

After Death 661

Chapter 661

"Yes, a heavy rainstorm came through, Michael said, reaching his hand toward me. "The flowers outside are in full bloom, and the air is especially fresh today.'

I took his hand and got out of bed, walking out to the balcony from the bedroom. The villa was located on top of the mountains, offering fresh air and a perfect view of the entire mountain in sight.

"When did we move here?" My mind was still in a state of confusion. I remembered moving in a while ago, yet I had a feeling that I was forgetting something.

Michael replied, "Just a few days ago. Are you still not used to it?"

I shook my head.

For some reason, I liked it here very much.

"Mom, Dad, Stevie escaped!" The kids were shouting for us from the door.

I quickly walked out. Ashton was anxiously telling me that Stevie had escaped.

I comforted him, 'Don't be anxious. Stevie is very smart. He'll come back on his own.'

Ashton stood in the hallway, looking at me with reddening eyes. "What if Stevie never comes back?"

There was an inexplicable pang in my heart. I smiled as I reassured him, "He will."

Soon enough, we heard Stevie's barks. I chuckled and ruffled Ashton's hair. "Isn't he back now?"

For some reason, there were still tears in his eyes. He turned and ran away without even looking at Michael." This child'

"It's normal for their personalities to be somewhat reserved. They were adopted from the orphanage, after all. Ashton is rather lively, but Xan doesn't really say much," Michael explained.

Inodded. The voice inside my memory was telling me that both Ashton and Xan were adopted.

However, I kept feeling that there was a cloudy veil in my mind.

"Where's Ms. Ewing?" I subconsciously asked.

Michael was momentarily stunned. He looked at me for a moment before replying, "Ms. Ewing? My mom passed away in a car accident a few days ago. So, she decided to return to her hometown."

I covered my mouth, looking at him in shock. 'Aunt Lois... passed away?"

Michael nodded and hugged me. "You're a bit overwhelmed with sadness right now, but you'll feel better soon.

"That's so sudden... She was just fine..." I mumbled.

What exactly was happening?

"I feel as if I had a long, long dream, Michael. I seemed to have died once in my dream... There was someone named Yasmin by your side..."

Michael chuckled and replied, "Your dream is so vivid. I think I do have an acquaintance named Yasmin, but we haven't really interacted much."

I stared at him dumbly. Did that never happen at all?

He said, "Alright, my mom's car accident must've reminded you of the one your parents got into back then, and that's why you're overwhelmed with sadness now. It's normal that your memories are jumbled up given that you still have some brain hemorrhage.

"I've got your favorite dishes ready. Let's go downstairs and eat." Michael took my hand and brought me downstairs.

He was treating me well and seemed to love me a lot. There was no Yasmin or other complications coming

between us. We even adopted two children and a dog.

Even though this warm and happy scene suggested that I was living a happy life, why did I still feel an emptiness in my heart?

It felt like I was living in a dream created by someone else, and my dreamweaver did not include themselves in the story.

"Wait..." As we went downstairs, I caught a glimpse of my face in the reflection of the glass. For some reason, my chest tightened suddenly. I hurriedly turned and rushed into the bathroom.

I stared at my own reflection in the bathroom in shock.

That was right. It was still me. This was still my-Stephanie Carlson's-face. It was the same, blemishless face. "Stephie." Michael worriedly hugged me from behind. 'Are you feeling scared again, Stephie? You were abducted and trapped in a glass cabinet by a killer a year ago. You were already on the brink of death when we found you.

"You've been in and out of unconscious since then, and you only regained consciousness fully a few days ago. You'd sleep for an unusually long time. And when you do wake up, you'd forget about what happened the day before. You'd even confuse dreams with reality.'

Michael softly explained, "You're struggling with some serious mental health issues, Stephie. That's why I brought you over to the villa in the mountains."

I looked at Michael, shocked.

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My head hurt so much.

My reflection in the mirror did look unusually pale, as if I was just recovering from an illness.

Scenes flashed through my mind-killer, rainy night, getting abducted by the killer, glass cabinet.

"Yes. I was abducted..."

"Stephie?"

My head hurt so bad. I subconsciously reached to touch my neck.

For some reason, I felt that there should be a scar there, but nothing was there on my smooth neck.

What exactly was going on with me?

"The funeral for the sir and madam is scheduled for tomorrow afternoon, Mr. Ford. Everything has been arranged," the butler quietly said.

I stared at Michael in shock.

His eyes reddened as he replied, "My dad... had cancer. He passed away in the sanatorium a while ago. My mom was overwhelmed with grief and was met with a car accident."

I continued to look at him, slow to process his words. He lost both his parents in just a few days.

Even though Michael lost both his parents, why couldn't I feel much sadness from him? Wasn't he upset? In my memories, Aunt Lois was incredibly fond of him, always showing him attention and care. "Don't be too upset," I comforted softly, trying to hug him.

"This all will pass. From now onward, this is our home," Michael whispered.

I nodded in reply.

While heading downstairs, Michael and I found Xan sitting on the couch watching TV. The latest news was playing on the screen.

The headlines were glaring "Mastermind of Serial Murder Cases Revealed: The True Culprit Is a Woman" and "Stephany Larson, Mastermind of Serial Murder Cases, Captured And Committed Suicide with Husband, Steven Lincoln."

I stood in place as I watched the news. A photo of Stephany Larson was shown on TV.

My heartbeat started racing out of nowhere as I stared at the screen.

"Stephany Larson Steven Lincoln..." I mumbled, repeating the two names.

"You shouldn't watch this kind of news, Xan. Your mom will feel afraid." Upon hearing the commotion, Michael hurried over and turned off the TV. He frowned at Xan, warning her.

She remained silent as she continued playing with her Rubik's cube.

Michael looked at me, concerned. "It's alright now, Stephie. The killer who abducted you back then- Stephany Larson- has now been caught. Her adoptive parents were human traffickers who targeted beautiful young women. You're the luckiest one to have survived it."

I leaned against him, trembling in his arms.

"Steven Lincoln, that's him. I remember him... I was abducted and trapped inside a house. He was holding an axe... I've seen him before. He's a killer."

It was undoubtedly him. He was finally caught.

It turned out that he was only an accomplice, and the mastermind was actually a woman named Stephany Larson.

"It's alright now, Stephie. Everything is fine now. It'll all get better. Now that you've regained consciousness, our days will only be filled with happiness from now on," Michael comforted me repeatedly.

I finally calmed down. Laying on his shoulders, I looked out the door.

Ashton and the wolfhound named Stevie were at the entrance. They were both watching me with a complicated gaze.

For some reason, I could see the profound sadness in the eyes of a dog and a child.

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"When did we move to live in the mountains?' It felt like everything around me was unusually unfamiliar, as if I was still living in a dream now.

"We moved a while ago. You were unconscious for a long time," Michael said, taking my hand.

I looked down at his hand. For some reason, I had the feeling that his hand shouldn't be this smooth and unblemished but littered with burn marks and scars

Surprised by my own thoughts, I subconsciously flinched away from Michael's hand. He looked at me with hurt, but it was fleeting.

"Let's go out for a walk, Stephie." He brought me out.

"Did Rachel... contact me?" I asked Michael upon remembering Rachel.

He nodded. "She did. When you got abducted, she helped me and the police look for you. She truly cares for you, Stephie. She's genuine to you.'

After a moment of silence, Michael continued, "She became a coroner because of you. But her work is getting more demanding now, so she might not be able to visit you as often."

I nodded in reply. She would surely be busier as a coroner.

"Do you want to go out for a walk?" he asked again when he noticed that I wasn't planning to leave.

I shook my head.

I was fearful of the sunlight outside for some reason. I kept feeling that everything was unreal-that I was still living in a dream.

"I'll stay at home with you then, Stephie. Michael was about to hug me, yet I instinctively pulled away and resisted him.

I was surprised by my own actions.

Michael and I were not that close, right?

"Did we really adopt the two kids together, Michael? What kind of relationship do we have now?" My mind was blank, and I felt as if I had forgotten something important.

Michael said, 'We're already planning to register our marriage, Stephie. I admit I wasn't really kind to you before this-I've always been suppressing my feelings for you. But when something happened to you, it made me realize that I really do love you.

"You're the only one I love, and I want to do everything I can to make it up to you and win you back. I've been staying by your side constantly during this time, and you gradually accepted me back, finally agreeing to my proposal.'

He poured some water for me and handed me some pills. "It's time for your medications, Stephie.'

I stared at the pills, asking, "What are these pills? I feel fine right now."

I didn't want to take the medications.

"Be good, Stephie. You suffered serious injuries and are still in the recovery period. You also need treatment for your memory issues. These are the medications for nerve care and memory recovery," Michael coaxed me to take the pills.

I felt resistant and refused to take them.

"You have to listen to the doctor, or you'll forget things and lose control of your emotions. You even hurt me and the kids that day," Michael said softly. He wasn't blaming me; it sounded more like a plea.

I looked at him, somewhat shocked. Did I lose control without even noticing?

I took the pills from his hands and swallowed them.

Soon enough, my emotions seemed to be suppressed and I calmed down entirely. There was no extra time or space for me to think about anything else.

Michael took my hand. I seemed to have no energy to pull it out despite my resistance

"Do you want to eat cotton candy, Mom?" Ashton ran in from the outside, a cotton candy in his hand.

There was a jolt in my mind, and fragments of memories flashed in my mind.

I saw a tall figure getting out of the car to buy me some cotton candy.

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"I bought this for my wife. Go buy them yourself if you want some as well... You'll end up with rotten teeth if you have more..." that person seemed to say.

I stood in a daze as I held onto the cotton candy. Why couldn't I make out the face of the person in my memory anymore?

Were those my warm memories with Michael? Why did I feel that it wasn't him?

"The police have solved multiple missing persons cases and discovered the mastermind to be a mad experimental base hidden in a desolate area. Whether it's a distortion of human nature or the decaying of morality, the exposure of this experimental base has shocked the entire society."

Ashton turned on the TV and was listening to the news again.

Down the mountain, it seemed everything had changed. The exposure of Genome Society was like a large tree being uprooted, leaving a tangled mess in its wake.

People started protesting online and condemning such actions.

"On May 24, 2046, the government issued a new decree banning all sorts of human genome editing experiments. It prohibits all sorts of genetic modification on human embryos for reproduction, experimentation, and other inhumane practices.

"Cloning human embryos are also strictly prohibited, along with-

Ashton sat on the ground while Stevie sat obediently beside him. They were watching and listening to the reports on genome editing and genetic experiments one after another.

The 'deaths' of Stephany Larson and Steven Lincoln were like a bomb, causing ripples everywhere. And now, the misdeeds and corruptions of Genome Society were finally coming to light.

Someone had single-handedly ripped away Genome Society's cover, exposing their profit-driven activities like genome modification, transplant of edited organs, and human trafficking to the public.

They would soon have nowhere to hide with the government taking action.

"Some people are just like geckos. Even if they're cut down, they'll still manage to come back," Ashton mumbled in front of the TV.

I was somewhat surprised to find that even a child would be interested in watching news about societal issues.

"What's wrong with society? They're prohibiting genome editing now?" I asked, confused.

Michael seemed to be into it as well, staring at the news. His voice was hoarse when he said, "When we see one cockroach around, that means there are already countless around."

I said nothing and continued to watch the news.

"An 18-year-old young woman went missing for 20 years, only to be found preserved in a cryogenic chamber. The crimes of Genome Society go far beyond this-the exposed experiments are shocking and have rippled across the world."

Media reporters were conducting interviews at the laboratory site discovered in the desolate area. But they weren't allowed entry due to restrictions.

However, the limited information revealed was enough to shock the entire society.

"Eight genetically superior victims were used as breeding tools to produce the best possible genetic specimens. Only four were still alive when found, and they were already suffering severe mental issues. What the media could report was incredibly limited. The true horrors of Genome Society were those unimaginable and terrifying experiments that couldn't be fully reported as they would certainly cause widespread panic.

"I thought these things would only happen in foreign countries," I whispered.

"They are happening in foreign countries, but their authorities are involved. That's why they've managed to keep things under a tight wrap," Michael explained.

I nodded my head, saying, "That's so scary. Let's not go out that often in the future. There are dangers lurking everywhere."

Michael nodded and smiled as he held my hands tight. "Alright, I'll protect you and the kids."

I looked down at his hands. I started to hallucinate for some reason.

I seemed to be seeing a pair of scarred hands holding my own tightly, but they still looked beautiful despite the scars.

The person said, "Live your life untainted, Stephie. Leave the dirty work to me."

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"The weather's perfect today, Stephie. How about we register our marriage today, just like you've promised me?" Michael seemed eager to register our marriage.

I looked at him for a moment, feeling inexplicably resistant. "I keep feeling that my mind's a mess right now. How about we head down to meet up with our friends first, and we'll talk about it later?"

I suggested going down the mountain, looking at him.

"Stephie... Michael subconsciously held my hand tight. "It's not safe to head down the mountain.

"You've seen what's happening with the exposure of Genome Society-everything is still unsettled and everyone's fearful. It's quieter and safer up in the mountains.

"Your memory hasn't fully recovered yet, so it's normal for your mind to be a mess. I'll stay here with all of you, and we can head back down after a while, okay?" he said, seeming a little nervous.

I nodded before leaning back against the couch.

"Steven," I instinctively called out a name.

I did it subconsciously. Who was Steven?

Michael evidently stiffened before turning to me, his gaze wavering. "Are you calling for Stevie, Stephie?" Stevie turned to look at me and gave me a bark.

I rubbed my temple. Why would I call out for "Steven"? Was it supposed to be Stevie?

"Why do I keep thinking about someone who's supposed to stay by my side?" I mumbled.

"It's your PTSD, Stephie. The doctor said that your mind created a person to stay by your side and protect you when you were scared and anxious, but this person doesn't exist in reality," Michael patiently explained. I nodded, somewhat getting what he meant.

Feeling tired, I got up and looked at Ashton and Xan. I told Michael, 'You should stay and play with the kids for a bit. I'm sleepy, so I'll head to sleep first.'

I drifted off into a deep sleep as soon as I returned to my room.

I dreamed of a vast lawn with flowers, forest, sunshine, and a flowing stream.

Ashton and Xan were running freely while playing with kites under the sun. Stevie was running with them

too.

I smiled softly as I sat on the lawn. Time seemed to stand still, and everything seemed so beautiful.

There was a man by my side. I couldn't make out his face clearly in the dream, but he was holding my hand.

In the dream, my gaze remained focused on his hand that was tightly holding mine. It was a hand covered in

scars.

Everything felt so blurry, yet that hand was oddly clear.

"Steven," I called out instinctively again.

The sky was dark by the time I woke up. Michael entered the room holding a glass of water and some pills." It's time for your medicine, Stephie."

I looked at the pills in his hands and swallowed them without a second thought.

"I've got some work to take care of at the office, Stephie. You can get some rest at home. Good night. Michael kissed my forehead before he got up and left.

Those pills made me sleepy. I felt drowsy all day long. Even though I just woke up, I quickly became tired again after taking the medicine.

I suppressed my drowsiness and sat up. I didn't feel like sleeping for some reason.

I wanted to look at the sky.

I walked to the balcony on the second floor and stood there watching the sky. The sky was covered with dark clouds, completely blocking the stars.

Suddenly, I heard some noises coming from the courtyard. I warily glanced over.

Michael's car had already left the villa, speeding away down the winding mountain road. I headed downstairs with a flashlight, finding the villa eerie and unsettling for some reason.

"Who's there?" I walked out to the courtyard and stared at a corner. There was no answer.

Ashton and Xan were already asleep. The courtyard was eerily silent.

Suddenly, a figure emerged, covered in blood and dressed in torn clothes. It was evident that they had just escaped from somewhere. "Don't take those medicines, miss! Don't take them! They're trying to change you! Don't believe in any of them-don't trust them!"

The person madly clutched at my hands, yelling out strange things.

I was startled and backed off in fear. I could only make out the person's face after I calmed down. "Ms. Ewing?" Ms. Ewing stumbled onto the ground and looked at me intently. "They're trying to change you, miss. You're no longer yourself. Please don't let them get away with this. Don't take those pills."

Stevie ran out upon hearing the commotion and started barking. The next moment, the bodyguards rushed in and took her away.

Chapter 666

I stared in shock at Michael, who had just returned. "Isn't she Ms. Ewing?"

He rushed toward me and pulled me into his embrace. "It's all my fault, Stephie. Ms. Ewing couldn't take it and lost her mind. I'll take care of it. Just listen to me."

Stunned, I watched them drag Ms. Ewing away. She lost her mind?

She asked me not to take the medicine because they were changing me? What did that mean?

"Go to the basement," Ms. Ewing mouthed those words to me before she was dragged into a car.

She asked me to go to the basement.

I stood numbly in place. I couldn't register any of Michael's comforting words in my mind.

What kind of secret was hidden in the basement?

"Go back to sleep, Stephanie." Michael took my hand and led me back to the living room. He only left after seeing me head upstairs.

I stood on the balcony, watching his car drive away into the distance once again.

Was Ms. Ewing's escape the work he had to take care of at the office?

I felt confused. Why did I feel that everything and everyone around me was fake, as if everything in my life was a lie?

I carefully went down to the basement after finding the flashlight.

There were three levels to the basement. I didn't know which level Ms. Ewing wanted me to go to. So, I decided to head straight to the third level, making my way up level by level.

The basement was dimly lit. I couldn't tell if it was because of the old wiring or if someone had deliberately cut the power, leaving it pitch-black.

Suddenly, something scurried past my feet. Without thinking I lifted my foot and crushed the scurrying rat beneath.

I felt numb both physically and mentally.

I looked down at the lifeless rat on the ground and took a deep breath. I backed away in fear and bumped into a cabinet as reality sat in.

Did I just kill a rat emotionlessly?

I knocked into something on the cabinet, and a box fell onto the ground. Its contents were scattered out, containing some books, old photos, and also some handwritten notes.

I crouched down and looked at the photos on the ground. Among them was an old photo with a woman who looked a lot like me. The man looked familiar as well.

They were taking a commemorative photo on the mountain, looking happy as the young man hugged the

woman

I turned the photo over and saw the delicate handwriting behind it. It said, "A memento of Sarah Leigh and Andy Lincoln."

Sarah Leigh... Andy Lincoln...

My head hurt so bad. For some reason, I found those two names familiar.

I flipped through the photos on the ground. They were mostly photos of Andy and Sarah, as well as photos of only Sarah alone.

The handwritten notes showed a young woman's innocent hopes for love and her dreams for the future.

In the letters, this young woman named Sarah was filled with dreams and hopes as she described their future

to her lover. She mentioned Andy in nearly every paragraph.

She wrote, "Meeting you is the luckiest thing that has ever happened to me. I want to marry you and start a family together."

Sarah probably wasn't the most skilled in literacy her letters weren't the most moving, yet they were sincere. Her words expressed her joy and dreams.

She wrote, "I want to bear your children. I like daughters. What about you?"

There was Andy's reply in the letter. He wrote, "I want a son. Even though I don't mind having either, I need to have a son to get my father off my back."

He also wrote, "I'm hiding you here. Listen to me and don't go anywhere. I'll take you home once I deal with the problems."

It wasn't hard to tell that the two of them initially loved each other. But the tone of Sarah's handwritten notes gradually changed, and her words grew hostile.

She wrote, "I want to kill you so that you'll stay with me forever."

Chapter 667

They gradually stopped exchanging handwritten letters.

I flipped through the contents of the box, but I couldn't find any other letters between the two of them. Everything else in the basement seemed to have gradually lost any traces of Sarah's presence.

That meant that she had disappeared in this villa while waiting for Andy.

The basement was filled with the things Sarah had used-even the cosmetics from the past era that had been used a little and then left to dry up in their bottles over time.

I carefully looked around the basement. It was eerily huge as the villa itself was huge. I was currently three levels down the basement. It felt spacious and terrifying.

I saw another box at a corner no further away. Upon opening it, I took a glance and recognized the person in the photo-it was Ms. Ewing when she was younger.

She wasn't pretty when she was younger. There was a total of three people in the photo-Sarah, Andy, and Ms. Ewing.

She was smiling at the camera, standing behind the two of them. I could tell that she was rather young back then-around her late teens. She was probably one of the household staff in this villa.

As compared to Ms. Ewing, Sarah was simply breathtaking in the photo. In a time when beauty filters did not exist, she was truly stunning in this old photo.

There were some daily necessities and a diary in Ms. Ewing's box. The early entries were filled with everyday details, but the only highlight was her envy of Sarah and Andy's relationship.

Ms. Ewing wrote, "Mr. Lincoln truly pampers Ms. Leigh a lot. He buys her an entire wardrobe of expensive clothes just for her. He even gifted her the expensive cosmetics and jewelry that I've only seen on TV.

"He also makes sure to get the finest ingredients delivered daily. The life of a wealthy wife is truly enviable." She also wrote, "Mr. Lincoln is such a fine man. Ms. Leigh has been staying here for

over half a year now, and he's only here to keep her company. Not once did he ever do something else. He said he'd only get intimate with Ms. Leigh after their marriage.

"It's really rare to find someone like him. I'm not even sure what I could do to find someone like Mr. Lincoln." At the end of the diary, Ms. Ewing wrote, 'Ms. Leigh has disappeared. She probably left the villa in a fit of anger. Mr. Lincoln treats her so well, yet she still ran away. She even told me to run and not to trust anyone. She told me that there were evil spirits here. She must have lost her mind!'"

Chills ran down my spine after reading it. Was this villa haunted?

Suddenly, I heard a crunching noise coming from behind me. Alerted, I stood up and shone my flashlight over in that direction.

A shadow flashed by, emitting a strange noise

My chest tightened as I slowly moved over. Fear began to spread within me, and it felt oddly unsettling.

"I'm scared, Steven!" Instinctively screamed for Steven when the light hit the wall and an eerie shadow appeared.

But I immediately calmed down as soon as I screamed.

Who exactly was Steven?

"Who's there?" I warily asked the shadow hiding in the corner.

The figure did not reply to me but continued to make a crunching noise.

I braved myself and walked over, nearly vomiting in disgust. Crouched in the corner was a woman dressed in

a filthy nightgown with messy hair. She was eating a rat raw.

"Who are you?" I asked tentatively.

She suddenly froze, turning over eerily and staring right at me.

Upon seeing me, she lunged at me as if crazed. "Die! All of you should die!"

She knocked me into the ground, and I hit my head hard.

I could make out her face under the dim lights. Time hadn't left too much of its marks on her face. I figured that she was Sarah Leigh-the original owner of this villa.

Why was she living such a bizarre life in the basement?

Chapter 688

I glanced at Sarah's clothes. Although they were dirty, there were still parts that were clean.

I pushed her away and saw that there was a bowl with remnants of food at the corner where she was crouching. Someone must have been keeping her hidden down here all this while.

"All of you deserve to die... You're not me-not me. Die! Die!" she started mumbling as if she had lost her mind." Not me... You're not me. I'm the only one... only one..."

I looked at Sarah and realized that she wasn't very aggressive. She got frightened and retreated back to her corner when I stood up. I could tell that she had completely lost her mind.

"Why are you here?" I asked.

Sarah looked at me and started smiling suddenly. 'Kill them all... All of you, go kill them all.'

I frowned, unable to understand her babbling.

She continued, "Oh, Andy loves me. If he doesn't, he should die.'

"Stephie!" Michael's anxious shout came from upstairs. He was looking for me.

It seemed like he wasn't familiar with this villa. Despite me calling out for him down here, he did not come

down to the basement immediately. It took him a while to come down with other people.

"Stephie!" Michael hurriedly hugged me. 'Don't wander around. This villa is just too dangerous.

"Who is she?" I asked him.

Michael and his bodyguards almost screamed out of shock. Clearly, he did not know who Sarah was.

"She's the person we're looking for-Sarah Leigh."

Zion and Eason came down from the stairs.

"It seems like Angel was telling the truth. Sarah escaped from the laboratory years ago and has been hiding in the basement of this villa ever since. Angel has been coming in regularly to provide her food."

"How did she manage to escape?" Zion asked, curious. "Even though the laboratory might not be impenetrable, it's incredibly difficult to escape alive."

Eason replied, 'Angel is part of the Rebels. She said that the Rebels rescued Sarah many years ago.'

I looked at Zion and Eason, feeling confused. I felt that they were familiar. I seemed to know them, but I just couldn't remember anything.

"Oh, you're even treating Una like she's Stephanie now?' Eason asked sarcastically.

Michael did not reply to him. He hugged me tightly in his embrace, as if afraid of something.

"She's the only one from the group of missing persons who escaped alive, though she seems to have lost her sanity. "Eason walked over to examine Sarah closely. "What kind of advanced techniques did they use on her? She looks like she's in her 30s."

Sarah looked well-maintained.

"She hasn't seen the sunlight for years, and oxidation is slow in a controlled environment. That must be the reason her aging process slowed down,' Zion said, checking the time. "We'll bring her back for now. We haven't found Steven yet, so we need to stay cautious."

"They say that he's dead. There's no survivor from the explosion in Daisy's laboratory, so perhaps..." Eason's tone was tinged with sadness.

"No, he wouldn't die," Zion said, refusing to accept the reality of Steven's death.

"Stephany is his everything. You've seen the way he would risk everything to protect her. But we've found Stephany's body, and the DNA results confirm that it's her-she's dead! So, how could Steven still be alive?" Eason looked as if he was venting his frustration.

"I won't believe that he's dead unless I see his body. 'Zion then instructed someone to take Sarah away.

He glanced at me as he walked past before telling Michael, 'She's also a clone subject. We'll need to get her cooperation and have her do a genetic test with Sarah'

"Steven... " I grabbed Zion's wrist before he could leave. "Who's Steven?"

Michael started panicking and hugged me instinctively. "He's nobody, Stephie. There's no one with that name. You must be tired. Let's go back to rest."

Zion frowned before turning to look at Michael suspiciously. "Isn't she Una, Michael?"

Chapter 669

Michael frowned as he looked at Zion and Eason. He said, "She's Una."

I was perplexed. Una? Wasn't I Stephanie?

Eason coldly chuckled before leaving with Zion. The basement fell deathly silent once everyone left.

"Listen to me, Stephie. Don't tell anyone else that you're Stephanie Carlson from now onward,' Michael said, looking at me anxiously. "If someone asks, you tell them that you're Una and you don't have any other memories. Just tell them you don't know no matter what they ask you."

"Why?" I looked at him, confused.

"There are too many people out there who might be from Genome Society. It might even be someone around us. Don't trust anyone else other than me." Michael held my hand tightly.

His gaze grew even more anxious under the dim lights. "From now onward, you can't live as Stephanie anymore. You have to go by Una-because Stephanie Carlson is already dead to the public."

I looked at Michael in shock. Stephanie Carlson was already dead? But why, when I was clearly still alive?

"Don't ask me why, don't leave me, and don't go down the mountains. We can live with the kids together in the mountains, okay?" He took my hand and led me up.

I watched his back, saying nothing.

Before going to sleep, Michael handed me some more medicine. I was perplexed. Didn't I just take them? Why did I have to take them again?

"They'll help with your sleep," he softly coaxed.

"Let's sleep together, Stephie. I'll stay by your side, so don't be afraid." He wanted to sleep with me.

I looked at the medicine and fell silent. I shook my head and replied, "I want to sleep alone."

Michael looked somewhat hurt. "I'm worried that you might feel afraid in the night, Stephie."

I took the pills and put them into my mouth before taking a sip of water. 'I'm sorry, I'm still not used to sleeping with you.'

Michael was taken aback. Indeed, he had never spent the night with Stephanie before this. He would always leave whenever he was done with her, telling her disdainfully that he felt disgusted seeing her.

"I'm sorry," he said hoarsely before getting up and leaving in a hurry.

The person who had the hardest time accepting the past was actually Michael.

As soon as he left, I ran into the bathroom and spat out the pills.

What would happen if I didn't take these pills?

After rinsing my mouth, I sat in the bathroom for the longest time.

The woman who was mentally ill... Ms. Ewing, who suddenly showed up and warned me from taking the medications and not to trust anyone...

And also Steven, whom I had no recollection of in my mind.

What exactly had happened?

"Mom?" The door opened quietly, and Ashton's head popped out to look at me.

I walked out of the bathroom and looked at him. I asked, "Why aren't you asleep yet?"

"I can't sleep, Mom. Can I sleep with you?" Ashton looked around before slipping into my room.

"Let's sleep, then," I coaxed softly, lying on the bed. Yet, Ashton kept on staring at me and refused to go to sleep.

"Are you not sleepy?" I asked in a soft voice.

Ashton nodded. 'Mom.'

He only called out to me cautiously, seemingly hesitant to speak.

I could tell that Ashton had many things he wanted to tell me, yet he wasn't saying anything. I didn't know how to ask about them either.

He ended up falling asleep while curled up in my embrace. At that moment, he looked as if he was desperately yearning for maternal love.

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Despite not taking the medicine, I remained well-rested. That meant that the pills weren't meant to make me sleep well.

I felt much better mentally the next day. The hazy feeling in my brain seemed to disperse a little as well. "Stephany was Genome Society's most valuable experimental subject, yet she died in Daisy's laboratory. Genome Society must be in chaos now. Losing Stephany means losing an extremely valuable research subject

Zion and Eason were back to seal off the villa and look for valuable information in the basement this time. For some reason, I was interested in listening to Zion's colleagues talking about Stephany Larson and Steven Lincoln.

One of the officers said, 'Genome Society refused to let Stephany go when she was alive. Perhaps death is a sort of escape for her.'

"Does reincarnation really exist in this world? I saw the words "Reincarnation Project" written in the laboratory records. Are they for real?"

I listened curiously. Reincarnation?

"Stop talking. 'Zion and Eason interrupted the other officers' conversation. Their gazes were tinged with sadness.

Stephany was probably someone important to them. They wouldn't have been so sad otherwise.

"Steven wouldn't just give up on Stephany so easily-unless he's absolutely certain that he could make the Reincarnation Project a reality. Perhaps this is his version of a switcheroo," Eason softly said to Zion.

"Do you think it's possible that Steven gave Stephany a new identity in order to help her escape Genome Society's pursuit? She could be truly free that way," he continued

Zion halted his steps and turned to look at Eason. 'Do you also believe in the Reincarnation Project? The experimental data shows that the first experimental subject that succeeded in reincarnating was Joel. Do you believe that Joel is Simeon?"

Eason was taken aback, frozen in place. There was a hint of conflict and anxiousness coloring his face. He subconsciously looked down and clenched his fists. "I hope he is.

"This is just a hopeful wish of the living. I don't believe in the so-called soul reincarnation.' As a staunch materialist, he found it hard to believe in such things despite the backing of scientific and experimental data. "Is Steven Lincoln... the Steven you're talking about?" I walked out from the corner, looking at Eason and Zion. Zion and Eason were stunned. They instinctively frowned when they saw me, turning wary.

"I'm sorry. It seems that I have forgotten a lot of things," I said, smiling apologetically.

Eason looked at me suspiciously.

"I want to know who Steven is. "I couldn't even explain why I was so eager to find out who he was, nor my intense curiosity behind it.

"The Steven we're talking about is Steven Lincoln, Zion explained.

"The news says that both of them are the masterminds behind the serial murder cases. Is that true?" I felt curious. Was this Steven the person who abducted me during the rainy night and wanted to kill me?

"That's only speculation. The media is reporting nonsense. The real mastermind is not Stephany Larson but Stephanie Carlson, who might have been reincarnated into Stephany. If Stephanie really is the mastermind, Steven would've been an accomplice," Eason calmly said.

"How could that be..." I looked at Eason in shock before looking back at my own hands.

Wasn't I Stephanie Carlson? Yet Michael told me to tell everyone that I was Una. What exactly did that mean?

"Stephanie Carlson almost died in the serial murder cases too. How could she be the mastermind?" I anxiously said.

"She was the best at deceiving everyone," Zion said with his head lowered as he sifted through for valuable items. He sounded somewhat sad and regretful.

Eason said, 'Carol turned herself in on the day Daisy's laboratory exploded and the laboratory in the desolate area was exposed. She didn't die during the games in the ruined building. She merely faked her death.

"Carol said that she was from the Rebels and she had planned everything just to avenge Simeon. She wanted to kill everyone," he said, looking at me as if deliberately trying to gauge my reaction.

He continued, "Carol said that the creator of the Rebels is Stephanie Carlson. Both of them teamed up to do all of that.'

I looked at Eason in shock. I couldn't understand what he was saying.

My mind was in disarray. I only felt darkness closing in and warmth in my nose. I reached out to touch my nose and realized that it was bleeding.

The world started spinning soon after, and I lost consciousness.