

After Death 41

Chapter 41

Was Stephanie's life or Yasmin's emotions more important?

Michael clenched his hands tightly and remained silent for a long time before finally saying, "I'll go upstairs and talk to her. But just to be clear, this has nothing to do with her, so she has no obligation.

He was still protecting Yasmin.

"Nothing to do with her?" I exclaimed and couldn't help laughing at his words again.

"How could you say that it has nothing to do with her? It was her who lured me there. She was the one who tricked me into the hands of the murderer!" I shouted at Michael, but he couldn't hear me at all.

He never wanted to hear what I said when I was alive, let alone now that I was dead.

"Stephanie... It's sad that you've fallen in love with such a man," muttered Zion to himself after Michael left.

Yes, falling in love with such a person was truly pathetic of me. Everyone could see how pitiful I was. Loving him was my greatest regret, but as time passed, my heart had become numb. It wouldn't hurt as much as before.

Who said love wouldn't fade? It would, once there was enough disappointment accumulated. Love would disappear once the person had tasted enough despair.

It'd be their own fault if the person continued to love the other blindly even after all that misery.

I loved Michael, and I lost my life because of that. What else was there to love him for?

Michael went to Yasmin's room and soon came out.

He shook his head at Zion and said, "Sorry, Yasmin's emotions are very unstable now..."

"Michael, let me talk to her. This is a matter of life and death. Every moment delayed..." said Zion anxiously.

Nonetheless, he knew he had no authority to rush things. From any legal perspective, Yasmin had no obligation to cooperate, but he knew that she was definitely related to my incident.

"I'm sorry, I can't let you further upset her," said Michael, insisting on protecting Yasmin.

Zion furrowed his brows and said, "Do you know that Yasmin called Stephanie three hours before she went missing?"

Originally, Zion didn't want to mention this. After all, this was an ongoing investigation, and he couldn't speculate arbitrarily.

Michael frowned and looked at the officer, asking, "Officer Landon, what do you mean?"

Zion explained, "There was a call from an unknown number three hours before Stephanie went missing. Because Stephanie hadn't saved the number, we didn't pay much attention to it during the investigation

"But yesterday, I had someone look into the number, and the number belonged to Yasmin's best friend. My colleague asked her about it, and she said she never called Stephanie. But Yasmin did borrow her phone that day. So, the caller might have been Yasmin."

"According to your words, Yasmin might have called her, and you can't confirm that!"

Michael was desperately hiding something, or perhaps he was afraid of something.

I burst into laughter after seeing his evasive behavior. "It was her.

"I've instructed the IT department to recover the call recordings from Stephanie's phone. It's the process, but when the recordings are ready, the truth will come to light," said Zion lightly.

"I'm actually glad that Stephanie was quick to react," he added.

I took a deep breath. After knowing that Yasmin had called me, I immediately decided to record the conversation. I didn't trust her and wanted to gather evidence, proving that I had always been repaying Michael's favors.

I just didn't expect that one day, it would become crucial evidence in my death investigation.

With furrowed brows, Michael looked at Zion and answered, "Then you shouldn't have made wild guesses before you have the evidence!"

"You know deep down whether I'm making speculations or not. Stephanie appeared at Sunset Alley. on the 15th, but none of you were aware of it. Don't you find it strange and suspicious?"

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Zion threw the cigarette butt in the trash can and spoke again.

"Stephanie's phone has suffered varying degrees of damage, but it's not completely irreparable. It'll just take time to recover the data, so we'll wait and see,"

He turned to leave but suddenly remembered something and looked back at Michael.

"If your hesitation and protection result in Stephanie's death or any other more dreadful outcome, you'll be partly responsible. Even if the law can't punish you, morality and conscience will always be your shackles."

Michael stood numbly in place, looking unusually exhausted for a moment.

I glanced back at him once and never looked back again.

I didn't know when my soul would disappear and when I would truly die. I didn't understand why I was in my current state. All I could do was wait.

I hoped for my body to be found and the truth to be revealed so that my remains could be cremated and laid to rest. Perhaps then, I could truly find release.

"Officer Landon, the lunatic... Steve has gone missing! We were all busy with the scene investigation, and when we turned around, he was gone.

Zion frowned and got into the car.

"Find him and keep an eye on him. He surely knows something.

Zion was convinced that Steve knew some secrets.

Sitting in his car, I looked at the phone in his hand. It was the photo of the little girl in a red dress that Steve had found at the welfare home.

In the photo, Steve was the most dazzling figure, always catching people's eyes at first glance. Perhaps it was because he was just so good-looking.

Standing next to him was another boy, who looked somewhat timid. He was clinging to Steve's arm in fear and hiding behind him. Standing in front of the boy as if protecting him, Steve looked like a big brother.

Zion studied the photo and said in a deep voice, "Steve....

"Lawson, can we find out about these children in the orphanage photo?" he said into his phone after dialing his subordinate's number.

Dave replied, "A few years ago, there was a big fire at the orphanage. The director knew that his crimes were about to be exposed, so he intended to burn all the children to destroy evidence.

"Except for the girls in red dresses who were already adopted, only Steve survived... He wasn't a fool

Chade

before, he was said to be a genius, but he became mentally disabled after that big fire."

Zion looked at the children in the photo again. Except for those who were adopted, they all died, leaving only Steve.

"He's the murderer on a killing spree, He's killing everyone from the orphanage back then. This person is very dangerous. He either has a split personality or... he's just very good at disguising," I said to Zion, but he couldn't hear me.

However, Zion was clearly beginning to suspect Steve as well.

"Keep a close eye on Steve after we find him!"

Seeing his suspicion of Steve, I felt relieved.

Just as he hung up the phone, his phone rang again. It was Keenan.

“Zion! Rachel is missing. She might have gone to find Yasmin. Are you with her?”

Zion paused for a moment before subconsciously looking toward the direction of the hotel. I also nervously watched the entrance of the hotel.

Rachel was on the way to see Yasmin?

Zion quickly got out of the car and walked toward the hotel. I followed, feeling worried.

In the hotel corridor, Yasmin was leaning against Michael, looking pale and weak. Standing at the door, Rachel didn't lash out at her but was speaking very subtly.

“Please, help me save Stephie.”

For my sake, she could only plead with Yasmin.

“I'm sorry...” Yasmin choked up and buried her face in Michael's chest.

Michael was infuriated as he said, “Rachel, stop acting crazy here. Yasmin's going through a lot now, and you're here only to provoke her.”

Rachel shot daggers with her red, swollen eyes at Michael and cursed, “You deserve to die...”

He fell silent and said nothing-

“You don't have to go, but lend me your

red dress.

dress...” said Rachel again, this time asking Yasmin for her

I had been wearing my red dress the day I went missing.

Taken aback, Yasmin looked at Rachel and said, “You're insane... We're talking about a murderer here.

“Someone like you naturally doesn't deserve anyone to risk their lives for you,” Rachel answered, her voice hoarse but firm.

“What's so good about Stephanie that you're willing to go this far for her...” Yasmin murmured,

seemingly unable to understand or believe Rachel's actions.

“Do you even deserve to learn about her?” Rachel coldly replied while clenching her fists. “Yasmin, you better pray that Stephanie's incident has nothing to do with you. Otherwise... I won't let you

11 sighed from a distance. It was she who deceived me into going to Sunset Alley.

“Rachel, you're going too far,” Michael interrupted angrily, still trying to protect Yasmin.

Ms. Bailey, just do as she says. If you're unwilling to cooperate with us, it's fine. But lend us the

Zion, bating listened for a while from the side, quickly stepped forward.

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In fact, he could already differentiate between the good and the bad. Yasmin was deliberately delaying time because she never wanted to help save Stephanie.

AC Past Free Bonus Time is Running Out!

Chapter 43

When Yasmin found out she was being targeted by the murderer, she got me to lure the murderer res her behalf. Yasmin was a selfish woman, and everyone could see that, except for thicknes

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“I’m sorry... I don’t have the red dress anymore,” Vasmin stammered, hesitating to give it here

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Taken aback, Michael said, “But clearly...”

Clearly, there was another one. Yasmin had said she liked that one very much, and Michael bought it

for her

“That... That one got ruined in the wash. It bled in the washing machine, so I threw it away,” she

stuttered.

Michael didn’t say much after that.

Rachel was so angry that her eyes were bulging with redness when she asserted, “Tell me the brand and style of the dress. I’ll buy one myself.”

Michael remained silent for a long time before answering, “It’s the Luxe Yonder autumn collection There’s only one red dress in that collection.”

Listening to his words, my heart ached faintly. When I was 18, he asked me what gift I wanted, and I said, “Give me a dress. I like the designs of Luxe Yonder.”

He agreed, but in the following years, the person he bought dresses for was no longer me.

Too lazy to say anything anymore, Rachel only glanced at him before walking away. He’d better not regret it after this.

With furrowed brows, Zion followed her out and uttered to himself, “There’s something wrong with Yasmin.”

“Officer Landon, could we get started with the plan as soon as possible?” Rachel asked as soon as they got into the elevator. She was no longer able to wait for another second.

“Please, let me try... I don’t dare to think about what Stephie is going through right now. Please,” she pleaded.

Zion took a deep breath and nodded.

“Alright, I’ll go with you to buy the dress first and then we’ll leave this hotel with you disguised as Yasmin. Don’t worry, I’ll protect you.”

Rachel nodded while gripping her hands tightly.

“I must catch that murderer,” she swore.

Zion, you must make sure that no harm comes her way,” I nagged, despite knowing that he couldn’t hear me. “You must protect her.”

That night, Rachel changed into the same dress that Yasmin had, straightened her long hair, and left the hotel with a face mask

I was worried, so I followed her all the way. I was afraid that she might encounter any danger.

She went to a bar and drank some alcohol. Soon, she was drunk, and her hair was all disheveled. To avoid suspicion and make her act look authentic, she had actual alcohol.

I sat beside her with red eyes the whole time.

“Rachel, don’t be afraid. I’m always here beside you.

I wanted to be her guardian angel to always protect her, but there was nothing I could do.” The police made sure that everything was going perfectly according to plan so that Rachel would not get hurt.

Rachel stumbled out alone into the night and walked back through Sunset Alley. Suddenly, there was a faint sound behind her.

Nervously, I looked back at the dark corner while trembling with fear. Even I, a ghost, was afraid of human intentions. What was truly frightening was never ghosts but the hearts of humans.

“Rach_ be careful,” I said nervously while staring straight at the darkness.

“Zion... Zion, where are you guys?” I shouted in fear, but they couldn’t hear me.

A dark figure flashed by and ran into the distance. The policemen who were watching from afar followed the figure.

I felt an inexplicable fear. I had a feeling that this was a diversion.

“Rach...”

I tried to pull Rachel away to escape, but it was too late. A figure had already emerged from the darkness. He was wearing a hooded sweatshirt and ill-fitting pants, revealing scars on his ankles. There was a long stick in his hand.

“Don’t. Don’t come any closer!” I screamed and shouted in fear, stomping my feet in place. “Rach! Run, Rach!”

He was the murderer. He was indeed the murderer! It was Steve!

said Steve hoarsely when he noticed Rachel sitting on the ground.

“It’s not her...” he muttered, his eyes also red. His extremely handsome face revealed a hint of coldness.

Crate 13

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Zion looked meaningfully at Michael. Was he really that foolish? Or was there some hidden agenda?

“I’m sorry... I-I don’t have the red dress anymore,” Yasmin stammered, hesitating to give it because she didn’t want the police to find out anything.

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Chapter 44

Rachel sat on the ground, looking at Steve. “Where’s Stephie...”

Steve dropped the stick in his hand as if he had been startled by something. He turned and ran, but Zion pinned him.

“Why are you running? What’re you doing here? Take him back for interrogation!”

Zion shouted, seething with rage-

It was always Steve!

I knew that Zion’s suspicions of Steve had deepened.

I sighed in relief. That was a good sign.

As long as the truth was discovered soon and my body was located...

The police took Steve away, and Zion carried Rachel.

I was temporarily relieved and stood there in a daze, looking at the lollipop that Steve had dropped. It was fruit-flavored.

Steve was arrested, and the police interrogated him for 24 hours. He didn’t say a word.

Without evidence, the police had to let him go for the time being.

I sat in the police station lobby, watching Steve being led away by the Lincoln family. My vision was numb.

This murderer... was too cunning.

Steve still seemed to be of great value to the Lincoln family. The Lincoln family had hired Huma’s best lawyer to bail him out.

I wondered if it was proven that Steve was the serial killer, would the Lincoln family try to get him out?

If that was the case, then those dead women were too pitiful.

In the afternoon, Michael came to the police station to inquire about the investigation.

He seemed very eager to know if I had been found.

I guess he wanted to find out if I was dead.

“The mission failed because it wasn’t Yasmin.” Zion began to suspect Steve, assuming that Steve

ce not to kill because he realized that Rachel was not Yasmin.

Crate 14

“We found a handkerchief with traces of sedatives in Steve’s pocket. There was a stick and other criminal tools too.” Zion frowned. Even if Steve was released on bail, they would still keep an eye on him.

“It’s Steve, that lunatic! He’s the murderer! Stephanie must be in his hands!” Michael angrily exclaimed. “Why don’t you arrest him?”

“First of all, the lunatic you’re talking about is the scion of the Lincoln family. Ignatius Lincoln stepped in to bail him out.

“Secondly, they’ve hired the best legal team to release Steve on bail. And lastly... Steve has a psychiatric evaluation to prove that he has a mental disorder. Even if he carries drugs and a stick in his pocket, there’s no way to tell that he’s the murderer.”

Zion warned Michael to act rationally.

Things would be different if Yasmin was the one who went that night. Once Steve was arrested in the process of trying to kill her, Zion would have the confidence to detain Steve temporarily.

Michael didn’t say anything and took a deep breath.

The Lincoln family... was indeed not to be trifled with.

“I always have this feeling that... Stephie is right beside...” Michael muttered.

After a while, he spoke again, “If we keep an eye on Steve, is it possible... to find Stephie?”

Zion didn’t say anything, but he hoped so.

The police had already started to suspect Steve and were watching him 24 hours a day.

I believed that under such tight surveillance, he would show his true colors sooner or later.

Rachel sat on the bench, looking a little lost. “Is Steve the murderer? Why don’t I think so?”

I sat down next to Rachel, smiling gently. "That's because you're too kind."

Rachel froze, turning her head in my direction.

I froze too, not knowing why I felt like crying.

Her eyes betrayed her deep sadness, and she shook her head. "Stephie's going to be okay."

"Murderers are all good at pretending, especially psychopaths," Michael said in a deep voice. "He doesn't seem to be pretending." Zion, being a police officer, had his fair share of experience. "I've contacted experts in criminal psychology. I suspect... Steve has multiple personalities or some other mental disorder."

I shook my head and sighed. I had suspected Steve was suffering from multiple personality disorder before. Yet, now I was more inclined to believe that Steve had an accomplice.

Ste 14

"Zion, the bodies of the women who were adopted in that photo have all been found. All except for a woman named Mildred Silva, and this Yasmin."

A colleague came over and looked at Zion. "We're searching for Mildred."

Zion nodded.

-Can't we just arrest that lunatic? Why does the Lincoln family still want to protect a loony guy! him?"

Michael's emotions spiraled out of control as he turned and left the police station. He intended to confront the Lincoln family.

I ignored Michael. He wasn't anxious for my sake. He was just worried that Steve would hurt Yasmin.

Rachel's eyes reddened as she turned her gaze to Zion. "Seriously? Is there no other way? We can only keep our eyes on Steve? Is that it?"

"Let's wait and see. We're watching Steve." Zion poured Rachel a cup of hot water.

Rachel took it, but her tears couldn't be held at bay. "I'm afraid... I'm afraid Stephie is now..."

"Rach, I'm fine," I reassured her in a hushed tone, suddenly feeling relieved.

I was dead by now. At least I didn't suffer much.

The pain of dying was all but forgotten now too.

"Officer Landon! Something's wrong..."

Outside the door, a young policeman rushed in with a pale face. "Steve sneaked out from the Lincoln family's residence. We followed him all the way... We found Mildred's body in the ditch behind the old orphanage..."

Chapter 45

There was a victim.

I stood up in horror.

Did that lunatic kill so many people?

The girls who were adopted were all killed, one by one..

What could be the reason behind this?

That lunatic threw away the bodies of the people from the orphanage earlier but only kept hers

What did he want to do?

Did he realize he killed the wrong person? Or was it...

“We’ve got Steve, but he didn’t run. He stood still, waiting for us to catch him...

“This time, on the body, we found... We found...” The police officer’s breath was shaky, and his voice

was hoarse.

“What did you find!” Zion asked anxiously.

The young police officer glanced at Rachel cautiously, hesitant to speak.

Rachel was terrified. She stood there, trembling. Her breath came in shallow gasps. “Please, just say it,

she whispered.

“Eyes...” The young police officer took a deep breath. “Dr. Sparks examined the corpse. According to him, the eyes in the victim’s sockets were put there after death.

“So, there’s a possibility the eyes may not belong to the victim. They might... belong to Stephanie.”

Rachel collapsed, trembling all over. Her face was pale and devoid of colors.

Eyes....

Did that maniac gouge my eyes out?

My whole body was shaking. I was terrified.

What did that maniac want?

What was he trying to do?

“Crazy! He’s just crazy!” I shouted as I lost control of my emotions. I cried and crouched on the ground.

It was too cruel...

Zion’s face looked grim as he took a deep breath. “Take care of her. I’ll go check it out.”

Zion wouldn’t let Rachel go to the scene.

She couldn't handle something like that.

"We can't be sure before any test is done. Don't worry." Zion didn't know how to comfort Rachel. He scratched his head and cursed as he walked away. Original

I stayed by Rachel's side, spacing out with her.

"Rach, I'm sorry. I'm dead and I can't fulfill our promise."

I once promised Rachel that if neither of us married, we would stay single. Then, we would find a city to spend our old days together.

I couldn't fulfill that anymore.

Zion came back soon after.

The corpse was also brought back to the forensic department.

The coroner was still conducting the examination. This would take time.

Michael rushed over after hearing the news. He looked even more haggard and disheveled than he had in the afternoon.

"I don't believe it... I don't believe it!"

He didn't believe that the eyes in the corpse would be mine.

The autopsy results were a harsh reality check for him.

Those were indeed my eyes.

At this point, Zion and the other officers were completely convinced that I had been murdered.

Rachel sat on the ground in dejection, no longer struggling.

She believed that I was dead.

Only Michael, as if he had heard some kind of joke, lowered his head. What followed next was his laughter tinged with a sort of madness.

I no longer had the strength to confront him or to slap him. All these were meaningless.

"Now, the last person the murderer wants to kill is probably only Yasmin," a female officer whispered.

Michael's eyes were bloodshot. "Fine... I'll wait for him."

"You've finally agreed to use Yasmin as bait? It's a pity... it's too late." Zion said meaningfully,

shaking his head. "It's always after losing something that people realize its importance. How pathetic.

Michael clenched his hands tightly, saying nothing.

"What's important? It's best if she dies..." he yelled at Zion, his eyes red.

I knew he would think it would be best if I died.

I sighed. Looking at Michael's current state, I couldn't help but smile.

With me dead, he would be free.

At the door, the young officer lowered his eyes and said softly, "Officer Landon, Steve... confessed. He said he killed her... He killed them all."

"What about Stephanie? Where's Stephanie's body!" Zion yelled out of control. "That bastard!"

"He won't talk..."

I sat on the chair in a daze. This madman still refused to reveal the location of my body.

"What? That son of a bitch."

Zion lost control. Even as a police officer, he still couldn't help it.

In a fit of rage, Zion entered the interrogation room. He turned off the surveillance camera and punched Steve, knocking him to the ground and beating him.

No matter how his colleagues tried to stop him, they couldn't.

Steve laughed maniacally with blood on the corner of his mouth and his eyes frighteningly red.

"Where's Stephanie? She's not from the orphanage. Why did you kill her? Why!" Zion shouted at

Steve.

"Soon... Soon, you'll see." Steve's voice was a hoarse murmur.

Before long, everyone would see my body.

"After Yasmin... is dead."

Chapter 46

"Crazy! You're a lunatic!"

Zion kicked Steve. His colleagues tried to pull Zion away.

"Officer Landon, this is not the time to be so rash. Although we don't know why he's so persistent in admitting to being the murderer... the timelines don't match up."

Zion took a deep breath and stood up straight.

Steve suddenly pointed at himself in fear. "It was me... I... killed them. Kill me!"

He wanted Zion to kill him.

Zion frowned and didn't say anything.

"Keep investigating until he tells the truth." Even if Steve admitted to the murders, he had a

psychiatric evaluation and many alibis. How could they convict him?

Ignatius also had the best legal team, so it was obviously a dead end.

There was a commotion outside. It was Michael's frantic shouts.

He wanted to rush in to kill Steve.

I stood at the door of the interrogation room, ignoring Michael's enraged howls.

I no longer cared, and I didn't love him anymore.

I stared at Steve, trying to get a read on him.

He admitted to committing the murders...

But why did I feel something was wrong?

His jacket was torn because of the beating.

Steve was wearing only a short-sleeved shirt as he sat next to the interrogation table. His face was ashen, like a zombie.

At this moment, he was as beautiful as a lifeless doll.

I stood next to Steve, trying to see through him. But I couldn't understand at all.

My gaze fell on the back of Steve's hand. Such beautiful and slender fingers were covered in burn scars

It was like a piece of pure white porcelain with flaws and cracks.

I remembered this hand when I was locked in the wooden box. I remembered how he had taken an ax

and walked off step by step.

le 16

My gaze traveled upward from his fingers. My heart suddenly sank.

This wasn't right.

Steve's upper arm was smooth and free of any scars. Something was off...

I had struggled desperately before I died. My fingernails dug into the killer's inner arm, tearing out blood and flesh.

It hadn't been long since I died. Even if his wounds had healed, there should still be temporary scars,

This was not right.

Did he have an accomplice?

"Get out of the way! Let me in! I'm going to kill him!" Michael was still shouting, his emotions out of control.

I turned my head back to look at the uncontrollable Michael. What was he yapping about?

Wasn't he the one who caused me to be like this today?

Zion couldn't take it anymore and punched Michael.

Finally, it was quiet.

"Officer Landon! Officer Landon... We found... We found... W-We found Stephanie."

Outside the door, a panicked female officer barged in, almost stumbling.

Michael, red-eyed and out of control, grabbed the officer by the shoulders. "What? Stephanie... Where is she?"

Zion, also startled, looked at the female officer. "What?"

"Dave and the others found a cellar in the abandoned orphanage, Stephanie is in the cellar..."

Rachel, also losing control, got up and ran over. "She's still alive, right? Please tell me she's alive.

"It's okay even if she doesn't have eyes. Healthcare is so advanced now... Is she still alive?" Rachel's voice trembled.

The female officer didn't say anything and just lowered her head. "Officer Landon... come with us.

Zion's heart skipped a beat. He gave Michael a meaningful look.

Michael stood there numbly, suddenly quiet.

The silence was eerie.

"I told you... she's not going to die. She's just doing this to make me marry her,"

Michael murmured, his words dripping with sarcasm.

I wanted to laugh, but I couldn't.

All I wanted to do now was to see my corpse and witness how it had been ravaged.

"Rachel... You shouldn't go," the female officer said kindly.

Rachel clenched her fists, her eyes filled with determination.

The female officer glanced at Zion.

Zion's silence implied a tacit approval.

Something had happened to me, and everyone had to come to terms with that fact.

Chapter 47

Rachel's whole body was shaking as she followed Zion.

Michael also trailed behind them. He was silent, but his face looked unsightly.

I looked at Michael and suddenly smiled.

The police had finally found my body.

This way, Michael could finally find relief.

He had probably been wishing for my death for a long time..

“Are you sure you want to go?” Before getting in the car, Zion asked Rachel again.

Her face was equally ashen. When she got into the car, her legs went weak and she almost fell to the ground.

Subconsciously, I reached out to help her, but it was futile. My hands simply passed through her.

I couldn't touch anyone.

“She's not dead.” Michael frowned, still insisting on his belief.

Rachel glared at Michael with loathing and got into the car.

I sat next to Rachel, staring out the window in a daze.

I had come to the point where I no longer had any feelings or expectations for Michael.

He and Yasmin had done this to me. All of my love and gratitude for them had been exhausted.

The police cordoned off the orphanage, with officer's on patrol everywhere.

Several ambulances were parked there, which seemed a bit unnecessary.

It was obvious that this was the first crime scene of all the murders.

I smiled bitterly. What were the ambulances for if I was already dead?

“Why didn't they find this cellar despite multiple searches?” Zion's superior also came since this was

a major case.

Zion quickly explained, “It's our bad. This orphanage has long been abandoned. There are no building blueprints, and this cellar is well-hidden...”

I looked at the cellar curiously. It was in a small warehouse behind the abandoned yard. Under the wooden floor was a private cellar, emitting an eerie atmosphere.

I had no memory of this place at all. I was unconscious before being dragged in by the murderer. Then, I woke up halfway and found myself in a dim place with no idea of how I got there.

“This cellar is well-hidden. It's hard to believe that anyone would find it by accident. Who was the first person to discover it?” Zion asked.

“Officer Landon, I was the one who found it. It's strange... Yesterday, I came here a few times but I didn't notice anything unusual. But today, I saw footprints on the floor...”

Phil was a little skeptical, wondering if he hadn't been observant enough yesterday. "It's my fault. I was careless yesterday."

"It's not your fault. The killer wanted to let us find out." Zion's expression was dark. He lit a cigarette. This murderer was a cunning one.

"Isn't the murderer that madman?" Phil asked curiously.

"Either he had an accomplice or he took the blame for someone else." Zion shook his head.

There were too many doubts here.

To down

Phil and the others fell silent. They stood at the entrance of the cellar, reluctant to go

"Officer Landon, you need... to be prepared. Frank just went down there and came out vomiting. It's a little complicated there. The medical staff are still trying to figure it out."

Zion took a deep breath before turning to look at Rachel and Michael. "They're family members of the victim. They're here to make identification easier..."

"The doctor is here. So does that mean... Is Stephie still alive?" Rachel grabbed Zion's arm in panic. Is she still alive?"

Zion's gaze was solemn. "Both of you... come with me."

Michael was a little agitated, but at the critical moment, he seemed to lose his nerve. He hesitated for a long time before going down.

I stood by and mocked him for being cowardly. Was Michael afraid now?

Wasn't it because of him that I ended up like this?

Michael... must be the accomplice.

I followed Rachel down to the cellar. I was almost overwhelmed by the fear that came over me.

Chapter 48

Shaking, I clenched my fists tightly. Even if I had already become a soul, I was still terrified.

Suddenly, Rachel stopped in her tracks. When she saw the sight before her, she shuddered and turned pale. She turned around and vomited.

It was the biological reaction to seeing something so saddening and horrifying. It wasn't that she found it disgusting.

There was a glass enclosure Inside the dark plt. It was lit up, making it seem like a cultural exhibit in a museum.

I was

Inside the enclosure, she could see me hooked up to countless drips. I looked like a doll that deliberately placed there. My eyes were gouged out, and the murderer had covered my eyes with a red slip of cloth...

My skin was already deathly pale. I was dressed in a red strappy dress, and my legs were pinned to the platform.

Firefighters and doctors carefully opened the glass enclosure. Everyone let out a gasp when they saw

1. me.

At that moment, my corpse looked like the most beautiful masterpiece on display...

Michael stood there with his gaze flickering. His eyes were filled with terror and mixed emotions.

I didn't know what he was thinking at that moment. Even I... didn't dare to take another look.

"That sicko... even pulled out her nails and inlaid them with crystals. Her earrings are also made of crystals, and her skin is encrusted with crystals... Everything Stephanie is wearing is priceless. Even this glass enclosure isn't made of normal glass..."

"The patient has a pulse! There are weak breath sounds!" the doctor yelled loudly, warning everyone to be careful with me.

I stared at the doctor in shock. There was a pulse? And breath sounds? What was the meaning of this?

I wasn't dead?

"The culprit must have injected the victim with a huge amount of drugs. These are pretty much liquid nourishment tubes for sustaining life. The victim is unconscious, but there are still signs of life," the doctor explained.

Rachel crumpled to the ground. Her emotions were all over the place. "Stephie... Save her, please. Zion, please save her. Doctor... please, please save her."

She knelt on the ground and begged. Her body was quivering like a leaf.

She didn't know who to beg so that I could survive.

"That man is a psycho... The victim can only lie in this position. If we move her." The doctor sighed.

"No... Save her, please!" Rachel begged them tearfully

I stood there numbly and slowly closed my eyes

At that moment, I sort of understood why my soul hadn't disappeared together with my body.

It was because I wasn't truly dead.

After a long time, Michael finally uttered hoarsely, "Save her..."

Save her.

Those two words sounded like mockery.

His face was ashen. He took two steps forward stiffly, as though he wanted to make sure that the person inside the glass enclosure was indeed me.

“That bastard... I’m going to kill him.” Michael’s voice was hoarse and deep, like it was being ground out.

He was shaking. When he confirmed that the person inside the glass enclosure was me, he bowed his head and didn’t dare to look up.

His red eyes seemed incredibly sorrowful.

However, his every move right now felt like mockery to me.

It was laughable.

you’re the one who did this to her!” Rachel screamed hysterically. She rushed forward to slap him.” You asshole!”

Michael stood there helplessly, allowing Rachel to lose her mind. He didn’t move an inch.

I stood there, watching the police and the doctors panic. My best friend was losing control, and Zion held her back. I watched as Michael lost his balance and fell on his behind....

“Officer Landon, Stephanie lost her pulse!”

The doctor’s heart rate monitor let out piercing beeps. My vision grew blurrier until darkness swallowed me.

So this was what death felt like.

Chapter 49

In the darkness, I could still faintly hear some voices. I could hear Rachel’s cries as well as Zion’s and the doctor’s anxious shouts.

“Stephanie, hang in there...”

“Stephanie!”

“Stephie!”

“She’s been holding on for too long. We found her too late... Maybe, maybe if we were one day earlier ... Just one day... she would’ve survived.” The doctor’s voice broke, and his eyes turned red. “She was pregnant too...”

As a spectator, he seemed to be unable to believe what had happened to

1. me.

“She must have been in such despair.” Phil looked away. “If only we had found her earlier... Two lives were lost from this! That animal!”

“She was tortured so badly that her finger bones were shattered. And just to make her look more delicate, he injected her with a huge amount of drugs. Her skin is even paler than a doll’s now.

“That psycho... displayed her like a piece of art in this glass case!” One of the female officers also broke into tears and looked away.

Sitting on the ground, Michael’s breathing grew heavier. As though he’d gone insane, his eyes were bright red. “She won’t die... She won’t die. She’s lying to me! She won’t die! Didn’t she want me to

marry her...? I’ll marry her, so come back! Don’t die!”

“If you

and Yasmin hadn’t obstructed the police’s investigation, Stephie wouldn’t have died!” Rachel sobbed while hitting Michael. She wanted to kill him.

The female officer tried to stop her, but Zion held her back.

Zion also resented Michael.

Stephanie could have lived.

“Even if we were earlier by just one day...” Rachel cried weakly, kneeling on the ground.

Just one day would have been fine.

“You and Rachel are the reason she’s dead. Go to hell, Michael! Just die!”

“She’s not dead... She won’t die!” Michael suddenly lost his mind, like he didn’t believe that the person in the glass case was me. He ran away as quickly as he could.

How laughable. Didn’t he wish I was dead all this while? Now that I was, what was he going crazy for?

“Officer Landon, we found a lead! Stephanie’s parents were the philanthropists funding this orphanage back then. The day they died in a car accident was the day when they were on the way to

attend a celebration at the orphanage!

“Also... on the same day, there was a huge fire at the orphanage that ended with a lot of casualties.” An officer jogged over into the basement. He was holding a photo of me and my parents at the

orphanage.

“The orphanage...”

Suddenly, my head hurt. The memories of the car accident flooded my mind. The face of the person frantically trying to save my life at the scene slowly changed from Michael's face to another person's. "Steve..." Why was I suddenly thinking about that murderer? Wasn't it Michael who saved me?

Did I lose that many memories from that accident as I thought?

"This can't be a coincidence. The death of Stephanie and her parents might not have been an accident! "Zion slammed his fist against the wall. "I'll catch that bastard for sure... I won't let Stephanie's death be in vain!"

My consciousness was fading. I slowly stopped being able to hear...

It turned out that my parents' deaths weren't an accident! It was orchestrated! It was definitely tied to the murderer who killed me.

The moment death came, a roaring wave of hatred and thirst for the truth nearly tore me apart.

The Grim Reaper gave me time but not the chance to leave behind any regrets.

My life was just beginning!

I was so unsatisfied. Why did I have to go through all this pain? Why did I have to lose my parents at 18 years old and live under someone else's roof?

I lived a compliant life, yet I couldn't escape the fate of being tortured and killed by a murderer, I was abandoned by my childhood friend and harmed by a wicked woman!

I was unsatisfied! If I could get another chance, I definitely wouldn't live compliantly anymore. "Dad, Mom." After the darkness came a flash of white light. I didn't know how long I was out. I didn't know what time it was. I didn't know anything. "I'm not satisfied. I want to live. I want revenge. I want to know the truth!"

"Stephie, it's time to wake up, you lazy piglet."

"Mom and Dad will always protect you."

After Stephanie died, the killer was not caught.

The Lincoln family bailed Steve out once again. Since he had proof of his mental illness diagnosis and an alibi, the police had no choice but to release him again.

"You bastard, I'm telling you, if you don't birth an heir to the Lincoln heir soon, don't even think

about leaving this place!"

Faintly, I heard a fierce voice. It yanked me back to reality.

Chapter 50

“Sir, I just gave her the drugs. That woman is also in the room. This time, it’ll definitely be a success.”

I began to feel scared. Where was this place? Why were my eyelids so heavy?

“Stephie...” A hoarse voice tickled my ear, followed by quick breathing. There was also an undisguisable rush of... lust.

All of a sudden, a heated kiss was forced on my lips. I was now fully terrified and shocked.

Where was this? Where was I?

“Mmh...” A low moan escaped my throat. I tried my hardest to resist and to open my eyes, but I

couldn’t do it no matter how hard I tried.

“Stephie...”

He kept calling my name, but he still felt very unfamiliar to me.

Our bodies touched rapidly, and I could feel the desire that he was trying his best to suppress.

It almost seemed like he treasured my body and didn’t want to hurt me.

“I’m sorry... Stephie... I can’t control... my body,” he apologized in a choked-up voice. He seemed to be in agony, like he wasn’t fully conscious.

After that, I completely gave up on resisting and lost consciousness once again.

“Mmh...”

After some time passed, the soreness of my body dragged me back to reality again.

I slowly opened my eyes. The blinding lights made my vision slightly blurry.

The sun streamed in through the windows. White curtains billowed in the wind.

I rubbed my hurting forehead. After a long time, my eyes shot open.

Wasn’t I... dead?

I pressed myself up and stared at the man lying next to me in a daze.

Seeing the unfamiliar surroundings and man, I instinctually screamed. My hands missed the mattress, and I almost fell out of bed.

Suddenly, a strong hand grabbed my wrist and pulled me back up.

Breathing wildly, I looked at the hand in confusion. Blotches of scars covered his hand from the back

of his palm all the way to his forearm. His defined muscles looked great when flexed.

The man was lying across the bed on his stomach. The scars on his back were even scarier, but the muscular lines seemed to beautify the fierceness.

His dark hair was soft and slightly long. It was ruffled messily atop his head.

I couldn't see his face clearly, so I could only force myself to calm down.

The untucked covers covered his lower half. His gorgeous back dimples were on full display, and so was his round bottom....

Even if I was stupid, I would still be able to guess what had happened last night.

There was also a trace of red on the white bed sheets.

I gaped at the red stain in surprise... Then, I got out of the bed in fear.

The soreness in my body and between my legs made me freeze on the spot. This was impossible... Michael and I had done it a long time ago. The blood on the bed sheets...

Wait, wasn't I dead?

Standing in this strange room, I looked to my left and right warily. When I saw the woman in the mirror, I screamed again.

Who was she?

I lifted my hand to touch my own face while gazing at my... naked body in the mirror.

This completely nude woman looked so unfamiliar. Her skin was smooth and flawless, and her figure was curvy in all the right places. She was absolutely stunning... I felt as though I was staring at a goddess.

But, who was she?

And why did I wake up in her body?

"You're too loud..." The man in bed was awake now. He frowned unhappily and sat up.

"Ah!" Before I could properly process that I had just been reborn into another person's body, the man's face once again horrified me..

Why was it him?