

I Died At The Age Of Twenty-seven When I Loved Him

The Most Chapter 13

Chapter 13: Side Story (1)

Chelsea didn't jump..

I spent what felt like an eternity begging her to come down from the roof, and finally, she gave in and followed me down.

She asked me to hold her.

I refused.

Before, I had always felt soft and sympathetic toward Chelsea. She reminded me so much of Madeline when she was 17-the same big, wide eyes filled with hope, making it hard for me to be cold. But now, with Madeline in the late stages of pancreatic cancer, I suddenly realized that no matter how much Chelsea resembled her, she wasn't her. No one could ever be her.

I refused to hold Chelsea, and as expected, she started crying.

There was a time when her tears would've stirred something in me, made me feel guilty even. But now? All I felt was exhaustion—pure, bone-deep weariness- and an overwhelming sense of frustration.

I couldn't help but remember what Madeline had said to me in her hospital room. Did Chelsea really resemble Madeline at all?

Madeline would never pretend to be weak or pitiful just to manipulate me, never use her tears as a weapon. She had too much integrity for that, too much strength. She'd never cling to another woman's husband, and she certainly would never desecrate someone's grave.

Suddenly, the thought of seeing Chelsea again made me sick.

And then, out of nowhere, a deep unease settled in my chest, a gnawing anxiety that made me desperate to see Madeline.

Even when Chelsea spiraled into her familiar patterns of threats and melodrama, I ignored her. Instead, I drove as fast as I could to the hospital, the urgency making my heart race.

I had already reached out to the best medical specialists in the world.

Madeline was only twenty–seven. She still had so much life ahead of her. I refused to believe anything else. She was going to pull through. We would grow old together.

“Madeline, please, wake up! I’m begging you...”

As soon as I reached the hospital floor where her room was, I was hit by the sound of Tanya’s heart–wrenching sobs.

The sense of dread inside me intensified.

I kept telling myself, “Stay calm. Maybe she just fainted. She’ll wake up any minute now.”

I ran to her room, my legs feeling like they might give out any second.

The sharp, metallic scent of blood filled the air the moment I entered. I looked down and saw Tanya kneeling on the floor, holding Madeline’s lifeless body as if she could somehow keep her tethered to this world.

Blood stained the corner of Madeline’s lips. Her hospital gown was soaked in crimson.

I froze.

My mind went blank.

How could my Madeline be bleeding so much?

It felt like an eternity before I could move, and even then, I could barely lift my feet.

I heard the doctor murmuring something to Tanya, offering her condolences. But their words didn’t make sense to me.

Madeline was still alive. She was supposed to be by my side for years to come. Why were they telling Tanya to grieve?

“Doctor, please, save her! I’m begging you, save her...” Tanya’s voice was breaking with despair, her sobs growing more and more frantic.

The doctor let out a heavy sigh and shook his head. “I’m sorry, Miss Madeline has passed. My condolences.”

Passed?

N–No.

No, that couldn’t be true.

This had to be some kind of cruel joke.

And yet... the doctors were telling Tanya to prepare for a funeral.

H—How? Why?

Madeline wasn't gone. She was still here. They couldn't be talking about a funeral- she wasn't dead.

I stumbled forward, desperate to hold her, to feel her warmth again.

But before I could even touch her, Tanya grabbed a glass from the side table and hurled it at me, smashing it right against my forehead.

Blood trickled down, but I didn't feel the pain. All I could focus on was Madeline.

"Get away from her! Don't you dare touch her!" Tanya screamed at me.

Madeline's skin was cold.

Her face, pale—too pale. Even her chin, stained with blood, couldn't hide the deathly stillness that had settled over her body. She looked like a broken, soulless doll.

"How could she bleed this much? Tanya, what happened to her? What did you do to her? Give her back to me!" I yelled, my voice breaking.

"What did I do to her?" Tanya shot back, her laughter wild and bitter. Tears streamed down her face as she glared at me with pure hatred.

"You've got some nerve, Alexander! Do you really think I could do something to her? You destroyed her! You and Chelsea! You betrayed her! And now, she's gone. Dead. You don't deserve to even look at her!"

"No! You're lying! Madeline can't be dead!" I screamed, my voice hoarse, refusing to believe a word.

I would've let Tanya hit me a hundred more times, stab me even, but I couldn't let her curse Madeline like this.

I refused to believe that she would ever leave me.

Tanya sobbed uncontrollably, her chest heaving. After what seemed like an eternity, she clenched her teeth and continued through her tears. "The doctors said she might've lasted a few more days. But she went so quickly because of you and that snake, Chelsea!"

Her words hit me like a punch to the gut.

What did Chelsea have to do with this?

The thought barely had time to form before Tanya shoved Madeline's phone in my face, forcing me to watch a video.

It was a message from Chelsea, sent to Madeline.

In the video, someone had dug up Daniel's grave. His urn had been broken, and his ashes were cruelly dumped into a raging river.

As the video faded to black, I stood there, stunned.

No.

No one knew better than I did how much Daniel meant to Madeline.

Chelsea had told me before that she didn't mean to damage Daniel's grave. She claimed she was just planting peach trees at the base of the hill. I believed her- thought she was just a sweet, naive girl. I never imagined she could be this cruel, this vindictive.

She had sent that video to Madeline on purpose.

How could she do something so heartless? How could she hurt Madeline like this?

I glanced over at the small box Madeline treasured, sitting quietly on the table. Knowing that it wasn't Daniel's real ashes in there must have destroyed her.

The reason Madeline had died so suddenly, so quickly, was because of Chelsea.

Because of my blind faith in her.

I had been worrying about Chelsea jumping off a building, while my Madeline was suffering alone. I didn't even get to say goodbye.

She left this world without me by her side.

"Madeline..." I whispered, my voice barely audible, staring at her lifeless chest.

Pain tore through me, ripping me apart from the inside.

My hands shook violently as I tried to reach for her, desperate to hold her one last time, but before I could, Tanya kicked my hand away.

“Get out of here! Don’t you dare touch her! Curse you, Alexander!” she spat, her voice venomous.

“Madeline said you’re not allowed to touch her body, not allowed to attend her funeral. T—Those were her final wishes,” she said, her voice cracking. “Do you really want to go against her last wish and make her soul restless?”

I shook my head, tears blinding my vision. I didn’t want her to be restless. I wanted her to find peace, even if that meant never holding her again.

I would’ve done anything just to hold her once more, but I couldn’t—because I was terrified.

Terrified that she would hate me.

Tanya and Ms. Martha, the head of the orphanage, took care of all the funeral arrangements. I wanted—no, needed—to be there for her. But on the day of the funeral, a lawyer came to see me with her will. Her first and clearest request: I wasn’t allowed to attend her funeral. My name couldn’t even be engraved on her headstone. Even though I refused to divorce her, in her heart, I was no longer her beloved husband.

The lawyer handed me a small USB drive and said, “This is what she left for you.