

After Death 61

Chapter 61

Michael appeared expressionless, as cool as he usually was.

Yasmin, on the other hand, seemed happy. She looked down at her abdomen, seemingly anticipating their child's birth.

I scoffed sarcastically.

How would Michael have dealt with my unborn child if I hadn't died?

Would Michael have forced me to have an abortion, or would he have ended our child's life. personally?

Michael was capable of anything.

He and Yasmin turned their gazes toward me simultaneously. Perhaps my laughter had caught their attention. Their eyes displayed a moment of surprise.

Michael approached me with a pale face. "Stephie..."

I frowned. Despite Stephany bearing a slight resemblance to me, it was unlikely for Michael to mistake her for me.

"Who are you?"

Michael took a step back dejectedly after staring at me for a long time.

Clutching my fists, I whispered while walking past Michael, "Crazy people."

"Michael, she's not Stephie. You've mistaken her..." Yasmin feigned sadness and held Michael's arm.

"Michael, the deceased won't come back. You can't let yourself stay demotivated. Even if concerned about yourself, think about our child."

I not

I felt my feet grow numb as I walked. I suppressed the urge to turn around and confront the despicable couple.

"Doctor, this is Mrs. Lincoln. The blood test results are in. Please take a look."
The nanny handed over

the results.

I could feel an intense gaze on me while sitting in the chair, which made me uncomfortable.

What was Michael looking at?

"Michael, let's go." Yasmin pulled Michael away.

Michael turned to look at me. He continued to murmur even as they left the consultation room, she really not Stephie?"

"Is

Michael pushed away Yasmin's hand and walked ahead. "Are you satisfied now? There was a child in Stephie's womb. It was my child," he kept muttering.

I could hear his voice even in the consultation room. His words made me feel disgusted.

"HCG levels are still low, so we need to monitor for a while. We must determine whether the

pregnancy is intrauterine or ectopic. If there are no other complications, you can safely continue with the pregnancy."

Dr. Adrian smiled. "Don't worry too much. Everything looks fine."

I nodded, held the test results, and left the room.

Suddenly, I covered my mouth as I felt nauseated. Ignoring the bodyguards and nanny waiting outside, I rushed to the restroom.

Upon entering the restroom, I scanned my surroundings. Luckily, I found the window was slightly open, which provided me with an opportunity to slip away.

I quickly left the hospital by climbing out the window. I needed to meet with Rachel before being caught by the Lincoln family's bodyguards.

Rachel was the only person I could trust in this world. Only she could recognize my identity.

Before I could go far, the Lincoln family's bodyguards started chasing after me. I felt so annoyed with their presence.

Just as I was about to find a hiding spot, a hand suddenly grabbed me into a car and covered my mouth.

I turned in panic to find Michael beside me. I felt disgusted upon seeing him.

"Who are you? What do you want?" I stared at Michael cautiously.

"Nothing... I won't harm you. I just want to help..." He raised his hands to show that he was harmless.

I noticed that Michael appeared to have aged significantly in a short period. He looked thinner and less sharp than before.

I avoided eye contact with him. "I don't need your help."

Chapter 62

Michael smiled. "I don't know why you're running. But if you step away now, they'll definitely take you away."

I leaned back in the seat and asked, "Got nothing better to do?"

Indeed, having Michael take me out was an option.

"Yeah." Michael nodded.

Lowering my voice, I said, "Take me out of the hospital."

Michael didn't refuse my request and signaled the driver to go.

I crouched on the floor of the car, avoiding the people outside.

Michael sat next to me, blocking the view of the people outside.

"We're here." After leaving the hospital, Michael had the driver stop the car in a safe place.

I looked out of the car window and glanced at Michael. "Why are you helping me?"

Michael stared at me for a long time. "You remind me of someone I know."

"Someone you know?" I laughed, feeling increasingly nauseous.

How disgusting! For whom was he putting on this affectionate act?

"This is my business card. Feel free to reach out if you encounter any trouble in the future." Michael handed me a business card.

I accepted the card and got out of the car. As Michael's car drove away, I tore the card into pieces and threw them into the trash.

"I'll get my revenge on all of you—Michael, Yasmin, and also the murderer."

Leaving the alley, I tied my hair up and wore a hat. I walked away with my head down.

After passing through several streets, I borrowed a phone from a coffee shop and dialed Rachel's number.

Meeting Rachel directly wasn't an option. It would be too obvious. I had to make her come out to see

"Hello?" Rach's familiar voice echoed through the phone. Her voice was strained from crying daily. "Who are you looking for?"

My eyes instantly turned red. I leaned on the table, trembling all over.

"If you want to know how your best friend, Stephanie lied, keep quiet. Come alone to the coffee shop on the corner near Mansion 13.

Cheer

Rachel suddenly became alert upon hearing my words. "Who are you?"

I remained silent, fearing that I might burst into tears if I spoke.

She nervously asked again, "Who are you?"

I covered my mouth, suppressing the tears. I hung up the phone before handing it back to the waiter. I lay on the table and cried for a long time.

After about 15 minutes, Rachel arrived.

I chose this café because it was close to her home. Also, we often came here when my mood was low. It had become our secret meeting place.

It seemed Rachel came in a hurry as she was wearing slippers.

She alertly looked around to search for the person who had called her.

"Over here." I waved to her.

She looked at me cautiously and came over quickly. "You..."

She stared into my eyes for a long time, as if wanting to say that I looked a lot like Stephanie.

She asked me softly, "Do you know the cause of my best friend's death?" Her eyes turned red.

I nodded and looked around. "If we haven't gotten married by the time we're 30 and haven't found suitable partners, we'll abandon everything and embark on a six-month journey abroad.

"If we still haven't found a life partner by the age of 40, we'll forgo marriage. Instead, we'll purchase a small house in Southvis City and spend our days together. If we're financially well-off, we'll adopt a child..."

Rachel's gaze at me slowly turned into surprise. She covered her mouth while trembling all over." You... Who are you?"

Chapter 63

"Rach, do you believe in souls?" I anxiously looked at Rachel, unsure if she would believe me. "I'm Stephanie..."

Rachel was in shock for a long time. With a hand over her mouth, she didn't say a word for a while, Maybe my explanation was too forced and unbelievable.

"What do you want?" Rachel frowned after a long time had passed. She appeared somewhat angry. "How do you know all that? Why are you impersonating Stephanie? Do you think I'm a fool?"

She looked at me with caution, as if wondering if I was a suspect or an accomplice.

It was indeed challenging for anyone to accept someone suddenly appearing and claiming to be their deceased friend.

"Relax, relax." I quickly raised my hands, making a calming gesture,

Rachel was stunned for a moment and grew more cautious,

She was probably wondering why I knew so much about Stephanie's secrets.

"Do you suspect me of being one of the murderers or an accomplice? Do you think I did something to Stephanie before her death, forced her to reveal the secrets between you, and then came to deceive you?"

I voiced Rachel's doubts. She remained silent, maintaining her caution.

feel free to ask me any questions. Ask about the I raised my hands as I explained, "If you think so, secrets only you and Stephanie know. Stephanie couldn't have told other people all her secrets. I am Stephanie..."

Rachel's eyes reddened. Perhaps she was hoping that I was Stephanie, but we were both atheists. How could we believe that someone had reincarnated into another person? Such a plot was typically found only in novels.

"I have Stephanie's bank cards with me." Rachel cautiously looked at me.

I said, "There are two cards. One is my scholarship card, and the other is my salary card.

"The scholarship card has over 30 thousand, and the salary card has 10 thousand, which I earned for Michael and Yasmin's wedding gift. There's also a joint card for our donation to the orphanage.

I once wished Michael and Yasmin a happy and lasting marriage. Unfortunately, they only take my life.

My eyes flashed with a hint of resentment as I talked about Michael and Yasmin.

Rachel asked again, "Stephanie had plastic surgery. Which part did she modify?"

wanted to

I was annoyed by Rachel's question. Women blessed with natural beauty often disliked receiving comments about having undergone plastic surgery.

"I was born beautiful. Did I need plastic surgery? I didn't do anything."

"That's the wrong answer. I accompanied her for eyelash extensions." Rachel waved her hand.

I was left speechless by her words.

"Rachel, are eyelash extensions considered plastic surgery? I remember you brought me to that beauty salon where the extensions didn't match the length of my natural lashes.

"As a result, my lashes fell into my eyes, causing me to get conjunctivitis."

Rachel looked at me with some uncertainty. "Where did you get your eyelash extensions done?"

"I went to Beauty Magic on Sisilia Street. The moment I walked in, the salesperson complimented my looks and praised my skin

“She even suggested semi-permanent eyeliner and eyebrows, saying I wouldn’t need makeup in the future.”

Rachel tightened her grip on her cup of water as she continued to ask, “Did Stephanie love Michael?”

I held my breath for a moment and replied slowly, “Stephanie no longer loved Michael. If she still did, then all the pain she endured would be justified.”

Rachel averted her gaze, wiping away her tears. “I’ll temporarily believe that you have some connection with Stephanie.

“But I find it hard to believe that you’re Stephanie herself. So, just be straightforward with me. What want?”

do

you

“Yasmin killed me...” Fearful that Rachel wouldn’t accept it, I revised my words.

“Yasmin killed Stephanie. She intentionally asked Stephanie to go to Sunset Alley on the 15th. She didn’t inform anyone else and deceived Stephanie into going there. In the end, Stephanie was killed by the murderer.”

Rachel turned abruptly to look at me. “Do you have evidence?”

I shook my head. “I don’t have evidence, but I... Stephanie’s phone has a recording of a call with Yasmin. Hasn’t the police retrieved the data?”

Rachel frowned. “Data recovery is complicated. It’s not as simple as you might think. It takes some time.”

I nodded. “Once the phone recording is recovered, Yasmin won’t be able to escape. She knows that.”

Chapter 64

“You know a lot.” Rachel looked at me suspiciously. “What exactly are you planning?”

I said firmly, “I want to make Yasmin and Michael pay for what they’ve done to me.

“Michael has always seen Yasmin as a kind woman, right? Let’s expose Yasmin’s hypocritical mask and reveal her true colors to Michael.”

“We?” Rachel sneered. “How can you be so sure I’ll help you?”

“You will. You know what Stephanie went through in the Ford family. You also know that Yasmin falsely accused her.”

I added confidently, “For the sake of your good friend, you’ll help me.”

“What should we do first?” Rachel compromised as she harbored strong animosity toward Michael and Yasmin.

I passed a note to Rachel. “Stephanie didn’t push Yasmin down the stairs, and Jack witnessed it. They lied. Jack clearly saw that Stephanie wasn’t the one who pushed Yasmin.”

“Jack and Yasmin are on the same boat. Even if he saw it, he wouldn’t tell the truth.” Rachel frowned. “Jack is a coward. Let’s stage a scenario to scare him, and he’ll tell everything. Then, call Michael and Yasmin over.”

I wanted to create a show that would expose Yasmin’s true colors to Michael.

I wanted to gradually ruin their so-called true love. I wanted Yasmin to never get what she wanted. Yasmin and Michael needed to face the consequences they deserved.

“I have to go...”

A few people were searching for someone outside the window. Clearly, they were the bodyguards of the Lincoln family.

I couldn’t be away for too long. The Lincoln family might become suspicious.

Rachel frowned as she asked, “How can I reach you?”

“I’ll contact you.” I stood up, preparing to leave.

“I trust you because you were able to answer my questions, indicating Stephanie’s genuine trust in you...” Rachel’s voice was hoarse.

I nodded. “Wait for my updates.”

Leaving the café, I hailed a taxi and returned to the Lincoln residence. I brought along some baby products.

Chapter

2/2

Ignatius’ expression soured as he stood in the yard. “Where have you been?”

“Grandpa, I was happy, so I went to the shopping mall near the hospital to buy things for my child.

“Although it’s still early, buying baby products in advance symbolizes good luck. It’s my wish for the child to have a safe and smooth birth.”

I smiled, trying to comfort the old man in front of me.

This old man didn't seem like a kind person. I felt uneasy just looking at him.

Ignatius sneered and didn't say much.

"You're now carrying the Lincoln family's child. This child's successful birth is the completion of your mission, understand?"

I quickly nodded obediently. "Grandpa, you're right."

"Alright, go back to your room and rest."

I followed the nanny upstairs, but she led me to a different room. "Aren't we staying together anymore?"

The nanny said disdainfully, "You're pregnant. It might not be safe for you to continue living with that lunatic."

They didn't care much about Steven.

"No matter what, he's still the Lincoln family's scion and the father of my child. Is it fair to criticize him like this?"

"If Mr. Lincoln Senior finds out, he might think you're jinxing the child in my belly. What if my child turns out to be a lunatic too..." I lowered my voice to threaten the nanny.

The nanny's face changed slightly as she quickly lowered her head. "Mrs. Lincoln, you're right."

Passing by Steven's room, I suddenly stopped when I heard sounds of violence and suppression coming from the room.

I turned to the nanny. "What are they doing?"

"That mad... Mr. Steven tried to escape today, but he got caught. Mr. Andy is giving him a lesson." The nanny glanced around cautiously. "Let's go, Mrs. Lincoln. We don't need to intervene."

I felt worried as I recalled the injuries on Steven's body.

I abruptly stopped after taking a few steps. I turned to walk toward the room and forcefully pushed open the door.

Chapter 65

Inside the room, James had given the command for Steven to be beaten up. To put it kindly, he just didn't want Steven to get out and hurt anybody. To put it more directly, he just wanted to let out his anger on Steven.

However, it was obvious that he was holding back and didn't dare to actually kill Steven. After all, the baby in my belly might not be birthed successfully.

I knew that James was just waiting for me to give birth to my baby. Once that happened, he would kill Steven and completely wipe out the so-called black sheep of the Lincoln family.

“What are you doing here?” James asked in a low voice. “Things are getting violent. You should rest up since you’re still pregnant.”

He instructed a helper, “Take her downstairs.”

Steven held his head in his hands, but his gaze was full of hatred and murderous intent.

I knew he would never give in. He wouldn’t give in even if they beat him to death.

“I went to the hospital today, and the doctor said my hormones are imbalanced. I need the father of my child to spend more time with me and comfort me so that my hormone levels can go back to normal. Otherwise, I might have a miscarriage,” I said quietly, looking fearful.

James scoffed coldly. “Is that so?”

The nanny hurriedly nodded. “Yes, I followed Mrs. Lincoln to her appointment.”

The nanny needed James’ protection, and she wouldn’t argue with me over such trivial matters.

James scoffed coldly again and was pushed in his wheelchair next to me. “Dress up properly tonight. You’ve earned some respect after bearing a child for the Lincoln family. Dad wants to introduce you to everyone, so you should go get ready.”

My heart skipped a beat as I turned to look at the nanny.

Softly, she said, “Mr. Lincoln Senior invited all the VIPS in Oceanville because he’s overjoyed by the news. You... You should be on high alert tonight.”

Everyone who was anyone in Oceanville would be attending tonight.

I took a deep breath and nodded. “You can step out first. If Grandpa asks about me, tell him I’m having morning sickness and that my hormones are imbalanced. I need to spend some time with the baby’s father.”

“Is he going to believe that? What if he asks the doctor?” the nanny asked nervously.

“He won’t. Even if he does, it doesn’t matter.” I was pregnant. As long as I wasn’t asking for anything ridiculous, he would say yes.

The nanny nodded and left.

I went back into the room and closed the door. “If the child’s birth is a success, they’ll kill you,” I said quietly.

Steven sat in the corner silently.

He was covered in injuries, and fresh blood was dripping from the corner of his eye.

I took the first aid kit out and helped him clean and dress his injuries. He remained as still as a statue, and even his expression remained the same.

What a lunatic. Couldn’t he feel any pain?

“What do you think? Are you going to be a sitting duck, or are you going to take up my offer to work together?” I asked softly.

“I’ll work with you,” he finally uttered after a long pause.

I looked at the gash next to his eye and sighed. “I’ll let you out the minute I get a chance.”

“No need,” Steven said. “Once James is dead, that old git will let me out.

If James was dead, then Ignatius would need a replacement heir for Lincoln Group.

After all, my baby hadn’t been born yet. If Lincoln Group landed in an outsider’s hands, it would be much harder to get it back.

By then, Steven would have the chance to take the role of the only remaining heir of the Lincoln family.

“A–Are you talking about murder?” I asked without thinking.

Was he about to show his true colors?

Steven’s gaze darkened. “He’s not worth it.”

Steven’s gaze betrayed his disdain. It was as if he was saying that James wasn’t worth getting his hands dirty for.

I was suddenly a bit scared of how different Steven was when he was serious.

He didn’t look like a lunatic anymore. Instead, he seemed like the devil himself.

“What’s your plan?” I wanted to know what he was up to.

“All you need to do is protect yourself,” Steven said, leaving my question unanswered.

I didn’t dare to ask any more questions about it. I was planning to leave after helping him dress all his injuries.

Chapter 66

“Steph,” Steven called out.

“Yes?”

“You’re over it, right?” He stared into my eyes.

Feeling self-conscious, I murmured, “Yeah...”

“Forget about him, Steph. He’s not worth it.” It was a strange thing for Steven to say.

I looked at Steven in panic. Who was he talking about?

If I remembered it correctly, Stephany did have an ex-boyfriend who was also an asshole. He was even worse than Michael. Was Steven talking about him?

I didn’t try to explain and left with my head hanging low.

Steven's gaze was always deep and entrancing like a black hole. I didn't have the guts to look back.

"Mrs. Lincoln, this jewelry and dress is from Mr. James. He said that you have to be the most outstanding person at the party tonight since you're part of the Lincoln family now," the nanny said with an envious expression as she walked into the room with an expensive custom-made gown and some jewelry.

I scoffed coldly. James never had any good intentions. Butter wouldn't melt in his mouth.

I looked closely at the gown and accessories. They were expensive, and just one necklace set cost upward of tens of millions.

I went to the mirror and began to freshen up simply.

"Everyone attending today is a very important figure. You really have to make sure you look your best so that Mr. Lincoln Senior won't be embarrassed," the nanny reminded me.

I knew how huge Ignatius' ego was, so I began to put a bit more effort into my appearance. I put on some makeup and wore the strapless gown that had been prepared for me.

The dress had an extremely low neckline, which only served to accentuate Stephany's already perfect figure.

I looked at my reflection. It honestly didn't seem far-fetched to call myself a modern Venus.

Stephany's beauty couldn't be argued with. She was so stunning that she stood out even in the entertainment industry.

"Beautiful," the nanny couldn't help but utter.

My expression was bitter, though. The extremely low neckline exposed James' real sick intentions.

As expected, men were all animals, even if said man was wheelchair-bound.

Suddenly, a loud bout of applause came from the doorway. I turned to see James clapping from his wheelchair. "Wow, I have to admit Dad has good taste. He never disappoints with his choices. How stunning. Simply breathtaking."

His compliments made me want to throw up.

I looked at him cautiously and smiled. "Thank you for the compliment, Uncle James."

I

I made sure to clarify our relationship so that he would finally get the hint.

Sadly, his heart wasn't in the right place to begin with.

James looked at the nanny and said, "You can leave. I have something to tell her."

The nanny hesitated for a moment, but she didn't dare to object. She left and even closed the door behind her.

I looked at him, still cautious. With a frown, I asked, "What do you have to tell me?"

“Steph, you’re a smart girl. You should know better than anyone who the real heir to the Lincoln family fortune is, right?” James stood up from his wheelchair and approached me.

I stared at him in shock. Wasn’t he handicapped? Could he walk the whole time? What was he doing in

a wheelchair, then? He might as well have just skipped right to lying in a coffin.

“Uncle James, what are you trying to say? I don’t get it.” I stepped back and away from him.

“You don’t deserve to have to be with a lunatic. If only I...” he trailed off and gritted his teeth as his eyes shone evilly. It was as if he was recalling a hateful memory.

James was infertile and weak. That was an ongoing joke among everyone in Oceanville.

I had heard Michael and the others laugh at James before, talking about how the Lincoln family was burdened by the sickly disappointment that was James. He had mistreated his body in his younger years and was now suffering the consequences of it. They joked that he would die because of women

one day.

“Steph, once that kid is born, that lunatic will be useless. Dad doesn’t have any other heirs. I’m the only one left. If you join me, you’ll be able to live out the rest of your days in luxury. Do you understand?” James was no longer trying to hide his true colors and laid everything out on the table.

He reached out in a wicked attempt to grab my dress.

I wanted to dodge his hand, but he caged me against the vanity.

Chapter 67

I had nowhere to run and was forced to go with the flow. “What are you trying to do, Uncle James?”

“It’s such a pity for you to have to stay together with that lunatic,” James said with a chuckle. “We have plenty of time ahead of us. You might as well ditch him and date me instead.”

“But the doctor just told me I’m pregnant. Grandpa really cares about this baby. What if the baby doesn’t make it?” I said with a smile. “That wouldn’t be good, would it, Uncle James? You can wait for a little while longer, right?”

James narrowed his eyes, clearly enjoying my reply.

He reached out and held my chin with one hand. “What a little vixen you are.”

My smile was becoming forced as I tried to hold back my disgust. How could someone like him still be living so brazenly?

“Okay, I have plenty of time. Let’s wait,” he said before leaning in closer with his hand still on my

chin.

I frowned as I tried to dodge him, but that made him annoyed. “What? Not even a kiss? Come on. You can’t lead people on and then act all shy and innocent.”

He was starting to lose his patience, but I was starting to not be able to keep up my facade.

Suddenly, right as I was panicking and at a loss for what to do, I heard a loud crashing noise. I saw that someone had knocked James out with a wooden pole.

I looked at Steven in shock. “H–How did you get out?”

His expression was bitter and dark. His gaze was murderous, and he paid no attention to me. Instead, he lifted the wooden stick again and prepared to swing it down on James’ head. He was trying to kill

him.

“Steven!” I quickly stopped him. “Are you trying to kill him?”

I could sense that Steven was actually aiming to kill.

I started to seriously suspect that he was one of the murderers.

Still, I couldn’t just watch him murder someone in front of me. “Grandpa will kill you if you actually

kill him. Calm down.”

H

Steven’s murderous gaze landed on me, and some of the rage faded from his eyes. “He laid his hands on you. He deserves to die.”

I froze. That sentence seemed so familiar.

Back when I was still a wandering soul, he had said the same thing after viciously beating up the asshole next to Michael.

“If you lay a hand on her, you’re dead.”

Back then, I didn’t know why he would kill someone for me even though we didn’t know each other.

I

So it wasn’t for me but for Stephany

but

“Mrs. Lincoln “The nanny came to call me to go downstairs, Inst when she saw that Steven was out and James was unconscious on the floor, she screamed and ran out
I

My expression became somber as I reached out to grab Steven’s hand pulled him back into the room and said, “Don’t come out I got this

Steven looked at me the wanted to say something, but he only managed to open his mouth.

I shook my head at him and shut the door before standing outside.

Soon enough, Ignatius rushed upstairs with a few bodyguards behind him. “Where’s that little bastard? Find him now!”

“Please calm down, Grandpa,” I said as I quickly approached him and stopped him from going any further.

“Just now, Uncle James tried to assault me. I was worried that something would happen to the baby, so I ran into the room. Steven instinctively acted to protect his child, Thank heavens he was there, or the baby...”

I trailed off as I put my acting skills to good use and began to sob.

Ignatius knew best what kind of person James was, I was betting on the chance that Ignatius cared more about the heir in my belly.

After all, Steven had been a genius before he went insane. Apart from that, James was infamous for being a pervert. If he hadn’t wasted his youth away by sleeping around so much, he might still be fertile and not a failure who couldn’t even make a test-tube baby.

If it wasn’t for James’ recklessness, why would Ignatius have to place all his hopes of having an heir on a lunatic?

Ignatius’ expression darkened. “That monster! Ralph, bring him back and make sure he learns his lesson!”

I let out a sigh of relief. At least I managed to dodge that obstacle.

“Grandpa, who’s going to attend the party tonight?” I asked as I approached him and changed the topic. “Please calm down.”

Chapter 68

“Hmph. Many big names in Huma will show up tonight.” Ignatius scoffed and led me downstairs. He offered, “I’ll introduce you to them later as you’ll be my granddaughter-in-law soon. It’s about time you bear a son for the Lincoln family as well.”

I was aghast at his remark. Why did he need me to produce a son? It wasn't like the Lincolns had a throne to be passed to a male heir.

However, when I considered the Lincolns' wealth and status in Huma, it did seem that they had a significant amount of inheritance to pass on.

"Grandpa..." I put on a look of stress. "Sure, babies conceived naturally are healthy and smart, what if I give birth to a girl?"

but

"You're still young. I have some years left in me as well. Don't worry, you can keep making babies in the next few years until you get a son," Ignatius suggested impassively.

My lips twitched. Did he see Stephany as merely a tool for childbirth?

Anyway, Steven would remain of use to the Lincolns as long as I hadn't produced the male heir that Ignatius so wished to see. I started wishing that I'd give birth to a girl.

"How did Steve... go mad?" I whispered curiously.

"Steve?" Ignatius shot me a glance. I wondered if they addressed him as "Steve" at home.

Suddenly, it struck me that Steve was Steven Lincoln to the Lincolns. "Oh, I mean Steven."

Ignatius explained coldly, "He was a smart kid, even a genius. Too bad he was driven crazy..." After some silence, he looked at me warily. He was reluctant to air the family's dirty laundry.

He added, "Don't worry about that. Just focus on producing an heir. That's the best thing you can do for us."

I nodded obediently. "Sure." Although Ignatius did not reveal anything to me, I assumed that Steven's current condition had everything to do with the Lincoln family.

"But Grandpa, I'm quite scared. There are rumors out there that Steven is a killer... A serial killer who targets women. Even the maids at home are gossiping about it. Is that true?"

"The doctor advised me to spend more time with the baby's father, but I'm afraid that he'll..." I put on an act to gauge Ignatius' response.

"Oh, he might be crazy, but he's no killer. Take my word for it. The rumors are baseless. For the safety of you and your child, you should keep a distance from him, though," replied Ignatius, who sounded confident that Steven was not a murderer.

If so, why was he at the crime scene, and what was he doing there? How was he connected to the murderer?

Ignatius had invited many big names in the business world to the Lincolns' dinner party. The Fords, just second to the Lincolns in power, were naturally present at the event.

However, I was surprised to see Michael showing up alone. Did he really treasure Yasmin so much that he'd rather keep her tucked away at home during her pregnancy?

"Mr. Ignatius, is this your precious granddaughter-in-law?" a guest greeted Ignatius with a smile.

Ignatius looked cheerful. The Lincolns had been regarded as a success in business but were rumored to be heirless. He'd, of course, take the opportunity to introduce me to everyone at the party.

"This is Stephany, my granddaughter-in-law. She's also the daughter of John Larson of Larson Group," Ignatius introduced me to everyone with a smile, attracting looks of surprise from the guests.

Those who were in the know would understand that I was nothing more than a baby maker that the Larsons gave away to the Lincolns. No family in their right mind would marry their daughter to a madman or a psycho killer.

Michael's gaze landed on me. Looking irked, he interjected, "Mr. Ignatius, I see that your granddaughter-in-law is here. What about your grandson?"

It was a hostile question that stemmed from his deep resentment for Steven.

Hah. What a ridiculous man!

Ignatius' expression crumbled. He was about to speak when his assistant rushed over in a panic, saying, "Mr. Ford, something has happened to Mrs. Ford! According to the police, she has been taken by the murderer."

Chapter 69

Michael's expression fell. He frowned at Ignatius and remarked, "Can't the Lincolns even keep an eye over a madman?"

Ignatius looked riled as well. Still, he couldn't refute it because firstly, the Fords were an established family in Huma. Besides, Steven was clearly a suspected criminal and a madman, a stain on the Lincoln family name that they desperately wanted to get rid of.

"Watch your attitude." I stood beside Ignatius and addressed Michael sternly. "Who are you calling a madman?"

Michael fixed a scorching and furious gaze on me. I didn't want to be around him for long, but I felt obliged to speak up for Steven and the Lincoln family.

"Are you the fiancée of that crazy man?" Michael confronted me. "Where is he now?"

"Why do you seem more concerned about my husband than your wife?" I frowned at Michael, feeling disgusted just by talking to him.

Sparing no time to argue with me, he cast me a knowing look and remarked, "No matter how

desperate the Larsons are, they shouldn't send their daughter to hell. Watch out for that madman, or you might end up getting badly hurt."

With that, he turned to leave.

I stood there with a frown and stared at Michael's figure. Then, I cast a quick look upstairs. Steven was at home, that was for sure. If so, who took Yasmin away?

Steven had admitted to his guilt when my body was discovered. Why did someone else emerge at this point? Was it an open provocation of the police?

I mused silently, "Is Steven the killer? Or is he a conspirator?"

"Ignore that Ford kid. He's brash and rude." Ignatius snorted and proceeded to introduce me to the others.

However, I felt rather distracted and unwell. I excused myself, "Grandpa, I feel tired."

Ignatius might not care about my health, but he was concerned about the well-being of his future grandchild. He relented. "Fine. Go upstairs and have a rest."

I nodded and made my way upstairs, only to be stopped by a woman. Young and good-looking, looked like the daughter of a wealthy family.

she

"Hah, Stephany Larson, you're really something. How did you transform yourself into Mrs. Larson in just a few days?" the woman confronted me with hostility and even shoved me.

I knitted my brows together and looked at the woman, finally recognizing her as Lena Ziegler. In Stephany's memories, Lena was her bully in school.

Lena had led the other classmates to gang up against her. Misfortune befell the Larsons because of the competition between the Zieglers and the Larsons.

As John Larson was less capable than his competitor and was tricked into signing a bet on agreement, he struggled with capital chain rupture. That led him to give his company away

bi

"Do you really think you can climb the social ladder by marrying an idiot from the Lincoln family? You should take a look at yourself in the mirror. You'll always be beneath me," taunted Lena with a smirk as she looked at me tauntingly.

18 years ago, I was a princess to my parents before they passed on. My classmates were friendly and caring, and the world seemed perfect.

After my parents died in a car crash, I was sent to live with the Larsons. That was where I had my first taste of what it felt like to live with a foster family. I kept quiet when I was bullied because I didn't

want trouble for the Larsons.

Nonetheless, I had lost my life once because of my cowardice. If I remained as cowardly after my rebirth, I might as well stay a spirit.

“Who are you calling an idiot?” I feigned a shocked expression and stared at Lena.

“Are you saying that Steven Lincoln is an idiot? Gosh, that’s pretty ignorant of you

“Steven Lincoln was once regarded as a genius. Don’t you know that he enrolled in advanced classes at the age of ten?”

Hearing that, Lena chuckled sarcastically. “How pathetic of you to bring up these useless facts from years ago! Everyone in Huma knows that Steven Lincoln, an illegitimate child who grew up in an orphanage, is a murderous madman.”

Looking astonished, I spun around and yelled out to Ignatius, “Grandpa, Lena is starting rumors of Steven, calling him a murderous madman!”

Chapter 70

There were so many guests around. In a flash, Ignatius became extremely upset.

the Ford family.

He was already embarrassed by the scene that Michael caused. However, he was from the after all. The Ziegler family was not up to their level.

“I see that any Tom, Dick, or Harry dares to bark at the Lincoln family now?” Ignatius chided.

Lena was trembling in fear. She looked at me in shock. She looked like she was shooting laser beams from her eyes.

“Stephany, you set me up... Mr. Ignatius, it wasn’t me... It was Stephany. She...”

“Grandpa, Lexy has been listening,” I said as I looked at the nanny, who was standing by the side.

She nodded. “Yes.”

Lena was in fear. “Mr. Ignatius... 1...”

“Where is this lady from?” Ignatius asked in a deep voice.

“She’s from the Ziegler family,” his assistant answered.

“Moving forward, the Zieglers are not allowed to attend any events related to the Lincoln family. They should first educate their own daughter. It’s only after that can they associate themselves with my family again.”

Ignatius’ voice was deep. He was taking this opportunity to give out a warning.

“Please leave.”

I gave Lena a mocking look. Recently, Ignatius had been filled with pent-up anger. She happened to be oblivious and ended up triggering him.

Lena was completely freaking out now. She came to her senses after a while. She looked at me in astonishment. "Stephany, you... You did that on purpose? How dare you!"

She was about to hit me when she was stopped by the Lincoln family's bodyguard. "Miss, you're not welcome at the Lincolns' family dinner. Please leave."

She kept staring at me. It seemed as if she was going to burn a hole through me with her gaze.

Stephany used to be submissive. She wouldn't say a word to anyone no matter what happened. Lena must be feeling confused as to why she had suddenly changed.

I glared at her provocatively. Then, I went upstairs. It felt good to have someone backing me up.

However, the Lincolns weren't backing me up. It was the baby that I was carrying.

Ignatius had to entertain the guests. I gave an excuse saying that I wasn't feeling well and needed to rest. I retreated to my room and sent the nanny away.

From the window upstairs, I glanced down. There was no one else outside. I took this opportunity to change into a different set of clothing and climbed down.

"Hi Rach, it's me." I ran out from the Lincolns' home and called Rachel.

Rachel stayed silent for a while before she said. "We're not that close. You can call me Rachel instead."

I acknowledged her request pretentiously. "Ms. Rachel, I heard that Yasmin was abducted by the murderer. Is that true?"

"It's not," Rachel answered unhappily.

I raised my eyebrow. This was similar to my theory. I had guessed that Yasmin was the one who staged the incident. She just wanted to make Michael worry for her.

"So, I suppose that couple is playing house, aren't they?" I remarked in a low voice.

"Yasmin acts well. When she regained consciousness at the orphanage, she said that someone abducted her. The cops didn't expose her either.

"Steve is under control, so she thinks that she's safe. Zion has said that it's highly unlikely that Steve is the murderer. She's just playing with fire. It would be her own fault if she ends up burning herself."

Rachel wished that Yasmin could get rid of the murderer as soon as possible. She wanted the murderer to be gone.

"Let's not talk about Yasmin and Michael for now. Have you found where Jack Brown is?" I squinted. I thought of tackling the matter with Jack as a starting point.

“He’s at the bar. Where else could he be?” Rachel snorted. “I’m here, watching him. Do you want to come over?”

“Of

cab.

course. Tonight... I’m going to scare him out of his wits!” I gritted my teeth and flagged down at

One by one, I would teach them a lesson. Jack would be the first!