

Married by Mistake: Mr. Whitman's Sinner Wife chapter 391-420

July 27, 2021 by superadmin

Married by Mistake Mr. Whitman's Sinner Wife [Sixteenth Child] Chapter 391

The man before her gave off an air of frost and avoidance, his chiseled features betraying nothing as he stared at her.

The wind blew strongly in the deep of autumn at the cemetery, caressing the cheeks of those who visited.

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Married by Mistake Mr. Whitman's Sinner Wife [Sixteenth Child] Chapter 401

Jeremy's sudden kiss stunned Madeline.

He said he loved her.

He loved a woman who looked just like the ex-wife he hated.

It was ridiculous.

'You never spared me a glance when I treasured you and regarded you as my one and only.

'So how dare you tell me you love me when my heart has given up and there's nothing but hatred left?

'It's too late, Jeremy Whitman.

'Even if you've fallen for me now, it can't heal and mend the ruthless wounds you've inflicted on my heart.'

Giving the excuse that she was unwell, Madeline turned away from Jeremy's kiss.

Still, she had 'happily' accepted Jeremy's marriage proposal.

Staring at the cerulean sea, Madeline found herself relating the hatred in her heart like the tides and waves before her.

'This is what you owe me, Jeremy. It's time you paid it back.'

Jeremy's heart tightened as he stared quietly at the enchanting smile on Madeline's face, the spark in his eyes turning dull.

Had he been even the slightest bit aware, perhaps he would not have lost the woman he loved to the harsh reality of time. Now, she was gone and never coming back.

'Madeline.

'If ever we get to start all over, you probably wouldn't choose to love me again, would you?'

...

The wedding ceremony was held the following day.

In the most luxurious hotel that the Whitman Corporation owned stood Madeline who was donned in her seven-figure wedding gown with her diamond tiara. She held a bouquet in her hands as she made

her way toward the handsome man in a tailored suit under the blessings and envious gazes of the attendees.

Light refracted off the chandelier, shimmering and engulfing the angelic queen with a dreamy glow as she took her steps to the stage.

Jeremy could not help but be reminded of his marriage six years ago as he set his eyes on the elegant and dignified aura of the smiling woman in front of him.

His heart raced while his gaze softened.

It was now lunchtime in jail when Meredith was met with the live stream of Madeline and Jeremy's wedding on the television. She was just about to sit in the canteen.

Meredith's eyes reddened with rage as her hands tightened their hold on her lunch tray.

It was the marriage she had longed for! The male lead was the very one she had scrambled her mind for ideas to lay her hands on!

To think that she had finally won Madeline these few years only to realize that everything she did was for naught... Madeline had turned the tables against her in the end!

No!

She refused to accept this!

She refused to accept such an ending!

Bang! Madeline threw the plates on the floor. “You btch! Madeline, you btch! You’ll pay for this!”

Meredith’s eyes grew red as a sinister flame burned in them.

Just then, a female inmate rolled her sleeves in displeasure just after her outburst and grabbed Meredith by her collar. “F*cker! How dare you throw things at me? You’re the one who’s going to pay!”

Then, the inmate raised a fist to land it across Meredith’s face.

Meredith wailed in agony after two punches and began to beg for mercy while everyone watched. Some others even gave her a few kicks.

Curling on the floor, Meredith clutched her head in fear. “Not my face! Don’t hit my face!”

She begged frightfully, which was rewarded with even fiercer punishment.

Her eyes fell on the television screen where Jeremy was currently helping Madeline wear her ring. Envy and hatred swarmed her as she watched the two exchange saccharine-sweet vows. Blood seemed to flow from Meredith’s eyes from the fury within her as she balled her fists and clenched her jaw, spitting a name out.

“Madeline Crawford!”

...

The ceremony ended beautifully, marking another step in Madeline’s plan toward her goal.

Even though the ceremony was against her heart's wishes, she was glad to at least have Jackson as her flower boy.

Amidst the attendees, she found that Eloise and Sean had come to give their blessings as well.

In a way, it could be said that she had gotten her parent's approval.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Whitman only seemed irked about the situation.

One of Mrs. Whitman's friends, who was also a rich man's wife, came over to congratulate her. "What a great daughter-in-law this is, Mrs. Whitman. She's rich, good at her job, and beautiful. You've got to be satisfied this time, right?"

"So what if she's rich? It's not like the Whitman family is broke! You can find beautiful girls all over the world. Her appearance is only average!"

Mrs. Whitman rolled her eyes disdainfully at Madeline who was drinking with the other guests. After turning around, she found Eloise and Sean and immediately went over to talk to them.

"Mr. and Mrs. Whitman, I couldn't believe Meredith was a fake when I heard the news. Oh, how I used to trust her. In the end, I was played into her lies." Mrs. Whitman huffed, severing any relations between them.

Eloise sighed sadly. "Here I thought that I had finally found my daughter and was about to become in-laws with your family too, Mrs. Whitman. I can't believe it ended like this."

Mrs. Whitman agreed. "Who would have thought that Meredith's family is actually so vicious? I would've sued her for marital fraud had it not been for the child she gave Jeremy!"

Fury flared in her eyes before her expression turned into a sympathetic one.

“The Montgomery family is well known within Glendale. It’s a pity that you haven’t found your daughter yet for it would be an honor to become in-laws with you. Had you found your daughter sooner, perhaps she and Jeremy would grow close and we wouldn’t have to settle for this woman here!” Mrs. Whitman spoke as she glared at Madeline.

Eloise followed her gaze to find a gorgeous-looking Madeline clad in an angelic wedding gown.

Her heart clenched inexplicably.

“Vera Quinn isn’t all that bad.”

“You have no idea, Mrs. Montgomery. This woman is even worse than Jeremy’s ex-wife, Madeline Crawford! Seeing her face makes me want to puke!”

“You’re allowed to retire early, Mother, if you feel uncomfortable.”

Madeline’s soft voice wafted over from behind, stunning Mrs. Whitman who turned around and pursed her lips distastefully at the sight of her. “What an eyesore!”

Her tone was displeased, then she turned and left.

With Mrs. Whitman gone, Madeline found the air much cleaner and easier to breathe.

A smile graced her lips as she turned to Eloise and Sean. “Thank you for attending. Here’s a toast to you.”

Madeline downed a small glass of red wine.

“Congratulations, Miss Vera,” Eloise said, her eyes no longer bearing the same sharp glint it once did.

Congratulations?

Madeline smiled faintly. The only thing to congratulate her about was for her almost completing her revenge plan.

At that moment, Jeremy walked over as well.

In his tailored black suit, the man’s charms oozed off him in waves.

“Miss Vera is a great match for you, Mr. Whitman. I’m sorry for the hurtful words I’ve said to you to defend Meredith.” Eloise apologized.

Jeremy’s lips quirked into a casual smile. “I never cared what other people thought of me.”

With that, he placed an arm around Madeline’s shoulders. “Today must’ve been exhausting. Let’s go home early, hmm?”

“Yeah.” Madeline nodded dotingly.

“Miss Vera!” Eloise suddenly rushed up to stop Madeline from leaving.

Both Madeline and Jeremy came to a halt. “Is something wrong, Mrs. Montgomery?”

“It’s just...”

Eloise seemed uneasy as she spoke.

“We’ve been trying to find clues about our daughter but we haven’t got a single lead at all. So, we were wondering if you could possibly recall if Rose and Meredith had said anything about my daughter?”

Ah, so they were now coming for her, their daughter.

Madeline lamented and parted her lips to answer only for Jeremy to interrupt her. “Perhaps I can help. Does your daughter have any special characteristics?”

Eloise and Sean’s eyes shone. “Oh! My daughter has a very special birthmark!”

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Madeline’s expression changed at her words.

Birthmark.

Her plan would be forced to end should Eloise speak of the birthmark on her body.

“What birthmark?” Jeremy asked curiously.

“It’s a but—”

“I’m feeling a little dizzy, Jeremy...”

Madeline's brows furrowed just as Eloise began to describe the butterfly-shaped birthmark. She then leaned weakly against Jeremy.

His attention immediately went back to Madeline.

He carried her right away. "I'll send you to the hospital."

"It's alright, I think I'm just tired," Madeline replied softly as she leaned against his shoulder.

Eloise and Sean's eyes shone inexplicably with concern as they watched Jeremy carry Madeline away.

The night darkened while the evening wind rustled the leaves of the tree in front of the window frame.

Madeline lay on the bed with her eyes closed, pretending to be asleep even though she was hardly even drowsy.

Tonight was their first night as a married couple, and while she had no idea what Jeremy was thinking, she refused to bring their relationship to a physical stage.

Soon after, Madeline heard Jeremy exit the bathroom after a shower. His steps were light, as if on purpose so he would not wake her.

Then, Madeline felt the bed dip on the other side.

Soon, Jeremy's warmth and smell enveloped her.

Madeline's heart thumped faster as she slowly pulled her hands closer under the covers.

It was unlikely for him to want to do such things with her.

Madeline was thinking to herself when a warm breath suddenly puffed over her cheeks.

Afraid that Jeremy would kiss her, Madeline blinked open her eyes.

She was met with a pair of deep, dark ones the moment she opened her eyes.

“Did I wake you?” The man’s gentle baritone washed over her.

The corners of Madeline’s lips tugged. “You didn’t.”

“That’s good, then,” Jeremy whispered, his slender fingers falling on her small face as he leaned over slowly, his lips touching the corners of hers.

Madeline pushed him away. “I’m pregnant, Jeremy. Let’s not.”

Jeremy looked up to stare inquisitively at her. “I’ll wait until you’re ready. Let’s sleep.”

“Hmm, goodnight.” Madeline sighed a silent breath of relief, but she was unable to understand the strange look hidden in the man’s deep gaze.

The room darkened with the night, leaving light breathing and hearts beating in tandem in the quiet of the night.

Madeline was already awake to begin with, but the discomfort of having Jeremy asleep by her side made sleeping an impossible feat.

She turned her back to Jeremy in hopes to widen their distance only to have a familiar warmth and touch engulf her from behind.

Jeremy's arms hung loosely around her small waist, and she could feel the warmth from his palm seep through the light material of her sleepwear into her skin.

While she did not like the feeling, Madeline did not push him away either.

There was no way she was going to turn back when she had already gotten here.

Especially when it was only a few more days anyway.

Feeling Madeline's tense figure in his arms, Jeremy's eyes snapped open. The faint scent of mint that wafted from her had his lips tilting in satisfaction...

The following day, Madeline looked up to stare at Jeremy's calm sleeping face.

Madeline flew into a rage and pushed him away when she realized their positions. She was curled into his arms, allowing him to hold her as he wished. As such, she immediately got up.

She expected Jeremy to wake up but he had merely turned to the other side to continue to sleep.

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Madeline's pink lips pursed as she indifferently took in the happy features of the man sleeping before her.

'I thought you said you were suffering from insomnia the past three years?

'But you look well-rested this morning.

'Hmph. Have you ever felt guilty or uneasy about my death, Jeremy?

'No, you've never.'

Madeline immediately washed up and changed after sparing a last glance at the man's face. Walking out of the room, she was met with Jackson walking out of his as well.

"Morning, Jack.'

She smiled and walked over.

"Is it time for school already? Would you like Big Sis Vera to make you breakfast?"

Jackson blinked and nodded innocently as he looked up at Madeline. "Yes, please."

Madeline's emotions lightened immensely at the little boy's adorable features.

While a maid had already prepared breakfast, Madeline made another. It was a more simple and nutritional one for Jackson.

Seated at the dining table, Jackson merely stared at the heart-shaped sunny-side up without making a move to eat.

Madeline was worried that it was not to Jackson's liking. "Do you not like fried eggs, Jack? Tell Big Sis Vera what you like and I'll make it for you."

With that, Madeline watched Jackson shake his head in response.

The boy's angelic eyes were filled with unbridled joy and seriousness as he looked at Madeline, his small lips parting to reveal two cute-looking canines. "Thank you, Mommy."

Mommy.

Madeline was stunned, not expecting Jackson to call her his mother so quickly without prompt when kids normally tend to dislike and even hate their stepmoms.

Yet all Jackson had for her was unrestrained love.

Madeline felt the corner of her eyes burn as she raised a hand to pat Jackson's head affectionately.

"Big Sis Vera will treat you as her own son from now on, alright, Jackson? I promise you'll have a mommy who loves you."

Jackson nodded, his dewy cheeks blooming with his first-ever carefree smile.

Madeline thought her heart was going to melt just from looking at the smile.

Love and hate seemed like such a small matter in comparison.

Madeline sent Jackson to kindergarten after breakfast.

As for Lily, well, Madeline had placed her daughter in a friend's care. She would never attend this kindergarten again.

Just as she was about to send Jackson through the kindergarten gates, Madeline was met with the sight of Eloise holding a stack of something in her hands.

Eloise was shocked to see Madeline here with Jackson and strode over to her. "I didn't expect to see you bringing Jack to school, Miss Vera."

"What are you doing here, Mrs. Montgomery?" Madeline asked with a smile.

Eloise stared woefully at Jackson whose hand was held in Madeline's. "Like how I've seen Meredith as my own daughter the past three years, I've taken care of this child as my grandson as well. There's nothing to sympathize with about Meredith's current situation, but Jack... I'm reluctant to give this child up."

Madeline understood, for she could see the affection and yearning for Jackson in Eloise's eyes.

"Granny."

Jackson suddenly called amidst the silent lull.

"You're my granny."

Eloise's dimmed eyes brightened instantly. "Jack..."

She reached out to ruffle the boy's head, only to accidentally knock off the stack of papers in her hands. Madeline lowered her gaze to look and her expression changed in recognition of the image on the paper.

Right then, Jackson squatted to help Eloise pick them up. The boy's round eyes blinked lightly as his eyes fell on the printed image. "I've seen this butterfly before."

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Both Madeline and Eloise's eyes widened at Jackson's comment.

Eloise Patton was a designer as well, so she could fully replicate Madeline's birthmark on the A4 piece of paper.

Madeline began to wonder if Jackson had ever walked past when she happened to reveal her birthmark.

"You've seen this butterfly, Jack? Where?" Eloise leaned down to inquire, eagerness shining in her glistening eyes.

"Why did you print so many search notices, Mrs. Montgomery? Are you trying to look for your daughter?" Madeline calmly changed the subject.

Eloise nodded. "I've posted it on the internet as well, but these flyers are merely another option. I'd try anything if it meant that I could find my daughter!"

Her words held nothing but hope and sincerity.

She truly wished to find her long-lost child.

Madeline felt her heart tremble and clench in her chest.

'Perhaps my parents are not to blame, not when they too were victims of Meredith's family's lies.

'They were used for their desire to find their child.

'Yet...'

"Tell Granny, Jack, where did you see this butterfly before?"

Madeline suddenly heard Eloise's impatient inquiry.

Snapping back from her thoughts, Madeline tried to stop Jackson only to hear the boy's clear tone cut through the air. "On Maddie," Jackson answered lightly.

Madeline felt her heart race.

Eloise was stunned. "Maddie? Jack, Maddie as in Madeline Crawford?"

Jackson nodded before reaching out to point the right side of Madeline's waist on her back. "Right here. That's where Maddie's butterfly is."

"..."

"..."

Madeline did not expect Jackson to have seen her birthmark.

Not to mention that Jackson was only two when she 'died' three years ago. What exceptional memory the boy had!

"Wh-What..." Stunned, Eloise's vision grew dark.

As if all her strength had left her, Eloise swayed and began to fall.

Madeline's reflexes kicked in and she grabbed Eloise before the other could hit the ground. "Are you alright, Mrs. Montgomery?"

Eloise's complexion was pale while her gaze was blank. Her entire body froze as if she had lost her mind while tears trickled steadily from the corner of her eyes.

"Mrs. Montgomery?"

"Hiss..." Eloise pressed a hand over her aching heart as she sucked in a painful breath. "So that's why... Now I understand..." she muttered to herself as the rush of her tears grew while her lips trembled to speak a name.

"Madeline..."

Madeline smiled bitterly at the words. She found her eyes becoming wet.

What a shame that it was all too late.

Eloise fainted after she uttered out her daughter's name.

Madeline sent Eloise to the hospital after she passed Jackson over to one of the kindergarten teachers. Sean rushed over not too long after.

Not knowing why Eloise had fainted, the man was anxious in fear that she had gotten sick.

Madeline signed Eloise's discharge papers before she returned to the room. Seeing Sean pace nervously outside, she immediately suppressed her upset feelings and walked over to the man with a smile.

"You're here, Mr. Montgomery. Don't worry, your wife is alright."

Sean thanked her as she handed him Eloise's examination report.

Sean's worry grew when he read the reason behind Eloise's unconsciousness—extreme distress.

"Distress? Why would Ellie be distressed out of the blue?"

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Sean looked at Madeline in confusion.

"Why did you send my wife to the hospital, Miss Quinn?"

"That's because..."

Madeline was just about to explain herself when sobs suddenly rang out from inside the room.

Sean's expression changed and he immediately turned around to enter.

Taking a deep breath, Madeline entered the room as well like nothing was wrong.

Eloise had indeed woken and she was currently crying her eyes out.

Sean approached her worriedly. "What's wrong, Ellie? What's got you so sad?"

Only then did Eloise seem to realize Sean's presence. She looked up at him with eyes reddened from all the crying. There was irreparable and incurable pain in her sad gaze.

"Why must the Heavens punish us like this, Sean? Why..."

Her voice trembled as tears fell like pearls from her eyes.

Confused, Sean felt his heart grow frantic.

"What are you saying, Ellie? Don't cry. Shh, relax. Talk to me."

Eloise gave a self-deprecating chuckle amidst her tears and looked up to meet Sean's concerned gaze with her ashen complexion. Then, she took out the gold pendant from her pocket.

"I've found our daughter, Sean."

"What? That's great! Did you really find her?" The worry on Sean's expression was replaced with excitement. "Where is she? Ellie, where's our daughter?"

Sean pressed impatiently while Eloise closed her eyes in agony.

"She died."

"Wh-What? Died?" Sean was stricken.

“We played a part in killing her...” Eloise looked up remorsefully. “Madeline Crawford was our daughter...”

“What... What did you say?”

Sean was shell-shocked when he heard Eloise’s words.

The joy he had felt moments prior shattered that very moment, its shards stabbing into his heart and grinding the muscle within.

Madeline’s heart seized painfully as she stared at the pain-stricken expressions Eloise and Sean wore from the sidelines.

“Mad-Madeline Crawford was our daughter?” Sean’s eyes widened in pain as he remembered how he had once slapped her across her face.

He had also kicked her onto the ground just to protect the fake that was Meredith.

He remembered how Madeline even seemed to be in too much pain to climb back up.

Her pitiful situation back then inexplicably surfaced in his mind.

Why did his heart hurt so much?

Sean’s legs were close to giving out.

“I finally understood why Meredith would have this gold pendant! I even watched it drop from

Madeline's clothes! So why did I believe Meredith's words that Madeline had stolen it?

"Now I know why Rose said our daughter died three years ago. That was when Madeline left us, wasn't it..."

Eloise began to choke on her tears as regret overwhelmed her.

"Oh, how I've prayed to find our daughter these 20-over years, only to scold, hit, and harm my own child to protect a wretched woman. What kind of mother am I?"

Eloise raised her trembling hands in front of her. She had never hated them as much as she did now.

She could not even remember how many slaps her hands had given Madeline for Meredith's sake.

Suddenly, Eloise's expression shifted. Throwing off the covers, she dashed to the balcony.

Sean ran after her in fear. "Ellie! Ellie, what are you doing?"

"Death would hurt less, Sean! When I think back to everything I've done to our daughter, I... Why couldn't I have died in her place?"

Then, Eloise turned around to jump.

Madeline spun to the side and was met with Eloise who already had a leg halfway out the railings. "No! Mom, don't!"

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In a split second, Eloise and Sean heard Madeline's shouts.

Although she had been determined to follow her daughter to where she was just a moment earlier, Eloise turned around in shock and climbed back inside upon hearing Madeline's words. Tears streamed freely down her cheeks as she stared at Madeline who stood not too far away. She was in a daze.

Through her glistening tears, she realized that the woman had the same appearance as the one buried deep and painfully in her mind.

"Your Eveline's still alive, Mom. You don't need to die for me," Madeline said with a soft smile.

"Come down. Dad's getting worried, hmm?"

"Eveline..." Eloise walked away from the border of danger as she stared at Madeline in a trance.

Sean blinked blankly at Madeline for a while before snapping back to pull Eloise into the safety of the hospital room. Then, he bolted the door to the balcony.

"Are... Are you Madeline? Are you really Madeline?" Eloise ran up to Madeline eagerly and gripped her hand.

She immediately tried to warm Madeline's hands only to realize that it was her own that was freezing.

With both Eloise and Sean looking at her expectantly, Madeline replied with a calm smile, "I'm glad you're alright, Mrs. Montgomery. Impulsiveness is a devil, so don't succumb to it anymore. Your life is important."

"..." Eloise and Sean were startled, finally understanding that Vera had only said those words to save Eloise.

Their hopes crashed again, from heaven to hell.

Both Eloise and Sean knew that Madeline had lost her life to an incurable sickness.

Still, perhaps Madeline would not have left as quickly if not for them picking on her again and again.

Thinking back, they remembered the harsh words they had spat out when Madeline arrived at Jeremy and Meredith's engagement event.

Oh, how this mother had even proclaimed that she was acting and the blood dripping from Madeline's mouth was fake as she fell to the ground.

Madeline had left for good after 'acting', leaving their hearts with unrestrainable pain ever since...

Eloise had run out of tears to cry by the time Madeline left the hospital.

Madeline understood the grief of loss Eloise was going through.

She did not want to live anymore when her child was murdered.

Such pain was reminiscent of the sky falling apart and everything turning gray before her eyes.

Although now color had returned to her world.

...

Jeremy finally woke with the realization that this was the best and most well-rested sleep he had gotten in three years.

Reaching out, he found that the other side of the bed was no longer warm and immediately called Madeline.

The call connected, and Jeremy's heart calmed as the speaker echoed with Madeline's clear, sweet voice.

Jeremy had planned to bring Madeline on a honeymoon, but she rejected him due to her pregnancy.

Monday noon, Whitman Corporations.

Jeremy had just wrapped up an important chairman meeting when he found Madeline sitting elegantly in the waiting area outside the meeting room.

Seeing him walk out, Madeline approached him with a thermos in tow.

"I made some dishes, Jeremy. I was hoping we could have lunch together?"

Watching the scene before them, Ken and everyone else involved in the meeting made an understanding move to leave.

Madeline held Jeremy's arm sweetly and entered his office with him.

This was the first time Madeline stepped foot in Jeremy's office.

'So this is the environment he works in.'

When you looked out from one side of the transparent floor-to-ceiling windows, you would see a thick riverbank. The other side allowed those in the office to oversee every inch of the city below. It was a great place for an office, and most certainly not somewhere any Tom, Dick, or Harry could own should they wish.

She had once been stripped away of the right to visit this place.

He was her husband, and while she was never allowed into his office, he would let another woman come and go as she wished.

Madeline's lips quirked at the thought as she quietly took out the food she had bought.

She would never wear an apron and cook for him again, for whatever willingness to give she once had no longer existed.

Jeremy was obviously in a great mood as he ate away happily without suspecting if Madeline had indeed made the dishes or not.

Rays of the mid-autumn afternoon sun scattered over the man's black button-up shirt, casting a gentle light over his deep gaze.

After lunch, Madeline even went to cut some fruit for him in the pantry. Then, she returned to the office with a fork to feed Jeremy the sliced fruits, bringing each piece to his mouth.

"It is sweet?" she asked with a smile.

Jeremy nodded as his deep gaze stared at the delicate features in front of him. If only time could pass a little slower, even if just a little bit...

However, Jeremy received a call before he could finish the fruits and was forced to leave for a moment.

Madeline almost jumped at the opportunity to go through Jeremy's personal computer so that she could carry out the next part of her plan, but a quick view of her surroundings put a halt to her plans. There was a surveillance camera in the office.

She would surely get caught if she acted now.

With no other option, she began to clean up the plate of fruit, and in extension, Jeremy's office table.

She deliberately pushed the mouse off the table as she straightened his desk. Madeline then picked it up and rearranged it while trying to look at the files on Jeremy's computer. Alas, the computer was locked.

Madeline could only give up. Fortunately, she had not come up empty-handed.

Right then, Jeremy returned, albeit with two other sets of footsteps.

Madeline looked up to find Eloise and Sean following behind him.

She had not told Jeremy yet that Eloise and Sean found out that Madeline was their daughter. Should Eloise and Sean speak of it now, there was no guarantee that her identity could still be kept a secret.

Madeline was nervous but made sure to wear a calm smile when she greeted them. "It's nice to see you here, Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery."

Both Eloise and Sean's eyes openly lit up as they fell on Madeline.

They were elated to see her face.

For it was one that brought them comfort and helped heal their hearts.

"It's great to see you, Miss Vera." Eloise walked over to grab Madeline's hands.

Jeremy was rather taken aback by the scene before him.

Since when had they gotten so close?

"Please, take a seat," Jeremy spoke.

Reluctantly, Eloise let go of Madeline's hands and sat down.

The secretary arrived in no time with refreshments and two cups of tea before leaving right after.

"How can I help you with this sudden visit?" Jeremy asked straight away.

Eloise and Sean shared a look before finally asking, their expressions looking embarrassed, "Mr. Whitman, we have a presumptuous request, if that's alright."

"What is it?"

"We were wondering if you have anything left of Madeline's, Mr. Whitman? Or perhaps things that she used when she was still alive?" Eloise opened her mouth to ask, her voice trembling as her eyes

reddened.

Realizing the point of Eloise's request, Madeline knew she had to stop her.

Surprised at the request, Jeremy spared a glance from the corner of his eyes at the woman next to him before parting his lips to ask, "Why? Is there something you need from Madeline's things?"

Eloise wiped away the tears that had gathered around the corner of her eyes and gulped. "We think Madeline might very well be our daughter."

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Madeline had no time to stop her when Eloise already blurted out such a sentence.

The surrounding air seemed to quiet down for a moment, and Madeline looked at Jeremy's reaction out of the corner of her eyes. His expression was a bit complicated, as if he had just heard an unexpected piece of news. However, it also seemed calm.

Madeline pondered for a few seconds before breaking the silence. "Mr. Montgomery, Mrs. Montgomery, do you really think Madeline is your biological daughter?"

Eloise stared at her, saying, "Although there's no scientific verification yet, I'm already 90 percent sure that Madeline is my daughter!"

Her tone was very positive, and her eyes that were glazed over with a fog looked at Madeline's face with incomparable nostalgia.

"Miss Vera has a daughter, yes?" Eloise asked all of a sudden.

Madeline nodded. "Yeah."

"When I saw your daughter at the entrance of the kindergarten, I was surprised. Your daughter looked really similar to my daughter when she was born.

"Now I understand why they look so similar. It's because your daughter looks like you, and Miss Vera, your appearance is almost exactly the same as Madeline's..."

After listening to Eloise's explanation, Madeline was dumbfounded.

It was true that Eloise had seen Lily then and lost her senses for a while.

It turned out that it was because of this.

'It turns out that even though nearly 30 years have passed, my mother still clearly remembers my appearance as a baby.'

There was a faint sweetness in Madeline's heart.

In these nearly 30 years without a father or mother, she had finally realized what it was like to be missed by her loved ones—even if this feeling could only be hidden deep in an unknown corner.

Madeline was thinking silently when she suddenly heard Sean say to Jeremy in a pleading tone, "Mr. Whitman, I know that you've always disliked Madeline. You think she devised it so that you were forced to marry her. But now, you should also know that Madeline is innocent and everything was plotted by Meredith. Moreover, it's been three years since Madeline has passed away now..."

At this point, Sean was obviously choked up, but he still continued, "Mr. Whitman, us husband and wife have no right to accuse you at all. We came to you today only hoping you could help us with something seeing that you were once married to Madeline.

“Even if we have no chance of being reunited with our daughter in this life, we hope that she would recognize her ancestors and have a name instead of becoming a lone ghost without a family...”

As he said this, Eloise could not help hiding her face away and weeping.

Madeline drew two tissues and handed them to Eloise.

She glanced at Jeremy who was still silent and raised her eyebrows regretfully.

“Mrs. Montgomery, Mr. Montgomery, I’m afraid Jeremy won’t be able to help.”

Madeline’s simple words shattered Eloise and Sean’s expectations.

“Before I got married to Jeremy, I’ve already gotten people to completely clear out all of Madeline’s belongings. There’s nothing left. If you want to do a paternity test, I’m afraid it won’t work.”

The light in Eloise and Sean’s eyes dimmed at the same time.

However, Eloise’s eyes soon became extremely firm again.

“Even if we can’t do a paternity test, I’m sure that Madeline is my biological daughter. If I still hesitate now, then I really don’t deserve to be a mother.”

Eloise tried very hard to suppress her grief. She then got up and smiled slightly.

“Thank you, Miss Vera and Mr. Whitman. We apologize for bothering you.”

After thanking them politely, she left with Sean.

The huge office became quiet.

Madeline's heart had suddenly become empty.

She raised a perfunctory smile and turned around. She saw Jeremy with his eyes lowered as if he was pondering something. His two sword-like eyebrows were deeply locked.

"Jeremy, what's wrong with you? Are you shocked because Madeline may be the daughter of the Montgomeries?"

Jeremy slowly raised his black eyes that were like the deep night, locking them with Madeline's own beautiful and smiling eyes. He smiled gently.

"These things are not important to me. What's most important is you."

'Not important? Yes, when have I ever been important to you?' Madeline sneered in her heart but still showed a sweet gesture. "Don't lie to me. I'm serious about this."

"I'm serious when it comes to what you say and do." He stared into her eyes, his tone sounding as soft as the spring breeze.

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Madeline smiled and was about to say something when the phone rang.

She looked at the screen and saw that it was from Felipe.

She answered the phone naturally and hung up after a few brief sentences.

“Jeremy, something has come up at my shop. I have to go back now.”

“I’ll see you off.”

“No, we’ll see each other tonight,” Madeline said as she turned around. As she was about to leave, Jeremy stretched out his hand to hold her. When Madeline looked back doubtfully, Jeremy lowered his head and kissed her lips.

“A goodbye kiss.”

“...”

Madeline accepted with a smile despite her rejection.

After seeing her turn around and leave, the smile on the corners of his lips gradually disappeared while the sharpness in his eyes faded away, leaving only a touch of regret.

When Eloise said that Madeline was actually her biological daughter just now, the assumption had given the most perfect answer to the entangled questions in Jeremy’s heart.

“Linnie...”

The name was gently uttered from between his thin and alluring lips, carrying hints of deep love and regret.

...

When Madeline met Felipe, she explained to him what she had learned so far.

“There’s a password to Jeremy’s computer. The information you want may not be easy to get.”

“It’s already very unusual for us to know the layout of his office this quickly.” Felipe turned around, his bright, obsidian eyes casting ripples of gentleness over Madeline’s face.

“In fact, compared to all this, I wanted to see you more.”

“As long as we get what I want and complete our plan, I’ll return to your side.”

“Will you really come back to me?” Felipe’s eyes were a little suspicious now. “You used to love Jeremy so much. Do you really have no feelings for him now?”

Hearing this, Madeline sighed with a smile.

“How much I loved him is how much I hate him now.”

She looked toward the endless sea in the distance.

“My love for him has sunk to the bottom of the sea by April Hill and it’ll never return in this lifetime...”

...

On the other side, Eloise and Sean had given up the idea of looking for Madeline's belongings when they suddenly received a call from Jeremy.

After meeting at the agreed place, Jeremy handed a transparent plastic bag containing a toothbrush to Eloise.

"This is..." Eloise took the plastic bag with surprise. She seemed to have guessed something as her heartbeat sped up involuntarily.

Jeremy calmly parted his lips and said, "It's the toothbrush she used. There should be residual DNA on it."

"This... Is this really the toothbrush Madeline used?" Eloise and Sean were excited and surprised.

"You can use this to do a paternity test, but don't let Vera know about it." Jeremy's tone was dull, but his attitude was serious. "I don't want her to misunderstand anything."

Eloise and Sean responded in unison, expressing their understanding.

Jeremy did not want Vera to know that he still had things from Madeline's life. That was completely understandable. After all, Vera was now Jeremy's true wife.

After Eloise and Sean thanked him, they immediately went to the screening agency in person.

From this moment on, Jeremy's heart also became perturbed.

With Eloise and Sean's status and background, they could definitely use the quickest route to obtain the identification result within the shortest time.

Night fell. Jeremy had just returned to the villa when his phone rang. He looked at the strange number on it, and after a few seconds had passed, he slowly swiped on the answer button. At the same time, Sean's excited voice came from the other end...

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July 27, 2021 by superadmin

Married by Mistake Mr. Whitman's Sinner Wife [Sixteenth Child] Chapter 411

Jeremy held his mobile phone quietly, listening to Sean telling him the result of the identification word for word...

Sean's tone was indescribably complicated. There was happiness, but there was still a touch of sorrow in this joy.

Sure enough, after listening to what Sean had to say, a tsunami rose in Jeremy's heart.

"Jeremy, you're back."

The call had not been hung up yet when a sweet voice sounded in front of him.

Jeremy raised his eyes and saw Madeline walking toward him.

The picturesque face hidden deep in his heart gradually magnified in his deep eyes.

"I was just waiting for you to come back for dinner." Madeline walked toward Jeremy and reached out to him to help him take off his suit jacket.

Jeremy quietly hung up, his eyes staying on Madeline's faintly smiling face the whole time.

Seeing her turning around to hang up the clothes, he suddenly grabbed her wrist.

Madeline looked back questioningly. "What's the matter?"

"It's nothing. I just missed you a little," he said softly. He walked up to her and hugged her all of a sudden.

He wrapped his hands tightly around her, the heat from his palms pressed against her skin. His affection that was not known to anyone felt scorching.

Yet this move of Jeremy's only made Madeline feel even more hatred for him.

She forever remembered his lack of affection for her back then.

How many times had he abandoned her during heavy rains, leaving her hopeless and trapping her heart in the biting cold spring? Until now, it could not be warm again.

'But Jeremy, it turns out that you're ridiculously fond of women who like to put on a facade. When I treat you sincerely, you disdain it.

'Nowadays, you're so attached to me when I'm being fake.

'Hmph.'

Madeline curled the corners of her pink lips quietly and laughed more and more in mockery.

"Jeremy, I missed you too," she said perfunctorily without feelings, "Let's eat first. Jack is still waiting."

Madeline let go and turned around, not paying attention to the expression on Jeremy's face at the moment.

During their meal, Madeline intimately served Jackson vegetables and wiped the soup around his mouth.

She noticed that this little guy was smiling more and more while the gloomy air around him seemed to have dissipated by a lot.

After dinner, Madeline accompanied Jackson to do his homework.

His kindergarten homework was simple for Madeline, but it should be a bit difficult for children. However, Madeline found that Jackson did not need any guidance at all to complete his homework perfectly.

She guessed that Jackson had inherited Jeremy's mind. Not only was his memory extraordinary, but his IQ was not low either.

Madeline was very fortunate that this child was nothing like Meredith.

Thinking about this, she could not help but think of her own child.

'Baby, where are you, hmm?

'Where did Meredith hide you?

'Mom really wants to see you soon...'

.....

The next day, Jeremy thoughtfully sent Madeline to First Crystal Street, leaving only after a short while.

Instead of returning to Whitman Corporation, he drove the car to the cemetery.

Eloise and Sean had been waiting there since earlier on. They were holding white chrysanthemums in their hands and were wearing solemn black clothes. Their eyes were red.

The wind at the end of autumn and early winter was a bit bitter. It blew past their faces with a biting chill.

It was not yet the usual time to visit cemeteries and there were very few people walking about there. There was only the rustle of leaves being blown by the wind.

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Eloise and Sean followed behind Jeremy with heavy footsteps. They finally reached the grave that had been destroyed into pieces.

"This... This is the place Madeline is buried?" Eloise's eyes widened with surprise.

She really could not accept the scene before her.

The grave was a destroyed mess, and even the tombstone was broken to pieces till the point it was no longer able to be pieced back together.

"It was Meredith who caused the destruction," Jeremy answered lightly.

Eloise and Sean's eyes lit up with anger in unison, but there were more heartache and grief at this moment.

Eloise put down the bouquet in her hands, walked to the scattered stones, and crouched down slowly.

She picked up a small piece of gravel and stroked it gently and very cautiously as if she was holding a treasure.

Tears of regret dripped quietly onto the rocks, leaving heavy tear stains.

"My baby girl..."

Sean crouched down and put his arm around Eloise as well, crying with regret.

If they had not hated Madeline so deeply, hitting and cursing her, they would not be feeling this insurmountable guilt along with their grief at this moment.

Jeremy silently looked at the couple who was crying in their arms in front of him. His deep, black eyes no longer held the loveless gloom from when he used to come here in the past.

It took a while for Eloise to adjust her emotions before getting up.

"Where are Madeline's ashes? Where are her ashes? Regardless, I'll rebuild a grave for the child."

"The ashes and the buried objects were all stolen by Meredith. I still don't know where they are."

"What?!"

“Meredith actually stole Madeline’s ashes? Why would she do this?” Sean could not understand this absurd behavior.

Eloise was extremely angry. “This woman, how could she be so vicious? She has already ruined Madeline. She’s no longer with us but I didn’t expect that even her ashes would not be spared! I will go and ask her about the whereabouts of Madeline’s ashes now!”

“Eloise, I’ll go with you,” Sean said and began to follow after his wife.

“Don’t waste your time. She won’t tell you at all.”

Eloise’s footsteps paused, the glittering teardrops in her eyes full of deep regret and self-blame.

“Mr. Whitman, I know you hate Madeline and that you don’t care where her ashes are. You’re indifferent even though her grave has been destroyed like this. If it were me from before, I would be the same as you, ignoring the matter as it was no concern to me, but now...”

Eloise smiled bitterly at herself.

“She’s my own flesh and blood. How can I be willing to allow her to be without peace even in death...”

Hearing Eloise’s words, Jeremy’s lips curled into a smile.

Everyone knew that Madeline was crazy in love with Jeremy, but only he knew his love for her.

He was not unnerved about anything regarding her only because these matters in front of him were no longer of significance.

"I think you'd better first go to another place with me," Jeremy said as he moved his long legs.

Eloise and Sean followed him after a few seconds of hesitation.

Jeremy took them to the grave of Madeline's grandfather, Len Samuels.

Seeing the name on the tombstone, Eloise and Sean raised their eyebrows thoughtfully. When they saw that the person who had erected the tombstone was Madeline, the couple was even more shocked.

"Grandfather?" Eloise was very puzzled.

Her father was not named Len Samuels and he had been living abroad all these years after she got married. He had never been to Glendale at all.

"He's the only relative who raised Madeline." Jeremy explained.

Hearing this, Eloise and Sean looked a little grateful.

"It turns out this old gentleman had raised Madeline." Eloise bowed deeply, looking at the name on the tombstone. Suddenly, she felt the name becoming more and more familiar, "Len Samuels... I feel as if I've seen this name somewhere."

She thought hard, and suddenly, there was a flash of inspiration.

"I remember! I saw this name at home!"

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When Eloise said this, Jeremy and Sean looked at her at the same time.

Although Madeline had been referring to Len Samuels as her grandfather, it was clear that he was not Madeline's real grandfather.

How could Eloise know Len Samuels?

"Eloise, have you really seen this name at home?" Sean was surprised.

Whether it was a servant or their relatives or friends, he was sure that none of them were named Len Samuels.

Eloise nodded with certainty. "With Diana!"

"Diana?" Jeremy frowned slightly.

"She's our housekeeper. She has been working for us since her 20s. It has been 32 years." Eloise explained. "I saw the name Len Samuels from her side."

"Diana's full name is Diana Samuels, and her surname is Samuels..." Saying this, Eloise's emotions gradually became more agitated as a certain conjecture appeared in her heart.

"Sean, could it be that... We should go back and ask her about this clearly!"

Eloise hurriedly pulled Sean up and turned around.

Jeremy glanced at the tombstone, then at the couple who had left hurriedly. The conclusion to the suspicions in his heart had already been outlined.

He looked at the gloomy sky and saw a ray of sunlight streaming through the dark clouds.

God had in fact not been indifferent toward him.

.....

Eloise and Sean were both upset on their way back.

The moment Eloise entered the living room after arriving home, Diana came out with a bowl of soup.

“Madam, you came back just in time. I’ve just made this soup for you. I’m truly sorry that I hurt you last time because of that horrid woman.” Diana apologized sincerely, but she did not forget to push the responsibility onto Madeline.

Eloise wanted to ask her straightforwardly, but seeing Diana apologize so sincerely, she calmed down and smiled.

“I know you didn’t mean it, but whether it’s Madeline or Vera, they’re not the bad women you seem to think they are.”

Diana’s eyes became fierce. “What Vera? She’s that b*tch Madeline. Don’t be fooled, Sir and Madam! That horrible woman killed Brittany. She should have died long ago!”

Hearing this, Eloise and Sean’s expressions darkened a lot. They could not accept anyone slandering their precious daughter so much.

What was more, Madeline was really innocent.

Brittany's death three years ago had been proved to have nothing to do with her.

Although she was very dissatisfied, Eloise had to suppress her heart for the sake of polite conversation. "Diana, you really do love Brittany. I can't compare myself to you as a mother sometimes."

There would instantly be a warm and loving smile on Diana's face whenever Brittany was brought up.

"I raised Ms. Brittany from when she was a child. Of course, I'd like such a beautiful, smart, and well-behaved child." As she said this, her smile disappeared suddenly. Her eyes became extremely vicious while she gritted her teeth.

"That damned sl*t Madeline actually made such a cruel attack and stabbed Miss Brittany to death!"

Looking at the distorted flame of hatred in Diana's eyes, Eloise and Sean glanced at each other. "The person who killed Brittany will definitely be punished so that they won't do stupid things to hurt other innocent people," Eloise spoke and patted Diana's hand while smiling gently.

"You're just in a bad mood. Do you want to go back to your hometown to rest for a bit? I recall your father is in your hometown. If I remember correctly, he's called Len Samuels, right?"

Upon hearing the words 'Len Samuels', Diana's eyes flashed with panic.

"Madam, I'm okay. You don't have to worry about me. I... I have nothing to do now. I'm going to work first. Please remember to drink the soup," Diana said with a gaping mouth before hurriedly turning around. She pulled on the apron twice with her flustered hands.

Seeing Diana's weird reaction, Eloise faced Sean excitedly, her eyes filled with the urge to talk.

Sean also saw the clue. He held Eloise's hand to comfort her. "It seems that this matter is really strange. She doesn't seem to want to tell us the truth."

“Then, what should I do now? I can’t wait for another moment!” Eloise was anxious. “Sean, I really can’t imagine what our baby girl experienced back then...”

Sean sighed with anger and pain. Suddenly, he thought of something and called Jeremy immediately.

Jeremy, who had just returned to the corporation, received Sean’s call. He listened to Sean’s request with some hesitation.

At this time, Madeline was carrying his lunch into his office.

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Her smile was like a flower while her eyes were quick-witted, shining in his eyes like bright stars.

After hanging up the call, Jeremy got up and walked toward Madeline. “Vera, Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery want to invite us to their home tonight.”

Madeline’s actions of setting out his lunch paused slightly. “Why would they invite us to be their guest all of a sudden?”

“They have a request and hope you can help them.”

Jeremy looked at Madeline, then informed her of the specific content of the unreasonable demand.

Madeline turned around and pulled Jeremy’s tie with her slender fingers, revealing a womanly, charming, and lively smile.

“Looking at your face, I’ll agree.”

Jeremy’s eyes gently admired the bright face in front of him as his heartbeat accelerated more than a little...

At dusk, the light of the setting sun shone through the branches and was cut into pieces of gold as it sprinkled on the ground.

Madeline held Jeremy’s hand and they sweetly stepped through the Montgomeries’ door.

Eloise and Sean had been waiting for a long time. Seeing Madeline’s picturesque face coming into view, the eyes of the couple revealed yearning and joy.

This was all because this face was exactly the same as their baby girl’s.

They could no longer see that smile, and their remorseful spirits could only obtain a trace of comfort through this method now—even they knew that this was selfish.

Now, Eloise and Sean sincerely wanted to get close to Madeline.

“Miss Vera, Mr. Whitman, please take a seat.” Eloise gave them a very warm welcome, her eyes fixed on Madeline’s face. “The more I look at Miss Vera, the prettier you look. I’m sorry to have to trouble you with things tonight.”

“Mrs. Montgomery, just call me Vera.” Madeline smiled but still felt the irony in her heart.

She used to stand in front of them with this face, but what she got was cruel treatment.

Human hearts were curious while human nature was even more unpredictable.

Diana, who was in the kitchen, heard some sounds and knew that the guests had arrived. She took a look and unexpectedly saw Madeline.

“She’s the distinguished guest that Madam mentioned?” Hatred and anger instantly lit up in Diana’s eyes. “What kind of distinguished guest is she?! This b*tch of a woman, how can she be even a tenth as distinguished as my daughter?!” Diana cursed, wishing to smash Madeline’s body into pieces. However, this time, she resisted.

Holding the freshly made soup, she walked over with a smile. When she reached Madeline, she apologized. “Miss Vera, I apologize. I got the wrong person last time and almost hurt you. I hope you won’t take it to heart. “

When Madeline heard this, she changed her generous and dignified attitude before raising her beautiful eyes arrogantly. “You again? Why are you still here? Mrs. Montgomery, why do you keep a servant like this? Have you forgotten about the incident where she made you lose so much blood till you were almost in trouble?”

Diana’s expression and eyes sunk upon hearing this.

“Diana has worked in our home for more than 30 years, after all. There would be no credit without hard work. I’ve put aside what happened last time.”

“A kind person will be deceived, Mrs. Montgomery. For some people, no matter how kind you treat them, there still would not be any harmony with them,” Madeline said indifferently as she glanced at the soup in front of her. “Did she make this soup? I don’t want to drink it. Who would be able to tell if she had laced it with something to hurt me again?”

“...” Diana lowered her head and gritted her teeth. “Ma’am, I’ll go back to the kitchen!”

As soon as she said this, she turned around angrily.

Madeline looked at Diana's angry back, then got up and walked to the kitchen.

Jeremy looked at Madeline's back with worry in his eyes before also getting up to follow.

As soon as Diana entered the kitchen, she slashed the beef on the cutting board with the kitchen knife while cursing viciously, "Madeline, you b*tch!

"Let's see how much longer you can be pleased with yourself.

"I will kill you to avenge Brittany!"

"I couldn't tell that you actually hate me this much." Madeline's voice drifted in.

Diana instantly stopped chopping the beef when she saw Madeline entering the kitchen. She waved the kitchen knife and pointed it toward Madeline, desire bursting from her eyes.

"Madeline, you b*tch! Vera Quinn? As if I'd believe that! You're Madeline! You killed Miss Brittany yet you're still free. Go to hell! Go to hell!"

Listening to Diana's vicious abuse, Madeline raised a proud smile. She was not surprised at all. She folded her arms and made her posture more cold and arrogant.

"You have good eyes. That's right, I'm not a Vera at all. I'm Madeline!"

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“You have good eyes. That’s right, I’m not Vera at all. I’m Madeline!”

Jeremy, who was standing outside the kitchen, had heard what Madeline said then. A subtle but shattered light shone in his deep sea-like eyes. It gradually condensed into a noiseless tsunami that surged in his heart. However, he just stood there in silence.

Diana, on the other hand, blew up instantly when she heard this.

“You really are her! You’re really that b*tch Madeline!”

She swung the kitchen knife in her hand and pointed it in Madeline’s direction. Those angry eyes saw red as if they were about to swallow Madeline alive.

“I must avenge my Brit today!”

“Your Brit? That was Mrs. Montgomery’s Brittany. What does she have to do with you? I’ve never even touched a strand of Brittany’s hair. Even if I really did kill Brittany, it’s Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery who should be looking for me for revenge. What right do you, a servant, have to teach me a lesson?”

“Who says I don’t have the right? No one else in this world has the most right to teach you a lesson than me!”

Diana’s emotions seemed to have suddenly reached the highest point. It was obvious that Madeline’s words had pierced a vulnerable spot in her heart. She looked weird at the moment, her mental state seemingly becoming abnormal.

“Madeline, you cruel btch. How dare you say that I don’t have the right? I’m the most rightful person in this world to avenge Brit! Btch, you killed my precious daughter! I want you to pay for my daughter’s life today!”

Diana roared, waving a kitchen knife as she slashed toward Madeline.

In a split second, Eloise and Sean rushed forward selflessly at the same time to stop Diana. Jeremy quickly took Madeline into his arms, bringing her out of the danger zone whilst protecting her tightly in his arms.

Sean subdued Diana and threw the kitchen knife aside.

Diana half-knelt on the floor as she screamed and yelled at Madeline like she was crazy, "Madeline, you b*tch, I'm going to kill you! I must kill you to avenge my precious daughter!"

"You finally admit that Brit is your daughter!" Eloise's words calmed Diana down instantly.

With her eyes wide, she slowly regained clarity in her consciousness.

Seeing these people standing in front of her, she shook her head desperately.

"Madam, you've misunderstood. How could Miss Brittany be my daughter?" Diana denied it. She glared at Madeline who was being fiercely protected in Jeremy's arms. "It's this evil lady who provoked me on purpose. I... I just want to avenge Miss Brittany!"

"You don't have to lie to me anymore. I already know about it!" Eloise looked at Diana with disappointment and anger. Tears had welled in her eyes. "I trusted you so much, but you actually did such a thing..."

Diana pretended to be innocent and confused. "Ma-Madam, what did I do? Don't tell me you don't believe me and believe in that b*tch Madeline instead?"

As soon as Diana finished her quibble, Madeline's chuckle was heard.

“You keep saying that you want to avenge Brittany, that you’re the person with the most right to teach Madeline a lesson, yet you don’t even dare to acknowledge your own daughter in the end,” Madeline said sarcastically as she left Jeremy’s embrace.

“That alone makes you unworthy of being a mother and even more unworthy of seeking justice for Brittany.”

Diana’s gaze became cold again upon hearing Madeline’s words.

“You, Madeline... You—”

“I’m not Madeline. I’m just cooperating with Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery to force you to tell the truth.”

“...” Diana looked at the exquisitely beautiful palm-sized face in front of her blankly as if she had just woken up. It turned out that everything before was nothing but a trap.

However, this woman looked exactly like Madeline. How could they be two different people?

“Are you still reluctant to tell the truth even at this point?” Eloise could not wait to know how her daughter was lost back then, or more accurately, how she was swapped.

Faced with Sean and Eloise’s questioning, Diana gritted her teeth and sealed her lips tightly.

Seeing that Diana was adamant about keeping quiet, Madeline’s beautiful eyes swirled as she took a step forward.

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“How ridiculous. You had so eloquently said just now that you would avenge your own daughter, but now you dare not even acknowledge this daughter of yours.”

“...”

“Although Brittany had lived the life of a rich daughter, she was really pitiful for having a mother like you. Even till the day Brittany died, she had never really called her biological mother ‘Mom’. Even now when she’s already dead, she still can’t die in peace. And you’ll also regret this for life.”

“You shut up! Just shut up! Stop talking!” Diana lost control of her emotions again. She stood up and wanted to raise a hand at Madeline.

Jeremy coldly reached out and clamped down on her wrist, pushing her away.

Diana plopped to the ground.

“If you dare raise a hand at Vera again, I’ll smash Brittany’s grave!”

What?!

Diana trembled in horror. She crawled toward Jeremy and knelt at his feet, begging for mercy with a pale face.

“Mr. Whitman, don’t! Please don’t destroy Brittany’s grave. I was wrong! I wouldn’t dare! I won’t dare to anymore!”

“If you really know you’re wrong, then tell us what happened back then. Otherwise, you’ll regret it.”

Diana suddenly froze when she heard the words. She was obviously hesitating.

However, looking at the inviolable authority in Jeremy's deep eyes, she was really panicking.

She had heard Meredith say that Jeremy murdered Madeline's child at that time. If so, what could he not do?

"You still won't speak?" Jeremy asked coldly, impatience written all over his handsome face.

Diana shivered violently and looked up tremblingly at Eloise and Sean who were angry. She gritted her teeth and admitted at last.

"Yes, you guys have guessed it right. Brittany was indeed my biological daughter... Back then, Madam and I were pregnant at the same time, and we gave birth only two days apart. I was too envious of Mrs. Montgomery's family background and living condition back then, so I swapped my own daughter with yours..."

After getting this answer, Eloise and Sean could not help but draw in a sharp breath, feeling a chill running all over their backs.

Madeline appeared to be calmly listening to Diana telling the truth, but there was already a storm in her heart.

'As it turns out, my biological parents didn't lose me because of their negligence. I was swapped.'

Eloise was tearful. She struggled to get her emotions together and her voice trembled immensely when she spoke, "Then, what about my own daughter? Where did you take her to?"

Diana suddenly lifted her head. "Don't worry, Madam. I didn't sell the young lady off, nor did I simply throw her away. I sent her to my hometown and brought her to my sister!"

"You're ridiculous! Detestable!" Sean was furious.

Diana looked at Sean and Eloise disapprovingly. "Mister, Madam, although it was a bit wrong of me to do this, my sister is very nice. She surely has not treated her badly. The young lady has definitely been dressed warmly and fed well, rest assured!"

Smack! Eloise could not help but slap Diana in the face. She endured her grief and said through gritted teeth and with angry eyes, "Diana, you're not a human! You swapped my daughter and threw her to your sister just to let your daughter live a good life. Yet, you're still arrogantly telling me to be rest assured?"

Eloise pursed her lips in utter grief.

"My daughter was originally a young lady. She wouldn't have needed to worry about food and clothes. She could have gone to the best school and get the best education. She would have been a socialite in the upper-class society! But because of your selfishness and greed, my daughter has never lived a good day!"

Hearing this, Diana took a look at Eloise, who was emotional, in disbelief. "Madam, what you said is a little too exaggerated. My sister is a good person. She has definitely taken good care of the young lady. Worst comes to worst, I'll ask my sister to send her back right now. She can still be the young lady. But my Brittany... My Brittany is really pitiful..."

"Bring her back? How lightly you speak of it! How are you going to bring my daughter back? She's already dead! She's dead, and you're also one of the murderers who killed her!"

Diana stared blankly with wide eyes. "Wha-What? The young lady is dead?"

"Yes, she's dead. She's Madeline, the person you keep saying you want to kill! Madeline Crawford is my biological daughter!"

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Diana was instantly dumbfounded after hearing such an answer. She shook her head with an expression of disbelief. She could not accept it.

“How can that be? Impossible! How could that bitch be Madam’s daughter? She’s not worthy. She’s not worthy of the title of the Montgomeries’ young lady at all. She’s just a bitch—”

‘You shut up!’ Eloise was outraged. “Who are you to curse my daughter like that? If my daughter isn’t worthy, then are you worthy? You did these despicable and shameless things that are lower than the low, and yet you still have the gall to criticize my daughter? Diana, you don’t have humanity or conscience. You’re simply not worthy of being human!”

Eloise reprimanded her furiously. Thinking of the hardships that Madeline might have experienced during the years after she was swapped, Eloise’s heart hurt beyond words.

“Eloise, what’s the matter?” Seeing Eloise teetering as if she was about to faint, Sean held her nervously.

Eloise burst into tears and raised her hand to hold her chest. “Oh Sean, my heart hurts. It really hurts. Our daughter could have grown up living a peaceful and prosperous life, but who would have thought that she would actually be killed like that...”

As she spoke, her red, tearful eyes glared angrily at Diana.

“From the moment you came to the Montgomeries until now, when have I ever treated you badly? I’ve only ever treated you kindly and even helped you to get married, but the result? I didn’t expect you to think so little of how well we treated you that you actually paid back our kindness with ingratitude!

“Brittany was a good girl. Even when Sean and I discovered that she wasn’t ours back then, we never treated her badly, but what about you? How did you treat my daughter? If it weren’t for your skulduggery back then, my Eveline wouldn’t have ended up dead!”

“Madam, I didn’t expect things to become like this. I indeed handed Madeline to my sister back then and

had her take good care of Madeline.” Diana was pushing the blame. She then said with dissatisfaction, “But, Madam, your daughter murdered my daughter. Even if she has died, her death still left a margin of inexorable guilt. It was what she deserved. My Brittany is the most innocent and most pitiful one!”

“You...”

Hearing Diana making such righteous remarks, Eloise and Sean were outraged.

This was simply absurd and ridiculous!

She had obviously done such an unforgivable and despicable thing yet she still blamed the victim.

“Diana, you listen to me! My daughter has never harmed anyone. She was innocent! Brittany was killed by someone else! On the contrary, you killed my daughter! She was killed by an idiotic, evil, and unreasonable fool like you!”

Eloise had exploded entirely, venting all the emotions in her heart.

“You keep saying that you want to avenge your daughter. You listen to me now. I want to get justice for my daughter! I will have you take responsibility for all the absurd things you’ve done!”

After Eloise warned Diana while pointing at her, she turned and walked away quickly.

Sean did not hesitate to call the police immediately.

Not long after, the police arrived. Sean told them the whole story and Diana was taken away.

As she was being taken away, she still insisted that she did nothing wrong and thought that her

daughter, Brittany, was the most pitiful. She did not even realize that her selfishness and greed had destroyed a family of three that was initially warm and complete.

Although the atmosphere quieted down after Diana was taken away, there was a trace of melancholy and gloominess in the air.

Madeline exchanged a few words with Jeremy before going upstairs to Eloise's room.

When she reached the door, she heard Eloise's whimpers and sobs.

A faint ache emerged again from the thorn in her heart.

After settling her emotions, Madeline raised her hand and knocked on the door. "Mrs. Montgomery, are you alright?"

Hearing this, Eloise immediately took a tissue to wipe her tears. She tried to put on a smile before saying, "Miss Vera, please come in."

Madeline walked in calmly only to see Eloise's red, crying eyes. She recalled what Eloise had said to Diana just now. A hint of distress involuntarily appeared in her eyes.

"Mrs. Montgomery, don't be so upset. If your daughter is here to see this, she'll definitely not want Mr. Montgomery and you to feel sad for her."

Hearing Madeline's comforting words, Eloise's tears flooded even more.

She looked at Madeline's face with tears sparkling in her eyes. Slowly lifting her trembling hand, she stroked the delicate and soft face in front of her gently.

"Eveline..."

Eloise moved her lips and whispered the name.

Madeline was a little stunned, knowing that it was her real name.

"Mom and Dad are sorry. We're really sorry. You had obviously shown up in front of us long ago, but we were blind. We hurt and mistreated you time and time again for that vicious woman Meredith..."

"I know that there's no way to compensate you in this lifetime. If there's a next life, I'll definitely make up for the harm done to you..."

Eloise reached out her hand with tears all over her face and she suddenly hugged Madeline.

"Eveline, my Eveline..." she called out lightly in a trembling voice.

Perhaps she was in a trance, but looking at Madeline's face, it was really hard not to be in a trance—especially in the state of grief and indignation she was in at this moment.

Madeline silently let Eloise hug her tightly, a touch of wetness appearing in her calm eyes...

This was probably the first time she was experiencing a mother's love. It turned out to be so warm. She cherished it.

Eloise let go after a long time.

“I’m sorry, Miss Vera, I lost my cool.” Eloise apologized sincerely. “Thanks for your help tonight, Miss Vera. If it weren’t for you, Diana wouldn’t have admitted so easily.”

Madeline smiled faintly. “It’s just a small matter, so don’t worry about it.”

She got up slowly, her face as undisturbed as ever. “Rest early, Mrs. Montgomery. Jeremy and I are going back now.”

“I’ll see you two off.”

Eloise looked at Madeline warmly and very politely sent her two guests to the main gate.

The car quickly drove far away, but Eloise and Sean’s gaze stayed.

They regretted everything they had done to Madeline, and now, only looking at this similar-looking face could they seek a bit of healing and comfort.

Unfortunately, this remorse could never be compensated.

The villa.

Madeline’s thoughts had not settled down completely even after she took a bath.

When she was young, she envied other children who had their parents’ accompaniment. She also blamed the gods and accused others as well as blamed her parents for not wanting her, but in fact, her parents loved her and thought about her.

Thinking of this, a warm current came from Madeline’s incomplete, injured heart.

Then, she thought about what had happened tonight again.

'Diana? She said she handed me to her sister to take care of me. But since I have my memories, it was Grandpa who took care of me. There was no one else.

'Diana? Len Samuels? What's their relationship?'

Madeline pondered intently, completely unaware of the approaching footsteps.

Jeremy looked at Madeline who was standing on the balcony with subtle eyes. He approached her step by step and lightly parted his thin lips. "Madeline."

Madeline, who was deep in thought, suddenly heard someone calling her. She instinctively turned around to respond, "Hmm?"

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When Madeline turned around and saw the man standing not far away, she realized she had unconsciously responded to him calling her 'Maddie' just now.

Meeting Jeremy's unfathomable eyes, Madeline very calmly put on a smile.

"Maddie? Don't tell me you're just like Mrs. Montgomery, unable to disengage from the show earlier and are still treating me as Madeline?"

Her tone made it sound as if she was joking. She then stepped toward Jeremy with a deep smile.

"But I didn't think you would call Madeline so intimately. She is, after all, the woman you abhor, no?"

Madeline smiled slightly. She passed by Jeremy and picked up a magazine. Then, she sat on the bed and spoke casually, "It was quite unexpected. As it turns out, Madeline was really Mrs. Montgomery's biological daughter. Moreover, she was swapped by a servant in the family right after she was born.

"What a shame that Madeline is already dead. The truth came too late."

Jeremy listened to Madeline quietly. He turned around and sat on the other side of the bed, his charming eyes falling onto Madeline's beautiful side profile.

He parted his thin lips slightly and said, "Although the truth came late, it did come in the end."

Madeline paused a little in the middle of turning the book, a hint of mockery in her beautiful eyes. "If so, while on this road that leads to the truth, who can make up for the harm caused to the person involved?"

She lifted up her palm-sized face and looked at the thoughtful man. Her gaze gradually cooled as her tone also became colder.

"Just look at Madeline. She was vilified at first, slandered and framed. Everyone had accused her, including you, the man she loved most. Now that the truth has surfaced, but so what? She's already dead."

The word 'dead' fell in Jeremy's ears, feeling as though it had hit his heart directly.

He looked fixedly at the pair of star-like bright, beautiful eyes in front of him.

"But if she's not dead, do you think she'll give the people who had wronged her back then a chance to redeem themselves?"

Madeline smiled faintly and put down the magazine in her hands upon hearing this. "If there really is an

'if', if a human's life can really be reset, I think the one thing she would wish for is to never have met you. Some wounds may never be healed once inflicted. Forgiveness is easy, but giving it is too difficult."

Madeline's answer filled Jeremy's heart with coldness all of a sudden. The ache in the corners of his eyes seemed to suddenly swell uncomfortably.

He finally knew that sometimes, casual words could also be like an invisible, sharp weapon that could stab a person's heart.

Thinking of the time that he could not go back to and of the many times he had heaped verbal violence onto her, how strong did she need to be so that she could still stand up again and smile at him after being hurt countless times over?

'Forgive?'

'How does one forgive?'

'Jeremy Whitman, you really deserve it.'

...

The next day after Madeline sent Jackson to the kindergarten, she was ready to look for clues about the child from back then.

As soon as she got into the car, she suddenly saw some popular news from her push notifications.

After watching the video, Madeline gripped the steering wheel in a daze. Her emotions were complicated.

It was a video of the press conference from Montgomery Enterprise.

She saw Eloise and Sean in the video. They had solemnly announced that Madeline was their biological daughter who was separated from them for almost 30 years. At the same time, they also emphasized that Meredith was just a despicable faker.

In the video, both Eloise and Sean's eyes were red and they choked up a few times, but they restrained their emotions until the whole press conference ended.

After watching the entire video, Madeline had a smile on her face. However, her eyes were already soaked.

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Felipe suddenly called and Madeline collected herself before answering the phone. The man's gentle voice sounded magnetically in her ears. "Are you okay? Did you see the video?"

Madeline seemed to understand something clearly. "I just finished watching it. Thank you for your concern. I'm fine."

"It seems that they really love you. It's just that they were blinded back then." Felipe explained on behalf of Eloise and Sean.

"Love..."

Madeline smiled while uttering the word, feeling strange all of a sudden. "Felipe, I'll come to where you are now. Let's talk about the plan."

After hanging up the call, Madeline hurried to a single-family villa in the suburbs where Felipe now lived.

After Madeline arrived, Felipe brought the black tea that he had just brewed. He looked at the woman who was in front of him with a smile and tender eyes. "I really want this to end soon. I think of you having to stay with him every night and it's very uncomfortable."

Madeline sipped the black tea, feeling Felipe's care and affection for her.

"Don't worry, I'll take care of myself properly. Jeremy may have married me and he may really have some affection for me, but in the end, this face of mine is one that he hates most. He won't be interested in me that way."

Felipe smiled superficially and nodded.

"He probably knew that you had been wronged and framed since before. And because he felt guilty and was unable to atone for a dead person, that's why he found some comfort in you," he said as he looked at the withered flowers in the yard, his eyes sinking.

"That's human nature. You may think he's really sorry, but sometimes, he might only be apologizing just to make himself feel better.

"I don't care whether he feels guilty or sorry," Madeline said lightly, "I just want to get my child back and crack his computer password as soon as possible to get the information we want."

"Maybe it's not necessary for us to go around such a big circle. I'll think of a faster way to complete our plan."

Felipe looked at Madeline with a mysterious smile. "I'm almost done with all the people on the board of directors. What we can be certain of now is that Jeremy holds nearly 70 percent of the shares of Whitman Corporation. As long as we obtain these shares, Whitman Corporation will no longer be his to rule."

Madeline pondered thoughtfully for a moment. "I know what to do."

Seeing the firmness in Madeline's eyes, Felipe's gaze softened. "Vera, will you regret doing this?"

Madeline smiled and shook her head. "What I regret the most is that I loved him too deeply and only realized it too late."

After saying this, Madeline's phone rang again.

She took a look and found that it was Eloise calling her.

Although Eloise and Sean did not know her identity, Madeline knew it clearly.

As for Eloise's call, she could not heartlessly decline it.

She picked up the call and Eloise's sentimental voice sounded as she made a request. "Miss Vera, are you free now? Sean and I have something to ask of you."

"I have time." Madeline agreed, then left Felipe's villa.

After Madeline left, Felipe held the cup she had just drunk tea from. The smile on his lips was just a tad distressed.

"You'll probably hate me in the future, I suppose. But I won't let you know that I'm actually not a qualified gentleman."

...

Half an hour later, Madeline came to the place Eloise mentioned. As soon as she got out of the car, Eloise

and Sean greeted her with a smile.

“Miss Vera, thank you for making this trip.” Eloise and Sean were very kind and friendly.

Madeline smiled elegantly. “I wonder what’s the matter you two want me to help with?”

Madeline calmly gave a soft smile at the man who had appeared in front of her. “Why are you here, Jeremy?” she asked, her tone casual with a hint of surprise. However, she did not let out the nervousness she felt.

Jeremy walked over slowly before turning to look at the tombstone. “Why are you here? And who’s this? Why are you paying respects to him? This is your first time in Glendale, isn’t it? I didn’t know that you had relatives resting here.”

Madeline pretended to be shocked as she replied, “Don’t you know, Jeremy? Madeline was still technically your ex-wife. Don’t you recognize her grandfather?”

“My ex-wife’s grandfather?” He stared dazedly at the name engraved on the tombstone, the words ‘Grandfather of Madeline Crawford’ were indeed engraved on the bottom left corner.

“Why would you come and pay respects to my ex-wife’s grandfather out of the blue?”

“Sympathy, perhaps,” Madeline parted her lips to reply in a heartbeat as she stared at the flowers she placed. “I’ve been feeling sad for this Madeline Crawford as of late. The man she loved deeply doesn’t even like her, and she had died being known as the shameless woman who even your family thinks death’s the least amount of punishment for her crimes...”

She said with a smile before bending down to light the candle.

“Perhaps It’s because I look too much like Madeline and have fallen in love with the man she was smitten

with, so I couldn't help but sympathize with her past. I had someone help me look into her past connections. Knowing that her grandfather had passed away, I thought that maybe I could pay my respects for her."

Madeline found no logical faults in her explanation.

Meanwhile, Jeremy stood stunned by the side. Staring at the flickering candle, his deep dark eyes seemed to have been lit by a bright flare as well.

"Oh, are you here to give roses to someone resting here too, Jeremy?" Madeline stood and smiled, brushing off non-existent lint and smoke out of Jeremy's shirt collar.

"The strong wind's giving me a bit of a headache. How about we return first?"

Jeremy turned to face Madeline's crescent-eyed smile and nodded.

Madeline watched Jeremy quietly as they made their way back and realized that he had yet shown any burst of emotions on his face.

Did he believe the words she said?

Most likely.

He could not possibly stay silent if he suspected her, especially not with how much he hated her.

...

Headlines of Meredith's conviction began to trend in newspapers a few days later.

Following that was the incident of Meredith stealing the identity of Montgomerie's eldest daughter.

Netizens were in outrage. As much as they felt for the Montgomery family, they were also heartbroken for Jackson.

Such a smart and brave child did not deserve such a horrible and wicked woman for a mother.

While reading the news, the Montgomery family's Twitter post about the search for their daughter caught Madeline's eye.

Within the passage of text was a description of a butterfly-shaped birthmark on their long-lost daughter's waist.

Madeline immediately tried to stop that from trending.

She could not let Jeremy see such a piece of news now.

At the same time, Madeline knew that she had to pick up the pace of her revenge.

Jeremy came to look for her just as she read the news and informed her of the date when he was going to bring her to meet his parents.

Madeline made sure to dress up that day and entered Whitman Manor with her arm linked with Jeremy's just as the sun set over the horizon.

Oh, how unwilling Jeremy was when she had stepped foot here back then.

Yet here they were, with Jeremy happily bringing her through Whitman Manor's doors.

Perhaps this was what people meant by the future was unpredictable.

Mrs. Whitman, Karen Yalaman, immediately rushed forward to ask when she realized that Jeremy had arrived. "Is it true, Jeremy, the things I read on the internet? Did Meredith actually do all those things? Is she sitting for 12 years? Did she actually pretend to be the Montgomerys' daughter too?"

Jeremy frowned in displeasure. "I don't want to hear her name anymore."

"But..."

"I'm here today for my fiancé to meet my parents. I'd appreciate it if you didn't speak of depressing names and things," Jeremy interrupted coldly before lowering his gaze to look at Madeline. "My mom made these dishes herself. I hope you'll find them to your liking."

"What?" Karen's expression darkened instantly. "You told me we had an important guest over tonight, Jeremy. You even told me to make the dishes myself! You're telling me it was for this woman?"

Madeline quirked a delicate brow and smiled lightly. "It's nice to see you, Aunty."

"Well, it's not nice to see you, you witch!" Karen spared Madeline a disdainful glance. "Looking at you kills my appetite!"

"Vera will be your daughter-in-law soon, so would you please not use such a sharp tone?" Jeremy asked distastefully.

Mrs. Whitman paused before huffing and marching to Mr. Whitman. "Do you see this? Your son's gone mad! I can't believe he brought home a woman who looks exactly like his ex-wife. Why divorce that b*tch anyway if this is the case?"

That b*tch.

Madeline's eyes flinched as she pursed her lips while taking in Karen's insulting label for her.

Jeremy's patience was running thin. "If you don't want this daughter-in-law, then you can say goodbye to having this son as well."

"..." Karen's expression froze. Seeing Jeremy pulling Madeline toward the door, she frantically composed herself and hid away her targeting words as well as attitude. "Forget it, forget it. Meredith's had her fun already, not to mention that she's been pretending to be the Montgomerie's daughter this entire time. You don't love her anymore, right? Then Mom won't care anymore. Be with whoever you want."

Karen turned and walked toward the kitchen. "I'll go check if the soup is ready."

Madeline took her jacket off and placed her bag down. "I'll be going to the bathroom, Jeremy."

Jeremy nodded warmly at her. "Be careful, alright? You're a pregnant woman."

"Alright," Madeline replied dotingly before making her way there.

Mr. Whitman, Winston, glanced at Madeline and placed the finance newspaper down. "This Vera Quinn looks a lot like Madeline, Jeremy. What are you thinking? Why marry a woman who looks so much like the one you hate?"

"Who said I hated her?" Jeremy fired back, leaving Winston stunned.

Winston's impression of Madeline was rather neutral, for he had only met her two or three times since he spent most of his time working overseas, but Madeline's appearance was something fresh in his mind.

While he had not seen much of Madeline, he had heard a lot of the wicked things the woman did from his wife and thus came to the conclusion that Madeline was not a good person and was someone his son despised to his bones.

Yet now...

Madeline had no actual need to use the bathroom, but Karen's words fueled the burning flares of hatred within her. She needed to calm down.

She had thought that this mother-in-law of hers would help her when Meredith framed her for stealing a bracelet. Ultimately, Karen had referred to her as their maid instead.

She had never once taken this orphaned daughter-in-law of inferior status seriously.

After recollecting her emotions, Madeline then turned to walk out of the bathroom only to meet face to face with Old Master Whitman who had just returned from the garden outside.

"Hello, Grandpa Whitman. We meet again," Madeline greeted calmly, her chest filled with genuine respect for the man in front of her.

Old Master Whitman replied meaningfully as he stared at the gorgeous features in front of him, "I was still in doubt before, but I'm pretty sure about it now."

Suspicion rose in Madeline's chest, but she wore an expression of befuddlement. "What are you talking about, Grandfather?"

Old Master Whitman lifted his intelligent gaze that was now glistening under the light. "It's you, isn't it, Madeline? I know it's you."

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Madeline was stunned for a second before a calm smile graced her lips.

"I think you might be a little confused about me, Grandpa Whitman. How could I be Madeline Crawford?"

The light in Old Master Whitman's eyes dulled slightly, but his gaze was clear. "I won't force you to admit it if you don't want to, Madeline."

"I'm really not Madeline, Grandfather." Madeline denied with a smile. "Why would I get married to the man who hates me if I was Madeline? I would've learned the last time that throwing myself to a flame would only get me burned."

Old Master Whitman was shocked to hear the news. His white brows were furrowed tightly. "Are you really getting married to Jeremy?"

Madeline nodded decisively. "Of course, I'm pregnant with Jeremy's child too."

At that, Old Master Whitman's gaze fell on her flat stomach. He pursed his lips but made no further comment.

"Grandfather, Vera." Jeremy walked over. "Why are you talking in front of the bathroom?"

Madeline smiled and walked over. "I bumped into Grandfather by coincidence, so we talked a little bit. He even joked about me being Madeline Crawford too."

Jeremy's brows furrowed with a subtle tint of invisible melancholy, though it was quickly replaced with a smile. He took Madeline's hand in his. "Vera does indeed look a lot like Madeline, Grandfather, but I assure you that they're not the same person."

Madeline felt tranquility wash over her at Jeremy's reassurance.

It was evident that he held no doubts.

His grip on Madeline's hand was gentle.

"I've decided to marry Vera, Grandfather. The wedding is set to be held in half a month. That's why I brought Vera here, to formally meet the family."

Old Master Whitman hesitated as his eyes fell on Madeline, then on Jeremy. He shook his head with a sigh. "This is your sin and therefore your punishment to bear."

"..." Madeline grew silent as she mulled over the old master's words. The meaning was clear to her, but she prayed that Jeremy would not pay it too much heed.

At that moment, the maid came over to notify them that dinner was ready.

Old Master Whitman left for upstairs with the excuse that he had no appetite. Including Madeline and Jeremy, the dinner table was set for four.

Despite her grave distaste for Madeline's presence, Mrs. Whitman held back on picking on Madeline since Jeremy was there.

"I hear that you're Miss L.ady's chief designer, Miss Vera. It's rare to see such young talent." Mr.

Whitman praised.

Madeline replied with a light smile while turning to look at the man by her side, "It's nothing in comparison to what Jeremy has already accomplished."

"True. Jeremy was already the CEO of a multinational corporation when he was still in school. There aren't many who can compete with Jeremy when it comes to this." Karen glanced pridefully at Madeline. "You've put in so much work to get close to Jeremy, so what else can it be if not for the fame?"

Jeremy's hands slowly came to a halt at the words, the prawn still partially shelled in his hands.

Picking up on Jeremy's displeasure, Karen immediately changed the subject. "My borscht should be done soon. I'll go take a look."

She stood as she spoke, unable to bear the displeased aura that Jeremy was giving off.

Placing the peeled prawn on Madeline's plate, Jeremy spoke gently, "My mom loves cooking, and borscht is one of her best dishes as well as her most favorite one to make. Drink more, it's good for you."

Madeline nodded mirthfully. Staring at the peeled prawn on her plate, her smile grew ironic.

'Never in your wildest dreams would you have imagined peeling prawns for the woman you hate, huh, Jeremy?

'I remember waiting for you every night when we were married with a table full of food, hoping that you would return to eat. Yet instead, you held the wretched woman in your arms and left me alone to fester in the dust.'

Right then, Karen walked out of the kitchen with a maid behind her bringing the soup.

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The corners of Madeline's lips curled as a smudge of mischief bled from her eyes.

Just as Karen was about to sit, Madeline frowned and placed a hand over her chest, dry heaving.

Everyone's gaze fell unanimously on Madeline while Jeremy reached out to hold her with concern. "Are you alright, Vera?"

"Something smells bad. It makes me want to puke," Madeline replied softly, "It might be from the soup, Jeremy. I feel bad. I think I need to vomit."

"..."

Karen's expression immediately darkened. This soup was one of her proudest dishes. It was rich in antioxidants and vitamins. It was also her favorite soup to drink.

Yet what had this woman said?

The smell of the soup was bad and made her want to puke?

"Bring the soup away," Jeremy demanded.

The maid was stunned, then she nodded and complied.

"Wait!" Karen stopped her. "What are you trying to say, Vera? You don't have to eat my food if you think it's so disgusting! What are you trying to imply by complaining about how it makes you feel like

vomiting? You're doing this on purpose, aren't you?"

"Vera's pregnant. Nausea is a normal side effect. If she doesn't like the smell, then we'll get rid of it."
Jeremy's tone was stern, his words brimming with his desire to defend Vera.

"..." Rendered speechless, Karen resorted to glaring at Madeline.

Madeline raised her mirthful gaze to meet Karen's angrily rolling ones and quirked a taunting eyebrow.

The dinner ended quickly, for Madeline seemed to gag at every dish Jeremy placed on her plate after a few bites.

Karen's expression soured with each time Madeline gagged.

Mr. Whitman had stepped aside to make a phone call after dinner while Jeremy went to the kitchen to make Madeline something as she hardly ate all dinner.

Madeline and Mrs. Whitman were left alone in the living room.

The maid walked over with a platter of dessert and fruits, only to have Madeline place the spoon back down distastefully. She then picked up her phone instead.

After sparing a glance at the kitchen, Karen finally flew into a rage seeing as Jeremy had yet to return.
"You're doing this on purpose, aren't you, Vera? It's one thing to not eat the dinner I made tonight, but it's another to spoil it the way you did! What do you want?"

Madeline looked up slowly. "So what if I did it on purpose?"

She admitted casually, leaving Mrs. Whitman shocked since she had not expected it at all.

“You...”

“Your dishes were so tasteless and they smelled so horrible that I couldn’t even swallow a bite. I was already as polite as possible because Jeremy is here, or I would’ve complained about you already had we been in a restaurant instead.”

“What... What are you saying? How could you insult my cooking?”

“Cooking?” Madeline took a whiff of the dessert before she threw it on the coffee table in disgust, knocking over the hot water on the table onto Mrs. Whitman’s expensive dress.

Karen sucked in a breath as she stood and pointed a mortified finger at Madeline. “Have you gone mad, Vera? How could you splash hot water on me? I knew you were no good by your appearance, looking just like that btch Madeline! I just never expected that you would be even more abominable than that btch!”

Seeing Madeline remain unfazed as she ignored her words, Karen reached out to grab Madeline’s wrist harshly. “I suggest you listen to me, Vera Quinn. You’d better not offend this mother-in-law if you want to marry into the Whitman family, or I swear to God, I’ll make sure you end up just like that b*tch Madeline! You hear me?”

Madeline turned to look at her wrist that was being grabbed by Karen as the woman’s warning sounded in the air. She then broke into a meaningful smile and slowly got to her feet...

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“Mother-in-law?” Madeline scoffed as she spoke, mockery apparent on her enchanting features. “How dare you call yourself a mother-in-law?”

“...” Karen’s eyes widened in shock.

Madeline tugged her arm back as her proud eyes swept coldly over Karen’s frustrated and infuriated expression. Frost suddenly permeated the air. “You’re the one who has to watch herself around me. I’m not Madeline Crawford, and I won’t allow you to walk over me and scold or hit me as you wish.”

“You...” Fury flared in Karen’s eyes as she raised an arm to give Madeline a lesson.

“Stop!” Jeremy’s icy tone shot through the air, freezing Karen’s hand mid-strike.

Madeline quirked a defined brow and parted her pink lips. “Do you not see how much Jeremy cares for me? Don’t offend me, do you understand?”

“...” Karen was too infuriated to speak.

A sliver of fear shone in Madeline’s eyes as she looked up and walked toward Jeremy. “Let’s go back, Jeremy. I don’t think Aunty wants to see me.”

Jeremy sent Karen a frigid gaze. “This will be the last time I repeat myself. Vera’s going to be your daughter-in-law very soon. It would do you good to change your attitude around her.”

“Jeremy! You... Don’t let yourself be blinded by this woman’s lies! She’s not as fragile and innocent as you think!” Karen pointed frustratingly at Madeline as she emphasized.

“All I’ve heard is you picking on Vera time and again. I also saw you raising an arm at her just now,” Jeremy stated indifferently as he placed Madeline’s jacket over her shoulders and took her hand. “Let’s go.”

“Hmm.” Madeline nodded, allowing Jeremy to interlock their fingers and bring her away.

Karen took a deep breath and ran after them to the car.

“Why would your mother lie to you, Jeremy? This woman really isn’t the kind and nice person you think she is! You’re going to regret getting married to her, just like when you married that b*tch Madeline!”

Jeremy’s grip on the steering wheel tightened at his mother’s words.

Raising the driver’s window in extreme displeasure, he hit the accelerator and left.

Looking through the rearview mirror, Madeline broke into a small smile at the sight of Karen stomping her foot angrily in the night breeze.

Jeremy made Madeline a bowl of noodles upon their return to the villa.

Perhaps it was the hunger, for Madeline found the noodles rather flavorful.

If they could go back in time and he had shown her even the littlest bit of warmth, they would never have ended up like this today.

Yet there were no such ifs in this world.

...

The following day arrived with Jeremy publishing the news of him getting married to a woman called Vera Quinn.

The internet was filled with thousands of comments blessing the couple, yet Madeline could not bring herself to feel a shred of happiness reading them.

These comments were once negative and filled with insults when she had married him years ago.

There was not even one person who blessed their union during that large-scale ceremony. Her innocent and hopeful prayers were the only thing there was.

Now that she had the blessings of the entire city, she no longer held the same youthful hopefulness of a bride-to-be.

Her phone rang as she read the comments.

Madeline picked the call up without a second thought after glancing at the caller ID. "Felipe," she greeted, paying attention to the words the man on the other end spoke before nodding. "Alright, I've got it."

Madeline hung up and grabbed her purse, leaving the house.

The unexpected guest she met as she stepped out had her stopping in her tracks.

Madeline's expression was one of annoyance as she took in Daniel's sudden appearance. "What do you want this time?"

"Are you free, Ms. Quinn? I'd like to bring you somewhere if that's alright," Daniel asked warmly, his voice making it seem as if he was pleading.

Madeline averted her gaze indifferently. "How many times do I have to tell you that I'm not Madeline Crawford? There's nothing for us to talk about."

With that, she walked away.

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"Ava's been in a car accident. It's not pretty. She wants to see you one last time before she goes."

Madeline's footsteps halted as her heart began to thrum erratically.

Taking a deep breath, she had a feeling that this could be a test from Daniel and Ava.

How could Ava suddenly get into a car accident? No way, she would definitely be alright!

Madeline thought to herself quietly as she stared at Daniel in annoyance.

"I don't know this person you speak of. Please leave me alone."

She hurriedly made her way off, but her heartstrings were pulled taut in her chest.

Daniel's gaze was sorrowful as he stared at Madeline's decisively retreating figure. "Do you have to be so heartless, Madeline? Ava was your best friend. Do you want her to leave the world without closure at all?"

Madeline heard Daniel clearly for she had not made it too far when he spoke. However, her heart was adamant.

Still, Madeline trembled as she took out her phone to inquire the moment she turned a corner.

They told her that a lady by the name of Ava Long had indeed arrived at the emergency room due to a car accident.

“Ava...”

Madeline’s heart raced.

Hailing a taxi by the side of the road, she immediately made her way to the hospital Ava was admitted to.

Madeline arrived at a private hospital room after asking around the hospital staff.

The door was open, but she found herself not daring to walk in.

She was afraid to see what Ava would look like all injured.

She was even more afraid of having arrived a tad too late.

Balling her fists, Madeline still entered the room in the end.

Upon walking in, Madeline was dumbfounded by the sight before her eyes.

On the bed lay a person who no longer seemed to be breathing. The ECG showed a flat line.

Madeline walked over nervously, thinking that a closer distance would allow her to see the patient’s face. However, she realized that their head had already been covered and hidden from sight when she arrived by the bed.

The entire bed was covered in a sheet of pure white.

Madeline's body froze where she stood as she reached out her shaky hands to lift the covers.

Ava's ashen complexion entered her vision, and Madeline felt the air get punched out of her chest. Her eyes burned as droplets of tears streamed from the corner of her eyes.

"Ava..." she murmured, a shaky finger tracing Ava's still warm cheeks.

"Why? How did it end up like this?"

Madeline refused to believe her eyes.

She imagined the day of their reunion to be not too far from now, so why did Ava have to leave her at such a time?

Why did the Heavens have to take away the people she loved again and again?

What horrible war had she started in her past life to warrant such painful experiences in this life?

Madeline leaned down painfully, clutching Ava's hand in hers. The sickening pale color on Ava's cheeks tore her heart apart.

"I'm so sorry, Ava. Maddie's late..." she whispered regretfully in Ava's ear as she hugged her.

However, she then heard a low chuckle by her ear just as she finished speaking.

Still startled, Madeline was met with a familiar voice speaking next to her ear. "Are you finally admitting it now?"

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Madeline's teary eyes widened. She was certain that she had not hallucinated that voice.

As she lifted her head, she stared at Ava's small grin while she smiled at her with her big eyes blinking. Ava was alive.

Madeline's heart was conflicted. Her feelings were mixed with a little frustration but also largely relief.

Ava shot up energetically as she took in the daze Madeline was in.

She quirked a proud brow at Madeline.

"Are you finally admitting me to be your good friend, Miss Vera Quinn?"

"..." Madeline was speechless.

Amidst the silence, Madeline felt someone approach her from behind.

Straightening herself and turning her head, she watched Daniel enter the room. His elegant and poised features were tinted with a subtle hint of excitement as his eyes glistened with tears.

It dawned on Madeline that this was indeed a test.

Despite having her doubts, she had decided to trust them in the end.

It was because she was truly afraid that the people she cared about would leave her for real.

“You’ve finally admitted it, Maddie.” Daniel’s Adam’s apple bobbed, and his voice shook as he walked toward Madeline. “It’s great to see you again.”

He spoke gently, slowly reaching out to touch Madeline’s cheek.

However, she only slapped his hand away. “Is this funny to you?”

Her tone was cold, laced heavily with admonishment.

Both Ava and Daniel were shocked. They had not expected Madeline to be so angry.

“Madeline...”

“Maddie, I...”

“Is joking about death funny to you?” Madeline asked furiously before turning to leave.

Realizing that they had gone too far with the prank, Ava turned to look at Daniel anxiously, urging him to chase after her.

“Madeline!” He caught Madeline before she could get too far away. “I’m sorry we took it too far. Although, I’m sure you must know why we did it.”

Daniel's grip tightened on Madeline's arms, expectations and earnestness seeping from his eyes.

"Do you know how sad we were when you left three years ago? Ava and I refused to believe that you were dead.

"Could you imagine how we felt when we saw you again? Yet all we got was you insisting that you weren't Madeline. You were too indifferent to even spare us a glance."

Daniel's tone thickened with emotion as he stared at the flawless appearance in front of her. Finally, he reached out to caress her cheeks.

The realness and warmth at his fingertips had his eyes watering.

"We missed you so much, Madeline."

Tears began to trickle silently from the corners of Madeline's eyes at Daniel's words.

Ava made her way slowly to Madeline's side with her injured leg in tow, tears also streaming down her face. "Don't be upset anymore, Maddie. I didn't lie about the car accident. It's just that I only hurt my leg."

Choking slightly, she tugged on Madeline's sleeves.

"Didn't you lie to us too, Maddie? We're even now, okay?"

Despite having not done anything wrong, the two apologized to her anyway.

Biting her lip, Madeline looked up with eyes that were brimming with tears.

She was no longer able to hold back her own emotions as she stared at Ava's tear-streaked face. She then reached out to pull Ava into her arms.

"Ava..."

"Maddie..."

Ava felt a rush of elation wash over her due to this reunion with a lost friend as she hugged Madeline tightly.

'Thank goodness.'

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'You're still alive, Maddie.'

'Not to mention that your life's great now.'

'Thank goodness...'

Having admitted her identity, Madeline told the two of her experiences the past three years as well as what she planned to do.

With reddened eyes, Ava sniffed and turned to look at a despondent Daniel. "No way, Maddie. Don't tell me you're actually going to marry Jeremy again! He almost killed you! It's because of the news of your marriage to Jeremy that forced Dan and me to use such a way to get you to admit that you're Maddie."

With that, Ava proudly bumped her shoulder with Madeline's.

"I knew you still cared about me, Maddie. You get full marks for this test!"

Madeline smiled before gathering her emotions, becoming serious. "My marriage with Jeremy is a must. I have to marry him."

"Why?" Ava could not understand. "Did you forget how he and Meredith used to treat you?"

"It's because of how they used to treat me that I must marry him again." Madeline's gaze was determined. "I'll let those who hurt me know of the pain that I felt."

Ava and Daniel knew better than to persuade Madeline when they took in the determination in her eyes.

Ava had to stay in the hospital due to her leg injury, so Daniel sent Madeline to the intersection instead.

Under the warmth of the autumn sun, he recognized the hints of youth from his memories in Madeline's defined brows and the small smile that graced her lips.

"Would you give me the chance to take care of you when your plan for revenge is over, Madeline?"

While remaining quiet, she found the telltale signs of a confession in Daniel's eyes.

Madeline gave a regretful smile. "Thank you for caring about me, Dan, but I've come to realize that timing matters too. Perhaps you were the right person at the wrong time."

"Do you still love Jeremy?"

“Love?” The word was extremely ironic when used with Jeremy.

Oh, how she had loved him, so much that she threw away her dignity and sense of self in the name of love. Yet all she got in return was the loss of her firstborn. Thinking about it now, her love was almost pitiful.

As such, she no longer loved him.

Every inch of her humble love had died the moment he scattered their child’s ashes...

After parting ways with Daniel, Madeline made her way to the detention center.

Delight flooded her as she stared at a hollow-looking Meredith who sported dark circles under her eyes.

Turning on her phone, the entire screen was filled with news of hers and Jeremy’s impending wedding.

Meredith’s eyes immediately glowered as she read the news, envy and hatred bleeding from her gaze.

“You btch! Madeline, you btch! Don’t think that you’re off the hook already! Jeremy will strangle you to death if he finds out that you’re Madeline! He would!”

Madeline kept her phone away casually. “I wouldn’t be standing here with you if he actually wanted to strangle me.”

“You...”

“What? How’re you doing inside? Tsk, tsk. It’s only been a while and you already look so haggard.”

“Madeline, you... You’re the one who made me like this. I’ll definitely take my revenge!”

“Revenge?” Madeline found it hilarious. “Who are you to use such a word? You’re the one who made you like this. This is your consequence for everything you’ve done to me! You’re the one who threw me in jail and had inmates torture me. You even induced my pregnancy and stole my child! Your punishment is already light enough compared to all you’ve done to me!”

“You only spent three years in jail while I’m spending 12 years in here!” Meredith tightened her jaw.

“12 years for the three lives you took is light enough, isn’t it? My grandfather, Brittany Montgomery, and my child. What are 12 years in jail compared to the three lives you took?”

Madeline’s sharp gaze pierced into Meredith.

“You’d better believe that I won’t stop at 12 years. With the three lives you took, I can promise you it’ll only be a matter of time before you’ll have to go and repent for the lives you’ve taken. It won’t be any longer now.”

The hands that held her pant legs tightened as a spark of fear flared in Meredith’s eyes.

Meredith grew frantic as Madeline turned to leave.

She believed that the moment Madeline’s true identity came to light, neither the Montgomeries nor Jeremy would let her go so easily. If that happened, she would have a painful death waiting for her.

She did not want to die, let alone never see the light of day again!

“Madeline Crawford! What if I tell you that your b*stard child never died? You’ll think of a way to get me

out of here, right?"

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Madeline was already out the door when she heard Meredith shout the words. A spark of hope flickered in her frosty eyes.

Her heart raced as well, way past what her body could take.

While still suspicious, she slowly turned around and lifted her cold gaze. "You do know that such a fact will not suddenly make you an innocent woman."

Meredith's reddened eyes glared at her. "I'm not lying! Your child is still alive. I only told you it's dead just to make you feel horrible. I hid your child away so that I could use him as a bargaining chip someday!"

Madeline stilled her heart and emotions as she slowly made her way back to Meredith. "Where's your evidence? Tell me why I should believe you."

"Would you rather believe that your child lives or is dead?" Meredith shot back with a smirk, for she knew that Madeline cared deeply about the child she had never gotten a chance to see!

It would definitely never cross Madeline's mind that her child had been by her side this entire time!

Meredith took Madeline's silence as an opportunity to keep talking. "Get me out of here, Madeline, and I'll tell you where your b*stard child is. Or else—"

"If you think this is going to get you out of jail, then you're dead wrong," Madeline interrupted.

Meredith was stunned, gaping at the indifferent expression Madeline wore. "Don't you want to know where your child is, Madeline?"

"Of course I do, but I also know that you're not going to tell me the truth. And even if you do, you can give up on the thought of walking out of here a free woman. You will pay for the deaths of my grandfather and Brittany!"

"..." Meredith's mouth froze as blood slowly drained from her face. Dazed, she watched Madeline turn around casually.

Was this still the very Madeline Crawford she had once walked and trampled on freely?

She refused to believe that someone could change so drastically.

This bargaining chip of hers had now become an immense lead for Madeline. She had played herself.

Meredith regretted it badly, but it was already too late for her to do anything about it now.

Walking through the detention center's doors, Madeline stared at the azure sky with long-lost mirth and joy in her eyes.

The corner of her lips curled as tears trickled from her eyes.

"As long as you exist, my baby, Mommy will find you. I promise..."

Madeline hid the happiness of recovering something she had lost within her and began to investigate the truth back then.

If the child was alive, that meant the ashes back then were fake.

Had Meredith fooled Jeremy too?

If the ashes were fake, then Jeremy's aloofness was real as was his hatred for her and their child.

Despite her covert investigations the next few days, Madeline found no leads.

Nor did she find where Rose and Jon had hidden.

On the eve of the wedding, Madeline went to meet Felipe while Jeremy held an important video meeting in the office.

Felipe was shocked to know that the child stolen from Madeline when she was in prison was still alive.

"Could Meredith have lied to get out of jail? That woman seems to be capable of anything." Felipe remained suspicious.

"The fact that she's capable of anything makes it even more probable that she actually kept my child as a bargaining chip." Madeline analyzed, her eyes sparkling with hope. "I really want to see this child, Felipe. I wonder how she's doing and I wonder if she looks just like Lily..."

"I'll help you find this child." Felipe promised, her gentle eyes swimming with a rare tint of sadness. "It's been so many years and I, too, wish to see my parents again."

Madeline turned to look at Felipe as she took in his words, only to find an unfamiliar smudge of melancholy on his warm and gentlemanly features.

“Something’s bothering you, Felipe. Won’t you tell me? You’ve helped me so much, and I wish that I could at least help you carry a bit of your burden as well.”

Felipe shifted his warm gaze to look at her. “As a gentleman, it is unsightly to have the girl I fancy worry about me, but as of today, there is something that I must be frank with you about.”

Madeline tensed up reflexively as Felipe’s gaze grew serious.

“What is it? I’m listening.”

“Have you ever thought of why I don’t like returning to Whitman Manor? Or that I don’t like any of the people who live inside that villa?”

Felipe’s words were soft, flowing smoothly into Madeline’s ears like a calm river stream.

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She shook her head and stared at Felipe in confusion, which led him to tell her a shocking excerpt of the past.

She finally understood the heaviness of the secret Felipe held in his heart...

Before she could even digest Felipe’s story, Madeline received a call from Jeremy.

Gentleness returned to his eyes as he watched Madeline leave.

“I am no gentleman, after all. For what gentleman would push the woman he loves to the arms of a nemesis?”

He smiled faintly, a dangerous glint sparkling in his eyes.

Following Jeremy's request, Madeline arrived at the lobby of Whitman Corporations.

Just as she was about to walk in, Jeremy exited from the glass doors.

The man oozed with nobility with every casual step he took.

Setting his eyes on Madeline, the frost in his gaze immediately thawed into gentle warmth.

"You sounded impatient on the phone. Did you need something?" Madeline asked with a smile.

"Yeah." Jeremy took Madeline's hand and walked to the car.

After hopping in, Madeline almost thought that Jeremy was impatient about getting registered.

Still, it was unlikely that they would go to the town office since she had voiced the desire to leave it for later as there were no auspicious dates.

The road they drove on began to look familiar as she pondered.

It was the road to April Hill.

Indeed, half an hour later, the car came to a stop by the seaside of April Hill.

The mid-autumn wind was salty from the sea breeze as it stabbed waves of coldness into one's bones like pins and needles.

Madeline's heart was jumbled up as she stood facing the sea.

The place was once filled with innocent and beautiful memories, memories that had now wilted and died away.

Why did Jeremy suddenly bring her here?

With confused eyes, she turned around to look at the man who had now exited the parked car.

In his hands were a bouquet of burning-red roses, the gold flakes on its petals reflecting the sharp rays of the sun.

Jeremy stopped in front of her, the autumn wind shooing away the hard corners of his eyes.

"For you." He gently handed the large bouquet.

"Thank you." Madeline accepted it with a fake smile as she looked up to meet Jeremy's joyous eyes. "Why did you bring me here, Jeremy? You're giving me roses too. What's all this about?"

"Something I should've done ages ago." He parted his lips to speak, but his words sounded muffled.

Madeline stared at him in puzzlement. "What do you mean?"

"Marrying you," he spoke easily as he looked at her, warmth flooding from his peach-blossom eyes.

Jeremy went down on one knee as his words fell, his cold fingertips taking Madeline's left hand.

Madeline had not the time to object before Jeremy placed a radiant diamond ring on her ring finger.

She was shocked by his actions.

His words reminded her of the promise he had once made.

Did he perhaps know something?

Jeremy's attractive features grew closer as Madeline was still trapped in a daze. "I love you, truly."

"..."

The word 'truly' was emphasized. With that, Jeremy leaned forward to capture Madeline's lips in his...