

## Forgotten Six Feet Under Chapter 03

The news anchor continued to urge the public to steer clear of the hazardous area, emphasizing the need to avoid any potential accidents.

Flynn sat up straight, disbelief etched on his face. "They actually closed off Wild Valley?"

My mother's brow furrowed as a thought crossed her mind.

Then Flynn sprang up from the couch, excitement bubbling over as he slapped his thigh. "This is fantastic! That camping trip we took to Wild Valley is now a legendary last hurrah! I can't wait to tell my classmates! They'll be so jealous, especially since they never got a chance to go before it was shut down."

Slowly, my mother's tense expression began to relax.

"Alright, enough of this childish excitement. Have you two picked out a birthday gift for your grandmother's party?"

My father, who had initially worn a dark scowl, finally seemed to ease up. "This time, you kids had better come up with some charming words to flatter her."

Flynn rolled his eyes. "Whitney always helps me pick the best gifts for grandma anyway. Grandma will love it. You guys don't need to worry."

With that, he turned his attention back to the game on TV.

When my name was mentioned, my mother's expression shifted back to one of disdain, and she turned to retreat into her room.

After sitting on the bed for a moment, she picked up her phone, seemingly indifferent, and opened our chat history.

There were no new texts.

Our last conversation felt like a distant memory now, and those few brief exchanges seemed strangely foreign.

An unnameable emotion washed over her, and she pressed down on the voice message button, her voice laced with frustration as she spoke for several tense seconds.

"Whitney, get back home by tomorrow, and I can arrange for you to move back in with us. If you keep hiding, I swear I'll sever our ties!"

With that, she tossed her phone aside and lay back down, drifting off to sleep.

I sat there, wanting to cry but finding myself unable to produce a single tear.

Six months ago, I graduated, but my parents missed the ceremony they had promised to attend because Scarlett had scraped her knee.

Afterward, when I quietly voiced my disappointment, they used my age as an excuse to kick me out of the house.

Fearing my grandmother would find out and scold my mother, I kept quiet about it.

I didn't even dare to use my grandmother's connections to help me find a job.

My mother knew that I had spent my whole life longing for her and my father's approval.

She was my Achilles' heel.

As long as she threatened to cut ties, I would rush back to apologize, eager to make things right.

But now, she no longer held that power over me because I had been dead for two months.

When my mother woke up, evening had already fallen.

Checking her phone, she found only a message from her close friend.

It was from Aunt Lillian.

[Hey, Ginny. I remember you all just went to Wild Valley recently. Hope everything's alright.

[How's Whitney? I tried calling her, but she's not answering.]

Seeing Aunt Lillian's message made me feel moved.

Over the years, besides my grandmother, Aunt Lillian had been one of the few people who cared about me.

I usually only shared good news with my grandmother, and during tough times, it was only Aunt Lillian who would pat my shoulder and reassure me, "Your mother just needs some time to think. She loves you."

I had always believed that.

Until I tried calling her before I died, and she repeatedly hung up on me.

That was when I realized what a 'white lie' was.

Maybe my unwillingness to let go had kept me lingering near my mother even after death.

I didn't want that.

I didn't want to witness their happy family life in the afterlife.

My mother pinched the bridge of her nose, typing a reply.

[Who knows where she's gone? My mom's birthday party is coming in a few days, and you have to come with me.]

Aunt Lillian had a close relationship with our family.

She immediately agreed, adding that she had brought me a hand-stitched silk scarf by Sophia Dallas, which I had long wanted.

My mother paused mid-text.

She realized that the scarf I had asked Aunt Lillian to reserve was meant for her.

Earlier this year, I had subtly asked what she wanted for Mother's Day, and she casually showed me a video of it when she was scrolling on social media.

I had made a mental note of it right then.