

Chapter 6

It was two days before my body was found. By the time they discovered me, my face and body bore numerous wounds, but my hands remained firmly clutched over my stomach, as though in a desperate attempt to protect the life I had been carrying.

When the rescue team retrieved my remains, their first thought was to contact my husband. But no one could reach him. They then turned to my mother and mother-in-law.

My mother arrived at the scene and, upon seeing my lifeless body, collapsed in grief, sobbing until she fainted. My mother-in-law, similarly overwhelmed, lost consciousness on the spot.

When the two women regained consciousness, they went together to obtain my death certificate and made arrangements to transfer my body to the funeral home. Throughout it all, they tried repeatedly to call Grayson, only to have every attempt met with the cold indifference of a disconnected line or a curt rejection.

My brother, Liam Pearson, stood by the cold storage at the funeral home where my body now lay, weeping like a heartbroken child. A man of over six feet tall, his shoulders shook with the force of his tears.

"Belle," he choked out between sobs, "I should've stopped you back then. I should've never let you marry that monster."

His voice cracked as tears streaked his face. "I should've told you to divorce him sooner. If I had... maybe you wouldn't have ended up like this."

His tears fell like rain, mingling with his anguish. I hovered nearby, watching his grief with a sigh that seemed to echo in the void. If only I could tell him it wouldn't have made a difference. Back then, I had been too in love with Grayson—blindly, recklessly in love.

No one could have stopped me. I'd have married him no matter what warnings I was given. My love for him had been like a moth to a flame, an all-consuming obsession. I had clung to this marriage with stubbornness, even when he accused me of deliberately causing Alice to miscarry and demanded a divorce. I had refused to let go.

But now, as I was looking back, it was all so laughable. Here I was, dead and gone, while my husband remained blissfully by his lover's side, indifferent to my fate.

My mother-in-law, visibly shaken, could offer no rebuttal to Liam's words. Her eyes were swollen and red from crying. As for my mother, she was beyond words, her tears flowing ceaselessly as though her heart had shattered. She swayed like a tree caught in a storm, and if it weren't for Liam holding her steady, she might have collapsed entirely.

The three of them, united in grief and burdened by the weight of my death, carried my death certificate to the hospital.