

## Chapter 38

Olivia stumbled as she stood up. She smiled frailly. "I fell in love with him the moment I laid eyes on him. I've loved him for so many years. I-I can't just let him go."

Keith saw tears streaming down her face. He wanted to wipe them for her, but he was in no position to. He could only stay still and look at her.

Tears slid down her chin. Olivia smiled wryly. "I know it's suffocating. But, the thought of watching him marry another girl hurts more than my cancer. I have no reason to live, so I'm choosing to die.

"I recently stumbled upon a saying. If you knew you were destined not to end up with the man you love dearly, would you choose to live through the joy and hurt and watch it end, or turn around and leave before it even starts?"

Olivia laughed at herself. "If I hadn't met him, I would have chosen to turn around and leave. However, such is fate that I am unable to escape. He and I agreed that he would keep me company for another month. We will get divorced after. By then, I will take the step back to look around, like you want me to."

Keith looked at how clumsy each of her steps were. Her right hand rested on her left shoulder as she walked. She kept her back turned to him as she said, “Keith, thank you for everything you’ve done for me. I don’t deserve you.”

She slowly inched her way to the chilly outdoors. There was a blizzard howling outside. Her silhouette drifted further away into the distance.

Keith did not want to let her go. He looked out the window and watched her disappear.

The corner of his lips curled into a helpless smile. Why was she so persistent? Was Ethan really worth it?

Keith likened her to a pious priest on a vision quest, looking for a holy place that never existed in the first place.

The lights were on when Olivia got back to the Miller residence. She looked at the cozy mansion in the snow, reminiscing how it had been three years ago.

Warm air flooded her the moment she opened the door. She took her shoes off and found Ethan busy in the kitchen.

As usual, he was there.

He was wearing a gray cashmere sweater. His forearm

muscles pushed against his rolled sleeves, making him look especially attractive. His left arm bore a long and ugly scar.

The scar was from when he shielded her from a thug that was coming at her with a sharp knife.

Ethan was focused on cooking when he felt a hug behind him. He was stunned and stopped as Olivia buried her head into his back.

He continued cooking for a bit more and turned the flame off. He stood at the stove and did not turn back. He said softly, "Where did you go?"

"I was at the hospital for my arm."

He knew how she could be. He had to care for her quite intently, even when she got a small cut. Her fall this time was much worse than that.

It didn't matter what Marina said. Ethan was not blind. He could tell that she was trying to save Connor.

"Thank you for today. Connor was okay."

After that, Ethan skillfully plated the food and brought it to the dining table.

Olivia was rooted to the spot, shocked. It was the first time he had ever thanked her. A wave of regret followed.

The “thank you” was meant to set a professional distance.

She wanted to tell him, “Ethan, I went to get my arm stitched up. It still hurts now. Can you make it better, please?”

Looking at his tall back, Olivia muttered to herself, “What’s there to thank? I hate that little punk. I, of all people, hope he hurt himself. I twisted my ankle trying to save his clumsy self.”