

Olivia 4

The chapter opens with Olivia reflecting on how quickly abnormal situations become normalized in her life, from grieving her father's death to adjusting to visiting her son Asher in jail. She describes the stark contrast between visiting Asher with his attorney, Jordan, where they discuss legal strategies in private, and visiting alone, where she must communicate through Plexiglas in a crowded room. During their personal visits, they avoid discussing the case, instead focusing on mundane topics like sports and Asher's sketches, which include a poignant drawing of Lily. Olivia's heartbreak deepens as Asher repeatedly asks when he will be released—until the day he stops asking altogether.

On Saturdays, Olivia sells honey and beeswax products at the local farmers' market, but her business suffers due to the community's judgment. A January thaw brings more foot traffic, but customers avoid her booth, and vendors treat her with hesitation. Overhearing two girls gossip about Asher's incarceration, Olivia snaps, chastising them for their ignorance of the legal system and their cruel assumptions. Her outburst leaves her feeling ashamed but also furious at the town's collective condemnation. By the end of the market, it's clear she's been ostracized, and her unsold products are later vandalized, with her truck tires slashed.

Detective Mike Newcomb arrives to take Olivia's statement about the vandalism, their conversation strained by the unresolved tension between them. When Selena, Jordan's wife, arrives to give Olivia a ride, Mike offers to drive her home instead, hinting at lingering guilt or unresolved feelings. The chapter underscores Olivia's isolation as she navigates the fallout from Asher's arrest, facing both personal grief and public scorn.

Throughout the chapter, Olivia's resilience is tested as she balances her love for Asher with the harsh reality of his incarceration and the community's rejection. Her attempts to maintain normalcy—through visits, letters, and her market stall—are met with

hostility, leaving her emotionally raw. The destruction of her honey symbolizes the shattered remnants of her former life, while the strained interactions with Mike and Selena highlight the complexities of her support system. The chapter paints a vivid portrait of a mother's unwavering loyalty in the face of systemic and social adversity.

