

Chapter 1 - Betrayal At The Altar Novel by Dolores Delia (Rachel Grey & Louis Smith)

“Will you please continue with the wedding ceremony first? Other matters can wait for now.” “Rachel Grey, you know very well that our marriage is just a trade. Being Mrs. Smith is all you want from me. So, stay out of my business.”

Her lips lifted into a mocking snicker, she had never thought that the three years she'd spent with him was just a trade in his eyes.

They have been together for the past three years, spending most of their time together. She could forgo everything for him, falling out with her family and leaving them. All he had in return was he couldn't control his feeling for his old flame, Olivia Cruise.

“Here is 200 thousand dollars. It should be enough for you to lead a stable life in the countryside.” He said.

Apparently. the past three years she spent with him were worth only 200 thousand dollars. He wouldn't have known that the 200 thousand dollars were nothing to her, actually he didn't even know who she really is.

“Louis Smith, your family's wealth meant nothing to me, nor do I care about being Mrs. Smith. And I will not accept any form of apology and compensation from you. Remember this. There'll never be reconciliation between us.” Her face seemed laced with ice, and nothing was in her eyes except indifference and determination.

As the wedding march played in the background, Rachel walked down the aisle in her white bridal gown toward Louis Smith, who is bearing a bouquet in his hand at the other end of the hall.

Louis was wearing a matching white tuxedo. When the golden light shone on him from behind, it created a gentle halo-like effect that enveloped him, making him appear bright and youthful.

They had known each other for the past three years and had weathered many trials and tribulations together. Today was the day her dream came true; she was finally getting married to him.

Her only regret was that her family was against her marrying Louis. So, She'd never gotten the blessing from her family to marry him.

Tears of joy shone in her eyes when he walked towards her and handed her the bouquet in his hand.

The priest on the platform gazed upon the bride and groom with gentleness. "Mr. Louis. Smith, do you take Ms. Rachel Grey for your lawful wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do you part?"

Rachel controlled the waves of emotion she was going through as she gazed hopefully at Louis, wanting to hear the word of affirmation from him.

Louis did not seem overjoyed by this occasion, and there wasn't any excitement on his face.

He stood there hesitantly, not saying the word Rachel wished to hear.

At this very moment, Jane Smith bolted in through the door from the outside, interrupting the procession happening in the church.

"Louis' It's Olivia..." Tears streamed down her face like a helpless child as she muttered,

"She.."

A gush of bad omen hit Rachel's heart as she gazed at Louis in confusion. Her grip on his hand tightened involuntarily.

Rachel knew the weight that Olivia Cruise carried in Louis's heart.

For Louis, Olivia was the one that got away, the one that would never belong with him.

After the fall of the Smith family, Olivia left him for the opportunity to go overseas. Being a proud man, Louis cut all contact with Olivia and chose to be with Rachel instead.

But a month ago, Olivia came back into his life.

Louis immediately paled as he anxiously asked, his voice hoarse and panic-stricken, "What's wrong with Olivia?"

“Olivia bled so much, and I couldn’t stop the bleeding. The doctor said that she’s in danger of losing her life,” Jane spoke.

Louis flung Rachel’s hand away and sprinted out the door after hearing about Olivia from

Jane.

“You can’t leave!” Rachel grabbed Louis’ hand as her entire body shook uncontrollably. She had her eyes fixated on him, and she said, “Louis, it’s our wedding day today. Are you sure you want to leave?”

Their guests were murmuring at each other, and some even threw them mocking stares that stabbed through her heart like sharp knives.

She stared at him with her reddened eyes as she begged for him to stay, “Louis, Will you please continue with the wedding ceremony first? Other matters can wait for now.”

“Olivia got into an accident trying to save me, and she’s now in the hospital, fighting for her life. I can’t leave her just like that.”

His expression gloomed when he realized she wouldn’t let him leave the church without completing the ceremony. His glance at her hardened as she spoke, “Rachel Grey, you know very well that our marriage is just a trade. Being Mrs. Smith is all you want from me. So, stay out of my business.”

All the years she’d spent with him, and everything she’d done for him, was just a business

transaction to him.

Her pupils shrunk as she stared at Louis’ gloomy face in disbelief. The shock in her eyes slowly turned scornful.

Her lips lifted into a mocking snicker as she spoke, her gentle voice laced with despair, “Everything that we’ve been through was just a trade to you?”

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“Yes!” Louis Smith answered firmly. His voice showed no hint of hesitation as if her question was silly.

Rachel's heart skipped a beat. Her heart throbbed in pain as if someone had stabbed her heart with a knife.

Louis left her and bolted out the door after dropping an insincere apology.

Rachel stared at Louis' leaving figure. She felt as if all air was sucked out of her. She couldn't breathe, and her heart was convulsing in pain.

She felt the chill seeping through her body, freezing her limbs.

The Smith family had financial difficulties when Louis took over the family business. Their cash flow problem pushed them to the brink of bankruptcy.

He told her then that he couldn't provide her with a stable life and future when the company was facing a financial crisis and would marry her when the company was back on track. She believed him and still remembered the promise he had made her after many years. With her identity, she helped him conquer the business world and became his advisor, making his name in the business world from a nobody just so that he could make her Mrs. Smith. She was hoping that her family would accept him once he had succeeded.

She had never thought that the three years she'd spent with him was just a business transaction in his eyes.

She was the only party in the relationship that had seen him as her true love. But for him, the relationship was just a trade.

All her efforts and sacrifice for him were just a joke compared to what he had with Olivia Cruise.

Biting her lips, Rachel pushed back the tears in her eyes with all her might. Still, they flowed freely down her face.

The excruciating pain from her heart spread to every cell of her body. She couldn't help shuddering as the convulsing pain from her heart took over her organs and body. Standing by the side, Jane couldn't help letting out a satisfied grin when she saw Rachel's miserable state. "Rachel Grey, my brother would never marry a village girl like you had you not been bugging him for so many years. Get out of my family if you know your place." Rachel's heart sank after hearing those brazen words of Jane. "Did you forget that the success of your family is because of me?"

“Stop spitting nonsense!” Jane scolded Rachel as she pointed her finger directly at her, “Who do you think you are? Do you think you’re some big shot? My family can still turn our fate around, with or without you.”

Rachel’s heart continued to throb in pain. Was that what she was to the Smith family? “That’s enough! That would be all for today.” Mrs. Smith stood up impatiently and walked toward Rachel. She looked at Rachel in disdain as if she was dirty and lowly. “Look at you, Rachel. You can embarrass yourself, but please stop embarrassing the Smith family.”

After that, Mrs. Smith greeted the guests with a broad grin.

Rachel stood unmovingly as her eyes swept through the hall at the guests leaving the wedding she had been waiting for such a long time. How did it turn out to be a joke?

Was this what she got in return after everything she had sacrificed?

Was it because she had fallen for a man that never loved her back?

Rachel slowly closed her eyes as tears flowed from the corner of her eyes. She felt helpless and weak.

Thirty minutes later, Rachel wandered aimlessly on the quiet street like a homeless soul. The rain started to drizzle soon after, and it slowly got heavier before it poured. Rachel looked around for a shelter and noticed a bus stop nearby. She could only run toward the bus stop bare-footed.

Stones with sharp corners cut through her feet when she stepped on them. Rachel frowned. She gritted her teeth as she endured the pain and limped toward the bus stop.

Honk!

A sharp honking sound caught her attention when it rang through the street.

Her eyes widened in shock as she saw the car driving straight toward her. She felt her pupils tremble as the car neared.

Rachel’s mind blanked out. Her legs were weak like jelly, and she couldn’t move at all

The car sped by and passed her by at lightning speed.

Momentum from the car caused her to lose balance, she swung around and fell to the ground.

She thought the car would ignore her and continued to speed away as if she wasn't there. There was nothing and no one around here after all, and they wouldn't get caught even if they did hit and run.

Little did she expect, the car stopped and reversed until it stopped right before her.

She watched the car door open from her sprawled position, and a man with slim legs in black bespoke leather shoes stepped out from the car. He got out of the car and walked toward her. After reaching her, he extended the umbrella in his hand and sheltered her from the pouring rain.

"Are you okay?" David Jones asked. His voice was deep and clear to her ears.

Rachel raised her eyes and looked at him. The man standing before her had a chiseled jawline and well-defined facial features, especially the deep, dark eyes that could stare into her soul, and she found that to be extremely attractive.

The pair of eyes seemed familiar. Had she seen them before?

But she couldn't remember where she'd seen them.

Rachel shook her head. Her soft voice was a little hoarse when she answered, "I'm fine. Thank you."

She pulled herself together as she tried to get back on her feet. The wound and scratches on her legs had weakened her, and she fell back to the ground.

At this very moment, she felt a strong arm catch her by the waist and pull her into an embrace.

She fell into his embrace and was instantly enveloped by his warmth and the smell of his body. It was cooling, and exclusively him.

She instinctively held out her hand and placed them against his chest. She could feel the strong, muscular chest with her palms and the throbbing veins beneath the muscles even when his clothes separated them.

Rachel felt her palms growing hot and automatically pushed David away but failed terribly. He swooped down on her and picked her up with his strong arms.

She couldn't help frowning, and displeasure filled her eyes as she cried, "What are you doing? Put me down!"

Although she had known Louis Smith for the past three years, they had only held hands. She couldn't help feeling tremendous discomfort when a stranger carried her like that.

"You're hurt. You need to go to the hospital right now." David gazed down at her, his gaze open and straightforward.

"I can walk on my own." She was uncomfortable with the intimacy they were having. The cool aura of him enveloping her was suffocating her, sending tension through every cell in her body.

"Stop moving around." His deep, hoarse voice fell into her ears like an order, instantly stopping her urge to struggle.

A gust of cold wind from the air-conditioner hit her when he put her into the passenger seat, causing her to sneeze involuntarily.

David turned off the air-conditioner as he glanced at Rachel, who appeared weak in his eyes. He took off the jacket he was wearing and wrapped it around her. "Careful, don't catch a cold."

"Thank you!" Not only did the jacket smell like him, but there was leftover warmth from his body. Her heart beat a little faster when she felt his leftover heat envelop her body.

David's eyes swept over her blushing cheeks. A fleeting smile flashed through his eyes when he said, "I should be the one to thank you."

"What?" Rachel gazed at him in confusion.

“Thank you for accepting my apology and allowing me to make it up to you.” He frankly spoke with his deep voice as he gazed at her.

They were quickly driven to the nearest hospital.

Rachel insisted on walking on her own. David could only walk with her at her speed and finally sent her into the emergency room.

Rachel saw David talking to someone on the phone from far when she walked out of the emergency room with his back facing her. Seeming to have caught a glimpse of her, he quickly hung up and strode toward her. “Here is my contact number. You may contact me if you face any problems.”

“I have no other demand from you.” Rachel rejected the name card that was handed to her. She should have nothing to do with him once the matter was settled. She hated dragging longer than it was necessary.

Rachel paused a moment before she took off his jacket and handed it back to David. “Here’s your jacket. I’ll pay for the dry cleaning.”

David stared at Rachel with raised brows, and a hint of a smile flashed in his eyes, “You need it more than I do right now.”

Rachel teared up after hearing such a simple word from him, a stranger that helped her when she was down.

Perhaps she was touched by a stranger’s kindness after the tragedy she went through earlier that day.

“Thank you! I’m fine. I’ll leave now.” Rachel rejected David’s offer to help. She had a more important matter at hand that she needed to take care of. She had to return to the Smith family.

David remained standing on his track as he watched Rachel’s leaving figure. Humor flashed through his deep, unfathomable eyes as he muttered under his breath, “We shall meet

again.”

Rachel Grey limped to the marital room she was supposed to share with Louis Smith. Staring into the empty house, she knew no one was returning to the room other than her. Her eyes fell on the sticker spelling “Happily Married” on

the door. Rachel stepped toward the sticker and tore it off the door, there was no hesitation or reluctance in her action. The wedding decorations in the room got on her nerve. She pulled herself together and kept all the wedding decorations away. Everything else was packed except for the pre-wedding photograph she'd taken with Louis.

She stood there silently with her eyes fixated on the pre-wedding photograph. The pain in her eyes eventually turned into emptiness. She reached for the nearby scissors and stabbed the smiling face in the pre-wedding picture.

After cleaning up all the traces of their so-called love, Rachel sat alone on the sofa the entire day until the night had fallen. Just when she felt drowsy in a trance-like, she heard the door opening from the outside.

She would usually have a broad smile on her face, ready to greet the person coming in through the door in the past. Today, she sat on the sofa silently, and there was no smile on her face.

There was no guilt on Louis' face at all when he saw Rachel sitting on the sofa. Exhausted, he sat on the couch, massaging his temple as he ordered, "Pour me a glass of water." Rachel gave him a wry smile, "Louis, let's break up."

Her voice was firm and determined.

He stared at her, his eyes deep and unfathomable. She couldn't tell what was playing in his mind.

Rachel let out a scornful chuckle as she stared back at him. "Why are you looking like that? Isn't this what you've been looking forward to since you left me during the wedding or even since the day Olivia returned to the country?"

Louis took the pack of cigarettes from the table and habitually took one from the box. He lit it and took a deep pull of his cigarette.

After a moment of silence, he snickered, "Breaking up would be the best option for us. Your misunderstanding toward Olivia is too deep, after all. Being together with you is going to hurt Olivia even more."

Rachel threw a glance at the man sitting before her. She did not bother to hide her sneer. "I'm curious. What else would you not do for Olivia Cruise?"

Louis extinguished the cigarette in his hand. A hint of impatience appeared between his brows. "I've been trying to forget about Olivia for the past three years. But this is not something that I can control. I hope you can forgive me and not blame this on Olivia. She's innocent, after all."

Rachel couldn't help but guffaw after hearing these words from Louis.

They have been together for the past three years, spending most of their time together. She

tried her best to satisfy him, hoping she could one day change him with her love and that his heart would one day belong to her.

She could forgo everything for him, falling out with her family and leaving them. All he had in return was he couldn't control his feeling for his old flame, Olivia Cruise.

Looking at Rachel, who seemed to have lost her mind, Louis frowned. A sharp pain hit his heart. "Here is 200 thousand dollars. It should be enough for you to lead a stable life in the countryside."

Apparently, the past three years she spent with him were worth only 200 thousand dollars.

He wouldn't have known that the 200 thousand dollars were nothing to her.

"Louis Smith, I did not stay with you because of anything you could give me. Your family's wealth meant nothing to me, nor do I care about being Mrs. Smith." Her face seemed laced with ice, and nothing was in her eyes except indifference and determination.

"I will not accept any form of apology and compensation from you. Remember this. There'll never be reconciliation between us." She got up and stood straight as she strode toward the main entrance into the house.

Watching her leaving figure, Louis felt his heart sink a little as if an anchor dragged it down. Heaving a sigh, he couldn't help reaching out his hand.

Rachel Grey took nothing with her but inexplicably took the jacket the mysterious man left behind.

She walked down the street, limping as she went. The bright, hot sun did not seem to do any good to her freezing body. She took out her phone and called a number, "Mary, can you pick me up?"

Twenty minutes later, Mary Green arrived in a red supercar and stopped before her.

She glanced at the white bandage on Rachel's feet and took off the sunglasses from her face. Her brows furrowed in concern as she asked, "What happened to you, Rae?"

"Mary, can I stay with you for a while?" Rachel asked weakly and leaned back on the car seat. She then calmly updated Mary on everything that happened between her and Louis Smith. She told it so casually that Mary thought she was telling someone else's story. "That Smith guy and his family are a bunch of morons. How dare they compare you to someone like Olivia Cruise?" Mary unconsciously stepped harder on the accelerator, speeding the car out of anger. She then started cursing. "Did Louis Smith think he had the capability to succeed without you by his side all these years? He thought he could reach the position he was in with that bit of ability of his? Was he blind or dumb? Did he think he did it based on his greed and shamelessness, cheating on you with his old flame? He and his family have taken advantage of you all these years. Now he ditched you because Olivia Cruise is back in town? Their shamelessness was incomparable."

Rachel casually spoke, "Mary, I'll never end up with a happily ever after. A life where I'm loved by my parents and being married with a fulfilling family is never mine."

Mary was instantly reminded of Rachel's childhood. She frowned as a hint of sadness glinted in her eyes, feeling sorry for Rachel, "Don't be upset, Rae."

"I will not hope for a happy marriage or life since I know I will never have that, nor would I feel sad over it." Rachel lightly bit her lips and slowly shut her eyes. "I'm exhausted. Let me take a nap."

Mary could feel that something was wrong with Rachel. She placed her arms on Rachel's and found that Rachel's temperature was abnormally high.

Muttering more curses at the man that ditched Rachel, Mary sped her way to the hospital. Along the way, she never failed to spit out more curses for the entire Smith family.

The Smith family was still working hard at the edge of Seaxas back then, trying to work their way into the city. The Smith family would never have become the new money of Seaxas had it not for Rachel, who played the crucial role of being Louis' advisor.

They worshipped her when they needed her and ditched her once Olivia came home.

They had mistaken a jewel for trash. She would love to see how long the Smith family would last in Seaxas without Rachel.

Rachel slowly regained consciousness as her fever subsided.

The first thing she saw when she woke up was the pure whiteness of the hospital room. She frowned when the air full of the smell of antiseptics hit her nostril. It was the smell she hated most.

Her eyes instinctively swept around the room as her consciousness slowly returned, and it fell on a person sitting at her bedside.

Stunned, her grip on the blanket tightened as she called out to him in her dry, hoarse voice. "Uncle Tom..."

"How do you feel?" Tom Johnson stood up and placed his hand on Rachel's forehead as if it was the most natural thing to do. He heaved a sigh of relief after confirming that Rachel was fine and poured her a glass of water. "Do you feel any discomfort?"

Rachel instantly shook her head.

"Mary told me what happened to you." Tom couldn't help feeling sorry for Rachel as he gazed upon her pale, exhausted face.

There was hatred for the Smith family as well after hearing what they did to her.

Taking a deep breath, he pushed down the anger in his heart and asked, "So, what's your plan after this?"

Everyone in the Johnson family was against Rachel's relationship with Louis Smith after they learned that she had fallen for someone who wasn't in the same social status. Rachel, being the stubborn mule of the family, estranged

herself from her family, hid her status as the grandchild of the Johnson family, and joined the Smith family in toiling in the name of love.

Angered by her choice, Old Mr. Johnson cut all financial support as the ultimatum to force Rachel to return to the family.

Hence, he lost Rachel for three whole years.

Everyone in the Johnson family had waited for Rachel to change her mind for three years. Little did they know, they received the news of Louis ditching Rachel.

Rachel Grey was a descendant of the Johnson family and was entitled to the privilege of rejecting others, not the other way around.

What a nerve Louis Smith had.

Tom Johnson would not allow Louis Smith to escape unscathed after hurting Rachel. He would make sure this ungrateful man learned his lesson.

“Haven’t you laid out the plan for me, Uncle Tom?” Rachel smiled. She glanced at Tom, amused by his question.

“My plan for you is for you to return to the family. The old man is aging fast, and it is becoming difficult for him to manage the company. You know your Uncle Adrian and I are interested in something other than taking over the family business. So, we would be thankful if you could take over the family business.” Tom gazed at Rachel lovingly. “You can let me know if you have something else in your mind. You know I’m always on your side.”

Tom’s simple words of assurance flooded Rachel’s heart.

She recalled when she went against her family, who loved her unconditionally, for al heartbreaker. She had so wanted to give herself a good slap for being such an ungrateful brat.

She held back her tears with all her might. She choked gratitude for the family that never gave up on her. “Thank you, Uncle Tom!”

“You’re the only niece I have. Who else would I side with other than you?” Tom gently patted her head, his eyes full of adoration for her. “Take care of yourself. I’ll come to visit you again. tomorrow or the day after.”

After Tom left, Rachel turned to the window. The sun shone brightly through the window, signaling that she should take a walk outside when the weather was good.

Wearing a knitted sweater, Olivia Cruise watched Rachel from the hospital corridor, who was sitting alone under the tree.

Although Rachel was wearing a typical hospital gown and sitting alone under the tree, her air of elegance stood out among the commoners.

There was a hint of innocence in her look, graceful yet pure. Her beauty was intriguing, one that others couldn't help turning their heads for a second glance as she walked down the street.

"I can't believe we're meeting again so soon." The voice coming from behind caught Rachel off-guard, and she automatically turned toward the direction of the voice. Her expression immediately turned glacial when she realized who was speaking.

Olivia stared straight at Rachel as her lips lifted into a gloating smile, and it was a smile that screamed victory. "It has been so long, Rachel Grey."

"I can never seem to get away from you, Miss Cruise." Rachel's eyes gloomed. Her entire body was enveloped by hostility toward the woman standing before her.

Olivia wasn't bothered by her words. She continued, "I do feel sorry for you sometimes, Miss Grey. After all, you've wasted three years of youth on a man who never loves you back."

At this very moment, tears formed in her eyes and flowed freely down her face as she grabbed Rachel's arm and started pleading. "Rachel, it's all my fault, and I'm the one that did you wrong. Please forgive me, will you?"

"Don't touch me!" Rachel frowned as she flung Olivia's grip away in disgust.

She did not use much force when she flung Olivia's arm away, but Olivia was thrown to the ground.

Shocked by Olivia's sudden change of behavior, she heard someone yelling from behind. Before she regained her thoughts, "Rachel Grey, what are you doing?"

Rachel suddenly realized what Olivia was trying to achieve and why she had suddenly turned into a different person.

It was one of Olivia's tricks, a show she put on. She would have wasted Olivia's effort if she did not play along in a play Olivia had orchestrated.

Rachel Grey grabbed Olivia's arm before she hit the ground.

Olivia glanced at Rachel in confusion as she couldn't understand what Rachel did.

"If you're going to act, we should make it appear realistic, shouldn't we?" Rachel pulled Olivia near enough so that she could whisper into her ears, and her tone was soft and gentle but laced with iciness. "You know, if you can't do it to yourself, let me help you with it." Olivia's heart skipped a beat as she turned to face Rachel, looking straight into Rachel's glacial yet unfathomable eyes. She knew something unpleasant was going to happen to her.

The hospital had purposefully arranged rocks around the lawn to create a relaxed and comfortable environment for their patients to recuperate.

Rachel knew the consequences she needed to face if she let go of Olivia's hand. Yet she did not hesitate.

Olivia fell on the rocks with a loud thud and knocked her head onto one of the rocks.

Her fair forehead instantly reddened as a colossal swell formed on her forehead. She appeared fragile and feeble.

Everything happened so fast that Olivia could not react, and Louis was also caught off-guard.

It took Louis a while before he recovered from the shock. He furiously barked at Rachel. "Rachel Grey, have you any idea what you're doing?"

Rachel shrugged, seemingly unbothered by his anger. "I'm so sorry. I didn't mean it."

"You!" Looking at Rachel's unbothered face, Louis knew she had no remorse over what she had done.

“You don’t believe me?” Rachel’s lips lifted into a mocking smile when she saw the disdain on Louis’ face. “That’s funny. Why did you believe every word Olivia said when she apologized but refused to believe me when I said the same thing? Is it because my acting skill isn’t as good as hers?”

Olivia carefully touched the spot where her head hit the stones, and she could feel the massive swell on her head. The stabbing pain was so terrible that it would have driven her crazy, and she could feel the spot throbbing.

Her beautiful eyes were full of hatred as she glared at Rachel. She gritted her teeth, controlling the urge to jump on Rachel and tear her apart.

As a celebrity in the entertainment business, her beauty was her capital. It was so important to her that she couldn’t afford anything to happen to her beautiful face.

She had never thought that Rachel could be so ruthless, ruthless enough to ruin her that

way.

Ignoring the killing stare from Olivia, Rachel returned her with a mocking glance. “Olivia Cruise, will you please stay away from me the next time you see me? Else, it might not be such a small lesson in the future.”

Noting the warning in her words, Louis quickly stepped in front of Rachel and looked at her gloomily. “You’re being unreasonable, Rachel Grey.”

Rachel raised her brow disapprovingly as the corner of her mouth lifted into a smirk. “Since I’m as unreasonable as you said I am, stay away from me. I’m an impatient person. I don’t bother to have a second glance at the things I’ve already thrown out like rubbish.”

“You!” Louis’ face darkened as his fist tightened by his side. “Come for me if you’re still angry with me. It has nothing to do with Olivia. Leave her alone!”

“Is a cheap woman that every man could have worth fighting for?” Rachel threw him a sideways glance as she mocked mercilessly. “You’ve overestimated yourself.”

Louis frowned deeper at her, warningly shouting, "You can hate me. But do not hurt Olivia."

He bent and picked Olivia up, then gave Rachel a deep glare before turning and walking

away.

Rachel remained standing on the lawn as she watched Louis' leaving figure. She could no longer control the tears that were streaming down her eyes.

The three years she had spent with him were all for nothing. The love that made her give up her family, in the end, was all for nothing.

But she never thought of returning to him the moment she asked to end her relationship. with this man.

Rachel slowly closed her eyes. She couldn't stop the tears from flowing down her eyes no matter how hard she tried. The tears were her final mourning for the love she had lost.

"Are you okay?" A deep, captivating voice asked. She did not notice someone had been standing by her side all this while.

Rachel Grey instantly opened her eyes. The first thing she saw was David Jones handsome, flawless face. Surprise flashed through her almond-shaped eyes, and she exclaimed, "What are you doing here?"

She had just seen her a few hours ago, and now they had met again.

David was wearing a bespoke three pieces suit that fitted him nicely, which enhanced the innate elegance and nobleness he carried.

"I'm here to visit an elderly." His dark eyes landed on Rachel's face, and a fleeting twinkle appeared in his eyes. He repeated, "Are you okay?"

Rachel raised her head to look at him to find herself looking straight into the black hole of his dark, unfathomable eyes. Her heart naturally skipped a beat. "I'm fine."

"I'm talking about here," David poked at his chest where his heart was as he spoke. "Usually, most women would choose to cry out loud and have a good release of their emotion. Want to give it a try?"

As he spoke, he took a handkerchief and handed it to Rachel.

Stunned by his sudden act, a faint smile appeared at the corner of her mouth. “Crying doesn’t solve any problem. Furthermore, I have no reason to waste any tears for a man that doesn’t worth any drop of my tears.”

“It’s terribly painful, isn’t it?” He gazed at her.

Rachel stared at the branches of the willow tree flowing as the wind blew. Her vision slowly emptied as she muttered, “How could it not?”

She thought her passion would be returned with true love but had gotten nothing.

David gazed at her in silence for a moment before he said, pursing his lips, “True. Instead of hanging on to someone or something that wasn’t worth your effort and love, why not save them for those that love you?”

His words somehow made Rachel’s heartbeat quicken. She stared into his deep, mysterious eyes, feeling a little panicked.

David paused, seemingly at a loss for words. “Since you know that he has his heart somewhere else, there’s no point trying to make his stay. Being apart seems to be better than hanging on to someone who did not love you back, and you’ll end up torturing and hating each other.”

Rachel stared at him in astonishment.

They were, after all, almost a stranger. It was a surprise for her to hear such words coming from him.

But she knew he was stating the truth. Instead of forcing him to stay, letting him go would be the better option, and it would also be a chance for her to start over. She, Rachel Grey, would not stay in denial and refuse to get over a failed relationship, nor did she want to face Olivia Cruise and Louis Smith, hurting herself watching them being lovey–dovey.

She took a deep breath and regained the peace of mind she used to have. “We broke up. There’s nothing between us anymore.”

Surprise flashed through David’s eyes.

He tried to hide the grin that almost formed on his face. Having his emotion under control, he tried to speak as calmly as possible, "One should stop chasing after unrecruited love. You seem more easygoing than I thought, Miss Grey."

"Just like you've said, it's better for me to let go than have a miserable life with him and eventually hate each other." Rachel continued, "The love that I have to beg for isn't true."

David raised his brows as he gazed at her in admiration. "We seem to have something in common after all."

They casually chatted for a long time in the hospital garden as the conversation flowed freely and naturally without any awkwardness.

"Mr. David, Old Mrs. Jones asked for you. "An elderly lady approached them. She glanced at Rachel warmly. "You can come with us if it's convenient."

Rachel Grey glanced at David Jones in surprise.

"Do you mind coming with us to say hi to my grandma?" David glanced at Rachel with smiling eyes.

Rachel glanced at the elderly lady standing by the side, gazing at her, keen for an answer. She hesitated for a moment before nodding in agreement.

Watching Rachel and David walking toward her from afar, Old Mrs. Jones couldn't control the broad smile on her face. She waved at them enthusiastically. "I hope you don't mind me calling you over so suddenly, girl."

It was the first time she saw her grandson with a lady.

She couldn't control the excitement in her heart.

"How are you, Mrs. Jones?" Rachel greeted her with respect.

Old Mrs. Jones couldn't hide the delight in her heart when she heard Rachel greeting her. She held Rachel's hands adoringly and caressed them. "I'm fine, child. You're such a good girl. I like you very much."

Old Mrs. Jones's sudden adoration for her made Rachel uncomfortable, and she could only return her a courteous yet awkward smile.

Feeling the discomfort Rachel felt, David came forward and adjusted the blanket covering old Mrs. Jones' lap, conveniently creating a distance between Rachel and his grandmother. "Although it's sunny today, it's still windy. You might still catch a cold."

Old Mrs. Jones raised her brow in surprise. Was this gentle and considerate man still her unromantic grandson? She thought she might never live to see him with a woman.

Old Mrs. Jones had lived long enough to know what David was up to from the little gestures

he'd shown.

A meaningful grin appeared on her face.

David wasn't dim-witted regarding how to treat a lady, after all. He was worried that she would make the young lady uncomfortable.

Her sight fell on Rachel again, and they were full of love. "How long have you known each

other, child?"

Initially, Rachel was confused by the warmth shown by Old Mrs. Jones. Now, she had finally realized the reason behind the friendliness. She hurriedly explained, "Old Mrs. Jones, do not misunderstand. We just met each other by chance."

By chance?

Old Mrs. Jones threw David a fleeting glance.

She was afraid David did not take it the same way she did.

"Girl, I liked you very much the first time I saw you. Will you do grandma a small favor? Please come by and talk to me when you're free." Old Mrs. Jones glanced at Rachel deeply before closing her eyes, playing the part of an old, lonely woman to gain Rachel's sympathy.

"This kid would disappear for months when he got busy. I feel so lonely in this hospital with no one to talk to."

“I...” Rachel instinctively wanted to reject her pleading, knowing the old lady had misunderstood her relationship with David.

But the graying hair of Old Mrs. Jones reminded her of her own maternal grandfather. She couldn't bear to reject an old lady like her. After hesitating for a moment, she nodded. “Okay.”

The sad face of Old Mrs. Jones instantly lightened up after Rachel agreed to visit. “Then I'll send David to get you, and I'll be waiting for you.”

“That'll be such a hassle.” Rachel glanced at David, feeling slightly embarrassed about her visit to old Mrs. Jones would cause David so much trouble.

“Of course not.” Old Mrs. Jones quickly threw David a gloating glance, a signal that she'd done him a huge favor.

After a brief chat with Old Mrs. Jones, Rachel received a call from Mary Green and excused herself.

David's upturned eyes narrowed to a slit when he watched Rachel leaving as if he was watching a target leaving his sight.

“David.” Old Mrs. Jones called out to him. There was a hint of chill in her inquisitive tone.

David Jones turned toward her grandma and noticed the slyness in her eyes. He grinned. “I'll never forget your kindness, grandma.”

“You, brat!” Old Mrs. Jones threw him an irritated glance before raising her brows

triumphantly. “I did not do it for you. I'm doing it so that I get to meet my great-grandchild

soon.”

David looked downward, hiding the gloom beneath his sight. “That's a promise then, grandma. She will be my bride. You won't regret it, no matter what the future may bring.”

“There’s nothing I trust more than my instinct.” Old Mrs. Jones spoke. “You’re the one that needs to work hard and win her heart soon. From what I observe, she isn’t interested in you.”

That was precisely David’s worry.

No woman would reject him, considering his eligibility.

But Rachel did not seem wavered by what he could offer and did not seem attracted to him

at all. That was a colossal blow to his confidence.

“Maybe you can guide me on that?” David glanced at Old Mrs. Jones.

“You should show your sincerity if you want to make her yours.” Old Mrs. Jones spoke with an air of importance. “Do not act high and mighty in front of her, and take the initiative to be good and gentle to her. What’s important is to be loyal to her. You’ll get it from me if you ever do her wrong.”

David couldn’t help laughing. “We’re not married yet, and you’re taking her side already?”

“I like that girl very much.” Old Mrs. Jones couldn’t stop smiling when she recalled Rachel’s sweetness. “Where are you going?” She asked when she glimpsed David’s leaving figure.

“Taking initiative.” David grinned.

Rachel did not expect to see Louis Smith’s sister, Jane Smith, when she returned to her hospital room.

Jane seemed to have been waiting for her to return. Else, she wouldn’t have met her on her way back to her room.

She glared at Rachel with eyes filled with hostility as she looked at her from top to bottom. A sneer appeared on her face, “I’ve looked too highly on you. I thought you were an intelligent woman and will leave on your own after knowing that none of my family likes you. It’s totally unexpected that you’ll continue to bug my brother and Olivia. You didn’t think my brother would want you back when you pretended to be sick and miserable, did you? Take my

advice and give up now. My brother wouldn't want a woman that every man could have."

"Say it one more time!" Rachel's face turned glacial, and her voice layered with harshness. Used to Rachel's pettiness, the sudden change in Rachel's behavior had taken Jane by surprise. "Did I say anything wrong? You've just broken up with my brother not long ago, and I caught you flirting with another man. Doesn't that make you a woman every man could have?"

Since Rachel said nothing, she shamelessly continued, "My brother told me everything. Do not think I don't know why you went missing last time."

Colors seeped away from Rachel's face after hearing what Jane said. She was as pale as a ghost as emotion flooded her eyes.

She clenched her fist tightly, burying her nails deep into her palms, but she felt no pain. Her fragile body couldn't help shuddering, as if she was silently taking on the burden of the entire catastrophe.

She had never felt so insulted in her entire life, and it would be a scar that would never heal

in her heart.

Only Louis and her knew what happened, and he promised her he would never tell another living soul. Little did she know, he told Jane her secret.

Was his promise worth nothing at all?

Rachel felt as if a blunt knife had cut her heart open. She found it difficult to breathe as dizziness and pain ran through every inch of her body.

Staring at her pale face, she thought she had a grip on Rachel. Her tone became harsher, "Rachel Grey, I'll tell you the truth. If Louis did not break up with Olivia, and you were conveniently by his side, bugging him all these years, you won't stand a chance to be with him. Why don't you reflect on yourself in front of a mirror?"

Slap!

The sound of a slap rang in the hospital corridor, and Jane had taken a blow on her face.

Jane was caught off guard, and her smug look disappeared from her face when Rachel hit her. She looked at the attacker in disbelief, and the shock in her eyes gradually turned into anger. “How dare you hit me?” she exclaimed.

“Of course, I dare. Why wouldn’t I? Who do you think you are?” Rachel replied

The next second, she suddenly grabbed Jane by the neck, pressing her head hard against the window.

Jane realized that her upper body was hanging out of the window at this point.

The height of the fifteen–story building had her scalp tingle and her pupils tremble. Right now, even her screams involuntarily quivered. “Help! Someone is trying to kill me!”

“Jane Smith, did you really think you could mess with me simply because I decided to let it go?” Rachel calmly said, “I don’t mind shutting you up forever since you can’t control your damn mouth!”

As she spoke, she pressed down on Jane’s hand with a little more force.

Jane was hanging upside down and wholly suspended from the window. With fright, she screamed for mercy, “I was wrong, I was wrong. I promise never to do it again...”

Perhaps due to the thrill offered by the scene, many onlookers gathered. Some even calmly took out their phones to record a video.

Rachel glanced at the crowd, thinking she could not afford any trouble at this critical moment since she would have to inherit the Johnson family business in a few days.

“I won’t be merciful next time!” She snorted and pulled Jane back from the window. As soon as Jane’s feet touched the ground, she felt a sense of safety coming from the sturdy floor. At this point, she finally quieted down as she quickly got up and fled, constantly warning Rachel as she looked back multiple times, “Rachel, just wait! The Smith family will never let you off the hook!”

Rachel, however, simply raised her eyebrows as her cold smirk became even more striking. “Then bring it on!”

She had nothing to worry about regarding the Smith family, which had nothing to do with her these days.

She absolutely would not mind teaching the Smiths a lesson if they dared to mess with her, She returned to her room with Jane's words ringing in her ears still. She recalled when Jane said that her brother had told her about her disappearance back then.

She had never expected one to break a promise so easily, effortlessly.

She also had not realized that the man she truly loved had, in fact, never believed her.

She wondered if Louis had forgotten why she was kidnapped in the first place.

She thought to herself, "How could he have no sense of guilt and even expose my scars with his own hands?"

The memory of the incident that took place in the alley had her trembling uncontrollably and her body racked with shivers as she recalled the details of that fateful night. As she recalled, she felt as though her heart had been ripped open as the cold wind rushed in, chilling her to the bone ruthlessly.

It was not until she heard a knock on the door that she snapped out of her thoughts. She turned to see David standing at the door.

Her panic disappeared in an instant and was replaced by surprise.

She did not expect to see him just yet, especially when she was in such a terrible state.

"Well... Is there anything you want to tell me about?" She asked.

He was wearing a well-tailored suit, and as he strode toward her with conviction and with his long, slender legs, he was bathed in the golden sunlight.

The sunlight seemed to coat him in a layer of pale gold and set off his noble and elegant aura as if he were a sacred and inviolable celestial being.

His dark eyes gazed at her face, and his brows furrowed imperceptibly as he noticed the moistness at the corners of her eyes.

“I suddenly realized that we haven’t exchanged contact information yet.” He took out his phone to provide his Whatsapp QR code and handed it to her. “Let me know when you have time.”

She looked at the serious-looking man, and a hint of a charming smile appeared on the corners of her lips. “Since I promised grandma, I won’t go back on my word.”

“Of course, I know you won’t go back on your word,” he replied. “You know, I am grateful that you are willing to make time to accompany her and make her happy, so I will do my best to fulfill the role of a driver and try my best not to let your goodwill go to waste, Miss Grey” His words expressed his gratitude toward her and his main intention in exchanging contact information. Moreover, his trust in her was so unwavering that it warmed her heart.

She hesitated momentarily, then scanned his QR code with her phone and added him to her Whatsapp contact list.

Nevertheless, the next second, he said, “Please also send me your phone number to avoid any delays in receiving text messages.”

She was rendered speechless.