

HOW A DYING WOMAN REWROTE HER EPILOGUE

Chapter 13

Sylvie had just earned her drone license, and she piloted the thing with effortless skill.

Every swoop and loop she pulled from the sky brought another burst of applause.

Talented, poised, completely self-assured.

No wonder, really.

It was easy to see how Jarrod could fall for her at first sight.

A woman like Sylvie-she had everything it took to turn heads and draw men in.

Elodie had to admit, even from a neutral perspective, that Sylvie was magnetic. She was gentle, confident, and composed-raised with every advantage, smart and ambitious, and beautiful to boot.

Wherever she went, the spotlight followed.

But...

Everything Sylvie had was stolen.

Her mother and Elodie's mother had once been friends. Sylvie's mom had grown up with little, and Elodie's mother had stepped in-paying her college tuition, helping her get into grad school.

But in the end...

Sylvie's mother plagiarized Elodie's mother's work.

She'd taken the research, put her own name on it, and climbed the social ladder over Elodie's mother's broken back. After landing herself a wealthy

husband abroad, she disappeared-pregnant, and with everything that should have belonged to Elodie's family.

Now Sylvie was glamorous, untouchable. She didn't have to lift a finger, and everything she wanted just fell into her lap.

A cold edge crept into Elodie's eyes. It was almost laughable.

Sylvie's performance was flawless, and as soon as she left the stage, a swarm of reporters surged forward, desperate for a soundbite from her and Jarrod.

Elodie was stuck in the middle of the crowd, jostled several times as the reporters barreled past without a second glance.

Someone as insignificant as her didn't even have the chance to dodge. She stumbled, pain flaring in her ankle, but managed to steady herself.

A reporter's question drifted over the noise: "There's a real spark between you two! Are we going to hear some good news soon?"

Elodie looked up.

Jarrood had pulled Sylvie into the crook of his arm, shielding her from the press. His expression was cold, his presence enough to make the journalists hesitate. "Please, don't touch her," he said, voice low and commanding.

The female reporters giggled and exchanged glances.

"Mr. Silverstein, you treat Ms. Fielding so well! Are you two getting married? You're absolutely perfect together!"

Elodie thought she caught Jarrood's gaze flicker her way for the briefest moment.

What did that mean?

Was he warning her to stay out of it?

A sharp, needling pain radiated up from her ankle, spreading into her stomach. She bit down on her lip and tried to stand, needing to get out of there.

But someone grabbed her arm.

She turned, meeting Joseph's wary look. "What are you doing? Listen, don't cause a scene. It's just an interview. Don't embarrass Sylvie—don't drag everyone down with you."

Elodie stared at him, momentarily stunned.

Did he really think she'd rush over and blurt out the truth? That she'd try to break them up on camera?

Her face went pale, then cold. She jerked her arm from Joseph's grip, her eyes so icy they could cut.

She didn't even bother replying—just turned on her heel and walked away, slender back straight and unyielding.

Joseph stared after her, frozen.

He looked down at his hand, still tingling from where she'd pulled away, her skin soft against his palm. His throat felt suddenly dry.

But her eyes... that look. It was-

Disgust.

For the past three years, Elodie had always been agreeable and eager to please, desperate for approval from this entire circle. Now, seeing her like this, he felt off- balance.

Had he misjudged her all along? Or had Elodie just lost her mind?

"What are you staring at?" Maurice appeared, giving him a clap on the shoulder.

Joseph snapped out of it, frowning and curling his fingers into a fist. "Nothing. Let's go."

Probably just another one of Elodie's little tricks.

Elodie slipped a bottle of unmarked pills from her bag, dry-swallowing one despite the bitter taste. Her stomach pain only worsened, forcing her to curl up on the seat and breathe through it.

At least she hadn't driven today. She sent a quick message to Alexander before slipping out of the venue.

The medication she'd brought from home was losing its effect. What she needed now were targeted therapies from abroad-something strong enough to stabilize her condition. After consulting with her doctor and confirming the prescription, she took another painkiller, pulled the covers over her head, and slept straight through until noon the next day.

What woke her was the urgent ring of her phone.

She blinked at the caller ID: Jarrod's grandmother, Henrietta. Forcing her voice to sound as normal as possible, she answered, "Grandma?"

Henrietta sounded delighted. "Sweetheart, how was your day out with Jarrod at Mount Serene?"

"Mount Serene?" Elodie echoed, confused.