

Rewritten 9

Chapter 9

Amidst the chaos of his room, a young man, Ethan, sat in his wheelchair. Unattended locks of hair cloaked his eyes, his gaze grimly tracing the spot where a craft knife was mixed in with the shards of shattered glass on the floor. A voice seemed to echo in his head.

“Why hesitate? One cut and the pain will be gone. It would only sting for a moment. Your parents already divorced and remarried. They have their own children now. They’ve abandoned you. Go on, end it! Find the sweet release of death!”

‘If you didn’t love each other, why did you marry? Why did you have me? You both have your own families now. What about me? What am I to you?’

Ethan’s gaze turned increasingly fierce, a firm resolution setting in. He pushed himself off the wheelchair, trying to stand. With no support from his legs, he fell onto the ground. Glass shards sliced his palm, blood spilling and staining the wooden floor. He reached out amidst the wreckage, grabbed the craft knife, and slid the button upward, revealing the sharp blade. All it took was a single, swift cut across his wrist, and he would find his escape. As he laid the blade against his wrist, a jujube was tossed in through the window, landing neatly beside him. Then another, each bigger and redder than the last, their color matching the blood pooling on the floor.

Ethan squinted against the harsh sunlight pouring in through the window. The next moment, a jujube hit him squarely on the head. Pain flared. The fruit fell to the floor, rolling off into a dark corner of the room.

Ethan had no words.

Just then, a calm and pleasant voice floated in from outside.

“These jujubes are from our tree. Enjoy them. Don’t stay in there cooped up all day; it’s unhealthy. If you ever want more, just let me know. If you’re shy, toss something tasty from your house and we’ll trade. Oh, I’m Madelyn. I’ll come by and see you every day, okay?”

Perhaps Madelyn's voice had been too loud; it stirred the household staff within the mansion. Someone quickly walked out.

"Who's there? Who's talking in the yard?"

Madelyn shrugged and quickly retracted her feet from the wall, hiding among the tree branches. If she could, she wished to alter his future. Perhaps it was because she empathized with him; she knew what it felt like to be abandoned by everyone—helpless and desperate.

As Madelyn's voice receded, Ethan's eyes, previously tight with distress, flickered.

'She'll come see me every day?'

Her words sparked something in him, a hint of a change. It was as if the dying embers of a fire that was about to go out had been stoked, rekindling a glimmer of hope.

The housekeeper looked around but found no one. Thinking it strange, she turned and left the yard.

Up in the tree, the bugs were getting annoying. Madelyn filled two bags with the jujubes, then climbed down the ladder to head home. As she returned, Rosario, just descending from the third floor, was about to call her when she noticed the wood splinters scattered over Madelyn's clothes. She approached her ward, brushing off the debris.

"Where've you been running off to, all covered in grime? Get back to your room and change your clothes right away. I'll wash them for you."

Madelyn cast her a sidelong glance, replying calmly, "It's fine. Here, Rosario, taste these jujubes I've picked. They're really sweet."

Rosario spotted the jujubes in her hands and shook her head. "You didn't bother with the jujubes we picked earlier. Now, look at you, climbing up and picking them yourself. You went up there all on your own?"

Madelyn nodded. "Yep! I climbed using the ladder."

"You've healed, but you've forgotten the pain!" Rosario admonished lightly, prodding Madelyn's forehead with a finger. "You're not to climb that tree anymore. If you get hurt again, I'll have your father chop it down."

Madelyn knew that Rosario was all bark and no bite. She would not actually do it. "Rosario, I'm not a child anymore. I'll be careful."