

Fractured Affection

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The corridor fell silent. Even the faintest sound was audible.

Hearing the devastating news, Adam, who was usually composed, grabbed the doctor's lab coat, looking furious. "What did you say?! No, You let her die! Was this deliberate?!"

The doctor, terrified, waved his hands frantically. "No, no, Mr. Fowler, her heart stopped before arrival! Her injuries weren't fatal... perhaps a sudden cardiac event from trauma ..."

Adam released the doctor, as if burned. No fatal injuries meant only one possibility: Sylvia had given up on the quest. He and Noah had coldly watched from upstairs while she was tortured. Did she discover that, and so she gave up living?

Noah realized this too. He clutched his head in agony. "It was me. I killed Sylvia. If... if I had realized it was Sylvia then... she wouldn't be dead."

Seeing Sylvia's cold body lying on the operating table, Adam swayed, while Noah knelt before her

in remorse.

"Sylvia, I'm sorry. It's all my

fault. If you must hate someone, hate me. I killed you."

He mercilessly slapped himself repeatedly, as if only by self-flagellation could he lessen his guilt. The sharp slaps echoed in the emergency room. Noah's face was swollen and red. Even Adam couldn't bear it anymore.

"Enough! Sylvia is dead. Even if you kill yourself, it won't bring her back. We need to avenge her."

At this, Noah's eyes lit up with a glint of ruthlessness. "That's right. We won't let those bitches off easily."

They brought Sylvia's body back to the Fowler residence and had the girls who attacked her brought in.

"Release us, or we'll sue!" the ringleader spat, her face still smeared with Sylvia's dried blood.

It was only when Noah slapped her hard did her bravado vanish. She begged like a dog, crying, "I'm sorry! I was wrong! Please spare me! We're still college students!"

"Sylvia begged you too, but did you spare

but did you spare her? I believe in repaying evil with evil," Adam said. Then, several men dragged these girls away. Endless torment awaited them.

The thug returned later, bloodied hands clasped behind his back. "They confessed, Mr. Fowler. Someone lured them to attack Miss Lawrence. Her location was leaked."

"Trace the source." A glint of cold determination flashed in Adam's eyes.

The thug left.

Sadness enveloped the villa. Neither Adam, nor Noah spoke. Noah couldn't bear it any longer and went to Sylvia's room.

He hoped that when he opened the door, he would see her turn around and call him sweetly, as always. But when he pushed it open, the room was empty; it was all a dream.

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Menu

He searched for traces of her, but every drawer and cupboard was empty. Her clothes, the books on her shelves, the jewelry she wore—everything was gone. It was as if she had never lived in this place, or this world.

But Noah clearly remembered that Sylvia hadn't returned home yesterday. How could she have had time to clean everything up?

He checked the security footage and found that she had left the villa two days ago, carrying nothing. But where did all her belongings go?

He didn't know that it was the system's so-called "erasure." All her possessions had vanished, leaving no trace, no memories for anyone.

Only a recording device remained—the one she'd asked the system to give to them.

Noah almost absentmindedly turned it on. After hearing the recording, he was struck speechless, frozen in shock.

After a long moment, he ran downstairs in a panic.

"Adam, check this out."