

Five Years of Marriage to Mr. Bradford (by Koi Fish)

Chapter 751

A police car arrived, and the ceremony ended. The curious students returned to class, glancing back every few steps.

After class, they quietly whispered about what had happened. Rebecca only learned later that the police had also taken away the dean and Dina.

A few days later, a notice was posted, announcing that Fabio had committed serious violations, mainly accepting bribes to arrange student placements. The dean had been involved, too; they were relatives.

The campus bullying incident that had trended was also clarified: Rebecca had been the victim. The edited bathroom video only showed her fighting back in self-defense.

Those involved in the rumors and actual bullying would face punishment due to the severity and malicious nature of their actions.

The matter finally came to an end. All related posts were quickly deleted.

Once the next internet controversy blew up, this one would be forgotten, and everyone would return to their normal lives.

The school soon appointed a new vice principal and a new dean. Time marched forward, bringing everyone closer to college applications. Studies became the focus again.

Catherine, Beatrice, and Dina never returned. Rebecca didn't know where they went, nor did she care. Her only task was preventing tragedies from the other world from happening here.

She hoped Vance would never cross paths with Catherine again.

The storm gradually died down. This topic would eventually sink into the river of time. The only lasting effect was that more people came to ask Rebecca about Gabriel.

Jenny had always been a fan of good-looking guys. She had seen Gabriel at the donation ceremony and immediately added him to her favorite list, even placing him at the top.

"Becky, do you know how handsome your cousin looked that day? When he held your hand and announced you were his cousin, wow, he was like a god descending from heaven. So cool!"

Within a week, Jenny had gushed about it at least 30 times. More than that, she even compared him to others.

"He's so hot, Becky!" she exclaimed. "Way hotter than Vance! That mature, commanding, and steady kind of charm! Compared with him, Vance is just a callow trying to act deep and mysterious."

Vance happened to show up behind them. Rebecca burst out laughing at his deflated expression.

Jenny turned around and shrank guiltily. But then, she stuck her neck out defiantly. "What? You got a problem?"

Vance wouldn't dare. That was Rebecca's cousin after all.

"He's a role model for us to learn from," he admitted frankly.

"That's right!" Jenny smirked. "But he is Becky's cousin, not yours."

"How about I introduce you to him?" Rebecca chimed in. "I can give you his number."

"That's fine." Jenny waved her hands frantically. "Idols are for admiring from afar."

"Such a chicken," Vance teased.

"Not really..." Rebecca mused.

Actually, Gabriel wasn't that much older than they were. In the other world, he was already in his thirties and still unmarried. She wondered if he would have better luck in this life.

"Let's focus on midterms," Vance said, staring at her. "I heard you only got a 70-something on last week's math quiz."

Rebecca really didn't want to talk about it, but how did he know?

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Chapter 752

Math and science were Rebecca's weak points.

Even though she had scored 100 in math in the other world, that was so many years ago. She had forgotten most of it. Getting 70-something now was already pure luck.

"You've regressed. Last time, you got over 90," Vance said seriously.

Rebecca didn't respond. It wasn't just math; except for French, all her grades had dropped.

The longer she was away from the SATs, the rustier the knowledge became. Most of what she did in the other world had little to do with these subjects.

"Being good at French alone isn't enough," Vance added, lecturing her all the way to the cafeteria.

He continued even after they sat down to eat. Finally, Jenny couldn't take it anymore and covered her ears. "Enough already! You're nagging like my dad. Can't you just let me finish my meal in peace?"

Vance paused, glancing at Rebecca. "Let's do tutoring a few days a week. Should Jethro and I tutor you?"

Rebecca felt a headache coming on. Who would have thought that a woman in her thirties would have to come back, take the SATs again, and go through tutoring?

"Starting this Sunday afternoon," he continued. "Right after lunch. Then we'll have dinner together. My treat."

Before Rebecca could answer, Jenny blinked. "Can I just show up at mealtime?"

Vance looked askance at her. "I'm not your dad. Why should I feed you?"

Rebecca nearly choked on her food.

"Dad," Jenny called out smoothly.

Rebecca couldn't hold it in anymore. She collapsed onto the table, pounding it as she laughed.

Even Vance couldn't help smiling. "Jenny, do you have any dignity at all?"

Jenny ignored him and started ordering. "Make that special cake—the one your restaurant does best."

"You're ordering now?"

"Uh-huh! Otherwise, Becky won't come."

Rebecca listened to their bickering with both amusement and helplessness.

Re-experiencing student life was wonderful in many ways, but the tests and studying were truly painful.

"Young Rebecca, where are you?" she groaned in her heart. "I want to go home. Please come out."

That same day, Vance gave her a set of math problems and told her to finish them whenever she had time. He would explain them using every spare moment tomorrow.

"Jethro can explain them too," he added.

That night, Rebecca worked on the problems until lights-out and still wasn't finished. She had to wake up early the next morning to continue.

Before sleeping, she kept thinking about the math worksheet. She really didn't know how to solve the big problems. She felt helpless and wanted to go home.

"What should I do?" she kept muttering, finally falling into a deep sleep.

When she woke up the next day, she felt like she had slept for a long time. Her body was stiff.

The moment her mind cleared, she had a strong premonition. She opened her eyes and saw the ceiling of her home in Paris.

"I'm back!" Joy surged through her. She coughed from the excitement, startling the person beside her.

"Becky? You're finally awake!" Josette cried tears of joy and shouted toward the door, "Becky's awake! Gabriel, Becky's awake!"

She grabbed Rebecca's hand and pressed it to her cheek, her eyes full of tears. "You're finally awake."

Rebecca felt the warmth of Josette's face in her palm, but she was shocked to discover she was still wearing the platinum diamond bracelet on her wrist.

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Chapter 753

Rebecca had often wondered whether her return to high school was a dream or if there were truly two parallel worlds.

She leaned toward the dream theory, but this bracelet...

Her awakening turned the entire house lively. Kaitlyn and Gabriel ran in and out of her room countless times.

Looking at Gabriel's thirty-something face, she thought of the younger Gabriel who had just donated to her school in the dream. For a moment, she felt dazed.

"Why are you looking at me like that? Wake up from a long sleep and don't recognize me anymore?" Gabriel leaned down with a smile.

Rebecca had always thought Gabriel looked young. A man in his thirties with barely any signs of age. But compared to the young man in the dream, he looked way too cunning now.

She shook her head. "Gabe, you've gotten old."

His eyes sharpened. "Wow, just wait. No gift for you then."

Rebecca couldn't help laughing.

As with every previous awakening, the first thing was a full medical checkup at the hospital. Gabriel went out so Kaitlyn could help her change, and then they would head to the hospital.

"I'll go get my mom. Call me when you're done," he said, closing the door behind him.

Rebecca looked at the bracelet on her wrist and gently turned the clasp. Her joints and muscles were still stiff from lying down so long, but she managed to move them and saw the engraved letters: Becky.

Her hands dropped weakly. She was totally confused.

Kaitlyn knocked and came in. "Sweetheart, let's go to the hospital."

With Kaitlyn's help, she changed clothes. Gabriel came back up and carried her downstairs.

At the hospital, all her functions were normal. The doctor only told her to focus on nutrition and exercise.

After returning home, Josette and Kaitlyn prepared nutritious meals and helped her walk in the garden. Once back in her room to rest, she started replying to messages and emails.

The family had planned to return to the States and stay for a while, but her latest coma had delayed the trip.

She reconnected with the dance troupe. Heather gave her a smooth update on everything. With Heather there, she felt reassured. But with her constantly shuttling between two worlds, how was she supposed to resume normal dance work?

In the second week after waking, she felt her muscle strength had returned and began practicing with the troupe again. Out of practice for a long time, her skills had grown rusty.

She could compromise on other things, but not dance. Maybe because she had pushed too hard, she entered the dream world again that night.

But this time was different. She became the observer once again, not merged with her younger self's body. She watched everyone's lives—attending class, eating, playing ball, sleeping, and so on.

The young Rebecca and Vance meet in the cafeteria like strangers. They didn't even glance at each other and simply walked past.

Jenny ran over and slung an arm around the young Rebecca's shoulders.

"Becky, what's wrong? Did you fight with Vance again?"

"No, I didn't."

"You two... Last Sunday, Vance invited you to his restaurant for math tutoring. Why didn't you go? He even made that famous cake."

"Why should I go? What remedial classes does he need to give me? I'm not going."

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Chapter 754

"You..." Jenny looked at her, frowning. "Becky, why do you seem like..."

"Rebecca!" Darren called out to her from a distance.

"Coming!" the young Rebecca replied with a smile and ran over.

She waved at Jenny. "Jenny, I'm going back to the classroom to solve some problems. Let's go back to the dorm together after the evening study hall."

Jenny stood in place, staring at the young Rebecca's retreating figure in a daze. Vance had appeared beside her at some point and stood shoulder to shoulder with her, his gaze fixed on the young Rebecca's wrist in the distance.

"What's going on with you two?" Jenny asked, still puzzled as she watched the young Rebecca leave.

Without saying a word, Vance walked away.

Rebecca was in a spectator state, her viewpoint fixed on Vance. She seemed unable to control her perspective and could only follow him.

Jethro came over to meet up with Vance. "It's all set. Tomorrow afternoon, we're going to Ridgewood High. Aiden and the others will be waiting at the school."

Rebecca was shocked. "Why are they hanging out with Aiden and the others again? Hasn't he promised me he wouldn't?"

"Okay," Vance agreed.

Rebecca wanted to scream, "Vance, you lying bastard! You promised you wouldn't play with them anymore!"

However, she couldn't make a sound. Not a single word came out.

Then, she was jolted awake by her alarm clock. She opened her eyes and found herself in her Paris home. Her phone alarm was ringing.

In fact, her phone always had an alarm set. If she had truly fallen into a deep sleep and returned to another time and space, the alarm probably wouldn't have been able to wake her.

She lay back down, hoping to fall asleep again so she could stop Vance. But no matter how hard she tried, she couldn't fall back asleep.

She felt frustrated. Before, when she couldn't wake up, she had only wished to wake up quickly, to stop taking exams and studying, and return to normal life.

Now that she was truly awake, she was desperately hoping for night to come soon so she could go to sleep. At eight o'clock in the evening, she hugged her phone and went upstairs to sleep.

Josette, Kaitlyn, and Gabriel all looked at her with strange expressions, as if asking, "Sleeping again? Haven't you slept enough?"

"I'm... a bit sleepy." Rebecca pointed upstairs.

"Go ahead," Josette said. "I will come up to accompany you later."

She was afraid Rebecca would fall into another deep sleep.

Upstairs, Rebecca went to bed and quickly fell asleep. This time, what she saw was not her own school, but Ridgewood High.

The basketball court was bustling with noise and excitement. They were playing basketball.

She looked down at herself but couldn't see her body. This time, she was once again in spectator view and hadn't merged with the young Rebecca's body.

She floated above the basketball court. Given the score, the game was about to end.

Vance was on the court, along with Jethro and Darren. Aiden and Lucas from Ridgewood High were also there. Among the spectators, she saw Jenny, the young Rebecca, and... Catherine.

Catherine was wearing Ridgewood High's school uniform. She had been transferred to Ridgewood High again.

As the final whistle blew, the game ended, and cheers erupted. Players from both teams walked to the center of the court to shake hands.

Vance walked toward Aiden, but the young Rebecca did nothing to stop him, just standing there holding a bottle of water.

Rebecca panicked, rushing desperately toward Vance. But she was only in the spectator's view. Her line of sight simply zoomed in, and her body didn't appear at all.

Vance walked straight through her and continued forward.

"Vance!" she shouted. "What did you promise me?"

She circled to stand in front of him again.

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Chapter 755

Vance couldn't see her. He reached out and shook hands with Aiden, smiling brightly.

Rebecca stood right next to him, so close they were practically touching, but she couldn't feel him, nor could he feel her.

She could only watch helplessly as the two boys shook hands and hugged. They threw their arms around each other's shoulders and made plans to eat at Vance's restaurant.

No matter how she shouted behind him or even climbed onto his back and pinched his neck, he felt nothing.

At the same time, the young Rebecca was walking side-by-side with Darren, chatting and laughing. She tried climbing onto the young girl, hoping to merge again, but it didn't work.

Right now, she wasn't even a shadow. She could only silently watch them leave Ridgewood High. Worse, she couldn't get out of the dream, and her vision had to follow them.

They took cabs to leave. She trailed behind Vance's car all the way to the restaurant. It was Aiden's and Lucas's first time there. They couldn't stop praising the place and Vance himself.

The two basketball teams filled the restaurant's largest private room, taking up a huge table and drinking beer.

They weren't even 18 yet! How could they drink?

Rebecca floated in front of Vance, glaring. "Drinking at your age is against the rules! Stop it!"

But it was pointless. He couldn't hear her at all.

Everyone except Jenny and the young Rebecca got a bottle. After several swigs, they started blabbering. Of course, as high school seniors, they also talked about which colleges they planned to apply to.

Darren and the young Rebecca exchanged looks, neither speaking. They had agreed to apply to schools in Arelmoor.

Jenny and Jethro said they hadn't decided yet. Aiden and Lucas said they were going to local colleges, planning to major in computer science.

"What about you?" they asked Vance.

"Oh, he is also going for computer science," Jethro chimed in. "But he'll probably..."

"I'm also applying to local schools," Vance cut in.

Jethro was surprised. "What, didn't you say..."

"I've got a restaurant here. How can I just abandon it and go somewhere else?" Vance's eyes were slightly out of focus, probably from the beer.

"Makes sense..." Jethro muttered. "Then let's all go to local schools. I don't plan to leave Soliaridge either. Attending school here and going home every day sounds perfect."

Aiden was thrilled. "If we're all majoring in computer science, we should apply to the same university!"

Lucas nodded eagerly. "Yeah! And we can try to get the same dorm room. We'd be brothers then."

Jethro looked a bit down. "What about me? I might not get into the same schools as you guys."

"Just work hard! There's still time!"

"Alright! Vance, give me strength!"

The passionate energy of youth burned brightly when they talked about the future, but Rebecca was troubled.

"Vance, how am I supposed to stop you from becoming friends with Aiden and Lucas? Why do you always break the promises you made to me?" she murmured.

The meal lasted until very late. They took the cabs home afterward.

The young Rebecca had a bodyguard car picking her up. Vance had a driver, and Jenny hitched a ride with him.

Rebecca floated in the air, forced to follow Vance and enter the car with them. Her perspective was fixed on his profile.

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Chapter 756

Vance and Jenny were both sitting in the back seat, and Rebecca was squeezed between Vance and the car door.

Jenny spoke up. "Have you changed your mind again?"

Vance's tone was indifferent. "About what?"

"Your college choice," Jenny said hesitantly. "Weren't you planning to go to Arelmoor before?"

"No. I've always wanted to stay in Soliaridge."

"You weren't. You were even looking for a house in Arelmoor." Jenny sneaked a glance at him. "I... didn't mean to eavesdrop. I just happened to hear you talking to a real estate agent."

Vance was silent for a moment. "It was a friend who asked me to help inquire about it. You misunderstood."

"I didn't misunderstand!" Jenny's voice grew louder. "It's because of Becky, right?"

Vance fell silent again.

"She has been ignoring you lately, so you've lost heart?" Jenny probed.

"No."

"Vance." Jenny lowered her voice. "Don't be like this. No matter what, we're all still friends. Becky..."

"I said it's not." Vance cut her off. "Don't talk about it anymore."

Jenny sighed and dropped the subject.

Vance leaned back in his seat and closed his eyes to rest. After a long while, he spoke in a low voice. "She won't keep ignoring me."

Jenny looked at him with an expression that said, "You must be drunk."

She sighed. "Forget it. Becky is my best friend. No matter what decision she makes, I'll support her. But I don't want to see you looking so depressed every day."

"You don't understand anything," Vance said, then stopped talking altogether.

The driver first dropped Jenny off at her home. When she got out of the car, she glanced at Vance, who still had his eyes closed and had no intention of saying goodbye.

She sighed again and went inside.

Rebecca's perspective suddenly shifted to Vance's right-side profile, meaning she was now in the position Jenny had just occupied.

She stayed in this viewpoint, staring blankly at Vance's face. She couldn't do anything else because he couldn't hear or see her.

The car drove all the way to Vance's house. When they arrived, he grabbed his jacket and got out.

Rebecca involuntarily floated after him, drifting all the way into his home. After greeting his grandmother, he went to his room, entered the bathroom, and tossed his jacket into the laundry basket.

Then, he started taking off his shirt. Stunned, Rebecca wanted to run, but she couldn't move. Her vision was out of her control.

He threw his shirt into the laundry basket, then began removing his pants.

Rebecca couldn't help but scream. In a panic, she quickly closed her eyes. Thankfully, she could close them.

Soon after, the sound of running water came. She could feel the hot steam rushing toward her.

"No, I have to leave. I can't stay in the bathroom any longer." She tried hard to move her legs.

This feeling was familiar—sometimes in nightmares, when a terrifying monster was coming, and she wanted to run, her legs just wouldn't move no matter what.

This was exactly her situation now. Thankfully, her willpower prevailed, and she finally managed to rush out of the bathroom.

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Chapter 757

Rebecca floated inside Vance's room.

This was the first time she had ever seen his room from his high school days. The style was the same as his study room after they were married in the other world.

It was clean, tidy, and minimalist. Being in this space made her feel as though she had been transported to that time.

On the wall beside the desk hung a schedule he had written. She drifted closer to read it. From her perspective, it was as if she were hovering right on top of the desk.

It was his study plan. He was incredibly disciplined; not a single 15-minute slot in his day was wasted.

There was an overall plan, followed by weekly and monthly breakdowns. The end date on the master plan was August of next year—the summer after the college applications.

He had written only three words: [Go to Arelmoor.]

She stared, lost in thought, when movement came from behind her. She whipped around and found Vance already sitting at the desk.

He had just showered. His hair was wet, water still dripping from the strands. From where she hovered, it felt like she was squatting on his desk, face-to-face with him.

She could even imagine the droplets from his hair landing on her wrist.

"Vance..." she called out.

Of course, he couldn't hear her. And naturally, he couldn't see her squatting right in front of him. Otherwise, he wouldn't be staring so intently in her direction.

Honestly, in both of her lives, she had never looked at Vance this closely. Every pore on his skin was clearly visible.

She finally understood her 16-year-old self. In the tender years of youth, who wasn't a little bit shallow about looks?

Vance couldn't be described as merely handsome. There were many kinds of charm, including that effortless, atmospheric kind. But he was beautiful—refined and striking.

"Vance..."

In two worlds, she had never been this bold. Taking advantage of the fact that he couldn't hear her, she could say whatever she wanted.

She sighed. "It's a shame. You're so good-looking, but no girls have ever had you. What a waste!"

Looking into his wide eyes, she thought back to their life together and suddenly felt empty. She sighed again. "How am I supposed to tell you that Aiden and Lucas are both terrible people?

"In another life, you were best friends with them. The three of you started a company together. You gave them everything, and those two—one stupid and one rotten—screwed you over. And Catherine... you cherished her, spoiled her, and helped her bully me."

She paused, feeling too painful to revisit the past. She looked away. "In the end, she betrayed you..."

Vance sat at his desk, staring blankly ahead.

A thought suddenly struck Rebecca. Could she use a pen?

She tried touching the pen holder and found she could pick one up. But if he saw a pen floating in the air, that would spook him.

She'd wait until he fell asleep. But Vance wouldn't go to sleep.

He had drunk beer earlier, so by right, he should have been sleepy. Yet he just stared into space, then picked up his phone.

She leaned in and saw him open the chat with her. He stared at her profile for a long time, his finger gently stroking it. In the end, he locked the screen and placed the phone face-down on the desk.

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Chapter 758

Vance reached deep into his desk drawer, pulled out a pack of cigarettes, and took one out.

Rebecca was speechless, wondering when he had picked up that habit. He never smoked in either world.

"Vance!" she shouted instinctively. "Put that cigarette down!"

But he couldn't hear her. He lit it and started coughing hard.

"Serves you right," Rebecca gloated.

He eventually stubbed it out and tossed it in the trash. Then he lay down on the bed.

Seeing her chance, Rebecca looked at the pen on the desk. She mustered all her willpower, reached out, and managed to grab it.

Then, on the scrap paper he had left on the desk, she wrote: [Vance, don't forget what you promised me. Don't hang out with Aiden, Lucas, or Catherine. Don't go to the same university as them. Don't be friends with them.]

It was exhausting. She hadn't expected writing one line in the dream to take so much effort.

Floating in the air, she looked at the message she had poured nearly all her strength into. Under the warm glow of the desk lamp, the handwriting was a bit messy but legible.

She had forgotten to sign it, but that was fine.

Suddenly, Vance sat up.

Rebecca quickly dropped the pen back in place. It landed with a soft clack. She tensed up, worried he might have heard it, but he made no reaction.

After a while, he walked to the desk. The scrap paper was right beside his right hand.

He opened a math problem set and started working, using the very sheet she had written on and solving problems directly on top of her message.

So, even though she had written it so clearly, he couldn't see it?

Her heart sank, filled with dejection. It seemed that she could no longer merge with the young Rebecca's body. She was separated from this world by an invisible wall.

"Becky? Becky?" someone seemed to be calling out.

She yawned, feeling tired and heavy. Once again, she lost control of her movement and drifted toward Vance's bed.

She was stunned as her perspective suddenly shifted to the ceiling above Vance's bed. She lay down and uncontrollably closed her eyes.

The sound of Vance's pen scratching on paper gradually faded. Her consciousness grew hazy until only the voice calling "Becky" became clearer and clearer.

She opened her eyes and found herself back in her home in Paris. The person calling her was her grandmother.

Seeing her awake, Josette breathed a sigh of relief. "You're finally awake. Get ready and come down for breakfast. I made Aglio e Olio today."

Josette was probably afraid she would sleep for a long time again.

In fact, Rebecca had looked up her condition online. Other people seemed to have similar issues, but none slept as long as she did. Science couldn't explain it.

"Okay, Grandma. I'll be right down," she replied.

This dream journey had been exhausting.

Josette held her hand, smiling. "Kaitlyn mentioned an exhibition she wanted to take us to. Do you have the energy?"

"Yes, of course." Rebecca looked down.

Josette's hand was holding the wrist with the bracelet. She was curious. Didn't Josette feel the bracelet pressing against her?

"Grandma, does this bracelet I'm wearing look nice?" Rebecca asked.

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Chapter 759

"Bracelet?" Josette held the wrist where Rebecca's bracelet was, smiling at her. "Are you still not fully awake?"

Rebecca lifted her own hand and stared at the shiny chain on her wrist. "I'm not wearing anything?"

"No, you aren't," Josette replied, looking at her curiously.

Rebecca lowered her hand. "Oh, I just had a dream where I bought a new bracelet."

It seemed that in this timeline, no one except herself could see this bracelet.

Josette remembered what she said. After the exhibition, she took Rebecca to buy a bracelet.

Rebecca stretched out the hand that already had the bracelet on it. The sales assistant only complimented her fair skin tone and how well it matched the new bracelet she was trying on, then proceeded to put the new bracelet on the same wrist.

So, everyone else really couldn't see this bracelet.

If she couldn't feel its weight and touch on her wrist, she would have started doubting whether it was all just her imagination. But it really was on her hand...

Later, she would still enter dreams every few days. However, she never merged with the younger Rebecca again. She remained a floating observer, helplessly watching everything unfold before her eyes.

Vance had completely forgotten the promise he made to her, often hanging out with Aiden and Lucas. They played basketball together and ate at his restaurant without paying every time.

As a transparent person, even when she pressed herself right against Vance's face, he felt nothing.

She left him messages again and again. She wrote on his draft paper, his study plans, the walls of his room, and even the foggy bathroom glass when he was showering, but none of it worked.

He couldn't see any of it.

The writing on the draft paper was covered by his notes. The messages on the walls and plans were still there, untouched even when she entered a dream the next time. The ones on the glass disappeared as soon as the steam cleared.

She tried finding Jenny, Darren, and the young Rebecca. But none of them could see her.

And one time, she even saw Vance and Aiden sneak out of the evening study hall, slouching with arms around each other's shoulders as they hid in the shadowy back alley behind the teaching building to smoke.

Vance was smoking so skillfully now. He didn't choke anymore. He must have smoked a lot.

She watched the glowing tip of the cigarette flicker between Vance's fingers, listened to Aiden's loud, grating laughter, and saw Vance's profile blurred behind the smoke, wearing a wild smile that felt completely foreign to her.

Furious, she wanted to rush over, grab him by the collar, and demand answers. She wanted to slap the cigarette out of his hand, but her arm passed straight through his body like he was nothing but mist.

The teacher arrived and caught them red-handed.

"Vance Bradford!" The teacher's reprimand sounded like thunder.

"Please control him! Don't let him continue like this!" Rebecca shouted, even though she knew the teacher couldn't hear her.

Vance had always been an outstanding student. How could something like smoking and skipping class happen to him? What was wrong with him?

Vance was dragged to the teacher's office, while Aiden was handed over to the security office.

In the office, Vance wore a defiant expression that made the teacher furious.

"Just look at your recent behavior! And look at your scores in this month's exam!" The teacher slapped his test paper down. "Do you know how much you've regressed? You've already dropped out of the top 50!"

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Chapter 760

Outside the top 50...

Vance had always been ranked first in the entire grade.

Rebecca was furious. "Vance, what the hell are you doing?"

Vance simply stood up straight. He didn't answer the teacher, and, of course, he couldn't hear Rebecca's angry shouts.

"Vance, have you run into some kind of difficulty? You can talk to me—whether it's about studies, life, or... emotional confusion. I'm here to listen," said the teacher softly.

"Thank you, ma'am. I know what I'm doing," he replied.

The teacher was clearly upset but held back her frustration. "I know you've always been a determined and self-disciplined kid. Everyone goes through setbacks when they're young, but remember this: what defeats setbacks is never giving up or becoming depressed.

"It's becoming stronger than you were before and stronger than your opponents. If you crumble and fall behind, that's what will truly disappoint people."

Rebecca understood what the teacher was getting at. She was hinting that if this was because of a breakup, moping around wouldn't win the girl back. Only by becoming stronger would he earn respect.

She didn't know if Vance understood. Right now, he looked indifferent and kept giving half-hearted responses. "I know, ma'am."

He repeated that phrase no matter what the teacher said afterward. He agreed to everything, but the look in his eyes gave him away. He wasn't listening to a word.

In the end, the teacher couldn't do anything more and just let him return to class.

Rebecca's vision followed him uncontrollably into the science classroom. She stayed by his side through the entire evening study hall, watching him doodle nonsense.

Absent-minded the entire night, he just held a pen and scribbled things on paper that she couldn't understand.

Furious, she floated around to his front, essentially sitting on his desk face-to-face with him. When their eyes met, she saw no reflection of herself in his pupils.

She grew dejected. "Vance, if you mess up the SATs, I will never forgive you! Have you thought about your grandmother? How sad would she be if she knew you gave up on yourself like this?

"You still have to take care of her in the future. How can you give her a peaceful retirement if you amount to nothing?"

She muttered on, knowing it was just self-talk. What else could she do?

When the evening study hall ended, the other students packed up and left. Vance remained seated.

Jethro came over. "Vance, let's go back to the dorm."

"You go ahead," Vance said.

Jethro knew Vance hadn't done well on the test and had been called in by the teacher. He wanted to say something but eventually held back.

After Jethro left, Vance just sat there, staring blankly ahead. Rebecca sat on his desk, watching him.

"Come on, what are you spacing out for? I thought you stayed to do problems. Wouldn't spacing out in the dorm be better? Why are you doing it here?" she shouted.

Still, it was just her self-talk.

Vance's seat this week was against the wall near the door, right by the light switch. Suddenly, he reached up and turned off the lights. The classroom instantly plunged into darkness.

Rebecca thought he was finally leaving. She sat cross-legged on the desk and whispered, "That's better. Go back to the dorm and rest. Start studying hard and live well from now on. No matter which school you get into, you'll do great."

"You'll build a famous tech company. You'll have fame, wealth, and status... And if... you meet a girl who loves you deeply, and you like her too, be sure to treat her well. Don't let her get hurt, okay?"