

All Sins 131

Chapter 131

Naomi's smile was a bit cautious as she added, "Yes, we've all been friends for many years. I'm really glad you came to see me."

Olivia stood there, listening. Everything appeared normal, but there was a subtle hidden tension that went unnoticed by everyone.

Tyler even struck up a conversation with Claude. "How have you been in the past few years?"

Claude smiled and responded, "Not bad. I've been living a quiet and stable life."

"We're glad to hear that," Tyler remarked, his eyes chilly as he spoke.

Claude calmly replied, "Indeed. A peaceful mind is key to a good life."

Naomi's expression seemed forced, but she said, "I'm glad you're back, Claude."

Claude reminisced for a moment, his expression serene. "Yes, you're right. I feel happier being back here."

The room fell silent, and no one spoke.

Olivia looked at the three of them curiously.

Then Claude spoke again, "Well, now that I've dropped Olivia off here, I'll be on my way."

Naomi looked wary as Tyler addressed Mrs. Lindsey, the nurse. "Mrs. Lindsey, please escort Mr.

Claude out.”

Mrs. Lindsey nodded. Tyler didn't seem intent on making Claude stay, as if their conversation and escorting him out were just for show.

Claude didn't linger much longer. He glanced at Olivia and walked out of the room.

Now, only Olivia remained in the room. She looked at Naomi, Tyler, and then Hillary.

They all remained silent, with Tyler's expression remaining neutral. After Claude had left, Tyler turned back to the doctor, resuming their conversation.

Olivia glanced at Hillary and after a moment, she said to Naomi, “I just remembered I have other plans. Can I come see you tomorrow instead?”

Naomi asked, “You're not leaving with Tyler?”

“No. I forgot I needed to return something to Sophie.”

Tyler looked at her and rolled his eyes.

Naomi didn't know what was going on, but she didn't want to force Olivia, so she turned to Tyler. What do you think, Tyler?”

“It's up to her,” came the cold reply.

Naomi nodded. “Okay. That works too.”

Olivia stayed for about ten more minutes before leaving. As she descended the stairs, she spotted someone standing near the staircase at the main door.

Seeing the figure from behind, she asked, "Claude?"

When Claude heard her voice, he turned around, and their eyes met. He smiled and said, "Olivia."

Chapter 132

After Olivia left, only Naomi and Tyler remained in the room. Hillary was also present, but she was as good as an invisible person.

Naomi initiated the conversation. "Tyler, do you think Olivia left to meet Claude?"

"Do you think so?"

Naomi wasn't sure, but she sounded worried and said, "If Olivia and Claude are seeing each other, then-

Tyler lowered his voice. "Talk to her then. She's your sister, so it should be easy to have a conversation with her."

Olivia didn't expect Claude to still be there, so she approached him. "Why are you still here?"

She noticed a lit cigarette between his fingers. He was smoking.

Claude saw her staring at his cigarette and extinguished it, chuckling. "Sorry for indulging my bad habit."

Olivia quickly replied, "I don't mind at all," but she looked up and realized he didn't seem happy- rather, he appeared downcast. She asked, "Are you upset?"

Claude didn't deny it, just stood there with a sad expression. "Yeah, a bit. Being here brought back some unpleasant memories." He gazed into the distant darkness.

Olivia couldn't understand why someone so gentle and bright would have a somber side. She quietly looked up at him.

Claude felt her eyes on him and met her gaze with gentleness. "Why are you staring at me?"

Olivia shook her head. "Nothing. I just think you're a wonderful person."

Claude looked at Olivia under the white light, feeling a strange flutter in his heart. He didn't even realize when his gaze softened further, then he smiled and said, "I'm not wonderful, Olivia."

Olivia held him in such high regard that she couldn't help but be drawn to him, so she shook her head. "No, you're a wonderful person."

His smile lingered as he asked, "Why are you so cautious around your family? Didn't you say your relationship with your sister was okay?"

words.

Olivia tensed at his words. "No, it's not like that."

But how could Claude not have known? From the moment she hesitated at the door, he realized she didn't have a good relationship with her family.

"You need to tell me if you're unhappy," he whispered.

Olivia looked at him, puzzled by his sudden remark.

Claude stopped talking, looking at her with a gentle yet helpless expression.

Olivia replied, "Don't get me wrong, Claude. My family is nice to me."

Claude's smile faded. "As long as you believe they're nice. Remember, you can come to me if you need help."

Olivia couldn't explain it, but his words warmed her heart. She nodded, saying, "Of course."

Chapter 133

It was getting late, so Claude said, "Let's go. I'll give you a ride home."

Olivia hesitated due to the late hour, but after considering, she nodded. "Okay, thanks."

As they prepared to leave, a car pulled up beside them. They glanced up to see it was Tyler's car.

The window rolled down, revealing Tyler seated inside, staring at them. "You're still here?"

Claude, surprised to see him, smiled brightly. "Just having a chat with Olivia."

Olivia stood there, quietly looking at Tyler.

After hearing Claude's reply, Tyler turned to Olivia. "Are you coming back with Claude or with me?" He went straight to the point.

Olivia felt conflicted, having just agreed to let Claude drive her home. With both men looking at her, she hesitated.

Tyler didn't want to pressure her, so he remained silent, waiting for her decision.

After some consideration, she said, "I'm heading in the same direction as Tyler, so he'll take me home. You don't need to go out of your way, Claude."

Claude wasn't upset by her choice and maintained his smile. "Alright then. Let's stay in touch."

"Sure." Olivia didn't add anything else and got into Tyler's car.

Without looking at her, Tyler said to Claude, "We'll be off then."

Claude nodded.

Tyler rolled up the window, and Olivia noticed his expression turn cold, sensing the change in atmosphere. She wondered why his expression changed. Was it because of Claude? Or was it something else?

The silence in the car was suffocating.

Olivia remained quiet, sitting as the car moved along.

Suddenly, Tyler glanced at her and asked, "Did Claude purposely go to the university to pick you up and then go to the hospital?"

His question felt like an interrogation, making Olivia's heart race. She stammered, "N...No."

Tyler pressed on. "No what?"

Feeling she didn't owe an explanation, Olivia stayed silent.

“What? You don’t want to talk? You seem to be enjoying your chat.” His tone was calm, but it felt accusatory.

Olivia retorted, “Even if something was going on between Claude and me, don’t I have the right to make friends? Besides, we just happened to run into each other.”

Tyler kept his eyes on her.

Sensing she might have angered him, Olivia fell silent again. The car’s headlights illuminated her face, making her appear tense and defensive.

There was a hint of anger in Tyler’s eyes. After a long pause, he spoke in a measured tone, “You should stay away from him. I can’t control you, and you have the freedom to make friends, but Claude isn’t someone you should be taunting.”

Chapter 134

Tyler’s tone was so calm, yet it carried an underlying chill. He mentioned “taunting,” but Olivia didn’t understand what he meant.

Not wanting to escalate into an argument, Tyler closed his eyes and remarked, “Well, it’s expected for your sister to say all that. I’m just reminding you and don’t have the right to interfere.”

The entire journey home passed in silence.

Olivia reflected if her words had been too harsh since Tyler didn’t respond, and he remained silent as well.

When the car arrived at Sandalwood Palace, Olivia was trying to find a way to ease the mood, but

Tyler beat her to it. "If you need a ride after class, just call me. If you don't want to call me, you can always call the driver. Alright?"

Olivia was surprised. Not only was he not angry, but he spoke with such gentleness, making her feel she had been too harsh earlier.

Quietly, she apologized, "I'm sorry, Tyler," with sincerity in her voice.

Tyler regarded her as though she were a child throwing a tantrum. "Let's hope it doesn't happen again."

"Okay," she mumbled, lowering her gaze.

With that, Tyler proceeded upstairs, leaving Olivia standing in the hallway.

That night, Olivia lay in bed, reflecting on Tyler's words, before gradually drifting off to sleep.

The next morning, Claude texted her a picture of some scenery and smiling children. Olivia recognized one of the children.

She stared at it for a long time, then replied, "You went to our village to teach before?"

Olivia had spent her early years in a village with her mother. Her grandma's house was nestled deep in the village, and there was a small school with only a handful of students. Olivia often played there and recognized the children.

Claude replied promptly, "Your village?"

"You went to Sereneville, right?"

Claude confirmed, "I went there three years ago. There was a disabled child named Natalie in the picture."

Olivia felt a surge of happiness as memories flooded back. “Yes, Natalie. Her legs didn’t move well, and her grandpa would carry her to school every day. She’s such a joyful child. She always called me

Livi.”

“I think she mentioned Livi to me before.”

“Really?” Olivia marveled at the small world they shared, even though they had never met.

“Yes. She said Livi used to braid her hair, take her to the river, and give her candy. Was that you?”

Olivia’s heart swelled with emotion. Everything was as she remembered. It had been a long time since she last visited.

“How is she? Has she grown taller?”

“When I left three years ago, she had grown taller and could take a few steps with the support of the desks.”

Chapter 135

Olivia was elated to hear about Natalie’s well-being, the happiest news she had received in a while. That’s great. She’s grown up so fast.”

“I never imagined I’d come across the Livi she always talked about. We should plan a trip to

Sereneville. It’s been a while since I’ve seen them.”

Olivia’s heart fluttered at the suggestion. “Sure. I haven’t been back in ages. Just let me know when you’re free.”

“Alright. Consider it a plan.”

After chatting for a while, Olivia set her phone aside, marveling at the twists of fate.

Descending the stairs, Olivia noticed Tyler seated there. She realized she had been engrossed in conversation with Claude and they were now running late.

Taking a seat across from Tyler, he asked, “Didn’t have a good sleep?” He then noticed she kept checking her phone.

Olivia saw him staring at her phone and took it off the table. “I overslept a little.”

Tyler looked away, sliding a glass of milk toward her. “Drink it while it’s cold.”

Olivia eyed the milk, her lips pressed together. “Okay, thanks.” Feeling guilty for her behavior the previous day, she appreciated his kindness.

Typically, Tyler would drive Olivia to the university in the morning. As they arrived, she inquired, “Are you visiting Naomi today?”

Noticing his frequent visits to the hospital lately, she wondered about her sister’s well-being.

Tyler didn’t explicitly confirm, simply stating, “She has a few tests today.”

Olivia wanted to ask how Naomi was, but she hesitated and merely nodded. “That’s good.”

Tyler glanced at her, noting her lack of enthusiasm, then briefly placed his hand on her head.

Olivia looked up at him. Meeting his gaze, she felt a momentary connection before he withdrew his hand, saying, "Alright, focus on your classes. I'll pick you up later."

His voice was soft and gentle, but Olivia protested, "You don't have to worry about me. I can make my own way back to Sandalwood Palace."

more.

She didn't want to take away time that Tyler could spend with Naomi. Her sister needed him more.

Hearing her response, Tyler stared at her. "Okay."

As Olivia got out of the car and walked into the university, his expression turned cold.

The news of the Harris Group's huge donation to the university buzzed around her, but she paid little attention. She hoped Tyler could secure funds for her sister's treatment, a cause close to her heart.

She prayed for Naomi's swift recovery, her worry for her sister's health weighing heavily on her mind.

Later that night, Olivia chatted with Claude through text. They clicked inexplicably well, understanding each other.

Meanwhile, Tyler had been proactive, assembling a new team of doctors to care for Naomi. Olivia remained unaware of these developments, as Tyler chose not to disclose them to her.

effortlessly

Chapter 136

After a brief exchange, Claude proposed a trip to Sereneville. With no classes to attend on Saturday and her long absence from the village, Olivia found the offer tempting. She thought for a while and ultimately agreed.

After Tyler left that morning, she prepared to go. The maid asked, "Where are you off to, Ms. Olivia? Will you be back for lunch?"

"Er... I'm not sure!" Olivia replied, then quickly left.

Claude was waiting for her at the university, and he courteously opened the car door for her.

Olivia always felt calm around Claude, unlike when she was with Tyler. "Thank you!" she said cheerfully.

"For what?" Claude chuckled. "Come on, let's hit the road before we get stuck in traffic."

Olivia thought of what Tyler had said that night and glanced at Claude. What was going on? Why did Tyler warn her about upsetting Claude?

He noticed her gaze. "What is it?"

"I... was just thinking about something."

"Hmm?"

"Do you think there might come a time when you... hurt me?"

"No way," Claude replied immediately.

She hadn't expected such a quick answer.

He looked at her and grinned. "Why would I do that? You're the first girl I've been interested in since I got back."

"Really?" she asked tentatively.

"Really."

For some reason, Olivia trusted him. "Okay, I believe you."

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The drive took about 3 to 4 hours until they reached Sereneville. Olivia stared out the window, lost in thought as familiar sights passed by.

Claude knew what was on her mind. "Do you remember where your old house is? I can take you there.

"It's next to the elementary school I used to attend, St. Hope."

"Alright."

"No! It's fine," she said hurriedly. It was a little too far away.

But Claude knew it meant more than just distance. She hadn't been happy living with the Joneses maybe she would've been happier here in this humble place.

"Let's go. It's your home, after all."

In silence, they pulled up to a small, rundown house near St. Hope School, Olivia was shocked to see

her childhood home.

Claude got out of the car and opened the door. He took her hand and led her through a cobweb-filled door.

“What are you doing?” she asked.

Chapter 137

Claude pushed open the battered front door. “This won’t do. This is your home! We should clean it up.

Olivia had been avoiding looking at the dilapidated house, but something about Claude’s determination and her own presence there gave her courage. “I... I agree.”

Claude led her inside, still holding her wrist firmly. They walked through the hallway and stopped at a broken wooden window sill. “We can fix these. All of them!”

He let go of her and started working on the window, showing gentleness and focus in his actions.

Watching him work helped Olivia come to terms with the reality of her old home. She smiled. “Wait for me! I’ll go buy some cleaning tools!”

That night, Tyler returned to Sandalwood Palace at 10 pm and noted the silence. “Where’s Olivia?” he

asked one of the maids.

“Um, Miss Olivia left after you did this morning. She hasn’t come back yet.”

“Till now?”

The maid nodded.

Tyler's serious expression darkened further. "Did she say where she was going?"

"Uh... no. I asked when she'd return, but she said she had no idea."

Tyler shot a stern look at her and immediately made some calls. No one picked up.

Since it was Saturday, he decided to contact Sophie. She sounded surprised to receive his call. "H- Hello? Mr. Tyler?!"

"Sorry to bother you at this hour, but is Olivia with you?"

"No. I haven't heard from her today."

"Are you sure?"

"Yeah, pretty sure, Mr. Tyler."

Tyler hung up, considering the possibilities. He didn't like it, but it seemed increasingly likely. He instructed his assistant, "Find out where Claude Pearce is."

After a few minutes, he got a response. "He left the city today... with Ms. Olivia."

While Olivia cleaned, Claude helped with the repairs. By nightfall, the house had transformed into something much nicer. They sat across from each other at a table with ramen bowls.

"Boo-hoo, Claude. All that hard work only got you a bowl of ramen!" Olivia teased.

Claude chuckled, studying her dusty face. "Then maybe you owe me a big treat next time!"

“What would you like?”

“Hmm, I should aim higher. How about... some convenience store–bought microwave macaroni?”

Olivia laughed despite her bashful self. Claude seemed captivated by her laughter.

“What’s wrong?” she asked.

“N–Nothing,” he said, shaking his head.

Suddenly, his phone rang. He glanced at it and immediately frowned.

“Huh? Who is it?” she asked, then saw the screen. It was Tyler.

Chapter 139

Olivia had no idea what Tyler meant at all. All she saw was Claude’s bloody face. “Please, let him go, Tyler!” she cried, worried.

Claude didn’t fight back. He grinned, blood staining his teeth. “I may be a sinner, but who cares? Are you here because of Morgan, or because I got close to someone you wouldn’t let anyone else near?”

Morgan? Who was that? Olivia watched them, realizing their usual calm was gone. They glared at each other like enemies about to kill each other.

Tyler smirked. “Don’t push me, Claude.” He then shoved Claude aside, making him crash into a table.

Quickly recovering, Claude wiped blood from his lips.

“Claude!” Olivia moved to check on him, but Tyler pulled her back, his grip like claws on her

shoulders. "Have you forgotten what I said?! I can't believe you went with him without telling anyone!

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Olivia didn't expect him to be this furious. "We were just cleaning my house! And I didn't mean to miss your calls!"

Tyler wasn't interested in her excuses. He grabbed her wrist and pulled her. "You're coming with me! Your sister's worried sick!"

All Olivia cared about was Claude. She looked back at him, but Tyler dragged her forward.

"Don't even think about it!" He kept his hands on shoulders and led her forward to his car. The engine was still running, and the bright lights momentarily blinded her, causing her to squint.

Tyler's grip intensified as he forcefully pushed her into his car. Olivia attempted to escape, but Tyler pulled her back in, holding her chin firmly as he glared at her. "You still have no idea of the trouble you're in, do you?"

Olivia was confused. Why was he so mad over something that seemed trivial? She was an adult, capable of making her own decisions. Yes, she should have let them know of her whereabouts, but that oversight didn't justify such harsh treatment!

"Why are you so angry?" she managed to ask.

"Why shouldn't I be? Don't you realize everyone's been looking for you?!"

Olivia's expression froze.

Chapter 140

Tyler's phone rang. It was Naomi. Despite his anger, he kept his voice calm.

Olivia couldn't hear what was said until Tyler handed her the phone. "Talk to your sister."

"H-Hello?" Olivia whispered. Tyler glanced at her, closing his eyes to calm down.

"Where have you been?!" Naomi's voice came through. "You disappeared without a word! Do you realize how worried we've all been?! Dad almost called the police!"

Olivia bit her lip, closing her eyes. "I'm sorry, Naomi I forgot to tell you..."

Though Naomi and Olivia weren't close, it didn't mean Naomi wouldn't worry. Olivia's soft, almost tearful apology calmed her down. "Okay. I'll forgive you this time. But don't do it again! You didn't answer any calls. None of your friends knew where you were. Thank goodness Tyler found you! What if something bad happened? How would Dad feel?!"

"I'm sorry!"

"Fine. Just... just go home and rest."

Tyler opened his eyes when the call was over. Olivia apologized again as she handed his phone back.

Tyler seemed calmer now. He took his phone back and resumed driving. Meanwhile, Olivia stayed quiet, knowing he was still upset.

They arrived back at Sandalwood Palace at 3 am. The maid was waiting anxiously, but before she could say anything, Tyler ordered sternly, "Get her into the shower." He went upstairs immediately.

The maid looked at Olivia's dusty clothes and led her quietly upstairs.

Exhausted, Olivia sank into the bath as the maid prepared her nightclothes. "Do you know how worried Mr. Tyler was? He didn't stop searching as soon as he realized you were gone. He made so many calls!"

Olivia stayed silent.

“Who can blame him, though? Ms. Naomi was abducted before, and it was so scary!” the maid continued, “Please don’t go out alone like that again. What if something bad happened?”

“Naomi was abducted?” Olivia asked. She hadn’t paid much attention to the Joneses’ affairs when she was younger.

“Yeah, we were all anxious. It took Mr. Tyler a long time to rescue her.”

Fear filled Olivia, and she hugged herself tightly in the tub.

The maid left her clothes and headed to the door.

“Wait. Do you know someone named Morgan?” Olivia asked. The maid paused, stunned.