

## After Death 561

### Chapter 561

Steven and I looked at each other.

I knew he was trying to ease my worries, but how was that possible in a situation like this?

"There weren't a lot of resources left on the ship. At this rate, it'll be difficult for us to last until help arrives," Jimmy said quietly. He was implying that we give Steven up in exchange for a lifeline.

I stared at him coldly. "Why don't you sacrifice yourself, then?"

"It's not like I want to do this either. But I can't possibly turn myself in." He waved his hand in the air. It was uninjured. He could not possibly be the president.

"What exactly did you get on this ship for, Jimmy?" I shot him a cautious look.

He was a very smart man. Since he could remain so relaxed the entire time, it could only mean that he had mentally prepared himself beforehand.

"I'm only interested in the president of Crowdstar Group," he looked at me and answered honestly. "What kind of mysterious person could be a genius and make everyone green with envy?"

"In order to surpass him, I need to meet him myself."

Jimmy was here because he wanted to be better than Crowdstar Group's president.

"If my brother actually turns out to be the president... I'd actually be quite impressed." He laughed. There was a subtle hint of hostility in his eyes.

As someone who had benefited from Genome Society, Jimmy didn't want anyone else to reap the same profits as he did. He wanted to be the minority, which was why he was trying to get rid of the organization entirely.

However, from a different point of view, he wanted the same things as the organization did. He just did not want there to be too many genome-edited geniuses. He still wanted to benefit from the resources that they could provide.

Jimmy thought of himself as a genius. As someone who was a self-proclaimed elite, he was hostile toward other elites. He wanted to find the president and get rid of him.

"It doesn't matter if Steven is the president or not. Touch him and I'll kill you." I cast him a warning look. He only smiled in response.

To be frank, we all understood the situation. If Steven did turn out to be the president, he would've exposed his identity during this incident on the cruise. Because of his relationship with Stephanie, the organization might not trust him ever again.

If that happened, they'd get rid of him.

Hence, it didn't matter if he was actually the president. I just hoped he wasn't.

If the organization of Crowdstar Group turned out to be him, he must've done so to infiltrate the circle and find the mastermind behind everything.

Afterward, Steven left with the group of people. He didn't make our lives any harder.

Maverick looked at us apologetically. He kept lowering his head as he apologized, "I'm sorry... My wife is in their hands. I'm so sorry... I had to."

I stared at him. I'd honestly expected this to happen.

With Steven's intellect, how could he possibly not realize that something was off with Maverick? He had probably noticed straight away but still chose to play into their schemes. He wanted to use this opportunity to be handed over to the Rebels.

Ashton was right—his father went with them willingly. I clenched my fists and didn't say anything else.

Ashamed, Maverick lowered his head and turned to leave.

"We need to get off the deck promptly. The waves are getting bigger. Hurry!" I yelled after the group, urging them to leave.

Una and Jimmy got off the deck on their own.

Xandra pushed Rachel's wheelchair while I led the two kids downstairs.

Suddenly, the ship rocked. Yasmin lost her balance and fell to the ground.

I looked at her indifferently and stood at the door to the deck.

To be honest, I wanted to shut the door and let her fend for herself.

Evidently picking up on my intentions, she stared at me with a look of panic and horror. She opened her mouth to speak but didn't manage to say anything.

She was still looking at me with a venomous expression. It seemed like she wasn't willing to let anything go. It was as if she wanted to skin me alive.

I scoffed coldly before turning to leave.

I didn't shut the door.

Compared to death, staying alive would bring her more pain. Now that Michael had gotten the information that he wanted, Yasmin was of no value to him anymore.

From now onward, every day of hers would be spent in agony.

With AIDS, she'd have to constantly live in fear of dying. She'd have to suffer as long as she was alive.

## Chapter 562

Yasmin seemed to have seen this coming too. The rain poured down, and the violent waves splashed onto the deck. Her entire body was drenched, and she was shivering from the cold. She slowly walked down the deck and curled up in a corner.

No one was going to protect or help her anymore.

Looking back, she had no idea what she did wrong. She was still jealous. She wouldn't regret her actions even if she were on her deathbed.

Some people were just born bad apples. They'd stop at nothing until they died.

In the room, Eason and Zion found something to eat. Food was scarce nowadays. Before this, there was no form of rationing. Hence, the reserves on board were more or less emptied. The remaining was guarded by the Rebels, so they'd be difficult to get to.

Joel found some lollipops and milk for Ashton and Xandra.

Xandra stared at the lollipop before asking carefully, "Ashton... Is this what we saw on TV? It looks yummy."

Ashton rubbed her head. "Eat up."

For the last five years, the pair only had each other to rely on as they lived in a real-life rendition of The Truman Show.

They didn't have any toys, snacks, or even the accompaniment of their parents like other children did. Since birth, they had been experimental subjects placed under watch in a glass cage.

I cast them both a look of sympathy before bringing them into the room.

"The Rebels' stand is clear. The game will only end if the president of Crowdstar Group is found. If not, people will continue to die." Zion sat on the couch.

He continued, "At this point, we don't even need to go after each other. If the president doesn't reveal himself soon, we'll all end up dead when we run out of food and water."

At the moment, everyone was living in dread.

Xandra rubbed her bloodshot eyes in fear. At the side, Dayton shot her a glance. Subsequently, he took off his jacket and draped it over her shoulders. She froze for a moment before lowering her head wordlessly.

"The amount of food left on the cruise is dwindling..." The voice rang out from the speakers once again." From now onward, there'll be a change of rules. If you want to eat, you'll need to pay for it."

I turned to look at the balcony and froze.

"The killer escaped!" I yanked on Zion's arm.

Stan, who'd been locked in the room this entire time, had managed to break free from the cuffs without us knowing.

Upon realizing this, Eason and Zion ran over to check. There were bloodstains on the cuffs. It looked like he'd been rubbing on them for quite some time before he managed to open the cuffs.

"Asshole! All this lunatic knows how to do is add to the mess," Zion spat.

Eason frowned and looked at Joel. "We'll go get him back."

"Now that everyone is living in fear, he probably won't be in the mood to go around killing people. With so many killers on board, murder isn't anything out of the ordinary anymore.

"Since he's such a sucker for mysteries, he probably went looking for the culprit of Huma's serial killings." Joel shook his head.

"For now, our priority should be securing food and water. Steven bought us some time by surrendering himself to the Rebels. We need to make sure we stay alive until help arrives." I looked at Eason and the

rest.

Everyone agreed with what I said, and we went to get food together.

Upon reaching the dining area, everyone became extremely worked up.

A slice of bread was a hundred thousand dollars while a bottle of water cost 130 grand. This was actual money we were talking about.

The Rebels were collecting money from us indirectly. Genome Society needed funds, and so did they. "This is mad. They're actually mad!" Zion snapped angrily.

Eason was fuming as well. "The money I've earned from years of work isn't even enough for a bottle of water."

Joel shrugged in resignation. "I'm just a high schooler. I don't have any money either."

We all looked at each other. This wasn't about how much money we had the prices were absurd.

"I have enough. I'll make it my treat." Xandra offered.

"It's okay, I'll do it." Dayton stepped in front of her. "Save your money for your own use." He was being quite the gentleman.

## Chapter 563

"I'll pay." Michael materialized out of nowhere and offered to pay.

I looked around. There was no sight of Yasmin tailing after him. Had she completely given up?

I scoffed before raising my hand, signaling for him to go ahead. "Please, Mr. Ford."

Since he was filthy rich, we might as well use his money. Yasmin's gifts, along with her parents' medical bills, should've totaled up to about a million or more.

He shot me a complicated look. He opened his mouth to speak but didn't end up saying anything.

"These prices... I really can't afford anything. I only have 30 grand in my savings..." Zion scratched his

head. The 30 grand was only there because he never got a chance to spend it.

Rachel smiled sheepishly. "I have five grand in my bank account..."

We were all poor here.

"I..." I thought about it. Aside from Steven, it didn't seem like I had anything else.

"I only have Steven..." I trailed off embarrassedly.

I had no money, and Steven wasn't here either.

"I" Michael wanted to say something, but he stopped himself before he did.

He had suffered from injuries previously and did not look too good at the moment.

"He has money. Let him get the tab!" Joel pointed at Jimmy. "Hey, you've been smiling all this while. Shouldn't you be offering or something?"

Jimmy immediately wiped the smile off of his face and remained silent.

"How stingy. What's the point of earning so much when you're not gonna spend it? Are you going to take it with you to the grave?" Joel spat.

Jimmy looked at Una and asked, "What do you want to eat?"

All of us rolled our eyes. How biased.

Una smiled and walked toward Michael. "I want a sandwich."

She wanted Michael to get it for her.

He nodded in response. "Okay." He was rather willing to spoil her.

Rachel rolled her eyes in disgust, and I did the same.

Xandra bought the two children some bread and milk. Those items alone cost her 500 grand.

"They could just take our money, but they're still giving us food and water anyway. Is this a joke to them?" Eason complained.

"You have some too, Yara. Eat up." Xandra got Yara some food as well.

Yara had been looking after Ashton and Xan all this while. She acted like an older sister despite only being around ten years old herself.

"Eat up, Yara." I patted her head. She could've gotten off the ship.

She nodded and started munching away.

"This is daylight robbery! A sandwich is 300 grand! Where on earth are we supposed to get so much money from? Why don't you just kill us, then!"

Some people could afford the food, but some evidently couldn't. It was clear that only a handful were able to eat now.

Those prices would put a dent in anyone's pockets. There was no way one could consistently afford to make purchases like these day after day. The fear of going hungry loomed over everyone.

"Give us the food!" Someone was already starting to riot.

I had anticipated that something like this would happen. I promptly backed up with Yara and the two children.

"Michael is buying food!"

Zion wanted to protect Michael, but the crowd suddenly got violent. Michael was pushed to the front. He had some food in hand, so they swarmed over to take it from him. Not everyone could afford bread and water for hundreds of thousands.

Zion, Eason, and Joel all rushed forward. They tried to protect Michael and the bread he had purchased, but all three of them got caught up in the mess. None of the bread survived. Michael lost a hundred grand in a short three minutes.

That amount might've been loose change for him, but we were able to see how crazy people became if they got incredibly hungry or were put in a disadvantageous situation.

They only went for the things Michael was holding. They didn't dare to go for the bread at the counter as the people guarding it were armed with guns. The crowd only settled down when someone fired a bullet into the air.

I watched as Michael and the three others trudged out from the sea of people. Their faces were all scratched up. They looked horrible, but it was hilarious.

Rachel couldn't help it. She broke into a fit of laughter.

Michael's expression was sour. He walked over with a grim look.

## Chapter 564

"You're attracting too much attention. Most of the people here can't afford all this. With the amount that you bought, you should be grateful that they only went after the food," Jimmy added nonchalantly. Michael ignored him. He fished out a deformed sandwich and hesitated for a moment. Then, he tore it in half. He handed me one half and Una the other.

Una didn't say anything. She took it from him expressionlessly and ate it. Being petty at a time like this was essentially a death wish.

I didn't throw the sandwich away since there was a shortage of food. Instead, I handed it to Rachel. She opened her mouth and wanted to say something. However, she eventually took it from me after I insisted.

"Everyone, go get some rest." Zion led everyone back to their rooms.

"Where's Yara?"

All of a sudden, Rachel realized that Yara was missing.

I froze as well. She was just here a moment ago.

"Yara!"

All of our attention was directed at the riot earlier on. Yara had vanished, and we had no clue where she went.

"You guys head back first. I'll go look for her." I was slightly worried.

Zion shook his head. "We can't let you search alone."

"Let's look for her together," Joel suggested as he started scanning the crowd for the young girl.

"I saw her go that way." Xan pointed toward the end of the storage room.

There was a passageway.

No one else seemed to have noticed it. It should lead to somewhere we had never been before. A few of us walked over and yelled into the entrance, "Yara?"

There was no response.

"Yara?" I yelled again. I wanted to go down, but Michael grabbed onto me.

"It's dangerous down there. Besides, it's so dark down there. Yara couldn't possibly have the guts to head down on her own." He didn't want me to continue further.

"But I really saw her go in there," Ashton declared firmly.

"Let's all head down as a group," Zion suggested.

The area ahead was pitch-black. There wasn't any hint of light. We descended the stairs and couldn't even manage to see our outstretched hands. As someone who was so afraid of the dark, Yara couldn't have come to a place like this.

"Do you guys hear something?" I asked softly.

"This way." In the dark, Ashton's small hand found mine before he guided me further down.

There were too many secrets on this ship. I had a bad feeling about this. There had to be something hidden here.

"Yara?" I suddenly heard footsteps from a near distance. Hence, I called out unsurely.

There was no reply.

"Don't worry, Mom. There's no one here. The sound is coming from the corridor," Ashton explained softly. He seemed to be able to see clearly in the dark. His night vision looked like it was better than my own.

"At this rate, the cruise will be barren. We can't drag this on for longer. If we don't find the president soon, Genome Society will destroy the ship."

Amidst the darkness, I caught sight of a small ray of light. I leaned against the wall to listen in. The Rebels were discussing their plans. Frowning, I held my breath.

This voice.... The person wasn't using a voice changer. I could clearly make out the voice of a woman. It sounded a lot like Carol.

Wasn't she dead?

"Genome Society wants to tie up all their loose ends. Too many people know of their secrets on this cruise. They won't let any of them get off this ship alive unless they're of use."

"We've already achieved our goal. The police are taking this case seriously, and we've already obtained the secrets regarding Genome Society on the cruise. We can stop after we expose everything to the world."

On the other side of the wall, the Rebels were still in discussion. The anxious and pleading voice sounded so much like Carol.

She was asking someone to cease operations, but they didn't say a word in response.

Who could it possibly be?

"Stephy!" All of a sudden, Yara's voice rang out from the darkness. She alerted everyone in the room. "It's so dark!"

I immediately ran over to cup a hand over her mouth, but it was too late.

The door swung open, and light poured out of the room. Someone stood in the doorway against the light.

I stood frozen in place, my breath hitching in my throat.

It was him.

## Chapter 565

A familiar figure stood in the light at the end of the hallway. It was Ewan-the Lincoln family's butler and Joel's adoptive father. He was one of Steven's most trusted people.

His expression was grim. Frowning, he shot me a look before signaling to the people behind him. "Grab them."

Joel stared at him with an equally shocked expression. "Dad?"

Ewan ignored him. His gaze was foreign as he stared at him. However, Joel recomposed himself very quickly. He didn't say another word.

Ewan was part of the Rebels?

"Why?" I asked.

Why did he betray Steven's trust? Why did he stay around him all these years when he was actually a Rebel?

"How are you so sure that Mr. Lincoln isn't part of the Rebels?" Ewan asked knowingly.

I fell silent.

At this point, if someone told me a stray dog was the leader of the Rebels, I'd believe them. It felt like we were back where we started.

From the first victim of the serial killing to Stephanie's death, and my reincarnation followed by all the other victims... Everything felt like a scripted act. At the end of it all, the ones who seemed the most suspicious were the ones who were there from the very start.

Did Steven not realize that Ewan was part of the Rebels?

I didn't doubt his feelings for me, but I was starting to doubt his motive. If he was actually a Rebel, did he pretend to kill off Stephanie as a show of loyalty to Genome Society?

My palms were starting to sweat. I lowered my head and stopped myself from thinking about this any further. Steven wouldn't kill me. He would never do that.

Maybe he used to be part of the Rebels, but they had a falling out because of the Stephanie incident.

However, all of these speculations couldn't possibly be verified until I saw him again.

"Don't resist." I turned around and looked at everyone.

We should comply for the time being to see what they were up to.

"You planned all of this just to find the president of Crowdstar Group?" Upon being brought into the room, I asked Ewan cautiously.

"Our actual goal is to reveal the secrets of this cruise to the public. We want everyone to know the evil schemes of this organization," he replied lightly.

Some things were meant to be kept away in the dark. There would be dire consequences if they were to be brought into the light.



"As for the president, he's essentially fueling their operations. We should find him and dispose of him in front of them. That should be enough to hurt them," he growled. He seemed to have a deep-rooted hatred for the organization.

"Why do you hate Genome Society?" I could understand where my hatred stemmed from. They had no

regard for the well-being of the experimental subjects. Even our births were a massive ploy. What about him, then?

"They probably hurt him in some way," Una said passive aggressively some distance away. Ewan didn't respond, but I'd somewhat guessed. It probably had something to do with his family.

"Because of the Lincoln family, I got to familiarize myself with the so-called Genome Society. As long as you had money or power, they claimed to be able to bring back the dead. They called it genetic cloning." He scoffed.

He continued softly, "According to them, they could clone an exact replica of the person through collecting DNA samples. They'd have the same genes, and even their personality would possibly be the same.

"I believed them. I asked them to preserve my sister's dead body. When I had the money, I'd bring her back to life. I didn't even care if I became their pawn. I got into Lincoln Group and spied for them."

It turned out that he used to be part of Genome Society.

"They said that Mr. Andy Lincoln was a traitor. Not only did he cut off the organization's funding and put a stop to their projects, but he also tried to stop the research on cloning and genetics. Under their brainwashing... I offered them information on Mr. Lincoln. Then, they killed him!"

## Chapter 566

Ewan's entire body was shaking. He was probably extremely regretful. Andy Lincoln died because of him.

Genome Society tricked him. They didn't help him clone his sister, and they even killed Andy. Afterward, he realized the truth and started plotting against them.

"Unfortunately, you went from one wrong path to another." I stared at him as I approached him. "Does Steven know?"

Some of the Rebels stopped me from getting too close to Ewan.

He stared fixedly at me. "In order to find the truth, you'll need to trust your gut."

"Who was the one who killed Stephanie?" I signaled for him to lift up his arm. I wanted to check if he was the one who killed me.

"You think I killed Stephanie Carlson?" He laughed before lifting his arm like I'd asked.

It wasn't him.

Ewan was relatively tall. Even as a middle-aged man, he was still quite muscular. He didn't seem like the man who killed me at all. From the memory prior to my death, the culprit had a red birthmark on his arm. Who on earth could it be?

The man had a slender build, but the birthmark on his arm was extremely striking.

I glanced around the room alertly. Aside from Ewan, there was the leader of the group—a man in a human -skin mask who used a voice changer.

What was his real identity? Why the elaborate disguise?

As for Carol's voice that I had heard outside the door... Where did that come from? Was I mistaken?

"They know too much. Kill them all," the man with the voice changer said.

"Kill them? Who's going to help us tell the world about everything if we do?" Ewan had no intention of killing us. He looked at Joel before continuing, "Besides, my son is with them."

"He's just an adopted boy." The man was slightly annoyed.

"You'd develop feelings for a pet dog after spending enough time together, let alone a boy!" Ewan cut him off.

"What the hell," Joel mumbled through gritted teeth. "This is some secret you've been harboring from me, old man!"

Ewan ignored him and continued speaking. "From the very beginning, our terms were to involve an ample amount of law enforcement workers and imperfect victims. You should know that it wasn't easy to gather enough people to fill this ship.

"If everyone dies... our goal will be left unfulfilled."

I stared cautiously at Ewan and the masked man. I had a feeling that things weren't as simple as they seemed.

"Find the president first!" the man in the mask bellowed. He shot Ewan a warning look before turning to leave.

Ewan instructed his men to keep a close watch on us. Then, he marched off.

"How much can we trust his words?" I looked at Joel, Eason, and the rest.

"At this stage, we're better off being skeptical. Each and every one of them is a seasoned actor by now." Zion rubbed his temples. He was clearly still in shock.

Even Ewan turned out to be a Rebel. Could I still trust the people around me?

"Stop. My head hurts. Now I'm suspecting that my mom is involved," Eason said through gritted teeth.

Then, he stared darkly at Joel. "If your dad is a Rebel, are you part of the group too?"

"I'm just a high schooler. You think too much of me." Joel grunted before plopping onto the floor, ignoring Eason.

For some reason, I had a feeling that he was feeling guilty.

"Zion is definitely clear..." Eason looked at Zion. No one was more trustworthy than him at the moment. Subsequently, he turned to look at Michael. "Your mother is affiliated with Genome Society. That's pretty shocking too."

Michael instinctively looked toward me and Una. He lowered his head before speaking guiltily.

"I had my suspicions when my mother brought Stephanie home in the beginning. I tried to come up with multiple reasons. I even hated Stephanie because of it. I would've never thought she wanted to observe the experimental subject up close."

I didn't say anything. I just sat on the floor with Ashton and Xandra in my arms.

Zion was right no one was trustworthy at this point.

Yara was a prime example.

From the time she led me to Ashton and Xandra, I started feeling suspicious about her.

## Chapter 567

The members of the Rebels immobilized us by tying our hands and feet. However, Ashton and Xandra, being children, only had their hands bound.

Xandra whispered in my ear, "Mom, there's something wrong with Yara. She's incredibly intelligent. She appeared in the underground cabin a while back and came to find us. After she confirmed our presence, she escaped."

I was stunned, and my eyes were fixed on Xandra. "What do you mean?"

"Mom, there are numerous traps and mechanisms in the underground cabin we're in. Anyone unfamiliar with them would never make it out alive. Before you arrived, I heard footsteps. Someone walked into the cabin, saw us, and then turned and left. Those footsteps belonged to Yara."

Xandra and Ashton could guess a person's height, weight, and approximate age by the sound of their footsteps.

"Then why wasn't there a mechanism when we went down to the cabin?" I asked in a hushed tone.

"Because Ashton and I wanted to go out and look for you, so we found and deactivated those traps and mechanisms in advance."

Before Xandra and Ashton could shut those traps, Yara managed to spot them and smoothly escape. She could even trick me into going down. Her intention was for me to meet Ashton and Xandra and then take them away. I wondered about her true purpose.

This time, it was also Yara who led us down to the cabin. Hence, we uncovered the Rebels' secret and encountered Ewan. So far, Yara had shown no signs of malicious intent.

"Yara, who exactly are you?" I turned to look at Yara, who was squatting in the corner.

Yara looked at me with an innocent expression, as if she didn't comprehend. I sighed and fell silent.

"It's chaotic outside now. That lunatic is selling food and water at extremely high prices, triggering a riot. He's instigating conflict between the rich and the poor."

We heard Ewan arguing about this lunatic. The person he was referring to was most likely the masked man.

"Rich people can easily spend millions, or even tens of millions, on a meal while many poor people struggle to afford a few hundred or a few thousand. This has led to a distorted mindset and increased resentment toward the wealthy.

"They're killing each other outside. If this scenario continues, only a few people on this cruise will be able to get out alive."

Ewan was seething with anger. It was clear that his principles clashed with those of the masked man. Ewan sought to minimize casualties, aiming to uncover Genome Society's activities and bring them to light.

On the other hand, the masked man's motives centered around inciting conflict and killing. He sought to spark lethal confrontations between the rich and the poor.

"The darkness is where the seed of evil in human nature takes root and thrives. Once it emerges, it must be eradicated completely to prevent its recurrence. Those who have died on the cruise were far from innocent." The masked man's voice changer emitted an eerie sound.

His statement that the victim was also the perpetrator was precisely parallel to the mastermind behind

the serial killing. I could basically confirm that this masked man was not only the mastermind but also the creator of the serial murder case and the killing game.

I had to acknowledge that he was truly brilliant.

"If all these people die, who will spread the word? The rich and powerful possess infinite resources. We gathered over a thousand people to spread the word, bridge the information gap, and challenge ignorance. It wasn't to let you kill people as you please."

Ewan's voice resonated with intense emotion and seething anger, clearly showing his strong disagreement with the masked man.

The masked man taunted ominously, "It's difficult to achieve great things if you're too kind-hearted. You've witnessed too little of human nature. These individuals who are easily swayed by self-interests will continue to be driven by those interests once they're free. They'll only hold us back.

"Only those who survive and still harbor good intentions in their hearts will have the opportunity to stand steadfast and strive to expose all of this."

These people would do anything for personal gain, including murder. The masked man believed keeping these people alive would only mess up their plan. They would later appear and accuse that there was no issue on the cruise, blaming only the Rebels for the killing.

The masked man clearly had a deeper understanding of human nature. However, he was too violent and bloodthirsty. Whether it was the serial murder case, the killing game, or the Death Cruise, they all served as chilling evidence of his insanity.

"That's enough. We've narrowed down the list of suspects to 11. One of them is definitely the president of Crowdstar Group. Once these 11 people's hand injuries heal, we can identify the president and kill him in front of Genome Society.

"After that, we'll abandon the cruise and leave. It's time to stop it," Ewan continued to argue with the masked man.

## Chapter 568

I looked at Zion, and he looked back at me. It was clear that the Rebels were not as unified as they seemed. Some members advocated killing while others preferred exposure. Ewan was the one who stood for exposure.

"My dad is not actually a bad person," Joel said in a low voice, speaking up for Ewan.

Jimmy sneered. "Not a bad person? Not a bad person when he's the one who locked us all up here?"

"You're still alive, aren't you?" Eason frowned and said, standing up for Joel.

"Stop making noise," Una urged with a serious expression. She gestured for everyone to remain silent.

After a brief moment of silence, a hand emerged, followed by a gradual appearance of a head. To our astonishment, it was the killer, Stan. He had managed to infiltrate the warehouse through a narrow crack in the door.

Our hands and feet were tied as we all eyed Stan warily. He was a killer, and we had bound him before. We were afraid that he would retaliate. Rachel was even more frightened and sought refuge behind Zion.

However, Stan appeared indifferent toward us. Instead, he cast a peculiar smile as he surveyed the warehouse.

He pointed to the door and smiled. "The serial killer is outside. He planned everything, including the killings. He gathered all the people he thought should be killed. The wealthy, in particular."

Stan approached me with a smirk on his face as if to show off his secret of being a serial killer.

"He's not acting alone. He didn't commit all this on his own. He's just a piece of shit but still dares to provoke me, haha."

With a wary look, Michael positioned himself in front of me to shield me from Stan. Yet, Stan ignored him and pushed him aside. He showed off and reported to me with an intense gaze as if he truly regarded me as his equal.

Stan seemed very happy because he killed people on his own, unlike the serial killer who had assistance. He smiled and lifted his pants, revealing his congenitally deformed legs and body. "Do you know what it signifies when a murderous person doesn't commit the act of killing themselves but instead schemes to have others carry out the killings for them? It signifies disability or weakness."

Stan was analyzing the identity of the serial killer. "I won. I defeated him in essence. He must be someone like me, either disabled or weak."

I frowned as I looked at Stan. What he said was right. The serial killer planned everything, allowing the victims to kill each other. He never really did it himself, except for Stephanie.

When I remembered the moment Stephanie died, I gasped. I was in a daze and noticed his birthmark, the scratches I inadvertently made on his arm, and his weak and thin body.

Even in killing me, he resorted to semi-anesthesia. This implied that the murderer might not have the strength to kill me while I was fully conscious. He was indeed a feeble presence.

Was it the masked man? He was dressed in a way that concealed all of his skin, yet it was unmistakably apparent that he was more slender and shorter than the other men. Who could he possibly be?

"If I kill him, I'll go down in history, and I'll be the real winner," Stan declared with a confident smile, ready to kill the masked man and unveil his true identity.

I took a deep breath before speaking with caution, "You'll definitely put yourself in grave danger by going

out like this. Do you really want to kill him? He has a lot of people around him who will help him, and you need our support as well. It's only fair."

I attempted to deceive Stan, who unquestionably found my words to be logical.

"Untie our ropes and we'll help you..." I raised my hands, which were tied behind my back, signaling him to free us. As anticipated, Stan enthusiastically aided us in untying the ropes, thinking that we were going to help him kill the man.

"Ashton will trick him in later. Then, we'll work together to subdue him and uncover the identity of this well-disguised person." I looked at Zion. The few of us understood each other without speaking a word.

## Chapter 569

"Be careful. He's very clever." Stan reminded us, looking neurotic.

I nodded perfunctorily and gently rubbed Ashton's head. "Ashton, listen up. We'll hide behind the door. You just run out and lure the people outside in."

Ashton acknowledged obediently and quickly ran out.

Una had already noticed Ashton and Xandra. She asked me with a puzzled expression. "Ashton.... In theory, they're my children."

Una had obviously figured out that the members of Genome Society had used Steven and Stephanie's fertilized eggs to create the second generation of experimental subjects.

"You're overthinking. They're Stephanie and Steven's children," I said as I positioned myself to shield Xandra.

Xandra and Ashton had also seen Una earlier on because she looked exactly like their mother. However, they were aware that she was not their mother.

Una crouched down beside Xandra. "In terms of genetic similarity, Stephanie and I are perfect replicas of each other. I'm your true mother, not her. Come to me."

Xandra shook her head, took cover behind me, and whispered, "She's my mom."

Una was perplexed by the fact that the two children recognized me as their mother even though she bore a stronger resemblance to Stephanie.

I sternly warned Una, "It's not the time to take the children away now."

Una snorted and then hid behind Jimmy.

Meanwhile, Michael also kept his gaze fixed on Xandra. After all, she was Stephanie's child with another man. Despite being an experimental subject, Xandra served as a constant reminder of their unborn child that had been in Stephanie's womb.

I could discern a profound sense of regret, helplessness, and despair in his eyes. Yet, once something was lost, it was irretrievable. What purpose did regret serve? A shattered mirror could not truly be restored. Even if a broken mirror was carefully reassembled, its cracks would forever remain.

Ashton ran outside and saw the masked man. Then, he immediately ran back inside. After arguing with Ewan, the masked man was about to leave when he spotted Ashton with his hands tied behind his back. He subconsciously wanted to catch Ashton. Since he was just a child, most people didn't see him as aggressive.

As Ashton approached the door, Yara intentionally knocked something over in the room, causing a loud noise. Our attention immediately turned to Yara, who appeared innocent, nervous, and frightened. This incident confirmed that there was indeed something amiss with Yara.

As soon as the masked man at the door heard the noise, he halted and remained alert. Before he could call for assistance, I swiftly rushed out and kicked him down, eager to expose his true identity by tearing off his disguise. However, the masked man suddenly burst into an eerie and unsettling laughter.

"You're so enigmatic. Let me see who you really are." As we went forward to hold him down, I prepared to remove the human-skin mask from his face. However, as my hand touched the mask, members of the Rebels arrived and aimed their guns at us.

"Don't move, or we'll kill him," I declared, instantly trapping the masked man before me and tightening my grip around his neck.

The Rebels exchanged glances. Suddenly, the masked man I subdued attacked me unexpectedly. He pulled out a knife out of nowhere and stabbed me in the abdomen. Instinctively, I grabbed his hand and glanced into his eyes. His eyes... seemed oddly familiar.

"Leave!" I shouted, asking them to escape first. Michael stepped in to help me and nearly got shot by the Rebels.

"Carry the children and run!" I yelled at him. He hesitated for a while before he took the two children and quickly escaped.

"Mom!"

"Stephie!"

Ashton and Rachel called out to me with concern.

"Zion, take them away first!" I engaged in an intense fight with the masked man, allowing them to escape first.

## Chapter 570

Upon realizing the dire situation, Stan led everyone to flee through the passage he had discovered.

While the masked man resisted, I hastily tore open his sleeves. Under the loose shirt, his arm was indeed thin and weak. And there it was, the red birthmark I had been hoping to find on the inside of his arm. In that instant, my heart skipped a beat. It was him, just as I had expected.

No. To be exact, it should be her.

Realizing that I had bought enough time for everyone to make their escape, I raised my hands in a gesture of surrender.

The person standing before me wore a tightly-fitting mask. At first, I mistook it for a regular mask, but I soon realized it was actually an adhesive commonly used for special effects makeup. I was in a hurry, so I could not remove the mask.

She had skillfully employed makeup techniques to completely transform herself into a man.

I only realized she was a woman when I held her hostage just now. I felt her neck and Adam's apple, which was fake. This was a disguise to hide the truth. She was a woman who was disguising herself as a man.

Furthermore, everything seemed logical because she was a woman. She appeared delicate and frail, not as physically powerful as men. Hence, when she planned the serial murders, she manipulated the killings. She directed the perpetrator to eliminate the victim.

She lacked any sense of reverence, displaying complete indifference toward life and considering human existence as worthless.

I raised my hands as I gazed at the woman standing before me. "You killed Stephanie... You're the one who killed her."

Stephanie's recollection of the killer just before she died merged perfectly with the person before me. When the drug took effect, she gradually slipped into a coma. While she was struggling, she scratched the killer's arm and noticed the red birthmark.

I had finally come to understand the reason why she did not kill Stephanie directly. Instead, she used drugs to make her unconscious and then placed her in a glass display cabinet. She morbidly wanted to turn Stephanie into a work of art, aiming to provoke others.

She considered this her ultimate masterpiece.

Her Adam's apple was connected to a voice-changing magnetic disk, resulting in a hoarse and peculiar sound. It was as if her vocal cords had been damaged. At first, I thought she was Steven, and I even considered the possibility of her being the deceased Simeon.

However, I never suspected that she was a woman.

During the earlier fight, I noticed that the soles of her shoes were unusually high. She had added insoles to boost her height. Clearly, she intentionally sought to appear taller. At around five feet six, she shouldn't be considered short for a woman.



However, with the added insoles, she truly resembled a man standing at five feet eight. Thus, we did not assume that she was a woman from the very beginning.

"You're a woman, and you've put in a lot of effort to apply makeup to disguise yourself. Are you afraid we might recognize you? You must be someone I know. Let me try to guess who you are..." I looked at her warily, trying hard to discern her identity. She was the real mastermind behind the serial murders.

The masked woman smiled strangely as she took the gun from her subordinate and aimed it at me. "I was the one who killed her. Stephany, you know too much..."

"We can't kill her for now. Think about it. If Steven is indeed the president of Crowdstar Group, he won't cooperate with us, and that will only bring us trouble. Why should we create a formidable enemy?"

Just as she was about to pull the trigger, Ewan rushed over and cautiously persuaded the masked woman. The masked woman was obviously hesitant. She clearly recognized my worth.

"She can't figure out your identity. She can't die yet as she's an important test subject for the organization and a key piece in our plans. We must use her to overthrow the organization," Ewan reminded, approaching carefully.

The masked woman sneered and swung the butt of her gun at me. Suddenly, my vision blackened, and I collapsed to the ground.

"Their hands are nearly healed. It won't affect the collection of fingerprints and palm prints anymore," I overheard Ewan say in a trance.

"Very well. Let's find out if Steven is the president of Crowdstar Group." The masked woman smirked eerily, appearing unsatisfied. She kicked me in the stomach, causing me to groan when I was unconscious. She hated me very much and made no effort to conceal her feelings. I wonder who it could be.