

The Last Goodbye Chapter 13

Ripples stirred in my heart, mirroring the surface of the lake. At least someone still cared whether I lived or died.

“If you keep this up, you’ll catch a cold. Better head back,” the security guard urged.

I nodded, and as I began walking home, I could hear his footsteps trailing behind me at a measured distance.

I stopped, and so did he.

When I turned around, he quickly said, “I’m not following you. This just happens to be part of my patrol route.”

He was clearly not used to lying. His eyes flitted nervously, avoiding mine.

I let it slide and continued ahead. It wasn’t until I stepped into my yard that he finally turned and left.

When I reached the door, it was already locked. I called out a few times, but no one answered. After a while, I gave up and sat down on the doorstep.

Alfred would’ve left the door open for me. The only one who would lock me out was Andrew.

I didn’t know how long I sat there before I heard the door open behind me.

Even then, I didn’t move a muscle.

“Jeffrey, you woke Valerie. Now she’s upset and won’t let me open the door for you. So, what should I do now?” Andrew’s voice was as smug as always.

I turned to face him through the mesh, saying nothing.

After a long pause, I finally spoke. “Andrew, you’re terrified that Valerie might actually treat me well.”

Andrew raised his chin slightly at that. “We’re different.

“Of course,” I said calmly. “I’m her husband. You’re just the one who came between us.”

I’d dealt with Andrew enough times to know how to hit where it hurt.

Andrew chuckled. “But I’m the father of her child.”

“Do you repeat that to yourself often?” I asked, almost sympathetically. “When you look at me, do you see your future?”

“That’s impossible,” Andrew shot back, his voice clipped, his words firm. But he still refused to meet my eyes.

Realizing he was losing ground, Andrew slammed the door shut. “I’ve made up my mind. You can spend the night out here.”

I remained seated on the steps, staring up at the moon

It wasn’t the same as the one I’d seen by the lake. This moon hung high in the night sky, just as white and pure, but without the same allure..

I lowered my gaze, looking toward the direction of the lake, though it wasn’t in view. Yet somehow, I still felt its presence right in front of me.

In a daze, I imagined two figures walking together by the water. Though they remained distant, I could feel them slowly growing closer.

I remembered her sitting on the bench by the lake, tears dampening her lashes and streaking her cheeks. Even then, she held her head high.

Despite the sobs that escaped her lips, she clung to her composure. “I don’t want to just be Mrs. Page,” she had said. “I want them to call me Ms. Lindberg.”

In the light of dawn, her eyes had shone bright, her tears scorching as they landed deep in my heart.

Thus, I gave her a role in the company, taught her the ropes, and helped her rise. However, she was the one to push me aside in the end.

While I had been elated by what seemed like Valerie’s improved treatment of me, she had been weaving her web, silent and patient, closing in on me like a predator.

I had thought multiple times that if I had the chance to do it all over again, I would never have agreed to her request that morning.