

## Chapter 19 The Sadness Inside Grew So Heavy

The fall happened so quickly, Millie barely had time to react. Her nails scraped along the wooden railings, leaving deep marks before she finally lost her grip and tumbled down the stairs.

Both arms wrapped tightly around her stomach, she did all she could to protect her baby.

The entire accident unfolded in just a heartbeat.

At the stairway landing, Vivian and Alexia collided, their heads knocking together before they both crashed to the floor.

Brandon's hands moved through the chaos. He felt like he had pushed something and in the next moment, he saw Millie tumbling down the stairs.

He tried to grab her, but his fingers closed around nothing but air.

The stairwell was poorly lit, and once there was no movement, the sensor lights clicked off, leaving only the greenish glow of the "Emergency Exit" sign to light up the scene.

With effort, Millie pushed herself up and lifted her head, catching sight of Brandon's outstretched hand.

It dawned on her—he was the one who pushed her.

Alexia's voice broke the silence, trembling with fear.

"Millie!" she cried out, which brought the sensor lights flickering back on.

Pushing Vivian out of the way, Alexia hurried down to where Millie had fallen.

Her hands shook as she helped Millie up. "Millie, are you hurt?" she asked,

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her voice thick with tears.

Sweat poured down Millie's face, and her body throbbed with pain—her head, hands, and feet all aching from the fall.

Yet all those bruises faded in comparison to the pain burning in her lower belly, a pain so sharp she almost blacked out.

"Millie..." Alexia called her name again, panic rising in her voice. She understood just how serious Millie's condition was.

Earlier, when Millie had been wheeled out of surgery, a doctor had pulled Alexia aside and explained the injuries. "She hit her head during the car crash, which left her with scrapes and a mild concussion. There's some vaginal bleeding. The baby hasn't been lost yet, but this is very risky. She'll have to stay on bed rest if she wants to keep the pregnancy."

The doctor also shared that Millie kept begging them to save the baby while she was being treated.

Now Millie had fallen down an entire flight of stairs—just to stop her from fighting Vivian.

Guilt crashed over Alexia, and tears poured down her cheeks.

With shaky hands, Alexia fumbled for her phone and punched in a number.

"Millie, I'm calling for help. Please hold on," she pleaded.

Pain robbed Millie of her voice, leaving her unable to say a word.

She could feel something precious slipping away, a sense of loss deep inside her.

Despite the pain, Millie lifted her head and saw Brandon moving toward Vivian to help her up.

She parted her lips, hoping to call out to him, but not a single sound escaped.

All she could do was watch as Brandon wrapped his arms around Vivian, his touch gentle and full of care.

The sensor lights were off again, and only the dim glow from the hallway beyond the doors sketched the outline of Brandon and Vivian standing side by side.

Tears streamed down Millie's face, her heart gripped by a pain she could not control.

"Brandon..." Millie finally managed to whisper as he was guiding Vivian away from the exit.

He hesitated, pausing for a moment, but never turned to look at her. His eyes remained fixed on the white hallway beyond the doors.

Night had already fallen, and the hallway was empty, filled with silence.

Brandon's heart was anything but calm.

Back when chaos broke out, he had seen Millie go down the stairs. What haunted him now was the thought that he might have been the one who had pushed her.

His fists clenched so tightly that his nails dug into his palms, his whole body shaking from how hard he was gripping them.

Right beside him, Vivian spoke his name in a gentle voice. "Brandon," she said softly.

He glanced down and took in the sight of Vivian's face, her cheek swollen and bruised, a fresh bump rising on her forehead from their earlier fight.

A moment passed as he shut his eyes.

Once he opened them, he spoke in an even tone. "That's it, Millie."

Without another word, he took Vivian by the hand and guided her through the emergency exit.

A cry rang out behind them, Alexia's voice raw with pain, "Brandon!"

He kept moving and never looked back.

Inside the stairwell, Millie could only watch as Brandon walked away.

As they walked through the doors, Vivian shot a look over her shoulder, her eyes glinting with victory and a hint of mockery.

Unable to bear it, Millie closed her eyes and let the tears fall.

The truth was, she had lost everything a long time ago.

Why had she called for him again?

She should have already seen this coming.

Was it because she couldn't let go? Or was it because he was the father of her baby?

She had promised herself she would never let her heart waver again. So why couldn't she keep that promise?

Tears continued to stream down her cheeks, and the pain in her stomach grew worse.

The sadness inside her grew so heavy, it felt as if it might swallow her whole.

A single word escaped her lips, quiet and desperate. "Alexia..." Millie did not know what else to do, only that she needed Alexia near.

Alexia was already sobbing, her hands busy wiping at Millie's face, but her tears kept falling, making it impossible to dry them all.

"Millie, this is all because of me," Alexia cried out, pulling Millie into a tight embrace. "I'm so sorry, Millie. I really am... so sorry."

Millie's pain was so intense that her thoughts began to blur and fade.

Images from her dream seemed to flash in front of her, her father twirling her mother in a bright red dress, the younger face of Brandon watching everything from his balcony.

She could hardly bear it and silently begged in her heart. "Dad, Mom, what should I do now?"

Her body shook with sobs until there was nothing left to give.

As she slipped toward unconsciousness, her hand reached out, trying to hold on to something. But in the end, her fingers only grasped at empty air.

"Millie!" Alexia screamed, her voice breaking as she watched Millie's hand slip from view.

Suddenly, the lights in the stairwell grew brighter, shining down on a wide pool of blood spreading beneath Millie, soaking both her clothes and Alexia's white lab coat.

Alexia was paralyzed by fear, unable to do anything except call out for the doctors again and again, begging them to hurry.

Doctors rushed in a moment later, gently moving Millie onto a gurney and carrying her quickly toward the emergency room.

"She's going to be okay. We'll get her through this," said a colleague who often got along with Alexia, giving her shoulder a gentle pat for comfort before rushing off.

Alexia remained still, her eyes fixed in a daze on the bloodstained ground.

She did not move until the cleaners arrived and began to tidy the area. That was when she wiped her tears away and hurried after the doctors toward the emergency room.

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Elsewhere, Brandon slipped into the car with Vivian.

The door clicked shut and he buckled his seatbelt, but his hand hovered over the ignition. He did not start the engine.

Images of Millie's eyes as she fell down the stairs kept replaying in his mind.

From the passenger seat, Vivian's voice broke the silence. "Brandon, if you're still worried about her, you can go back. We're parked in the hospital lot, and if you just go upstairs, you'll find her. I don't mind going home by myself."

He said nothing, fingers gripping the steering wheel so tightly his knuckles

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Vivian dropped her gaze and rummaged in her bag for a wet wipe. Carefully, she cleaned her lips, wiping away both her lipstick and the smudge of fresh blood left behind by Alexia's slap.

She left the stained wipe right in Brandon's line of sight, letting him see the red and pink marks as she sighed. "I shouldn't have lost control and gotten into a fight with Dr. Hussain here at the hospital. I never touched Millie, but somehow she did fall during our fight..."

Vivian leaned closer and wrapped her hand around Brandon's, tears glistening in her eyes. "I'm sorry, Brandon. I only wanted to protect you."

Brandon's gaze dropped to the hand Vivian had placed over his.

A strange feeling swept through him as an old memory surfaced—years ago, when he was overwhelmed by worry and pain during his grandfather's illness, it was Millie who took his hand like this and softly comforted him.

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