

Rewritten 36

Chapter 36

Zach woke up drenched in sweat, his dream feeling all too real. As his eyes fluttered open, he found himself still mired in the anguish of losing Madelyn.

Grief, despair an ache that clenched his heart and stole his breath. He never anticipated a mere dream would elicit such a profound response from within. What made it even more bewildering was that in the dream, Madelyn perished, and he, too, was shattered, as if facing his own demise. It was utterly absurd.

"Zach, you're awake!" a soft voice came from beside him.

It was Jadie.

Zach glanced at the wall clock, his thoughts murmuring, 'Afternoon already? It's getting dark outside. How long have I slept?'

He noticed a tinge of redness in Jadie's eyes, as if she had just cried.

"Jadie, weren't you supposed to be at school?" Zach asked with a hint of concern.

Jadie's voice held a tinge of disappointment as she replied, "Zach, don't you remember? You promised to pick me up after school on Friday. I waited for you, but when you didn't show, I called Kevin and found out you were sick. I rushed over here immediately."

"I'm sorry, I completely forgot," Zach said, closing his eyes, taking a moment to recover. The dream had left its mark, still vivid in his mind.

"Are you feeling any better now, Zach? Would you like some water?" Jadie inquired.

"No, I'm good."

"Alright." Sensing his distress, Jadie reached out, her hand intertwining with his, providing silent support.

At that moment, a knock echoed through the door.

Zach's eyes fluttered open, his gaze shifting toward the entrance. "Come in."

"Mr. Jardin, it's time for dinner. How are you feeling now?" said the person entering the room, Rosario.

An unexplainable heaviness settled in Zach's chest at the sight of Rosario. "I'm feeling slightly better. Where's Madelyn?" he asked.

Rosario responded, "Madelyn is downstairs, having her meal. Shall I call her for you, Jardin? Is there something you need?"

Mr.

Suddenly, Zach became aware of something amiss. Thoughts raced through his mind,

Madelyn? Why did I mention Madelyn? Am I under some kind of spell?' He pressed his hand

against his forehead, weariness seeping into his voice as he replied to Rosario, "No, it's alright.

Then, turning to Jadie, he added, "You should go and have your meal as well. Once you're finished, I'll join you."

"Okay," Jadie responded.

Meanwhile, Madelyn couldn't contain her joy at no longer having to cater to Zach's needs. After finishing her meal, she settled on the couch and turned on a variety show. It was Friday, with the weekend looming ahead. She was certain Jadie would be home, taking care of Zach. If his condition didn't improve, Jadie would undoubtedly insist on taking him to the hospital. Thus, Madelyn eagerly anticipated the prospect of being free from Zach's presence for the next couple of days.

Hayson didn't return until eight o' clock in the evening. Just as Madelyn had expected, as soon as Hayson heard about Zach's illness, he hurriedly went to Zach's room to check on him.

Rosario came perilously close to losing their job, as Zach returned to find no bedsheet on the mattress, forcing him to sleep on the bare surface.

Jadie, on the other hand, harbored a deep fear of Hayson, remaining silent and withdrawing feeling like an invisible presence within this household, devoid of any agency.

Madelyn continued to implore Hayson, kneeling on the floor, "Father, Zach's illness has nothing to do with Rosario. It's all my fault. Please don't scold Rosario any further."

She knew that in Hayson's eyes, nobody in the household could hold a candle to Zach, not even for a moment. While Zach was merely unwell, Rosario bore the brunt of severe

consequences.