

# Earlier: Will: The Groom

The storm was relentless, the wind howling through the night and tearing across the island like a wild animal. Will, referred to by all as "The Groom," made his way cautiously through the power outage, his frustration masked behind a carefully controlled facade. He held up his phone's torch, its narrow beam barely cutting through the dense darkness, and squinted as he noticed Aoife standing a few paces away, her silhouette illuminated by brief flashes of lightning. She motioned for him to follow, her expression unreadable, and for a moment, Will hesitated, an unspoken tension tightening in his chest.

Aoife claimed she needed help with the generator, her tone calm and businesslike. Yet there was something unsettling in the way she moved, in the way her gaze lingered on him a second too long. The wind whipped around them, pulling at Will's jacket and ruffling his hair—a detail that irked him more than he cared to admit—but he followed her into the storm, determined to preserve the image of himself as the composed and capable figure he had so meticulously crafted.

As they walked, the night seemed to press in closer, the island shrouded in an oppressive darkness that mirrored the unease growing within him. When they reached the generator's location, Aoife turned to face him, her demeanor shifting from polite professionalism to something colder, more deliberate. Her first words struck him like a sudden blow—not about the generator, but about the past, about Darcey, a boy whose name Will had buried deep in his memory.

At first, Will tried to dismiss her accusations, his voice steady, his responses calculated to deflect blame. But Aoife would not relent, her words cutting through his defenses with precision, laying bare a truth he had spent years avoiding. She revealed her connection to Darcey, her grief sharpened into something resolute, her determination

to confront Will fueled by years of unanswered questions and unacknowledged pain.

The storm intensified around them, the wind and rain a chaotic symphony that only heightened the gravity of the moment. Aoife's accusations pierced through the noise, her voice unwavering as she recounted the torment Darcey had endured—the relentless bullying, the betrayal, and the ultimate tragedy that had left his family shattered. Will tried to interject, to explain, but his words faltered under the weight of her resolve and the undeniable truth she had brought to light.



Aoife's planning had been meticulous. She had used Will's fame, his arrogance, and his belief in his untouchable image to lure him here. The storm, the power outage, the isolation of the island—it was all part of her plan, a stage set for this reckoning. The bog beneath them served as a silent witness to their confrontation, its murky depths holding secrets that refused to be forgotten, just as Darcey's memory lingered in Aoife's mind, unyielding and unforgiving.

For Will, the confrontation was more than a moment of discomfort; it was a crack in the carefully constructed image he had presented to the world. The persona he had built through his fame, particularly on his survival show *Survive the Night*, was unraveling before Aoife's piercing gaze. She spoke not just of Darcey but of Will's complicity, of how he and Jonathan Briggs had treated Darcey with cruelty and indifference, actions that had contributed to his tragic fate.

As the rain lashed against them, Will felt a rare and unfamiliar sensation—fear. Not just the fear of being exposed, but a deeper fear that came from realizing he could no longer control the narrative of his past. Aoife was unrelenting, her grief and anger cutting through the storm like a blade, leaving him with nowhere to hide.

The setting could not have been more symbolic. The bog, dark and unforgiving, was a reminder of the weight of the choices Will had made and the lives that had been altered because of them. It was a place where secrets sank and stayed, yet tonight, Aoife had brought those secrets to the surface, refusing to let them remain buried.

Will stood frozen, torn between denial and the crushing realization that his actions had led him to this moment. The storm outside was nothing compared to the storm within him, as guilt, fear, and the consequences of his past collided. Aoife's words echoed in his mind, leaving him with a truth he could no longer ignore—some shadows cannot be outrun, and some debts cannot go unpaid.

As Aoife stepped closer, her final words were not a demand for vengeance but a call for acknowledgment, for the truth to finally be spoken. Will, for the first time, was left without a retort, without the armor of his charisma and carefully curated image. The storm would eventually pass, the power would return, but the darkness of this moment would remain with him, an unshakable reminder that the past has a way of demanding justice, no matter how deeply it is buried.

And as he stood there, drenched and shaken, staring into the unrelenting gaze of a woman driven by grief and truth, he understood one thing with startling clarity—this confrontation was not just about Darcey. It was about him, about the person he had been, the choices he had made, and the reckoning he could no longer avoid.