stop crying today. The maid rushed to prepare the milk, yet the cries worsened instead.

Patently, Ethan continued soothing the baby. "Be good, and don't cry."

The sight of a tall man like him holding a baby gently in his arms was heart-warming. Seeing this patient and gentle side of him, Olivia suddenly had a thought.

In just a few strides, she approached him and picked up the child. Somehow, Ethan did not stop her from doing so. Even more strangely, the child stopped crying and started to smile the moment Olivia held it in her arms.

The corner of its lips curved into a smile, and its eyes twinkled as it looked at her. The child then started chuckling and mumbling, "Ama ..."

Its tiny hands reached up in an attempt to grab the fluffy ball-like ornament on her cap. The child was all smiles, which was the exact opposite of Ethan.

It was like a blade had ruthlessly stabbed into her heart, and it was the last straw for her, crushing any bit of persistence left in her.

She once thought that Ethan truly loved her. He had been kind to her during their first year of marriage.

She could still remember him whispering to her, "Liv, let's have a baby."

How could she refuse him then?

Even though she had not completed her studies, she did not hesitate to conceive a child.

Only now did she realize that for all the time he spent with her, he did the same with another woman every time he went abroad for business.

Nausea overtook Olivia. She returned the baby to Ethan and darted into the toilet. Then, she locked the door behind her.

She did not eat much today. When she puked, all that came out was a mixture of her blood and the medications she took. Crimson liquid filled her sight, and tears started flowing down her cheeks.

"Great, just great," she thought.

Her marriage had been a joke all along. Everything had an explanation now. It turned out that everything had been planned from the beginning.

So, this was the reason he chose to save Marina instead of her when they both fell into the water that day. It also explained why he accompanied Marina when they both went into premature labor.

It was because the children in her womb were his!

After quite some time, Olivia heard a knock on the door.

“Liv, are you alright?” It was Chloe.

Olivia cleaned up the mess, splashed her face with water, and stumbled out of the washroom.

Chloe was unaware of the events between them. She asked Olivia, “Are you sick?”

“I just feel sick looking at those two. I feel much better now that I’ve vomited.”

“Do you know Marina? She’s always been abroad. Is there some kind of misunderstanding between you two? This is Ethan—”

“I know.” Olivia interrupted her, her voice cold as ice. “Ethan Miller, the president of Miller Group. Who in this world wouldn’t know him?”

“Yes. He’s a brilliant and accomplished young man.”

“Indeed. He hasn’t even divorced yet, but he’s already eager to remarry. Ordinary people wouldn’t be as bold as him.”

This left Chloe rather confused. “What are you talking about? He isn’t married, so why would he get a divorce?”

The smile on Olivia’s face did not reach her eyes. In a mocking tone, she said, “Who am I then, if he isn’t married? Mr. Miller, why don’t you tell my mom just who I am?”