

## After Death 601

### Chapter 601

"Do you still remember me, Steven? I'm Logan Cooper." The man who hit their car ignored Eason and greeted Steven instead. Or rather, he seemed to look down on Eason.

Eason's fists balled up as he stood unmoving, seemingly down in the dumps. Someone as cocky and sassy as him was now allowing someone else to act insolently before him?

"How disgusting. Even the air has turned disgusting" he mumbled. He then took out an alcohol wipe and cleaned his hands repeatedly before putting on his gloves.

I paused to observe Eason for a moment—he did have germaphobia. He was also aloof back when I first met him. He had to put his gloves on no matter where he went.

At first, I even thought something was wrong with his hands. Perhaps he had burns or something of the like. I later found out that it was merely his germaphobia.

But at some point, Eason no longer acted cocky and wore his gloves less often. Today was rather unusual for him.

"Steven?" Logan called out persistently when he saw that Steven was ignoring him.

Steven replied indifferently, "I don't remember you."

Logan's expression faltered slightly. He then said with a smile, "It's only normal that you don't. You're a great genius, after all. How could you possibly remember normies like us? Am I right, Hudson?"

He then reached out to pat Eason on the shoulders.

"Don't touch me!" Eason lost control of his emotions and instinctively reached for the gun in Zion's hand. Zion was alarmed by his action. As a police officer with an assigned gun, he couldn't let anyone casually take it away—not even a colleague. Fortunately, he reacted quickly and dodged out of the way.

Logan chuckled as he looked at Eason. "Who would've thought? You missed the advanced class reunion a few days ago. I only heard that you had become a police officer then."

Eason remained silent, as if he was enduring it. After observing him for a good while, I figured that he probably had a story of his own.

"Come with us for the investigation," Zion said angrily as he pressed Logan against the car.

Logan was cooperative as he got into the car with a smile. He looked meaningfully at Steven. "There weren't too many who attended the advanced class gathering this time. There'll be another one coming up in a few days' time. All of you should attend it, okay?"

He spoke loudly.

Eason watched as Zion brought Logan away. He then started muttering in a deep voice, as if talking to himself. But at the same time, it seemed like he was also talking to us.

He said, "Actually, I had a thought when the serial murder cases started. I wondered if Simeon was the murderer. But I realized that it wasn't him later on."

"What?" I asked.

Eason continued, "It's impossible that Simeon would give up on toying with me if he were still alive and was the murderer. He would've killed all these scums as well."

He seemed to be in pain. As a police officer, he struggled between justice and evil. They said that a person's nature would either keep them sane or lead them astray.

"Logan's appearance definitely isn't just a coincidence," Steven said, voice low and frowning.

There had to be a purpose behind Logan's appearance, be it Genome Society or the Rebels.

"He seems to be targeting you," I reminded Steven to be careful.

He shook his head and looked at Eason. "It seemed like he was targeting me. But in reality, he had been provoking Eason all along, intentionally or otherwise."

"But Eason isn't related to Genome Society," I said rather curiously.

I watched as he got into the car dazedly. Only then did I continue, "Surely, Logan appeared with a purpose. Why would he want to provoke an outsider like Eason?"

"Perhaps he has other ulterior motives," Steven said meaningfully. He then took my hand and got into the

car.

I paused for a moment. Suddenly, I realized something. He might have been targeting Simeon by targeting Eason.

Joel was considered the only successful experimental subject in Steven's Reincarnation Project. But many believed that he was a fake who was pretending. They thought he was merely a recipient of a memory transplant.

It was especially so for Mrs. Ford, who was overly eager to prove the authenticity of the Reincarnation Project.

## Chapter 602

So, this whole thing was targeted at Joel.

They were planning to conduct some sort of experiment in order to prove that Joel was actually Simeon. Was it something like an emotional experiment?

Just like how they used me to test Steven. And just like how they used Steven's feelings toward me to determine that I was indeed Stephanie Carlson.

"But that's not it. The reason why the emotional experiment was valuable and meaningful is because you love me. Does it work the same way with hatred as well?" I asked, intrigued by it.

Joel and Eason were sworn enemies, and they were both men. "Aren't they sworn enemies?"

Steven coughed before stammering, "Your cognitive world may not comprehend it, but feelings... aren't about soul connection. They're also unrelated to gender."

I was rather confused. It was indeed in my cognitive blind spot.

"I would still love you if... you were to reincarnate in a man's body." Steven's ears turned red. I parted my mouth slightly, unable to react all of a sudden.

After following Steven into the car, I watched the way Eason was driving distractedly.

"Um, it might be dangerous for him to drive now" Eason hit the gas and sped away before I could even finish my sentence.

I experienced the terrifying sensation of a roller coaster for the first time. My survival instinct kicked in as Thugged Steven tight. "Life's still worth living, Eason!"

Eason suddenly jerked the steering wheel hard. He had gone mad!

"You shouldn't behave like this, Officer Grant! Let's talk it out-" I hugged Steven tight and mumbled, "What's got into him now?"

"I don't know." Steven was considerably calmer than I was.

Eason sped away throughout the journey, forcefully completing a 30-minute journey in under 20 minutes.

I took a deep breath and got out of the car. I then whispered to Steven, "Do police officers not get fined for speeding?"

"They do," Steven answered me seriously.

I noticed that something wasn't right with the way Eason was acting. "Is he going to be fine walking away like this?"

Steven took out his phone and called Joel. "Eason has gone mad."

"I'm taking an exam here!" Joel seemed to be in the middle of a placement exam. It was almost time for his college entrance exam soon.

"He bumped into Logan Cooper from the advanced class today," Steven added.

Joel fell silent on the other end of the call. I heard him turning in his paper early shortly after.

"These questions are too easy, sir. I'm totally wasting my time and life here. I'll take my leave now. It's super urgent!"

He then ended the call soon after. Steven and I both looked at each other.

"How did you find out that Joel was actually Simeon?" I was curious about Steven and Simeon's story.

Back then, Simon was burned to death trying to protect Steven. It must have been a painful way for him to die.

How did Steven recognize that Joel was actually Simeon at first glance, then?

"His attention-seeking behavior and neuroticism are irreplaceable. It's just like how AI can never replace humans." The way Steven had said it sounded deep. To put it simply, he was calling Simeon a neurotic attention seeker who can't be impersonated.

"Besides, he was the one who escaped and found me." Steven looked at me and started telling me about Simeon and his story.

"Back then, during the fire... It wasn't that I didn't want to escape... It wasn't because of... my selfishness that caused Simeon to die. It wasn't that—"Steven lowered his head as he recalled the horrifying memories of his past.

I held his hands tightly, signaling for him not to be afraid. They were all in the past now.

Many had misunderstood Steven after that incident. They believed that he was too stubborn and refused to leave the orphanage. They believed that it was because he refused to leave that room that he ended up being burned, even causing Simeon's death.

Yet, only Simeon and Steven knew what the actual truth was.

## Chapter 603

"There was a fire outside, and they locked the door. The fire was spreading quickly, and we... we couldn't escape\_" Steven whispered with a trembling voice.

He couldn't help but still tremble upon recalling those past experiences of his.

"Actually, we might've had a chance at escaping if I had worked with Simeon. But we argued in the dorm that day, and it escalated into a fight." Steven looked up at me. "He accidentally struck me too hard, and I blacked out..."

Stunned, I looked at him in disbelief. I didn't know something like this had happened.

"Simeon... knocked you out?" Even my voice was trembling.

Steven continued, "He was too extreme. He wanted to kill everyone in the advanced class, and I was stopping him. I knew that they had locked the door from the outside and were deliberately holding him back.

"I never thought those people would start a fire. I thought it was just a prank to mess with us... They never expected the electrical system of the orphanage to short circuit. That spark of fire ended up resulting in a disaster."

Steven tugged on his hair and leaned against my shoulder, blaming himself. We stood there for a good while, and I felt his pain.

I could somewhat understand the truth and reason behind the fire back then.

Steven and Simeon were both one-of-a-kind geniuses. They would never allow anyone to burn them to death in the room just like that.

Simeon had crawled up from the bottom. There was both an angel and a demon residing within him.

It was just like what Steven had said—a person's nature would either keep them sane or lead them astray. If Simeon were to kill, he would've been more terrifying than the masked woman behind the Rebels.

I could vaguely figure out the reason Simeon had wanted to kill those people from the advanced class. It should have something to do with Eason.

Steven knew that Simeon wanted to kill, so he stopped him that day. Simeon struck Steven out of anger and knocked him out.

And Steven actually knew from the start that those people outside had locked the door. He thought that this would trap Simeon in. He didn't want Simeon to go to extremes and down to the path of no return.

Little did he expect that the people from the orphanage were worse than he thought. They actually lit a fire. Combined with the orphanage's aging electrical system, that spark of fire ended up causing an explosion that engulfed the entire room in flames.

Simeon struggled in the fire. He went mad, blaming himself as guilt washed over him. He shielded Steven, who was knocked out by him, tightly in front of him. He rather let the flames engulf him than abandon Steven to escape.

Simeon must have willingly died in the fire in the end, right?

Perhaps he was also afraid of being consumed by the demon within him, turning him into a devil who disregarded life and would kill without hesitation.

"It wasn't your fault, Steven" I comforted Steven in a whisper as I hugged him.

Both Simeon and him had blamed themselves. That was why they treasured and protected each other. They were each other's most trusted confidants. It was unparalleled whether in love or friendship. "That's why I risked everything to complete that experiment. I wanted to prove that the body would merely be a vessel as long as we unlocked the genetic code. The soul would then be reincarnated and locked down by the gene chains." Steven looked at me with reddening eyes.

"Stephie-

"The soul is merely an independent entity trapped within the body, and the genes are its chains. I've unlocked it. I know the answer now" His voice was trembling.

Steven found the answer in the asylum. As such, he conducted an experiment on Simeon after he escaped the asylum.

He knew that Genome Society had once extracted Simeon's genes to create clone subjects. He wanted to bring Simeon back by trying the experiment out.

I asked, "What about the clone subjects' own souls, then?"

I was just curious. Wouldn't the clone subjects have their own souls too?

## Chapter 604

Steven said, "Cloning is just like replicating a shell. It's considered defying the natural order. They retain fragments of consciousness, but their souls can be merged."

Steven's analysis was that clone subjects did not possess a soul. But some scholars believed that clone subjects possessed independent souls.

I remembered Una. The way she looked at me was of jealousy and envy. There were also some other complicated situations involved.

Perhaps Una wanted to become an independant and unique individual. She wanted to become the most special and complete soul.

"Simeon... succeeded, right?" I looked nervously at Steven.

Simeon was Joel. Joel was Simeon.

"He's Simeon." Steven nodded, firmly believing that Simeon was Joel and vice versa.

"Was that why you strongly believed that I was Stephanie Carlson?" I looked at him.

"I made a deal with Stephany Larson," Steven muttered.

Finally, he was willing to open up completely to me now. He was willing to tell me the truth.

"Stephany Larson willingly helped me to get you back. She said she wanted to disappear forever," Steven whispered.

Stephany Larson was a nihilistic existence.

"I realized a problem after observing all the clone subjects. Natural competition and selection can be a terrifying existence. Any species born unnaturally faces an inevitable path toward self-destruction." Steven looked at me seriously. "That was why I was afraid..."

I finally understood why Steven was so afraid of me dying. He wasn't afraid that I would die from external factors-the greatest enemy of clone subjects like us was ourselves.

We were seemingly born lacking the five senses. It was hard for us to find a reason or excuse to stay alive without having any emotional sustenance. Most of us would eventually commit suicide in the end.

"People with depression feel as if they're compelled by their bodies to die. Even if they're suffering, they don't wish to die. But they feel as if some unseen forces are forcing them to do so," Steven whispered.

Those were the findings from his experiments. He had drawn up conclusions from his observations." Clone subjects seem to naturally have the tendency toward depression. Similar to a patient with severe depression, some might even experience even more severe mental illnesses such as bipolar disorder."

One would describe it as an incomplete soul with a lack of the five senses in superstitious terms. But in reality, it was the consequences of casually cloning and creating lives.

Such a consequence was something beyond the limits of the current human sciences and medical capabilities. That was also why the limit of science was metaphysics.

Metaphysics wasn't one of the traditional senses. Instead, it was an intangible bond that was currently inexplicable to humans.

It was just like finding out that the soul was merely an ideology trapped within the body after deciphering the codes in the gene chains. Once the body was destroyed, the soul would then experience a hollow and unconscious liberation.

No one except those who were reincarnated would know what the afterlife was like. But even such reincarnation would require a medium-the genetic codes.

"So that's why you wanted me to find a reason to stay alive. You wanted me to experience what love, friendship, and despair were..." I looked at Steven, suddenly doubtful.

Were all those killing games truly a series of unfortunate events, or were the Rebels deliberate in planning them?

Why did it feel like the Rebels were seemingly using a cruel way to teach me about love, kinship, friendship, anger, fear, and despair?

## Chapter 605

"Do you want to die, Eason? Did your brain stop growing along with your age? What would've been the point if you were to die in a car crash?" Joel's scoldings could be heard from the courtyard.

Steven and I stood by the entrance, peeking in. Joel was angrily grabbing Eason, pushing him onto the lawn.

I was perplexed. It seemed a little awkward, considering that Eason was much older than Joel.

What was stranger was the fact that Eason had actually allowed Joel to push him onto the lawn. He did not move, nor did he resist or scold him.

That wasn't how Eason usually was like.

"He's intoxicated," Steven explained softly. Eason was clearly tipsy judging by the way he was acting. "Say something, will you? I can't believe you got yourself drunk like this!" Joel scratched his head angrily. It was as if he still had to worry about Eason despite him already being an adult.

"You're always just bullying me!" Eason yelled tipsily, as if he was unleashing all his pent-up grievances all of a sudden.

He was sitting on the lawn with his head hung low and eyes reddening. "If you're so amazing, try turning into a ghost and scare me, then! Try killing them all, then!"

Joel was stunned and stood in silence.

The thought did cross his mind. Just like what Steven had said, Simeon had wanted to kill those bastards from the advanced class. However, that fire stopped him from doing so.

"What happened between Eason and those people from the advanced class?" I asked Steven softly. He took my hand and brought me to the couch. Ashton and Xan were still playing with building blocks. The toy was something clearly too childish for them, yet they were enjoying themselves regardless.

"Hudson's growth spurt was delayed. He was petite back when he was still in the advanced class. Logan and the others were mean bullies. They liked harassing students who were weaker than them to assert their dominance in the class," Logan whispered.

I was stunned. I could probably figure out the rest of the story now.

He continued, "Simeon used to be bullied in the orphanage because of his young age, which was why he was empathic to Hudson, who was bullied. Hudson stuck close to him after he helped him out several times."

Simeon enjoyed poking fun at Hudson as well. Hudson could only follow Simeon out of his fear. He would rather be bullied by Simeon alone than to be bullied by many.

Later on, those people no longer dared to bully Hudson in front of Simeon. That was because Simeon was too ruthless.

Those who came from the orphanage were madmen. Everyone in their class knew not to mess with the two who came from the orphanage. That was because they would go mad when they were angry.

As such, they would only bully Eason whenever Simeon wasn't around.

Steven said, "Simeon and I weren't in school on that particular day. They were ruthless in bullying Hudson. He was sent to the hospital and developed a severe germaphobia after that."

His explanation was brief without specifically mentioning how those people had bullied Eason. However,

judging by his germaphobe now, they must have used extremely dirty tactics.

I could imagine how helpless Eason had felt back then.

Steven continued, "That was why Simeon went mad when Hudson cried while looking for him, asking why he didn't protect him well. He wanted to kill."

Simeon wanted to kill those people. He almost killed someone and took the path of no return in his late

teens.

The fire had consumed everything.

From then, Hudson became withdrawn and turned eccentric. He blamed Simeon for dying and leaving him alone.

He had also blamed Steven. He was jealous and wary of Steven, yet he also blamed Steven for Simeon's death. At the same time, he was afraid of Steven.

"Eason was initially hostile toward you because he didn't know the truth. Why didn't you explain to him?" I looked at Steven. Why would he want to bear Eason's unjustified anger?

"Hating someone fuels his motivation to keep going." He looked back at me with a burning gaze. Eason was someone Simeon cared for. As such, Steven wouldn't really blame Eason even if he went too far. The reason he did not explain himself was to give Eason the motivation to stay alive and change himself. Compared to before, Eason was a completely changed person now. He learned to protect himself from others.

## Chapter 606

I remained silent as I leaned against Steven. I felt heartbroken for him. He had been suppressing himself all the while.

"Steven," I called for him softly.

"Yes?" Steven looked down at me.

"Hug me, please." I buried my face against his chest.

"Are you kissing, Mom and Dad?" Ashton noticed that Steven was about to kiss me.

As such, both of us, who hadn't quite figured out ourselves as "parents", immediately straightened up. We looked at Ashton and Xandra seriously and said, "Go play with your toys."



"You can't sneakily kiss Mom okay, Dad? Mom belongs to Xandra and me." Ashton gave Steven a warning look while Steven stared back with the same intensity. What a father-and-son pair!

At that moment, I felt as if I had brought home two little troublemakers. Steven was just like a child himself, after all. Now, there were two more children vying for attention.

Following the abductor's instructions, Dayton struggled to drag a massive industrial container meant for heavy-duty supplies into Leffers Street. He was heading toward the tenth trash can.

As the trash can was rather large, there wouldn't be any issue fitting a container in. But now, the problem was the 30 million dollars in cash weighing over 600 pounds. It was impossible for Dayton to unload them into the trash can on his own.

As such, he could only sit on the container and give the abductor a call. "I've brought the money over now. Where is she? I want to see if she's safe."

"Place the container down and leave the place," the abductor replied with a low voice.

"I'm warning you, don't try any tricks. Just imagine the consequences if you still refuse to let her go after getting the money," Dayton threatened angrily.

Steven had taught him all those words.

Steven and I were hiding somewhere to observe our surroundings. The police were all in position as well.

As the CEO of the Crowdstar Group, Dayton surely possessed exceptional power. It would be fairly easy for him to deal with an abductor.

"We'll release her once we get the money and make sure they are fine." They only wanted to assess Dayton's financial capabilities. He wouldn't be able to come up with 30 million in cash in such a short amount of time if he wasn't the president of Crowdstar Group.

Soon after Dayton left, someone came to move the container. The police dared not make a move as they wanted to see if they would release Xandra. However, the abductors seemed to have no intention of doing so after monitoring for half an hour.

"What's the meaning of this?" Dayton called the abductor once again.

The abductor replied, "We're having second thoughts, Mr. Sacco. Thirty million dollars seems like three dollars to you. I heard that you've collected many valuable treasures.

"Last year, you secretly acquired an emerald vase worth hundreds of millions from an auction under the name of the president of Crowdstar Group. I heard that it's kept in the bank vault. I'll give you an hour's

time to bring it to us, and we'll immediately release her. We'll kill her otherwise."

An hour was just enough time for Dayton to make a round trip to the bank. They refused to give him more time for anything else.

His identity as the president of the Crowdstar Group could only be proven by retrieving something valuable using his identity as the president within the specific time given.

Dayton gritted his teeth, not knowing what to answer.

Steven said from the headset, "Tell them that this is their last chance. We'll kill them if anything happens to Xandra."

Dayton did as he was told. He then called his chauffeur to pick him up. The chauffeur was Joel.

This ploy had to be played out completely in order to convince Genome Society that Dayton was indeed the president of Crowdstar Group. Only then would there be an opportunity to contact the superiors supposedly above Mrs. Ford.

## Chapter 607

No sooner after Dayton left, someone sneakily went to check the container.

Zion did not expose his cover under Steven's reminder. The person had come alone knowing that was a huge amount of money. Surely, it wasn't to take it away.

The person opened up the container and glanced in to verify its authenticity. He then closed the container and left.

As expected, Steven was right. Those people only wanted to assess Dayton's capabilities and were not after the 30 million dollars.

That amount of money was insignificant to Genome Society. They wouldn't invite trouble for themselves by taking the money for good.

Everything went smoothly on Dayton's side as well. He soon obtained the item required by the abductor from the bank vault. From matching fingerprints and irises, everything went on seamlessly.

He returned with some time to spare.

"I've already brought the item you wanted. Release her!" Dayton said in his call to the abductor.

"Place the item inside the tenth trash can and leave the place. We'll send her back safe and sound at 10:00 pm tonight," the person spoke in a low tone. The police didn't even have enough time to locate them as the call ended quickly.

Dayton turned and left after placing the item in the trash can. Steven, Zion, and I were still observing from nearby.

As expected, someone walked over soon after. He did not take away the container full of money but only took the emerald vase away.

"That's worth hundreds of millions" I muttered softly.

I suddenly turned into a money-grubber after knowing how much it was worth. It was a shame to even let them get away with it.

"There's a chip installed in the emerald vase for tracking." Steven squeezed my hand.

I let out a relieved sigh. "That's great, then. I'll feel heartbroken otherwise."

Steven looked at me before softly whispering, "I'm rich, honey. I have lots of money."

I ignored him. He almost blurted out the fact that he was the president of Crowdstar Group now.

Dayton's residence was brightly lit even at 10:00 pm. He could only pace around while he waited as he could no longer reach the abductor by phone.

As soon as it hit 10:0 pm, a car passed by and threw out a huge suitcase before speeding away.

Dayton and Joel ran out to open the suitcase, revealing Xandra within.

She was still unconscious with her hands tied. Her clothes remained the same as what she wore when she was abducted. It seemed like no one had touched her, after all.

"Don't move." Joel raised a hand and signaled Dayton to stay still.

Both of them struggled to drag her into the room. They only let the police and doctor in to check on her

after making sure that no one was keeping an eye on them from the outside. "We'll need to take her blood sample to check for any illegal substances she might have been injected with."

They found needle marks after checking Xandra's arm. It was unclear whether she had been injected with a sedative or something else.

"Something was implanted in her head." The doctor discovered a wound on Xandra's head. They saw a small incision after parting her hair.

"Let's take an X-ray tomorrow." Zion's face paled. Those people were ruthless.

"It's a miniature chip bomb that can be controlled remotely. It's embedded under the scalp. It might be risky to remove it. This thing... is normally used on spies or infiltrators in war zones," Steven softly said. Dayton immediately turned as white as a sheet. His fingers trembled as he asked, "What do we do..." Xandra was innocent. She had been wrongly implicated. I grew anxious as I looked at Steven.

"Let's see what they're up to." He signaled for Dayton to call the abductor. Yet, Dayton's fingers kept trembling as he couldn't calm himself down.

Steven frowned before walking up to grab his wrists. "Calm down."

## Chapter 608

"Are the lives of those you don't care about insignificant to you?" Dayton asked Steven in a soft voice. Unfortunately, I overheard it.

Steven was glum. He did not answer Dayton but cast a sideways glance over to Xandra, who was still unconscious. "She's going to die."

Dayton's eyes were rimmed red as he tightly clutched at Steven's wrists. He lowered his head once he calmed himself down and picked up his phone. "I'll make the call."

I looked at Steven. At that moment, I felt a terrifying sensation that was hard to put into words.

When Dayton was asking Steven if he thought the lives of those he didn't care about were insignificant, I could almost be certain of what Steven's thoughts were besides the ones he cared about, he really was indifferent to everything else.

"What's that supposed to mean?" Dayton was almost gritting his teeth as he questioned the abductor with a deep voice.

"Didn't you guys place a tracking chip in the emerald vase as well?" The abductor chuckled.

Dayton's fists bunched up tight as he knocked himself on the head mutedly. "Turn off the chip bomb!"

Xandra was going to die.

The abductor replied, "That thing is only beneath her skin. It won't take her life. She can live a normal life as long as we don't activate it. But don't try to take it out. As soon as the chip-"

"You guys are mad!" Dayton cursed angrily.

"We just want to cooperate with you, Mr. Sacco. We'll contact you with the specifics later," the abductor sneered before ending the call.

The tracking stopped moving as soon as the call ended.

"We've lost them, Officer Landon. Both the emerald vase and the money were retrieved by us. They tossed the emerald vase into the trash heap, so we had to look around for quite some time-" Zion's colleague had called to explain.

Clearly, while Steven was toying with the abductors, they were also toying with us. However, it was hard to tell who was the winner between both sides at this point. They were rather evenly matched.

"We're caught. Does this count as blowing our covers?" Zion asked. Would it be harder to investigate Genome Society in the future?

Steven replied indifferently with a cold chuckle, "We've already won. The reason why they had to go to such lengths was because we've already won."

The people from Genome Society believed that Dayton was the president of Crowdstar Group. To Steven, that itself was already considered a win.

Zion was stunned, seemingly confused upon hearing Steven's words. "So from now on..."

"From now on, the police should stay out of this. You have your way of investigating while we have our own ways of handling things." Steven refused to disclose his next steps. His back seemed strangely determined yet melancholic.

I often felt afraid. I was afraid that the scene before me would turn into a mirage sometime in the future.

If Steven was the president of Crowdstar Group, then using Dayton to infiltrate the enemy's ranks was

akin to fighting a lone battle in close combat.

Zion did not comment further and nodded. He only left with the others after ensuring that Xandra was fine.

Dayton sat trembling on the ground as he watched Xandra, who was still getting examined by the doctor." But she's innocent."

"I'll head out for a bit. You guys can continue." I could tell that Dayton wanted to talk to Steven in private. Steven looked down and nodded. I then walked out of the living room and leaned against the door to eavesdrop on their conversation.

"You're the one who got her involved in this!" Steven glared angrily at Dayton. "I've told you more than once feelings would turn into one's Achilles' heel, and they would also become a weapon against others.

"You were the one who was constantly urging others to protect her on the cruise, making her a target. You were the one who turned her into your Achilles' heel and someone else's weapon against you!" Anger and indifference seeped through his voice.

"What should I have done, then? Tell me, what should I have done? You only care about those you care about!" Dayton's emotions were getting out of control.

Steven said, "Of course, I only care about what I care about! You were the one who chose this path. It's inevitable that you would have to sacrifice something in order for you to escape your parents' control, to achieve your goals, and to gain what you want.

"I made this clear to you before we started working together-you can't have your cake and eat it too!" he rebuked Dayton in a deep voice.

Dayton looked at Steven. "You said that I can't have my cake and eat it too, but why have you always been trying to do so? We're only your shield. That's why you can continue to live peacefully with her, right?"

"Call me heartless if you like, but if your stupidity obstructs my path, I won't hesitate to kill you and everything around you that might obstruct my plan. Do you understand?" Steven grabbed Dayton's collars, his tone tinged with displeasure.

The Steven now was terrifying to no end. I rarely saw this side of him because he had never shown it in front of me.

How grand were his plans? What kind of an intricate ploy had he woven?

"No one can have their cake and eat them too-not even myself." I heard Steven's last words before I left. Not even himself, he said.

## Chapter 609

Xandra regained consciousness. There was nothing wrong with her physically, except for the chip bomb implanted under her scalp. Dayton did not tell her about it, fearing that she would be afraid.

"I-"Xandra burst into tears as soon as she said, "I just went to the washroom and got abducted right away. I have to complain about the bad security at the theater!"

Dayton smiled and comforted her, "Everything's fine now."

Xandra wiped away her tears and asked, "How much ransom did you pay to bring me back?"

Dayton recounted, "A hundred and thirty grand?"

Xandra stopped crying out of shock. She hiccupped before snapping out of it. "That's wasteful of you! That's 130 grand we're talking about! Give it to me and I'll die instead."

Dayton was rendered speechless from her words. "Well, why do you still need the money if you're dead?" "You can save that money and donate it to disaster areas or rural areas. My life isn't worth that much anyway." Xandra was about to start crying again. This time, out of pity for the waste of money.

"Don't cry, we can still earn back the money," Dayton softly said.

She cried anyway. "I'm heartbroken for the money you spend. How could we give it out freely to the abductors just like that?"

"We didn't lose the money. The police retrieved it." Steven and I walked into the hospital ward and smiled at Xandra.

Xandra visibly relaxed and lay back on the bed. "That's good-"

Dayton lowered his head and remained silent. The rift between Steven and him was still there.

"Rest up," Steven mumbled before taking my hand to leave.

Xandra nervously started, "I heard the abductors talk about you when I was half-conscious."

She was talking about me.

I pointed to myself and asked, "Me?"

Xandra nodded.

"What did they say?" I looked at her.

Xandra rubbed her temple in contemplation. "They said something about... you being the third-generation experimental subject... And Nancy was... the second generation. I don't understand."

I halted for a moment, instinctively turning toward Steven. He frowned and grabbed my wrist. "You were sedated back then. Perhaps you heard it wrong."

I was bewildered when Steven pulled me out of the ward. "Isn't Nancy my mother?"

I recalled hearing from Nancy that I was the embryo created from her egg and someone else's sperm. Steven looked at me. "She is."

I felt bewildered. I should be Nancy's genetic continuation since her egg was used.

"Stop overthinking. You're just you-my Stephie." Steven stopped me from overthinking. He cupped my face and smiled at me. "Let's go home, Stephie. Ashton and Xan are still at home. I'm afraid they might

wreck the place if we return late."

I chuckled. "Alright."

It would have been nice if only we were a normal family.

"I didn't know that I could actually develop feelings despite having a painless motherhood," I whispered to Steven on our way back.

"That's because you were originally someone with feelings. It's just that they got suppressed." Steven held my hand. "You're becoming more like a normal person now, Stephie. You can live happily from now

on."

I looked at him and asked, "What about you? Will you continue to stay by my side?"

Steven was stunned. He then smiled and said, "Of course, I'll stay by your side."

He said he would continue to stay by my side.

The car stopped at the entrance of Steven's residence, and I saw a familiar figure-Michael.

"Michael?" I got out of the car, somewhat astonished. "Your mom actually allowed you to come out?" Michael did not look at me but at Steven. "I'm here for him."

## Chapter 610

I looked at Michael warily. He was here for Steven? What did that mean?

"You should head back first, Stephie. Ashton and Xan are waiting for you." Ashton and Xan were waiting for us with Stevie in the courtyard.

I nodded and headed back. Steven would tell me what Michael said anyway.

I sat on the lawn together with Ashton and Xan. I was looking at Steven and Michael while rubbing Stevie's head.

It was rare for both of them to talk calmly like that. I couldn't make out their lip movements clearly, and I couldn't hear their conversation. But Michael seemed to be nervous.

After 20 minutes, Michael hurriedly got into his car and left. Perhaps his time to be out was limited.

He glanced over to my direction before getting into the car and left. Steven walked in, looking unperturbed.

"What did he tell you?" I asked curiously.

"He said that he's getting engaged to Una." Steven walked over and sat beside me.

I felt surprised. "He's getting engaged to Una? Will his mom agree to it?"

"Perhaps he's doing it to spite his mom. He's rather rebellious." Steven started to hug and kiss me all over. "Who cares about him? That scumbag can marry anyone he likes. You're my wife anyway."

I helplessly leaned against his shoulders. "He only told you this? Why would he tell us that he's getting engaged? He's crazy!"

Steven chuckled and said softly, "He just said that his mom's a madwoman who's controlling his life. Anyone who gets near to him will be hurt by his mom. Una isn't afraid since she's egoistic."

I smiled. Funnily enough, Una was resistant to cloning and even looked exactly like Stephanie Carlson. We could just leave that family of theirs to hurt each other.

"Michael's mom will no longer keep watch on us with Una distracting her. We can live happily from now on." Steven sounded wishful as if he was daydreaming.

"Will that day ever come?" I leaned against him.

"It will soon. The reason why Genome Society was sounding out Dayton is because the real person in charge behind them wants to meet him. We'll win as long as they meet him."

As long as they knew who the person was and killed them, everything would come to an end temporarily.

"But even if we kill one person in charge of the Genome Society, the headquarters would still send out a second or a third person." I sighed.

"We'll kill them and destroy all of the genetic experiment data in Huma. They won't be able to trace back anything and would have to start over. We can rid ourselves of them that way." What Steven was trying to do was to delete all data the Huma Genome Society had of me.

"Are you sure they haven't uploaded the experiment data to the headquarters?" I looked at him.

Steven shook his head and replied, "The experiment data are not shared between them. They only have regular exchanges every year and would not display their data before the results are certain."

He had previously infiltrated Genome Society's laboratory, raising the arguments for the Reincarnation

Project.

I let out a sigh of relief. "If that's the case, we're really at the end of the tunnel now."

It was as if everything was truly coming to an end soon.

The police deployed more manpower on their investigation pursuant to the incident on the cruise. The people from Genome Society became even more withdrawn.

Steven and I experienced a few days' worth of a normal person's life-calm and harmonious.

Upon waking up daily, we would bring the children to play on the lawn and bring Stevie for a run by the beach. We would watch the sunrise and sunset.

Such a calm and wonderful life almost made me forget that I was merely an experimental subject.

"I'll bring you out to buy a dress, Xan." I was experiencing the joys of a normal mother as I brought the two children out shopping in the mall. We bumped into Michael, Una, and Mrs. Ford unexpectedly.

It felt strange seeing the three of them out shopping together. The happy family scene was rather peculiar. "This is my son and daughter-in-law." Mrs. Ford was smiling as she introduced them to the salesperson of the luxury goods store.

I was both surprised and puzzled. Mrs. Ford's acting skills were amazing-she actually endured everything and accepted Una despite Mrs. Ford's abnormal possessiveness toward her son.