

After Death 81

Chapter 81

Olivia said gratefully, "Thank you, Calvin."

"Don't thank me. It was our fault anyway. If word about this spreads, our hospital's reputation would be ruined."

Olivia replied, "Someone was targeting me, so it has nothing to do with the hospital. I won't tell a soul. I hope that you can keep this a secret too. Don't even tell Chris. I don't want to alert anyone."

Calvin nodded in understanding. "Let's put this behind us for now. I suggest that you do another checkup. I'll personally run the tests this time. If there's any problem, we can start solving it earlier too."

Olivia smiled and said, "It's no big deal. Don't worry."

"Okay then. These machines are radioactive, so you shouldn't be exposed to them too frequently in such a short period of time. If you want to have another checkup in a few months, then you can contact me any time."

"Sure."

Calvin smiled warmly and said, "You're well enough to be discharged now. I've already asked someone to deal with the procedures. By the way, let's exchange phone numbers."

Olivia added his number to her contacts on WhatsApp.

Calvin walked her out of the hospital and handed her the discharge documents he'd prepared. Then, they bid each other goodbye. After Everly teased her and Calvin again, they finally left.

In the car, Olivia couldn't stop thinking about the incident.

It definitely involved an insider at the hospital. The person couldn't have executed his plan so flawlessly unless he was familiar with the ins and outs of the place.

Nevertheless, they didn't have solid evidence. Since Calvin didn't want to make a big fuss about it for the sake of the hospital's reputation, he couldn't investigate every department either.

There were more than a thousand employees at the hospital, including all the doctors, nurses, housemen, and part-timers combined. How was he supposed to investigate all of them?

The only clue he was left with was the surveillance footage. If it could be restored, then they would be able to catch the person who'd tampered with her report.

Olivia pinched the bridge of her nose, clearly exhausted.

Everly, who'd been talking for a long time without getting an answer, couldn't stop herself from tapping Olivia's shoulder.

"What's the matter? Are you thinking about that douchebag again?" she asked.

Olivia recalled the furious look in Ethan's eyes before he'd left. Their relationship was ruined, and all she prayed for now was to have nothing to do with him ever again.

"No," she answered. She looked at the scenery passing by outside the window, wondering when Calvin would find an answer.

However, just after two days of rest, she received a call from the hospital.

"Ms. Fordham, Mr. Fordham's in critical condition. His heart rate suddenly declined, and his breathing is getting weaker. We've just taken him for emergency treatment. Please come as soon as possible."

In the hospital corridor, Olivia waited outside the operating theater anxiously while a nurse tried her best to comfort her.

“Ms. Fordham, you have to be prepared for the worst. Judging by Mr. Fordham’s condition, he might not..

Olivia dug her nails into her palm and said hoarsely, “I know.”

The nurse sighed and said helplessly, “I know it’s really been hard for you.”

As she looked at the young woman, who was around the same age as her own daughter, the nurse couldn’t help but feel sorry

that Olivia had to carry such a heavy weight on her shoulders at such a young age.

The nurse knew that Olivia was married, but she’d never seen her husband around. Olivia was always waiting out here alone. Her thin frame only increased the nurse’s concern for her.

The doors of the operating theater opened, and Olivia rushed forward at once.

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“Doctor, how is he?” Olivia’s heart was pounding violently as she gripped her sleeve tightly. She was terrified of hearing the

worst.

“Fortunately, the nurses noticed his condition very quickly, and we were able to save him in time. Olivia, I won’t keep it from

you.

“Your father is in a very dangerous state, and we need the best brain specialist, Leo, to perform brain surgery for him.

“Otherwise... We might not be able to save him next time.”

Olivia’s heart sank. She wanted to find Leo more than anyone else. Alas, she didn’t have a wide social circle. Keith had helped her look for Leo before, but to no avail.

When Jeff was wheeled out, she saw how weak he looked with his eyes tightly shut.

She called out, “Dad.”

However, it was like throwing a pebble down a well because she received no answer.

One of Jeff’s hands, which wasn’t covered by the blanket, looked thin and wrinkled with age. He seemed to have aged a lot over the last two short years. Except for the indwelling needle, the rest of the back of his hand was just loose, sagging skin.

It looked nothing like the hand that had held hers when they’d walked home last time.

Olivia leaned against him and wept uncontrollably. She said in a choked voice, “Dad, wake up and look at me, won’t you...

No matter what he’d done to other people, he’d never mistreated her. Olivia couldn’t just stand by and watch him suffer like

this.

A thought popped up in her mind.

The day she'd tried to jump off, Ethan had said that he could find Leo. Based on his wide network of connections and wealth, it wasn't surprising that he was capable of finding Leo.

If she hadn't been on the brink of death, Ethan would never have told her.

She knew how much Ethan hated her and her father, but she had no other way of saving Jeff. She'd never thought that she'd have to go and beg Ethan so soon after she'd just decided to cut ties with him two days ago.

After drying her tears and making sure Jeff was alright, Olivia asked Brent about Ethan's whereabouts. She then took a taxi to

Silver.

In the decadent club, scantily dressed female dancers moved around seductively. In every corner, men and women kissed scandalously, and loud voices came from the booths.

However, the fun and excitement had nothing to do with Olivia. She walked quickly toward a private room deeper inside the

club.

Ethan usually didn't like places like this and would choose a quiet spot even for a gathering with friends. Brent opened the door to the private room for her.

The luxurious private room could accommodate more than a hundred people. Even with so many men and women inside, Olivia still spotted Ethan among the crowd at first glance.

He was leaning against a leather armchair with his eyes shut. He looked very out of place in the rowdy room. With his eyes closed and his sharp gaze hidden, he looked harmless.

Bryan Moore, a dashing man dressed in gray casual clothes, sat next to Ethan, soaking his feet in a tub. A furry blindfold was hanging around his neck. Other people had either a glass of whiskey or Armand de Brignac in front of them, but he had a thermos filled with herbal tea.

One of them seemed to treat the place like a hotel, while the other treated it like a foot spa.

Olivia watched as a woman in skimpy clothes walked to Ethan and boldly tried to kiss him.

Smelling her pungent perfume, Ethan jerked awake. The first thing he saw when he opened his eyes was a pair of fiery red lips. As if by instinct, he shoved her away mercilessly.

“Ah!” The woman shrieked and sprawled on the floor right in front of Olivia.

Her short skirt rode up and exposed the sexy thong she was wearing underneath. The men standing around started whistling.

Olivia felt uneasy being in a place like this. She looked up with a flustered expression and met Ethan’s gaze.

His eyes were calm, but there was a hint of mockery in them. He’d just played hard to get a few days ago, but she’d shown up in front of him so soon.

It just proved he’d been right about her. He wondered what tricks she’d use this time since she’d tried to commit suicide the last time.

Olivia understood the look in his eyes, but with her father on the brink of death, she had no choice other than to ask him for help. Even if she’d only be humiliated by approaching him, she had no other way out.

The bystanders had noticed her, but other than Bryan, nobody else knew that she was Ethan’s ex-wife.

A woman with a hot body looked Olivia up and down, then teased her while chewing her gum, “Hey, ma’am. Are you in the wrong room?”

Olivia thought about the time Everly had joked about how girls nowadays wore spaghetti strap tops under their coats, whereas Olivia wore a sweater underneath hers.

In the room full of trendy people, she was the only one wearing a thick down jacket, a knitted hat, and a scarf.

Olivia ignored the woman and looked at Ethan directly. "Eth... Mr. Miller, can we talk privately?"

"Can't you see that there's a girl who's prettier than you already lying on the floor? Do you want to be next?" The woman teased her relentlessly.

Ethan looked at Olivia and said coldly, "Come here."

His words were like a slap in that woman's face. Olivia made her way through the crowd with everybody watching her and stopped in front of Ethan.

Bryan, who was soaking his feet, looked very comfortable. His forehead was beaded with sweat from the warm water. He was still as health-conscious as always.

The scent of wormwood masked the smell of alcohol and perfume. It also chased away the smell of cigarettes and made Olivia feel a lot better.

Bryan greeted her first. "Hey, long time no see, Olivia. Want to soak your feet?"

Olivia turned down his unusual invitation. "No thanks, Mr. Moore."

Bryan immediately started lecturing her about the benefits of soaking one's feet.

"It improves blood circulation and metabolism. It also helps relieve insomnia and reduce high blood pressure. What's more, it improves cardiovascular health. You don't look very well, so you should soak your feet. I've just made an improvement to the prescription..."

Ethan interrupted Bryan's rambling and pulled the blindfold over the latter's eyes impatiently. "Go to sleep."

The onlookers watched Olivia curiously, wondering who she was. Why did she seem so close to Ethan and Bryan? However, she looked unfamiliar to all of them.

Ethan sat there with his legs slightly spread, looking extremely intimidating. He glanced over at her mildly and asked, "Why are you here?"

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Ethan's impression was still the same as the last time, when she'd thrown a pot of porridge at him a few days ago. She'd been furious and crazy, and she'd looked just like an angry cat.

Now, she was the exact opposite of that. Standing with her head bowed, she anxiously shifted from one foot to the other.

Olivia tried to overcome the discomfort and awkwardness she felt under his gaze. Softly, she said, "I want to ask you for a

favor."

A laugh escaped his mouth as he sat with his legs crossed, plucking out a cigarette from a box. She knew he was mocking her. "What do you want now?" He asked.

Jason Yates, a rich youngster, stood not far away from them. Somehow, he was able to discern the slight difference in the way Ethan treated her

As he approached them, he said, "There's no one in this world who wouldn't want to ask Mr. Miller for help. Young lady, is this the attitude you should have when you're asking someone for help? Hurry and light Mr. Miller's cigarette for him."

Jason ushered Olivia to stand beside Ethan as the latter leaned in his seat, looking as lackadaisical as ever.

Apart from the tit-for-tat exchanges they'd had in the past two years, he'd used to be more polite and had more self-restraint. He'd never smoked in front of her.

Now, though, his collar was open, and the top two buttons were unbuttoned. The dim light emphasized his already prominent facial features, making him appear all the more formidable.

As Olivia busied herself to find a lighter, she met Ethan's deep eyes, which seemed to be judging her. She couldn't care less what he thought of her and proceeded to bend over with one knee on the couch.

She leaned forward, ready to light the cigarette. Since she and Ethan were not of equal standing, she was forced to be humble

around him.

The light from the flame of the lighter cast a flickering glow on his face. As he lowered his eyes, a hint of a smile hung at the corner of his lips for some unknown reason.

"I seem to recall that you once said you'd rather jump from the seventh floor of a building than come to me for help," he said.

That sentence was like a humiliating slap. She hadn't expected her father to get caught up in something like this and hence need Ethan's help. Still, she wasn't in the mood to guess what he thought of her, so she simply bent lower toward him.

In a humble voice, she said, "You're a magnanimous man, Mr. Miller. I'm sure you wouldn't be mad at something so trivial."

The gears in Jason's mind started turning.

Ethan had never let any woman close to him, but this woman seemed to be the only exception. Although she was dressed a little too modestly, she had a pretty face, which could suit Ethan's taste.

Hurriedly, Jason poured three glasses of whiskey for Olivia and rapped his fingers on the table. "This is the way things work."

Olivia furrowed her brows. Half a glass of this was enough to make her pass out, yet he wanted her to down three of them.

She glanced at Ethan, who then propped a hand under his chin and said nonchalantly, "What excuse are you going to come up with this time? That you're feeling uncomfortable or that you're sick to the point of no return?"

The sneer on his lips was as clear as day. He knew that she had a low alcohol tolerance, but he enjoyed making things tough for her. Perhaps this was him taking revenge on her.

Olivia felt her heart clench when she recalled the times he'd forbidden her from touching alcohol. Things were different for them now. Ethan sat there with his chin tilted slightly upward.

The air of arrogance and prestige he exuded was evident to anyone around him, and it ultimately put a wall between them. To him, she had been a puny and powerless wealding from the beginning.

Now that she'd thought things through, Olivia's mind zeroed in on saving her father. Her life and dignity were nothing in the face of saving him.

She raised one of the glasses into the air and downed the drink in one long gulp. She didn't drink often and was clueless about the quality of the whiskey. All she knew was that her throat was on fire after she finished it.

Pain. Not only did it burn her throat, but it also made her stomach hurt. Her clothes were thick, trapping heat and soaking her

in her own sweat.

Her stomach was torturing her as it churned like a whirlpool inside of her. She pressed one hand on her stomach, then reached for the second glass with the other.

Chapter 84

Someone handed her a warm glass of milk. "If you can't drink, then don't. Alcohol is bad for your health anyway. Here, have a glass of milk instead. You'll feel better after having it."

Bryan's voice was soft and gentle, similar to how a brother would speak to his younger sibling. He knew who she was and was really kind to her.

Olivia smiled at him gratefully, but before she could thank him, Ethan cut in, reminding her, "You have two glasses left." His voice was as cold as his gaze.

Bryan furrowed his brows at Ethan. He knew how much Olivia meant to Ethan, and if the latter took things too far, not only would his actions hurt Olivia, but he would make himself miserable too.

"Fine."

Olivia didn't hesitate as she reached for the second glass of whiskey. The look on her face said that there was no turning back, and she finished the drink in one go. Her stomach felt like it had been punctured by thousands of blades.

Having drunk too much alcohol too quickly, Olivia couldn't help but feel like the world was spinning around her. All of a sudden, she collapsed.

She thought that she'd crash onto the table. She'd never expected someone's arms to pick her up instead.

Ethan held her in his arms and left the room in a hurry. Olivia was already in a daze as she mumbled to him, "Whiskey ... One more left..."

Ethan tossed her into the backseat of the car. His eyes burned with rage as he looked at her. "Just what are you trying to do? Haven't you fooled around enough?"

Olivia thought she saw stars when she fell heavily onto the seat. She didn't care about anything at this point.

In a kneeling position, she reached out to Ethan and tugged at his sleeves like a pouting child. She said sluggishly, "I must find Leo. He'll perform the craniotomy for my dad. I'll pay back what my dad owes you."

Ethan lowered his gaze to Olivia and noticed a blush had crept across her previously pale face. She was trying her best to stay conscious despite being drunk.

"You can kill me, beat me, or do anything you want to me. I'll pay you back. Just let my dad go. He's my only family. Please..."

she mumbled.

Ethan smirked at her in contempt. "You? Paying me back? What else do you have besides your life?"

Loosening her grip on him, Olivia stared at him, completely helpless. "What exactly do you want me to do to make you satisfied?"

"No matter what you do, my sister's already dead. I don't want you to die, but I won't let you live a happy life either. I'll only feel like life is worth living when I see you wallowing in misery. Am I clear?"

“You’re so cruel...” Tears streamed down her cheeks, making her look pitiful.

The sight of her in such a state made him feel slightly sorry for her. Much to his surprise, he couldn’t feel any hint of joy when

he saw her tears.

Annoyed, he loosened his tie and stretched an arm around her, forcefully pulling her into his embrace. She was already in a daze, but the impact as she crashed into his sturdy chest made her even dizzier.

Just as she started to speak again, she noticed Ethan’s piercing eyes looking into hers.

Without any warning, he leaned in and pressed his lips against hers, snuffing out any sound she’d been about to make. He pressed on, letting his tongue explore and dominate every inch of her mouth.

He was overcome with restlessness. He’d thought that he didn’t want to see her happy and yearned to let her burn in hell, and yet when he saw how she was struggling in torment, he realized that he wasn’t even the slightest bit happy.

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He was overcome with restlessness. He'd thought that he didn't want to see her happy and yearned to let her burn in hell, and yet when he saw how she was struggling in torment, he realized that he wasn't even the slightest bit happy.

All he felt was a cold hand close around his heart, strangling and suffocating him.

As his lips touched hers, he caught her familiar scent. Only then did he manage to calm down. Both of them were like a tangled mess. The more she struggled against him, the tighter his grip on her became.

His hands moved swiftly to pull down the zip of her down jacket, but Olivia realized what he was doing and pushed her hands on his chest. "No!" She yelped, unwillingness written all over her face, but it only made Ethan more angry.

He stared into her eyes and repeated the words she'd said not long ago: "You said I could do anything I wanted to you."

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Ethan's words were harsh, but Olivia was left with no other choice. She removed her hands from his chest, and his hands moved to her clothes.

However, when he took her jacket off, he realized that she was wearing a sweater and another layer of thermal clothing under

1. it.

Ethan furrowed his brows in confusion. "Are you an old lady? Why are you wearing so many layers of clothes?"

Blushing, Olivia bit her lip and replied, "I'm afraid of the cold."

Suddenly, Ethan realized that she must be extremely thin to look fit even under so many layers of clothes. As his palm rested on the small of her back, he could feel her spine.

It was as if there was no flesh to separate her skin from her bones, and he wondered how she became so thin. The lustful thoughts he'd had just seconds ago vanished, replaced by a sheen of guilt.

Suddenly, Olivia glared at him, as though she'd only just realized what was happening.

In a tone that made it abundantly clear that she wasn't happy, she questioned, "Aren't you afraid that Marina will find out about you doing this to me? Don't forget that we're divorced."

Ethan's voice returned to its cool, indifferent tone. "It's none of your business. I agree with your earlier suggestion. From this day forth, you will pay me back on behalf of your father."

Quickly, Olivia asked, "About Leo ..."

"I'll find him."

Now that Ethan had promised to help her, Olivia could finally heave a sigh of relief. His gaze was dangerously locked on her as he said, "And you... you have to be on call whenever I need you."

Olivia was rather surprised to hear him say that.

His fingers brushed lightly over her cheeks as he teased, "I realized something. Whenever I touch you, you look like you're going to die. But I still yearn for you..."

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His voice trailed off as he stared into her eyes. "So what better way to torture you than this? Am I right?"

Enduring the searing pain in her stomach, Olivia asked him, "Will you regret torturing me like this one day?"

“The only thing I know for sure is that I can only smile when you’re in pain.”

Olivia had never imagined that their relationship would end up like this. She asked Ethan to drive her back to her apartment.

When they reached her place, he asked, “Aren’t you going to invite me upstairs for some coffee?”

It was obvious that he wanted to finish what he’d started in the car. Olivia had no reason to refuse him since Eve wasn’t home

and the apartment was all hers.

After opening the door, she darted into the washroom, not even bothering to switch on the lights or change into her indoor slippers.

She emptied the contents of her stomach and felt much more relieved and clear-headed now.

Suddenly, she felt an excruciating pain in her stomach and realized that the alcohol had only just started showing its full

effects.

Breaking out in a cold sweat, she curled up on the ground, trying to bear the pain in silence, but it seeped across every inch of her body, to the point that even simply breathing felt agonizing.

Her head thumped, and she wandered in and out of consciousness, wondering if she was going to die soon. She bit her lip to stop herself from making any sound.

Ethan waited outside the washroom for a long time, but Olivia made no move to come out. In the end, he knocked on the door and asked, “Olivia, are you okay?”

"I'm... fine." She forced the words from her mouth. "Give me a minute. I'll come out after cleaning up."

Never in his wildest dreams would Ethan have suspected that she was terminally ill. After all, she'd just had a checkup a few days ago. He walked away, thinking that she was simply embarrassed to face him.

Behind the door, Olivia was curled up in a corner with her arms pressed against her stomach as if to numb the pain.

Now, even the slightest movement caused her immense pain, making her regret her rash decision to down those two glasses of whiskey just now.

Chapter 86

Ethan took a furtive glance around the apartment. It wasn't big, but he could feel Olivia's presence in every corner.

When he noticed the baby crib in her room, he remembered that it was the only thing she'd taken with her when she'd left him. As the realization washed over him, his heart turned into a jumbled mess.

After seeing her jump off the building that day, he'd come to realize one thing.

He'd followed after her without hesitation, which made him understand that he couldn't stop loving her no matter how much he hated her.

His love and hate were intertwined. They fused into a prickly bramble full of thorns, coiling tightly around the two of them. It was as though the more he pushed her off into the dark, the closer he got to the edge of a cliff himself.

Ethan picked up a soft toy on the bed. Olivia had always hugged it to make herself sleep for countless nights in the past two

years.

If only that incident hadn't happened, he would have been a good husband to Olivia and a good father to their child. Every time her name left his lips, he could still feel the love he felt for her.

He simply couldn't make himself leave her for good.

Meanwhile, Olivia finally felt better after some time. She slowly pushed herself off the ground and walked to the living room.

She'd half expected that Ethan would have left, given that he was someone who valued time. Yet when she raised her head to look around the house, she spotted him on the balcony.

Sparks from a cigarette flickered as he held it between two fingers. It seemed that his smoking addiction had worsened.

Olivia was astonished that he was still here. Was he waiting to pick up where they'd stopped earlier?

A shadow fell across her face at that thought, and she went to get herself a glass of water to clear her throat.

After that, she dragged her feet on the floor as she approached him. "Should we do it here or on the bed?" she asked in a cool and distant tone, as though they were talking about work.

Ethan looked up from the cigarette to stare at her sickly face, then exhaled slowly, forming a white puff of smoke in the air. "Do I seem like a pervert to you?"

"I'll go to sleep if you're not thinking of doing it," Olivia told him blankly. She secretly thanked her lucky stars that she'd been able to escape it.

All she wanted was to have a good rest. She went into her room and closed the door behind her.

Ethan tapped at the cigarette lightly to make the ashes fall as he watched her disappear behind the door. This was exactly what

he'd wanted.

But why was he upset? Was it because there was no longer a shine in her eyes when she looked at him?

He opened the door to see her curled up in bed. Her bed was full of plushies, so she had to curl herself up to fit on the bed. That was the only way she felt safe.

Venturing into the dark bedroom, Ethan stood beside the bed, looking at Olivia. However, she was too tired to acknowledge him. Thanks to the alcohol, she managed to doze off easily.

The next day, she woke up to find Ethan sleeping on the bed in the master bedroom. Surprisingly, he went straight into the bathroom to shower without mocking or ridiculing her.

The doorbell rang, and she walked to open the door in her pajamas. Keith stood at the door with some bags of New Year's goods in his hands.

"It's New Year's soon, so I brought something over for you."

"There's no need to-" Before Olivia could finish her sentence, the door to the bathroom opened.

Chapter 87

Ethan had been expecting Brent to send some clothes over for him, so he walked straight out of the bathroom. He turned to look at the open door, only to find Keith standing there.

Raising an eyebrow in question, he said to Olivia, "It seems like we have company."

Olivia was still in her pajamas, whereas Ethan was wrapped in only a towel. No matter how one looked at it, they looked just like a couple who'd been married for years.

Keith was neither blind nor stupid; he set the goods down and left, dispirited.

Olivia didn't care to explain, which only convinced Keith that he'd guessed her situation correctly. Nevertheless, this was for

the best.

Ethan tossed a glance at the goods on the ground. "Am I not generous enough to you?" Ten billion dollars for their divorce was considered sky-high already.

Olivia answered, "I'll give these to the old guy who collects the trash in our area."

Ethan grunted. "Does he come here often?"

"He visited once when I had a fever."

"There won't be a next time." Ethan's harsh voice matched his stern message.

Stunned, it took Olivia a moment before she replied, "Okay."

When Ethan finished packing his things and got ready to leave, she couldn't hold back and asked, "About Leo..."

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"I'll contact you when I get an answer," he said, closing the door behind me. It was pretty easy for him to search for someone. Her father could be saved. Olivia slumped on the couch and let her head fall back against the headrest. Closing her eyes, she heaved a sigh of relief.

In the afternoon, Keith received a call from his parents.

His father, Frank Rogers, told him that he could have the opportunity to further his studies abroad. He could then take over the position of head of the hospital after that.

“Sorry, Dad, but I’m not thinking of going overseas for now.”

“It’s a golden opportunity. I tried so hard to get you into this. There are only three spots for it in the entire country,” Frank

answered.

Keith smiled mockingly in response, saying, “This chance should go to Ethan then.”

“I don’t know what happened between you and him, but he was even willing to set aside his status to inform me about this. Even if you don’t think about yourself, you should at least think about your siblings.”

Keith had always been compliant with his parents, but this time, he fell silent.

Noticing that his son was upset, Frank sighed helplessly.

“You’ve heard of Oakland Hospital, right? Ethan Miller offered to cooperate with us on that project, the one everyone’s been talking about in Aldenvine. I’m sure you know what that means.”

“I know,” Keith said curtly.

Failing to get a proper response from his son, Frank finally asked, “What’s making you stay?”

Keith stood up from his seat, arms behind his back, as he looked out the window at the hall bustling with nurses and patients.

He let out a sigh and explained, "I want to send someone off one last time."

Frank was at a loss for words at this point. Keith had always been a good child to him, and, as a good father, he didn't want to poke his nose into his son's private life.

However, he couldn't afford to offend the Miller family. On top of that, Ethan was someone he respected as well.

Keith recalled what he'd seen this morning and remembered how Ethan had been so possessive of Olivia during the banquet that night. Even after their divorce, Ethan still wasn't willing to let her off the hook so easily.

Besides, Keith knew that if he got closer to Olivia, it would cause trouble for her. With this in mind, he closed his eyes and eventually said, "Dad, I'll accept the offer to study overseas. I won't let you

down."

"Good. I'll make the necessary arrangements for you."

Olivia had finally gotten over the worst of days, and her life was starting to take some semblance of normality again.

Early the next morning, she went to visit her father at the hospital. When she reached, she saw the nurse wiping Jeff's face with a handkerchief.

She quickly took the cloth from the nurse, saying, "Allow me."

The nurse didn't object and handed it over to Olivia. Then, Olivia noticed two bouquets of gladioli on the table beside the bed. "Did someone come to visit?" She asked.

“Yes. Dr. Rogers was here. I was cleaning up the room when I heard him talking to Mr. Fordham’s attending physician. He’s going abroad for further studies, so we won’t get to see him here for quite some time.”

Olivia froze in the middle of wringing the handkerchief dry. She understood the real reason he was leaving. “I see.”

The nurse didn’t notice the change in Olivia’s expression and merely told her, “Dr. Rogers is a good person.”

“I know.”

“If you’re thinking of starting a family, I think he’s a pretty

Chapter 88

Stunned, Olivia stopped what she was doing and said sternly, “Madam, you’ve crossed the line. I want to talk to my father alone. Please leave.”

“Alright.” The nurse closed the door gently and left.

As usual, Olivia patiently wiped Jeff’s body and trimmed his hair and nails. Had it not been for the electrocardiogram displaying his even heartbeat, she would have thought that he’d left her for good.

Compared to the snowstorm before, the weather was great today, so she pushed the curtain away to let the sun’s warm rays shine into the room.

“Dad, I won’t be able to stay with you for long. If you don’t wake up soon, you might never see me again. Oh right—Ethan and I are divorced now.”

Olivia's voice was gentle as she spoke to her father, updating him on her life. Sunlight fell on her face as she smiled.

"He wasn't very kind to me these two years, but he's been quite generous since our divorce. He's given me what he should, including a house, a car, and some shares. I'm filthy rich now."

"I remember you telling me after Mom left that life should have its regrets, because only then would we learn to appreciate things. Since then, I've treasured everything and everyone around me, but, in the end, I haven't managed to keep anyone by my side," she continued.

"I've got some good news too, Dad. I heard that Mr. Crosby has decided to auction our house. I'll win the auction and get our house back.

"

"After Leo treats you and you recover, you live there. I'm sorry I have to leave you alone and for not being able to send you off.

Olivia talked on and on until it was dusk, yet Jeff showed no signs of wading up. She forced out a laugh helplessly. "Just as I'd expected... Miracles only happen in storybooks."

On her way home, Olivia noticed a piece of news titled "President of Miller Group Customizes Priceless Wedding Dress for Fiancée." There was a picture of the dress, "Milia Stellae," attached as well.

To be honest, Olivia didn't mind Ethan remarrying or having children with someone else, but the fact that he was giving his new wife this dress was heartbreaking.

There were so many wedding dresses in the world to choose from. Why did it have to be this one?

It took her back to that day three years ago. She'd just taken a shower and was lying lazily on the couch. She'd been watching a high-end luxury brand's press conference on TV.

Pointing to one of the dresses displayed, she'd exclaimed, "Wow! I just love the way Emy designs her dresses! All of them are special. They're elegant and stylish, but not flamboyant at all. It's a pity that we didn't hold a wedding ceremony."

Ethan had pulled Olivia into his arms out of habit. "Who said you could only wear a dress like that during a wedding ceremony? I'll give you the most unique dress of all, Liv."

A month after that, Olivia had come across a draft of a gown design on the table in the study. There had been other designs. wedged in the sketchbook too.

Seeing them, she'd realized that the reason Ethan had been working late into the night was because he'd been designing a dress for her.

"Do you

like this one?" Ethan asked. He had appeared out of nowhere and hugged her from behind.

He rested his chin gently on her shoulder as he spoke, making the atmosphere ever so romantic and heartwarming-

"I like everything you draw."

"I've discussed things with the designer. The dress will take three years from material selection to completion. Can you wait

until then?"

"I'll wait for it even if it takes 30 years," Olivia said. "There are so many diamonds on it. Why don't we call it 'Milia Stellae'?"

"Sure. It's all up to you."

“Then, I’ll wear this dress only for you.”

Olivia could still clearly recall the time they’d made this promise. She just needed to close her eyes to remember the smile that had spread on his lips that day. His gentle eyes shone like stars in the midnight sky, too.

Now, she didn’t need to wait for the dress anymore. All her waiting had brought her was seeing him give the dress to his new

fiancée.

Olivia recomposed herself before she headed home. Eve had packed her things in a hurry and moved to her house yesterday.

When Olivia arrived home, Eve was humming and waving the spatula in the air as she prepared food in the kitchen. The years she’d spent saving money to pay that douchebag’s bills had made her develop excellent cooking skills.

As the broth boiled in the pot, she busied herself with the ingredients, mixing them together step by step until the dish’s aromatic fragrance filled the entire room.

It warmed Olivia’s heart and made her feel as though she’d just climbed back from the depths of the underworld.

The aroma of the food helped improve her mood. It dissipated some of the sadness that had been weighing her down.

After stirring the broth with a ladle, Eve took a spoonful out of the pot, blew into it a couple of times, and tasted it. “Hmm. This isn’t bad. Liv will love this.”

“I like anything you cook,” Olivia said as she entered the kitchen. Eve was the only person by her side now.

"You're back! How's your father?"

"The usual."

"Don't worry. He'll get well soon. After all, you already donated all that money today. What a shame, too. You're too generous."

Olivia smiled. "You truly are a money-grubber. One needs to be alive to spend that money. No matter how much money we have, it's useless when we die. It's better to use it to help others."

"You're right. That money came from an asshole anyway, so you should spend it however you want. Otherwise, it'd go to that scheming bitch," said Eve.

She continued, "I'll never forget that he was the one who kicked me down the hill. As of late, I even dream of kicking him all the time."

"Oh, Eve." Olivia couldn't hold back a smile.

"Freeze." A camera appeared in Everly's hands out of nowhere. "Stay still. This is the smile I want to see."

Olivia covered her face with her hands. "You know that I don't like taking photos."

"I have to take more photos of you while you're still in good shape. That way, I'll have something to remember you by in case you leave..." Everly's voice trailed off.

Olivia then took the camera from her and smiled softly.

"Then you must put on some filters for me. After all, women like to look pretty all the time. I'll have to smile more so that you'll feel better when you see these photos in the future."

Chapter 89

It was the night of the charity dinner, which had been fully organized and managed by the Crosby family. The Crosbys had announced that 10% of the money from the auction would be sent to charity.

However, everyone knew the truth—the Crosbys were facing some financial difficulties and were trying to earn some cash by selling off some of their items.

Those in Mr. Crosby Senior's circle knew that he had an eye for invaluable collectibles, yet they kept quiet about it.

He'd liked hoarding valuables since he'd been young, so there were bound to be lots of treasures hidden in his house.

It wasn't every day that one got to see him selling his prized possessions, and those who knew him had decided to attend the dinner as soon as they'd received the invitation.

Even those without much money came over to watch the show. The word on the street was that the Fordham residence was going to be auctioned too.

Olivia and Everly arrived just in time.

The latter poked her head out of the car window to take a look before saying, "You go ahead and head upstairs. I'll park the car and meet you there. Save me a spot in the front row!"

"Alright."

Everly had never attended something like this and thought that they could help each other grab a seat. The truth was, the seats were usually arranged for the guests in advance at events like this.

There were two ways the seating arrangement was determined: either according to one's social status or based on the amount of money one had to offer.

Fortunately, Olivia had asked Everly to settle the donation before they came, so she already had a seat reserved for her. She couldn't simply sit wherever she wanted.

Unfortunately, as Olivia neared the entrance, she realized she'd forgotten the invitation when the guards stopped her from entering.

"Miss, do you have a letter of invitation with you?"

The guard wasn't trying to make things difficult for her. It was just that he'd never seen anyone wear a down jacket to an event like this. The dress code usually consisted of gowns and suits. On top of that, he could see that her down jacket was patched up in some places.

Frankly, Olivia said, "It's with my friend."

"I'm sorry, but you have to wait for your friend before you two can enter together."

Since it was a private event, Olivia understood that the guard was merely doing his job.

Despite getting some looks from some of the guests that were entering the building, she straightened her back, trying to remain calm and composed.

It was at this moment that Marina arrived with Calista, who had an arm hooked around the former's.

Olivia could hear Calista's voice from afar as she said, "Marina, I saw the dress in the interview. They say there are 3650 diamonds inlaid on it and that every diamond is a symbol of Mr. Miller's love for you. I truly envy the love you two have for each other."

Olivia pressed her fingers hard into her palms, but she didn't feel the pain. She had always thought that Ethan had designed Milia Stellae" for her and that all the diamonds were just part of the design.

Now she knew that it was to commemorate his and Marina's love.

Marina was surrounded by a group of women in ostentatious clothes. When her gaze met Olivia's, she coolly looked away, not wanting to have anything to do with Olivia. She didn't want anyone to know about Ethan and Olivia's past.

Calista, on the other hand, was a completely different case. Olivia had upset everyone when they'd had a meal together that day.

Besides, the Fordhams had finally gone bankrupt as well. With Marina by her side, Calista looked down on Olivia even more.

"Isn't this our class' genius? Why are you dressed so sloppily? When I saw you from afar, I thought you were a beggar." Calista mocked her.

The guard chose to speak at this inappropriate moment. "Mrs. Miller, do you know this woman? She doesn't have an invitation with her, but if you know her, you can go in together."

"I don't," Marina said curtly.

Calista tried to make things worse by telling the guard, "You should have your eyes checked. Don't simply allow penniless people to sneak their way into an event like this."

Calista added, "The New Year's coming, so maybe she was trying to steal something after getting inside. I'm sure you can't afford it if something goes missing."

The guard nodded repeatedly at Calista. "I understand now. Thank you for your reminder, ma'am."

Calista and Marina rolled their eyes at him and finally entered the building. Just as the guard was about to ask Olivia to leave, Brent, who'd come out for a smoke, saw them.

He immediately stepped in to stop the guard. Only then did the guard allow Olivia to go inside.

Chapter 90

“Mrs. Mil–Ms. Fordham, shall I escort you inside?” Brent addressed Olivia as respectfully as usual.

“There’s no need. I’m waiting for a friend... She’s here.”

Olivia had just spotted a woman in a flaming red fur coat. She wore nude stockings underneath and high heels, making her

look like an ostrich on fire.

All of a sudden, Olivia didn’t want to admit knowing someone like her. It had never occurred to her that Everly was late because she was changing in the car.

Everly walked over with a pair of exaggerated glasses on her face and an overwhelming scent of perfume surrounding her.

Olivia turned away from the horrendous sight and started to leave. “Nope. I got the wrong person. I’ll head inside now.”

“Liv! Wait for me!” Everly called after Olivia.

She approached Brent, stopped right before him, and removed her shades. “Did you piss Liv off again?”

Brent was never one to comment on women’s clothing, but this time...

“Do you think Treasure Trove is a nightclub? Are you going to dance in this?”

Everly was a short-tempered person, and she was already unhappy with Ethan. Seeing his henchman here made her even more annoyed.

“When you die, I’m going to dance on your grave in this dress.”

Brent didn’t bother arguing with her and simply said, “Come with me.”

However, Everly took out her invitation letter and said smugly, “No thanks. I have my own invitation.”

Before the two of them were finished with their talk, Olivia had already reached the second floor of the building.

Her father had enjoyed coming here. He didn’t have much interest in anything, but he liked collecting antiques.

When the Fordhams had been wealthy, they’d had a broad collection of antiques at home, ranging from valuables from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance Era. Not many knew that Jeff also liked to paint and carve in his free time.

As Olivia walked through the baroque–style hallways, she noticed that several of the antiques displayed in the glass cabinets looked rather familiar. They had once been her father’s treasures.

A wooden statuette with a small line of indents on one of its arms caught her eye. It was the one she’d bitten after her father had pulled her leg, saying that it was made of chocolate.

She’d only been six years old at the time, and she’d thought all her teeth would fall out after she’d bitten it. Now, she found it cute and funny with those indents.

Tears welled up in her eyes as a wave of nostalgia engulfed her.

She stood rooted to the spot before the glass cabinet, staring at the statuette, reluctant to leave.

After a while, she finally snapped out of her daze. She turned away from the cabinet, reminding herself of why she was here

today.

As she looked away, her gaze locked with Ethan's, who was also standing in front of the stage. He looked dashing in a pitch – black wool coat that outlined his slim and fit figure.

He stared directly at her, his eyes like two deep, bottomless pits. He looked away after a short while.

"Excuse me." Olivia walked past him as if they were mere strangers.

Not long after that, Marina came to him, beaming. "Ethan, why are you here?"

Calista, who was beside her, chimed in, saying, "Of course he's here because of you. You two love each other so much that you