

All Sins 121

Chapter 121

“Is there something you’re craving?”

Olivia didn’t know who she’d be having dinner with. This was the first time she was going on business dinners with him, so she quietly said, “Can we order more food?”

He looked at her. “We can get whatever you want.”

Olivia thought for a moment. “I don’t really have any cravings.”

Tyler didn’t want to push her. “Okay, we’ll just pick something when we get there.”

The car pulled up at a fancy restaurant near the university, and Olivia followed Tyler into the elevator. His secretary was there too, so Olivia stood quietly beside him while he kept his eyes on the doors.

Glancing up, Olivia caught Tyler staring at her reflection in the elevator door, so she quickly looked away. He seemed unfazed.

When the doors opened, Tyler stepped out first, and after a gentle reminder from the secretary, Olivia

followed suit.

Olivia had assumed it was just a simple dinner and she’d be able to leave afterward. But when she entered the room and saw the lecturers and the dean, she froze.

Tyler, who was walking ahead of her, noticed and paused to look at her. Olivia tried to act normal and

sat down next to him.

For Tyler, this was just a regular business dinner, and he had chosen a place near Olivia's university for her convenience.

Seeing how nervous she was, he spoke quietly. "This is just a casual dinner. You can head back to the lab after. Don't worry too much about it."

Olivia didn't know who she was supposed to be among the dean and lecturers, but they knew who she was. After the previous rumor, everyone knew she was associated with Tyler.

The dean greeted her, "Ms. Olivia, a toast to you, but don't be pressured to drink,"

Stunned, Olivia sat next to Tyler while the dean downed his drink in one gulp. Unsure how to respond, Tyler intervened. "It's just dinner, don't worry about her."

The dean smiled at Tyler's remark. "Of course! Someone you bring along must be important." The dean was very polite.

Tyler replied, "She's just a student at your university, so she should be the one toasting you. But she can't drink, so please excuse her."

The dean quickly reassured, "No problem. We wouldn't make her drink. "

Tyler smiled, and the dean took his seat. Despite telling the dean not to focus too much on Olivia,

Tyler still instructed the restaurant manager to give her the menu, saying, "Order anything you want.

Olivia never imagined dining with the dean, let alone receiving a toast from him, especially since she didn't even drink.

After a moment, she took the menu, and Tyler shifted his attention away from her.

However, one of the lecturers remarked, "Ms. Olivia is one of the top students in our school. Not surprising since she's Naomi's sister."

Tyler didn't respond to that.

Another lecturer said, "Naomi was always at the top of her class when she was here, a perfect match for you. She's also amazing at playing the piano. She always performs at our annual fundraiser."

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Tyler seemed to be reminiscing as the lecturers talked. He picked up the wine glass and took a sip. "That was a long time ago."

The lecturer continued, "I'm sure Ms. Olivia is just as talented on the piano as her sister."

Olivia couldn't play the piano at all. She wasn't artistic and felt uncomfortable with all the praise. She had always been in the background, and now being praised like this felt awkward.

Olivia knew they were only praising her because of Naomi.

Just as the compliments were piling up, Tyler calmly interrupted, "Olivia is Naomi's sister, but she's not a piano prodigy. Everyone has their own strengths, and they're not obligated to have the same

talents."

The lecturer realized the misstep and fell silent.

There was a hint of annoyance on Tyler's face, though subtle. He quickly changed the topic. "Let's

talk about something else.”

Olivia kept her head low, playing with her fingers.

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The lecturer, unaware of the sensitive topic he had touched, avoided looking at Olivia and shifted the conversation to fundraising, lightening the mood.

Relieved that the attention was no longer on her, Olivia began to relax.

Suddenly, she felt a sense of inferiority wash over her out of nowhere. During dinner, she hardly said a word, feeling like she was invisible.

Dinner ended around 10 pm. Olivia didn't get a chance to return to the lab because Tyler didn't bring it up, and she didn't dare to either.

After bidding farewell to the professors, Tyler and Olivia got into their car.

The night air was chilly. Tyler closed his eyes and leaned back in his seat.

Olivia sat quietly, and Tyler eventually asked, “You seem really busy lately. Weren't you supposed to go to the lab? Why didn't you?”

Olivia had been lying, and Tyler caught her. She didn't dare look at him.

But Tyler lifted her chin, forcing her to look at him. He gazed at her and said, “I just wanted to have dinner with you. Is that so hard?”

His voice was slightly husky and intimate, leaving Olivia confused. She wanted to pull away, but when she touched his hand, he said, “You're just as good as anyone else, do you know that?”

Olivia's hand froze.

Tyler knew that the dean had made her feel inferior, and he didn't want her to dwell on it. He traced her face with his fingers gently. "You're not Nicole, and you don't need to be overshadowed by her."

He leaned in closer, their faces almost touching, his breath carrying a hint of alcohol as it blew against Olivia's face.

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They were too close that their lips could almost touch.

The shadows from outside cast across their faces, and Olivia could smell the wine on his breath. Their noses brushed against each other as they breathed in sync. The car was filled with an intense silence.

However, Tyler didn't move any closer, just gazing at her. Olivia's pink lips pressed together slightly as he watched.

The air was charged with intimacy, and then Tyler's hand, which had been stroking her face, moved downward. She frowned a little, but with her lips still pressed together, she leaned into his touch.

In this enclosed space, some things were better left unspoken.

Tyler's voice was low. "Remember what I said today?"

Olivia kept her face in his hand, remaining silent.

Slowly, Tyler withdrew his hand, and the intimacy faded as the driver entered the car.

They sat in silence as the driver spoke up, “Mr. Tyler, are we heading to Sandalwood Palace?”

Tyler nodded and confirmed, and their car pulled away from the restaurant.

While they were on the road, Olivia finally asked, “Tyler, are the rumors at school true?”

Tyler opened his eyes and asked, “What rumors?”

“They said they were raising funds for my sister.” Olivia thought about her sister’s medical condition and whether she could handle the treatments.

Tyler didn’t deny it but looked weary as he nodded.

Feeling guilty, Olivia quietly asked, “What about IVF? I can try it if we have to.

Tyler met her gaze. “We need a marriage certificate to start the IVF process,” he explained calmly. Olivia’s expression didn’t change. “Well... do we have any other options?” Her voice sounded sad.

Tyler closed his eyes again. “We’ve checked the bone marrow donation database for potential matches in the first half of this year.”

Olivia sat in silence, absorbing the weight of the news. With no medical procedures available, all they could do was hold onto hope.

Chapter 124

Olivia didn’t know how she was feeling when they arrived at Sandalwood Palace, and Tyler remained silent throughout the journey.

When they got there, the maid greeted them warmly, smiling when she saw them together. “Mr. Tyler, Ms. Olivia, you came back together today,”

Olivia, dressed in a simple dress, stood behind Tyler obediently.

Tyler replied, "I went to pick her up," and then handed his coat to the maid.

Observing them, the maid couldn't help but feel their dynamic resembled that of a parent picking up their child from school. Despite their relatively small age difference, one appeared youthful while the other exuded maturity, they attracted attention from onlookers.

After changing into house slippers, Tyler told the maid, "You can go rest."

Concerned it was late and they might be hungry, the maid asked, "Should I make some food for you first?"

Tyler, not one for late-night snacks, glanced at Olivia for her input.

Olivia shook her head. "No, I had a big dinner."

Satisfied with her answer, the maid hung up Tyler's coat and retired to her room, leaving the couple alone in the spacious living room.

Olivia hesitated, unsure whether to go upstairs, but seeing Tyler pour a drink at the bar, she decided to stay as it wouldn't be polite if she left right away. However, after a moment's thought, she said, "I'm

going upstairs, Tyler."

Tyler, holding his glass, glanced at her. "You didn't eat much for dinner. Have some milk."

Olivia's stomach growled at the mention of food, but she managed to nod, thinking her stomach was betraying her. To avoid any discomfort, she made herself a glass of warm milk at the bar as instructed

by Tyler.

“There are some cookies on the kitchen counter,” Tyler added.

Deciding to follow his suggestion, Olivia grabbed some cookies and joined Tyler in the living room. As Tyler leisurely drank water, Olivia finished her milk and cookies, feeling full.

“I’m full now, so I’m going upstairs,” Olivia said.

But as she turned to leave, Tyler caught her arm and pulled her back. He leaned in, his frown betraying his calm demeanor. “Where are you going?”

Caught off guard, Olivia stuttered, “B–Back to my room.”

Tyler didn’t respond but held onto her hand as he led her upstairs. Olivia followed silently as they made their way through the long corridor.

Instead of guiding her to the guest room, Tyler brought her to the master bedroom. Olivia trailed behind, staring at his face.

Once inside the room, Tyler closed the door, hugged her, then kissed her.

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Olivia felt uncertain about the situation, knowing Tyler had a few drinks.

He finally released her from his embrace. She remained in his arms, looking up at him, and quietly suggested, “Tyler, why don’t I go for a check–up at the hospital...” Her gaze drifted down to his body.

Seeing her hesitance, Tyler’s expression darkened. “What check–up?”

Olivia had wanted to undergo a check-up for a while now. Mrs. Jones had suggested it, but her previous tests had come back normal.

“Never mind,” she quickly replied, shaking her head.

Tyler kept his gaze fixed on her, his eyes seeming distant. “Do you think something’s wrong with me?”

“No,” she murmured, feeling distressed. “I’m the one with the problem.”

She didn’t want to prolong the agony. She wanted to put an end to it. “I’ll go get a check-up tomorrow.”

Tyler observed her troubled expression, then leaned in close to her lips and murmured, “I’ll go. You don’t have to.”

Olivia thought she must have misheard. She had undergone various tests before, but she suspected the results were inaccurate.

He then kissed her and carried her into the room.

The next morning, Olivia skipped class and Tyler called in sick to work. When they went downstairs together, they sat at the table but didn’t eat breakfast.

Olivia had no appetite, and Tyler noticed her untouched food. “Not hungry? You didn’t eat much last night either.”

Although Olivia felt famished, her lack of interest in anything made it worse.

Tyler insisted, "Finish everything on your plate."

Olivia didn't say anything, but it took her a long time to finish her food. When she finally did, Tyler put down the paper he was reading.

After breakfast, Olivia retrieved her bag from upstairs and approached Tyler. He asked, "Do you want to come with me?"

Olivia nodded. "Can I?"

Tyler didn't refuse, so Olivia accompanied him, getting into the car together.

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The driver asked, "Where to, Mr. Tyler?"

"The hospital."

Olivia thought something was off but couldn't put a finger on it. She realized her complexion looked unnatural, so she glanced at the driver before looking away.

Tyler noticed her unease and leaned closer, raising his eyebrows. "What's on your mind?"

Olivia's heart raced as he drew near. She shifted uncomfortably and whispered, "Nothing."

Tyler studied her face intently, sensing her guilt, but decided not to press further.

Unaware of the dynamics in the back seat, the driver noticed a change in the atmosphere today when he glanced at the rearview mirror.

When they arrived at the hospital, Tyler instructed the driver to wait in the car. Since they weren't heading to Naomi's hospital, the driver grew curious.

Olivia followed closely behind Tyler, worried that the driver would suspect something.

Seeing how she was darting around, Tyler said in a hushed tone, "You might as well announce to the world that I'm here to get a check-up."

Olivia looked up at him, then lowered his head.

The check-up process was lengthy, and when the nurse gave instructions, Olivia listened attentively.

Tyler took the container from the nurse and nodded.

When they got to the door, Olivia didn't realize they were already in the procedure room. She was going to go in when Tyler said to her, "Stand here and wait."

Olivia took a few steps back. "Okay," she replied softly as Tyler went in.

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After everything was done, Tyler sat there, his face shrouded in the shadows as a torrent of emotions surged through him uncontrollably.

Slowly, his expression turned cold.

Olivia stood nearby, uncertain of what was happening. When she heard the door open, she

approached and asked, "Was it difficult, Tyler?"

Tyler glanced at her, and Olivia immediately regretted speaking. She fell silent, but Tyler's expression remained unchanged, his voice calm. "It was just a routine check-up."

Deciding not to say anything further, Olivia tried to act normal.

Tyler leaned in close to her and said, "Let's go." Olivia nodded and followed him.

At the doctor's office, the doctor reviewed the report and delivered the verdict, "Everything looks good."

Relieved by the news, Olivia sighed inwardly. Tyler, unsurprised by the outcome, led them out of the hospital and back to the car.

During the ride, Olivia remained silent. If both of them were healthy, why couldn't she conceive? Her thoughts churned.

Tyler noticed her troubled expression. "I told you, health is important, but conception is also about timing. Let's head home," he reassured her.

Olivia could only nod in response.

Mrs. Jones paid a visit to Naomi and inquired about their previous conversation and whether she had discussed it with Tyler.

Naomi's expression changed at her mother's question. "Tyler said we need a marriage certificate to get IVF. Don't you know that?"

Hillary, taken aback, asked, "Marriage certificate?"

Naomi confirmed, "Yes. I know you're anxious about this, but we need to take care of Olivia's health too." She pondered for a moment before adding, "Do you really want Tyler and Olivia to marry just

for a child?"

Stunned, Hillary didn't know how to respond to this unexpected question.

Naomi's guilt surfaced as she continued, "I feel terrible that Olivia has to go through this. We should let things unfold naturally. Tyler wouldn't do anything to her. I'd rather die than see Tyler marry Olivia for this reason." Her face paled.

Hillary grabbed her hand in frustration. "Don't say such things." Uncomfortable with the discussion of death, she tried to diffuse the tension. "I was just anxious. Let's wait and see."

Naomi agreed to drop the topic, lowering her voice. "Alright, let's not talk about this. We can still wait for a bone marrow match."

Hillary sat there with Naomi for a while, sighing heavily.

That afternoon, Tyler visited Naomi and found her visibly upset. She refused to take her medications again.

Observing the untouched medicine, Tyler remarked, "I've arranged for someone to check the bone marrow database internationally to find a match."

Naomi wondered if it was possible to find a match abroad when they couldn't find one locally.

He continued, "No matter what happens, you should still take good care of yourself." Naomi nodded but then said, "No matter how much money we have, we can't control my fate."

Chapter 127

They sat together in silence, the weight of unspoken thoughts heavy in the air.

After a prolonged pause, Tyler broke the silence. "Take your meds."

Naomi nodded, then hesitated before bringing up a topic. "I heard you're fundraising?" It was her alma mater, so she asked, "For me?"

She knew people wanted to send their thoughts and prayers to her. After contemplating for a moment, she said, "There's no point, Tyler. Don't waste your time because of me."

Tyler didn't say anything and just handed the medicine to her. "Just take it."

Their interactions had been limited lately, and Naomi was suspecting something. Now, she couldn't shake off the feeling of guilt. If it weren't for her health, Tyler wouldn't have to spend so much time at the hospital.

She felt like a burden. "I feel like I'm dragging you down."

Olivia went to the university in the afternoon, still pondering Tyler's morning medical appointment. Lost in thought, she strolled from the lake area toward the lecture hall.

As she walked, a familiar voice called out uncertainly, "Olivia?"

Though lost in her thoughts, she turned around to see Claude standing nearby, his gaze fixed on her.

"Claude?"

He grinned. "I thought I was mistaken, but it is you."

Excitedly, Olivia approached him. "What brings you here?"

“Sightseeing. I heard the scenery here is worth it,” Claude replied, indicating the camera in his hand.

Olivia was surprised by his visit based on her recommendation. She wasn’t serious about it, as the view was rather common. Feeling a bit embarrassed, she remarked, “Did you get any good shots?”

Claude chuckled. “It’s not bad. The swans here are well-fed.”

Although Olivia sensed a teasing tone, she couldn’t be sure.

While they were talking, a man wearing a suit walked over to Claude. “Let me show you another spot.

Olivia didn’t recognize the man.

Claude introduced them. “This is my assistant. I came to take pictures so he tagged along.”

Olivia greeted him. “Nice to meet you.”

He returned the greeting with a polite smile. They seemed to have other plans and couldn’t linger, so

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Claude bid farewell. “I need to go, Olivia. Let’s meet again.”

“Sure, go ahead.”

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Claude wasn't just there to take pictures. The Harrises' donation to the university had drawn attention from Yancey Bank, which had partnered with Harris Group on various projects.

Though Yancey and Harris Group had a good working relationship, Claude hadn't expected his first project after returning to involve Harris Group.

The Harris Group's contributions included funding for the lab and a bridge near the university gates.

Chapter 128

As Olivia watched Claude leave, she realized she was going to be late for class. She hurried toward the

lecture hall building.

Along the way, she overheard snippets of conversation.

"I heard Harris Group donated for the lab building. They're extending the north wing and putting in a

bridge at the gates."

"A bridge?"

"Well, have you noticed the traffic outside? It's always jammed with those bikes and electric scooters zipping around."

The memory of almost being run over by one made Olivia pause in her tracks.

After her class ended, the heavy rain made her hesitate at the gates, contemplating her journey home.

Just then, her phone rang. It was Naomi.

She answered, "Hello?"

"You haven't visited me since our last chat," Naomi said.

Caught off guard by the rain and Naomi's unexpected request, Olivia hesitated.

Naomi then said, "Can you come and spend time with me tonight?"

Her classes ended earlier today, so hearing Naomi's request, she bit her lip and agreed, "Okay."

She hung up and as she stood there, Claude's car pulled up. He rolled down the window. "Olivia?"

Surprised, Olivia turned to see Claude. "Claude?" Meeting him twice in a day was unusual.

"Trying to stay dry?" he asked, noting the rain.

Olivia was stuck because she didn't usually bring an umbrella around.

Smiling, Claude offered, "Hop in."

She wasn't expecting that. "You're giving me a ride?"

Claude chuckled. "Why do you look so surprised? What's wrong with giving you a lift?"

She clarified, "I was actually heading to the hospital to see my sister."

"Naomi?"

Olivia confirmed with a nod.

After a brief pause, Claude said, "Get in. I haven't seen her in a while, so I'll come along."

"You... You want to see my sister?"

Claude opened the door. "Get in."

Since Claude was familiar with Naomi, Olivia had no reason to refuse. She got in and thanked him politely.

"Don't mention it. Buckle up," he said as she fastened her seatbelt.

The journey was quiet and long due to the traffic jam caused by the rain. Claude attempted to ease the tension with conversation. "How's your sister doing?"

Olivia looked at her hands and thought about it. "Not doing great."

Claude tried to comfort her. "She'll get better. She has the best medical team."

Olivia closed her eyes and nodded.

Noticing her silence, Claude remarked, "You two seem close."

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"It's alright..." Olivia said softly.

Claude wasn't sure what she meant by that.

Olivia added, "There's a big age gap between my sister and me. We're not very close, but she's nice to

me,”

Claude just asked, “How big is the gap?”

“Um... Seven years.”

“That’s quite a gap, but I can tell you care for her.”

Olivia mumbled. “Mm–hmm.”

They chatted for a bit longer before falling into silence.

After about an hour, they finally arrived at the hospital. Olivia got out of the car and politely stood before him. “Thanks, Claude.”

Claude also got out. “For what, silly?”

Hearing him call her ‘silly’ made Olivia feel a bit embarrassed. She stood beside him, feeling warmth despite the chilly wind.

He looked down at her. “Let’s go.”

She nodded. “Okay.”

As they walked and chatted, they reached Naomi’s room. Seeing Hillary there surprised Olivia, causing her to freeze momentarily.

Naomi noticed them at the door and smiled. “Olivia!”

Tyler, speaking with the doctor, turned to see Olivia with Claude at the door.

Naomi was focused on Olivia, not noticing the man behind her. She was about to invite Olivia in when she spotted Claude and looked intrigued.

Olivia hesitated to enter and stood still. "He's Claude, my friend's brother."

Naomi didn't recognize him at first, but after a closer look, she was surprised. "Claude?"

Claude smiled at her. "Long time no see, Naomi."

Memories flooded back. It had been a few years since their last encounter, so his sudden appearance caught Naomi off guard.

However, as she glanced between Olivia and Claude, Naomi couldn't shake the feeling that something was going on between them.

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There was a subtle change in Naomi's demeanor, but then she refocused and asked, "When did you come back?"

She then looked to the corner. "Tyler, Claude is back."

Tyler closed the file and handed it to the doctor. After hearing Naomi's words, he walked over from the corner to the door. "We've crossed paths before." Tyler's gaze was chilly as he looked at Claude.

Claude met his gaze, and though their expressions remained mostly unchanged, there was an unspoken tension between them.

Naomi inquired, "Where? Why didn't I know about it? You didn't mention anything."

Olivia was also curious.

Tyler didn't answer Naomi's question, but Claude just smiled.

Chapter 130

"It got late one night, and I figured we'd catch up again, so I didn't mention it," Tyler casually explained, looking away from Claude.

Naomi sensed Tyler was keeping something from her, but she couldn't quite put her finger on it. After a moment of silence, she greeted, "Olivia, come on in with Claude. Why are you lingering at the door?"

Olivia realized that, but after what had happened before, she didn't dare walk in without a proper invitation, so she hesitated.

Claude noticed Olivia's caution and looked puzzled. Tyler also glanced at Olivia.

Naomi couldn't help but try to read Tyler's expression as she saw them outside, but his face remained impassive, revealing nothing.

Olivia still stood there, prompting Claude to say, "Let's head inside."

Olivia snapped out of her hesitation and glanced anxiously at Claude before moving forward. "Okay."

Claude noticed her unease and wondered if her relationship with her sister wasn't as good as she claimed.

Olivia entered the room slowly. After observing her for a moment, Claude approached and placed a hand on her shoulder. "Come on," he said gently, and they proceeded forward.

Naomi felt a sense of intimacy in the gesture, while Tyler's gaze turned colder and colder.

Claude removed his hand smoothly, showing no sign of awkwardness, as if he'd done it countless times before.

Naomi was puzzled. "Claude, are you and Olivia..." She trailed off, still fixated on Olivia's shoulder even after Claude withdrew his hand.

Claude was open about it and said, "I met Olivia at my sister Sophie's birthday party. I treat her like a sister."

Olivia didn't think much of Claude's actions, but Naomi's scrutiny made her uncomfortable. After a brief pause, she added, "I've only met Claude a few times, and he's always been kind to me, like a brother."

However, Naomi turned to Tyler. "Did you know they knew each other?"

Tyler, who had been silent until then, met Naomi's gaze and replied, "Yes."

Olivia couldn't shake the sense of chilliness she sensed from Tyler, so she became even more cautious.

Tyler then said to the nurse, "Pour us some water please."

Claude smiled, and Hillary stood up. "Let me do it, Tyler," she offered.

Hillary glanced at Olivia and Claude, wondering about their relationship, but then thought it would be

nice if they were involved romantically. It would mean Olivia and Tyler weren't together, dispelling her earlier assumptions.

Hillary fetched the water and handed it to Claude, who accepted it and addressed Tyler, "I heard Olivia mention Naomi being in the hospital, so I decided to come along for a visit. I hope you don't

mind."

Tyler replied, "Not at all. We're glad you came."