

Olivia F 991

Chapter 991

It took up so much of Olivia's will for her to shift her gaze away from Ethan's abs.

She began the checkup seriously and took out a stethoscope to listen to his heartbeat.

"What is this, Liv? It's cold," he muttered. "Why does this dream feel so real?"

"Stop talking," she hushed him, not wanting to waste the time explaining it to him.

After that, she checked on his eyes. His orbs were lifeless, so she couldn't diagnose anything from them.

The only thing she could do was to detox him so that he could check his eyes at a hospital.

Once the detox was over, his other organs would recover slowly.

Meanwhile, Ethan hurriedly zipped his lips.

Even though it was a dream to him, he wished she could stay a second longer.

That way, there would at least be more memories he could look back on.

"Turn around."

"Okay."

After a meticulous check, she deemed that the effort she spent over the last two days was worth it.

The most important factor was that he was healthier than an average person. He recovered fast every time he was injured.

time he was injured.

"Okay. Turn around." She slapped his butt.

Now that she was assured that he was recovering well, he let her guard down.

Yet, it was the fuse that sent his whole body burning.

Ethan turned over and pinned her down.

"Now that you're done, is it my turn to check?"

Olivia placed her hands against his chest. "What are you doing?"

He kissed her again. "Liv, did you miss me all these years? Did you miss me even for a moment?"

She recalled the resolution she made to herself on the day she left.

She wouldn't look back again for the rest of her life.

This time, she was willing to save him only because he was the father of her children. It didn't mean that she wanted a reconciliation.

Since there was no possibility between them, she could only give him the cold shoulder.

"No. I didn't miss you at all. I'm living a good life after leaving your side. My days are full of sunshine."

His expression suddenly changed. "So, you've fallen for Jack?"

The sheer thought of the possibility ticked him off.

He bit her lips hard. "How cruel of you, Liv. You told me that you're going to love only me forever."

Olivia was his bottom line.

Ethan hugged her tighter, rendering it more difficult for her to escape. Raising her hand, she wanted to hit him, but she noticed the wound on his arm.

According to Kelvin, Ethan was injured because of a woman who looked similar to her.

Olivia gave it a thought. She put in so much effort and barely pulled him back from death's doorstep.

If he was hurt, she would need to treat him again.

She slowly put her hand down.

After considering that he was affected by the medicine, she softened her voice.

"I was lying. I did miss you."

"Really?"

"Yes, really. Can you let me go now?"

Ethan suddenly reached out for her. "Let me see how much you miss me."

Olivia was baffled at that. She couldn't keep up with his logic at this point.

Although he couldn't see, he managed to take her clothes off swiftly.

Like a madman, he pulled her closer to him. "Liv."

She wondered if she had added the wrong drug. She didn't know what was going on with him as she found the situation absurd.

His organs were more or less damaged, but what about there?

Why was sex the only thing he could think of even when he was dreaming?

Ethan licked her ear lustfully. "You won't let me hold your hands during the day. So I can only do it in my dreams ..."

Olivia suddenly recalled what he said to her a few years back then, that she was the person in his dream.

The question was—what did he do to her in his dreams?

"Liv, hug me."

Chapter 992

Olivia thought about her newlywed days. Ethan had always been a reticent man.

Even if he mustered all his strength on the bed, his expression seldom showed much change. Let

alone the times he expressed his emotions aloud.

If he had not made it impossible for her to walk the next day every time they had sex, she would've

doubted his feelings for her. novelbin

He bottled everything up, not wanting anyone to read his emotions.

And after years of ups and downs, it seemed that their positions had changed.

Olivia kept all her feelings to herself while Ethan became the pitiful party.

He never hid his feelings anymore.

Like a loving and passionate dog, he knew where her sensitive parts were.

His wet lips traced downward along her neck, leaving wet marks.

"Liv, I miss you. I miss you so much that I'm going crazy."

Meanwhile, she thought, "Brent's gonna be back soon. If he sees me under Ethan, he's gonna throw a

ruckus for sure."

An idea flashed across her mind. She softened her voice. "I miss you, too, Ethan. But I gotta go. Time is running out."

"Where are you going?"

"I will think of something to see you again."

She then took the initiative to kiss him, taking the lead from him.

Her action caught him off-guard.

Anything could happen in a dream, anyway. Even if it was something absurd, he wouldn't suspect it.

Her kiss got him all mesmerized, and she seized her chance to escape.

Ethan, who was left alone, kept calling for her, "Liv. Liv ..."

Olivia hurriedly tidied herself up before walking out of the caves.

Those people were long gone, leaving only the red snake outside.

Willow was searching for fruits in the mountains nearby, so it was protecting her.

The cool breeze blew, calming Olivia down from the heat.

She climbed a tree and rested her hands on the back of her head.

The sunlight cascaded down on her through the leaves.

As she stared at the floating clouds and flying birds, memories of her with Ethan fled across her head.

Those moments were happy, painful, and despairing.

It was as though those days happened only just yesterday.

Now that Olivia counted the days, she realized that they had been at this for almost ten years.

She would be turning 27 this year.

Once, she was a naive girl who gave up on everything to entrust her life to him until their marriage met its demise.

She even thought of committing suicide for good during her saddest moments.

At long last, she stepped out of that kind of life.

She should be enjoying her time right now. Why should she look back again?

Closing her eyes, she calmed herself down.

Brent came to the tree.

When he noticed how laid-back the woman appeared, he couldn't help but call her, "Vanessa, how's Mr.

Miller doing?"

"Pretty good." Olivia jumped off the tree. "Let's go. Once we pull it through today, the detox will be halfway done."

"Thank you."

She replied without looking back, "Save it. I don't save people for free."

Ethan fell asleep on the animal's skin. Since he was weak, he couldn't put up with it for long.

Once he woke up, he would simply assume that it was a dream.

Olivia took the ingredients from Brent to start making the medicine. She took a few pills to stay awake.

Back when she decided to prepare for pregnancy, she took all kinds of medication every day.

As time passed, it changed her body in nature.

Although Olivia's blood was not as useful as Willow's, she was slightly different from ordinary people.

Brent stayed by Ethan's side. Now, Ethan only had to take the special bath thrice a day.

That was why Brent let Ethan sleep instead of waking him up.

An hour later, Ethan suddenly woke up.

Sensing that someone was by his side, he hugged that person immediately. "Liv, you've come to me."

Chapter 993

A helpless Brent answered, "Mr. Miller, it's me."

Ethan reached out to touch him. "Where's Liv?"

"It must be a dream again?"

"A dream?" Ethan frowned.

The dream felt too real for him. It was so real that he could feel Olivia's skin and temperature.

He thought he could still hear her voice ringing in his ears.

"Yeah. I'm afraid Mrs. Miller is still somewhere far away from here. Why would she appear here?"

Ethan's heart sunk to the pit of his stomach.

It wasn't easy for him to finally look for her, and yet it turned out to be a dream.

He lowered his head, letting out a bitter smile. "You're right. Why would I be able to see her?"

Olivia's icy voice spoke. "You're awake. Eat something."

Only then did he realize that Brent wasn't alone. The doctor was present, too.

He wondered if he had said something while sleeping.

"Was she here the whole time?"

Brent quickly replied, "No. Vanessa was outside the whole time. She entered the room with me a while ago. What's the matter?" novelbin

"Nothing." Ethan took the fruit given by Brent.

It had been days since Ethan last ate a proper meal. He always ate fruits and vegetables.

Hence, his body was weak.

When he heard that they were specially nurtured for good health, he ate a few more of them.

Despite having zero protein and fat intake, he felt that it wasn't too bad to sustain himself with those nuts and fruits.

"Refill the bathtub with clean water. I'll change the medication later.

"We'll detox the remaining poison in him. He won't need it starting tomorrow," informed Olivia.

"Okay." Brent did as she told him right away. He was willing to do anything as long as Ethan could recover.

Olivia yawned while preparing Ethan's medicine. She didn't speak to him at all.

On the next day, he obviously appeared better than before.

Kelvin rushed over to pick Ethan up. "Miss, has Mr. Miller recovered already?"

"Of course not. It's only been three days. He's halfway through the detox. It'll take six more days to detoxify the remnants.

"But he won't need to dip himself in hot water anymore. All he needs to do is to spend an hour in a medicinal bath. And he can take the medication once every three days."

Judging from her exhausted complexion, everyone could tell that it had been tough for her.

"Thank you so much. You sacrificed your sleep just to treat Mr. Miller. You are a living angel! I'll make you a trophy of appreciation once I return home."

The corner of Olivia's lips twitched.

"That kind of thing isn't worth anything. As for the payment, I'll seek it from Mr. Ethan. Look after him. I'll

be getting some rest in my room."

She yawned and left without looking back.

After she left, Ethan suddenly grabbed Kelvin's hand. "Did you guys mention my name to her?"

Kelvin scratched the back of his head. "No. We've been calling you Mr. Miller."

He turned to look at Brent. "What about you, Brent?"

"No. Uncle Tucker has been calling you a brat, too. Your name wasn't mentioned. Even Krystal called you Sova."

Half of the red marks on Ethan's face had subsided. There are only some marks adorning the corner of his eyes and his forehead.

The somber Ethan had doubts. "Say, how does she know my name?"

Not even the meticulous Brent noticed it, let alone Kelvin, who wasn't the sharpest tool in the shed.

"Mr. Miller, do you mean ..."

Ethan said, "She knows me."

Chapter 994

Brent explained, "She's a famous doctor, not a country bumpkin. You're not wearing a mask, so it's not weird that she recognizes you, Mr. Miller."

Ethan's brows slightly creased. "Is that so?"

"Yeah. It could be because famous doctors have a certain ego. But she did her best to detox you,"

Kelvin added.

Ethan couldn't put a finger on it. He kept feeling that the doctor treated him differently from others.

Perhaps he was overthinking it.

Noticing that he was still alive, Krystal threw herself at him with reddened eyes.

"Sova, I was worried sick about you."

Ethan trusted his guts and shifted to the other side, dodging her hug. "I'm fine. Sorry for keeping you waiting. I still have to stay for treatment. You should go back home."

She gaped in surprise. She jumped through hoops to get there. Yet, the first thing he said was a request for her to leave.

"Sova, I wanna look after you. You can't see. I've applied for a leave. Don't worry about it."

"It's fine. I have Kelvin and Brent looking after me. You're a woman, so it's inconvenient."

She stomped her feet. "What is inconvenient? We're both single. Besides, haven't we always looked after each other when we were on missions?"

Wendy happened to pass by the room at that time. Now, she finally realized that it had always been Krystal's one-sided feelings.

She sized Krystal up with a mocking gaze.

"Young ladies now are shameless. Can't you understand that he's rejecting you? Can't believe you're

still throwing yourself at him. How shameful."

The hatred upon receiving a urine splash from Wendy is still rooted deeply in Krystal.

Krystal retorted, "Sova and I are getting along well. You're just being salty about it because no one wants to marry you."

"Krystal Heath!" Joel called her out. He heard that as soon as he came out of his room.

However, someone rushed over to slap her before he could teach her a lesson.

The slap echoed clearly against the four walls.

Olivia heard Krystal's voice when she came out of her room after a meal. Krystal was as supercilious as always.

Olivia was so quick with her moves that Krystal was left in a daze. novelbin

Krystal stared at Olivia with widened eyes, still unable to register what had happened a moment ago.

"D—Did you just slap me?"

Olivia ignored the question as she stared at Krystal icily. "Apologize to Madam Wendy!"

Krystal's anger rose almost instantly. She came from a rich family, after all.

Had it not been for Ethan, she wouldn't have chosen that route. She would've still been the young lady wrapped in cotton back at home.

The pampered woman had a vile temper. "How dare you slap you? Who do you think you are, you ugly swine? You—"

Before she could finish, another slap landed on her other cheek.

"I'm demanding you to apologize. Otherwise, don't think of leaving this village." Olivia was giving off an intimidating aura.

"Do you know who I am? I—"

Joel hurriedly stopped her by saying, "Stop it, you brat! Apologize to Aunt Wendy at this instant!"

"I'm sorry, miss. Krystal is kinda on the edge these days. I apologize in her stead.

"Madam Wendy, I hope you won't take it to heart. She's just a brat," said the sensible Kelvin.

Kelvin didn't wish Vanessa to be angry at Ethan because of Krystal.

Still, Olivia wasn't buying that. She still remembered that slap from Krystal.

Back when Ethan was in trouble, she failed to understand the situation, and Olivia was slapped for no reason!

What did she do wrong?

She thought, "Does Krystal think that the whole world revolves around her?"

Chapter 996

Resting against the edge of the spring, Olivia caressed Willow's head and flashed a warm smile.

"Good girl. I'll be sleeping for a moment."

Willow nodded before pecking her mother's cheek.

Some butterflies danced around them. If they had a camera, it would have been a scene enchanting enough to be commemorated with a picture.

Olivia was so tired because she had spent several white nights, so she fell asleep by the spring.

Her tress was left flowing over her shoulders.

Without the mask covering her face, her skin appeared crystal clear. She became prettier than before.

As the good girl she was, Willow didn't disturb Olivia. Willow was harvesting herbs nearby.

The little animals seemed to like her very much. Even the little dear, who often visited the place, would sit before her to let her brush it.

The day seemed simple and wonderful.

Ethan was weak to begin with. The worst thing was that his eyesight had yet to recover.

It rendered it difficult to stay in a foreign place.

Brent led Ethan around so that he could familiarize himself with the small room, which was filled with wooden furniture.

When they opened the window, they could hear the birds chirping and the sound of the stream flowing.

"Slow down, Sova. Here's a small table. There's water on it. If you're thirsty—" Krystal wanted to help him.

Ethan shoved her hand away. "Krystal, as I said, you don't have to stay here. I'll ask someone to send you back."

"But Sova, I—"

Ethan waved his hand, motioning for Brent and Kelvin to leave.

Now that they were alone, Ethan said, "Krystal, you've reached the age of marriage. I hope you can get over me and don't look only at me anymore.

"Three years ago, I told you that I have someone I love. I will never marry anyone else other than her again."

"Olivia left you a long time ago. I know you've been looking for her this whole time. If she loved you, how could she leave your side without hesitation?"

"It's been years. She might've fallen for someone else and have kids—"

Ethan smashed the glass on the table.

"Have I told you not to slander Liv in front of me? This is the last time, Krystal. I've said what I have to say. I don't love you, and I never will."

Noticing his anger, she stomped her feet.

"Ethan Miller, how could you be so blind in love and cruel? Can't you see my genuine feelings for you?"

"I don't know what is so nice about that woman that you can't get over here for so many years. What do you love about her?"

"I love everything about her. Now, leave."

Krystal cried while running away.

Brent patted Kelvin's shoulder.

"Ask a few guys to follow her. Don't lose her. There are poisonous animals and fruits everywhere. If

something goes south, we won't be able to handle the consequences."

The bitter Kelvin chased after her, thinking, "What a bad omen. Just what is she here for?"

Brent gazed at the sitting Ethan, whose feet were surrounded by shreds of glass.

Sighing, Brent crouched down to clean up the mess. "Mr. Miller, you haven't fully recovered. Please

don't be livid." novelbin

Ethan kneaded his brows. "Find the right time to send her back."

"Okay."

The thought of Willow's gaze made Brent's skin crawl.

His hunch was telling him that Willow was targeting Krystal.

Considering that this was Willow's territory, he figured that he wouldn't be able to stand a chance

against the other party if they did something to Krystal.

While Olivia was in a deep sleep, Willow played with the baby deer for a while.

Until then, a pigeon flew into the cave and perched on Willow's shoulder.

It cooed, and she stood up.

She glanced at the sleeping woman before leaving quietly.

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Chapter 998

The number of snakes surrounding them increased. Kelvin threw Krystal off his back.

Before she could react to that, he pressed her head onto the ground abruptly. novelbin

She was livid. "What are you—"

"Shut up!"

He hushed her before pleading, "Please stop blowing the flute. She knows that she's wrong. She will not do it again. Stop those snakes from coming at us!"

He lowered his voice, threatening Krystal, "If you don't wanna die, beg for mercy right now! Otherwise, we won't be able to get out of this village."

The sound of snakes hissing echoed in the woods.

Krystal had never witnessed such a sight before. She wasn't even wearing protective gear.

The snakes didn't stop in their tracks.

Kelvin grabbed her ponytail to press her head onto the ground again. "I am so sorry, miss. Please show us mercy. If your mother finds out about this, she won't be happy, will she?"

As he had expected, the sound of the flute stopped as soon as he said that. The snakes ceased, too.

Still, it gave them goosebumps to have so many snakes staring at them.

Willow was still a kid, after all. The person she cared the most was Olivia.

The first time Willow used her ability was when she was two. Olivia had gone to the mountains to harvest herbs at that time.

The smell of animal-repellent powder on her subsided because she stayed in the mountains for too long.

A leopard sneakily attacked her from behind. Even though she reacted quickly, her arms were scratched.

Her blood splattered onto the little girl in the pack basket.

Willow's eyes widened. No one told her what to do, but she managed to call upon the insects, rats, snakes, and birds nearby in a fit of pique.

That leopard was bitten to death, leaving only its bones.

Olivia wasn't surprised by the leopard but by her daughter instead.

Willow could still remember Olivia's look back then. It was the look in which one was watching a monster.

That look merely lasted for a few seconds before Olivia hugged Willow and comforted her.

Nevertheless, it wrenched Willow's heart every time she recalled Olivia's gaze back then.

Kelvin was right. Olivia wouldn't want Willow to misuse her ability.

Willow blew the flute again. The melody slowly turned into a soft tune.

The snakes retreated like a withdrawing wave that pounded against the beach.

The red snake picked Willow up from the tree. When they were about to reach the ground, the

barefooted Willow jumped off it and landed before Krystal.

Krystal raised her head, meeting Willow's green eyes. Willow stared at her deeply as the latter

trembled in fear.

The sound of the bell rang, and Krystal's heart pounded along with the beat.

She broke into a cold sweat. When the bell could no longer be heard, she flopped onto the ground as

though her soul had left her body.

Her initial plan was to leave the village the next day, but she fell sick that night.

She wasn't in the right state of mind as she kept mumbling nonsense.

Kelvin was excited when he told Brent about the incident.

"Brent, you don't know how magnificent the sight was. It was a sea of snakes swarming us to the sound

of the flute! It was like a movie!

"They came right at us from all sides! It was terrifying!"

Brent frowned, recalling what Wendy had said before leaving. He had a hunch that Krystal's illness wasn't a coincidence.

"Brent, what are you thinking about?"

"Did Vanessa say that she won't let Krystal leave the village?"

Chapter 999

"She did, but that was on the condition that Krystal didn't apologize. Krystal did apologize to Madam Wendy."

Brent shook his head. "Do you think that it was a sincere apology?" novelbin

"I don't think so. If it really is Krystal's fault, what should we do?"

Brent sighed. "She should take the responsibility herself. Tell her to apologize to Madam Wendy sincerely."

He entered the room where the weak Ethan was resting.

Ethan didn't know what happened out there.

Brent greeted him as always when he entered the room, "Mr. . Miller, it's me."

"I know." Ethan could recognize the duo's footsteps. He wasn't as weak as Brent thought.

"How are you feeling today?"

Ethan closed his eyes, frowning. "Bad. The headache is killing me."

The marks on his face became lighter. He should be getting better because most of the poison was disposed of.

Brent wondered, "Why is Mr. Miller's complexion looking bad?"

"Hold on. I'll call the doctor over."

"Okay."

Brent couldn't care less about Krystal's incident as he ran to Olivia's laboratory.

She was reading a medical book while preparing medicine.

Not only was she practicing herbal medicine, but she also excelled in modern medicine.

She even concocted her own treatment for some illness.

Noticing the anxious Brent, she figured that something was wrong with Ethan.

That was the only matter that could make the calm and collected man anxious.

"What's wrong?" She slid a bookmark between the pages before standing up.

"Something's wrong with Mr. Miller. Please come with me."

She was already heading to the room. "Okay. Watch the fire for me. Don't let anyone come near the medicine."

Although it was her territory, unforeseen accidents might happen, too.

Ethan's detox had yet to finish. If someone changed the ingredients of the medicine, it might cost his life.

"Okay," replied Brent.

Olivia scurried into the house with light steps.

"Vanessa?" asked Ethan. He was alert because he couldn't see.

"Yeah, it's me." Olivia approached him. She smelled like herbs.

Ethan's expression slightly changed when the faint scent wafted his nose.

It was the same scent he smelled in his dream!

It wasn't the smell of herb medicine.

Olivia had been surrounded by herbs around the clock for the past three years.

Since she was also taking medicine, she carried a distinct body scent similar to herbs.

Not even a perfumer could make that scent.

Olivia didn't notice anything in particular because she was used to it.

Besides, she rarely interacted intimately with others. Only the people close to her in the distance could smell it.

Anxious, she leaned toward him to check on him without caring about his emotions.

She pried his eyelids wider to observe his orbs while asking, "Where do you feel uncomfortable?"

Her long hair strand brushed his neck when she leaned over.

It was as light as a feather, hence the ticklish sensation.

Ethan pulled his senses back and faced her direction.

All he could see was a blurry face.

"I'm having a serious headache, and my stomach is churning. I don't have an appetite either."

"Open your mouth and show me your tongue."

She grabbed his chin. Her cold fingers prompted him to open his mouth.

He could see her getting closer to him and feel her breathing.

She released him before announcing solemnly, "I have to check your body."

Surprisingly, he didn't stop her this time as she undid his buttons.

It was the same way Olivia removed his clothes in the past!

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She pried his eyelids wider to observe his orbs while asking, "Where do you feel uncomfortable?"

Her long hair strand brushed his neck when she leaned over.

It was as light as a feather, hence the ticklish sensation.

Ethan pulled his senses back and faced her direction.

All he could see was a blurry face.

"I'm having a serious headache, and my stomach is churning. I don't have an appetite either."

"Open your mouth and show me your tongue."

She grabbed his chin. Her cold fingers prompted him to open his mouth.

He could see her getting closer to him and feel her breathing.

She released him before announcing solemnly, "I have to check your body."

Surprisingly, he didn't stop her this time as she undid his buttons.

It was the same way Olivia removed his clothes in the past!

Chapter 1000

Ethan recalled the details of the dream involving Olivia.

An idea flashed across his mind; if that wasn't a dream, it meant it happened in real life.

In other words, the woman before him was Olivia!

That sheer thought excited him.

Meanwhile, Olivia was listening to his heartbeat with a stethoscope.

She frowned while murmuring, "Why is his heartbeat so fast?"

She covered the blanket over him and sat on the chair.

Then, she took one of his arms. "Breathe normally. I'm going to feel your pulse."

She had no clue that Ethan was in ecstasy.

He began connecting all of the clues about why this famous doctor was able to rescue him in time

unconditionally.

She even sacrificed three night's sleep to give him medicine.

The shriek he heard when he caught her was clearly Olivia's voice. He didn't mishear it!

Then, why did he have such a dream?

Perhaps she resorted to that method to check his body because he refused to let her check.

The blurry image of a little girl seeped into his mind.

Ethan heard that she was going to turn three years old soon. Perhaps ...

He reminisced about what happened four years ago.

That night, he helped the drugged Olivia on the ship and sent her to Aldenvine.

The next day, Joshua called him to inform him that Olivia had requested birth control pills.

At that time, he thought that it was bad for her health and her body was weak.

Before that, the doctor also told him that her body was weaker than average people's. It wasn't easy for her to get pregnant.

Thus, Ethan asked Joshua to give her vitamins instead.

To his surprise, she was pregnant at that time!

It was no wonder that the little girl resembled Olivia.

However, why did the little girl have green eyes, which were different from Olivia's and his? novelbin

Ethan couldn't control the ecstasy blooming in him. Olivia was alive!

She gave birth to a daughter and became a famous doctor!

The happier he was, the faster his heartbeat was.

Olivia's brows creased. She raised her head, looking at him. "Are you excited right now?"

He forced himself not to smile because all of this was a mere guess of his. He needed to verify it.

Besides, even if he guessed it right, she would escape far away if she found out about it.

He gradually kept his emotions under control.

Still, his hands were trembling due to his excitement.

"I—"

Considering his fast heartbeat, Olivia assumed that he was undergoing a turmoil of strong emotions.

She didn't know if it was a side effect caused by the medicine or if it was his problem.

Right then, Ethan showed fear. "I'm afraid."

"Afraid?" It was the first time she heard that word from him. She couldn't follow.

"What are you afraid of?"

He grabbed her hand. "Miss, I'm afraid that I'll die."

She had a hunch that he wasn't afraid of death.

It reminded Olivia of her past as she thought, "Who wouldn't be afraid when they're dying?"

It wasn't the fear of death but the fear of not being able to meet his loved ones.

She didn't mind that he was holding her hand.

She softened her voice. "Don't be afraid. As long as I'm here, you won't die."

He turned his hand to intertwine her fingers. "I'm afraid that I won't be able to meet my loved ones."