

Olivia 1

The chapter opens with Olivia reflecting on her initial desire to have a daughter, envisioning a future filled with shared experiences like manicures and school milestones. However, when her son Asher is born, she feels relief, believing a boy will be less vulnerable to life's hardships. This introspective moment sets the tone for Olivia's protective nature and foreshadows her later struggles with motherhood and loss. The narrative then shifts to her present life as a beekeeper in Adams, New Hampshire, where her family's apiary legacy shapes her identity and livelihood.

Olivia describes the town of Adams with its quaint, rural charm and darkly humorous history, including the misnamed Slade Brook. She recalls bringing her husband, Braden, to meet her parents, highlighting their early optimism and her certainty about their future together. However, her life takes an unexpected turn when her father dies suddenly, leaving her to manage the family's beekeeping business. This event marks the beginning of her transition from a doctor's wife in Boston to a single mother and apiarist back in her hometown.

The chapter delves into Olivia's deepening connection to beekeeping, which becomes both a career and a coping mechanism. She expands the apiary, innovates with bee genetics, and builds a sustainable business, finding purpose in the work her father loved. She also reflects on the lessons he taught her—about patience, protection, and resilience—which mirror her own approach to life. These lessons take on greater significance as she navigates grief, single parenthood, and the challenges of maintaining the apiary.

The chapter closes with Olivia honoring her parents' deaths by following the tradition of informing the bees, a ritual that underscores her bond with both her family legacy and the natural world. This act symbolizes her acceptance of loss and her commitment to preserving what remains. Through her journey, Olivia emerges as a complex

character shaped by love, tragedy, and the quiet strength she draws from her bees and her past.

