## Nine Months Pregnant I left my husband

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Chapter 5

My consciousness drifted in and out. In brief moments of awareness, I could hear my m other sobbing. At other times, it was the doctors. urgently calling for more blood. A cold sensation brushed across my abdomen, and beneath the sterile surgical lights, I saw fla shes of my past.

I remembered a simpler time. Back then, Daniel and I had just graduated from college. We were broke, living in the cheapest basement we could find. Despite the hardships, we were happy. To save money, no matter how late we got home from work, we'd cook meals in the narrow hallway. Even a simple bowl of noodles made us feel content.

One memory stood out. It was lingering in front of a shop window, staring at a dress. Da niel went without breakfast for two months to buy it for me. When he gave it to me, I was furious.

"If you keep skipping meals, you're going to destroy your stomach! What were you thinking?" I yelled. "And what do I even need for such an expensive dress?"

But he held me close and said with all the sincerity in the world, "My wife deserves the b est things in life. I'll work hard to make sure you have everything you want."

Time passed, and later, his career took off. He began showering me with luxury goods, but none of those things ever meant as much as that dress. The man who once promised me everything found another

woman.

As these memories surfaced, even in my half-conscious state, the

sadness consumed me. Tears rolled down my face. But then something loud broke thro ugh the haze. I heard my baby's first cry. Instantly, my

heart swelled, both aching and filled with joy.

With whatever strength I had left, I fought to open my eyes, my voice trembling as I ask ed, "Is my baby okay?"

"Don't worry, Mrs. Hart! You've got a healthy little princess!" the doctor

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reassured me.

At that moment, I finally let myself relax. I closed my eyes, feeling at

peace.

The next time I woke up, the smell of disinfectant lingered in the air as I struggled out of the darkness. When I finally opened my eyes, the first thing I saw was Mom's tear—filled, bloodshot eyes.

She didn't say a word, but her tears fell like rain.

"My poor Olivia, you've been through so much," she said softly, her voice cracking.

Anxiety crept in as I touched my now-

flat belly and looked at her. But Mom quickly soothed my worries. "Your baby is right her e," she said, cradling a tiny, peaceful angel in her arms. "You two were so lucky. God is watching over you."

As if to reassure me further, she gently placed the baby beside me. "But the doctors sai d you went through hell this time. You lost so much blood. You'll need to take good care of yourself, especially those stitches. You can't overwork yourself!"

In that heavy silence, Mom carefully avoided mentioning Daniel. I had. just survived a n ear-death experience while Daniel, her son-in-

law, had been missing all night. My mom was sharp and always had been. I kissed my d aughter's tiny fingers, and without hesitation, I calmly. told my mother, "I'm planning to d ivorce him."

"Mom, Daniel-" I began, but she interrupted me.

"Olivia, you don't need to explain anything. I know everything. My poor girl," she said, he r voice heavy with sorrow as she held my hand, tears streaming down her face.

"Last night, after you went into surgery, I kept calling that jerk. His phone was off, and he wasn't answering! I thought he was tied up with work," she went on, her voice shaking

with anger. "It wasn't until after you were out of surgery that I saw him. He was with some other

at th

woman hospital, getting her checked in." Her voice cracked as

she fought back tears. "If it weren't for the fact that you needed me, I

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would've marched over there and ripped both of them apart!"

I squeezed her hand, comforting her, feeling an unexpected sense of calm. Mom had rai sed me on her own, fragile on the outside but full of strength. No matter how old I got, in her eyes, I would always be her little girl who needed protection.

"Olivia, just like I raised you by myself, I'll help you raise your

daughter, too," she said, her voice strong again. "So whatever you need to do, go ahead . You don't owe me any explanations."

At that moment, I realized something important. Even without Daniel, I still had my moth er. Her love would always be there, solid and. unwavering. *My* world wasn't going to fall apart because of my husband.

It's just a man, after all.

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