

Married by Mistake: Mr. Whitman's Sinner Wife chapter 201-210

Madeline's eyes turned into crescents at Jeremy's shocked reaction.

"What's wrong, Jeremy? It's me... Madeline."

"..."

Madeline!

The name pierced straight into Jeremy's heart like a sharp knife, knocking the breath out of him.

Madeline quirked the corners of her lips prettily at Jeremy's stricken gaze. She leaned closer. "What's wrong, Mr. Whitman? I thought you're the one who told me to attend the anniversary celebration as your ex-wife?"

Her soft voice engulfed Jeremy's racing heartbeat like a closely woven net.

Hearing her response, Jeremy felt his heart slowly calm down.

'So that's how it is, huh?'

Staring at her pretty as a picture appearance, he felt his heart drown in loneliness.

However, Jeremy made sure to keep that emotion to himself. Quickly but surely, he responded with a warm and seductive smirk. "You're here."

Madeline smiled. "Yeah, I am."

Meredith was no longer having it. She was pissed at the little distance between Madeline and Jeremy as the two conversed.

"You're here, Miss Quinn."

She walked over to greet Madeline with an ingenuine smile. Then, she tilted her head to blink with innocent curiosity at Jeremy.

"What were you and Miss Quinn talking about, Jeremy? Can I know?"

"I think it's best you don't, Miss Crawford. It's my and Jeremy's secret after all." Madeline smiled knowingly. "Right, Jeremy?"

"..." The fake smile gracing Meredith's lips fell, but she forced another one as she refused to drop her facade in front of everyone. "Well then. Now that you're here, Miss Quinn, I believe it's my duty as Jeremy's fiancée to formally welcome you to tonight's celebration!"

With that, Meredith quickly turned around to face Jeremy. "Mrs. Whitman hasn't gotten the chance to announce what she wanted yet, Jeremy. We should let her finish talking!"

She lifted her eyes to throw Mrs. Whitman, who was still stunned on the stage, a look.

Reading the atmosphere, Madeline's beautiful eyes swept over Jeremy's silent expression again. "Then I'll go get some food. See you."

Jeremy nodded faintly as he stared back at her beauty. "Hmm."

He had to admit that he found himself attracted to her looks.

To the point where his heart had uncontrollably skipped a beat.

Breathing had become difficult while his heartbeat turned untamable since the moment it skipped a beat.

Her face reminded him of 'her', the very 'her' he had tortured and left gaping, the 'her' who had died with hatred in her heart...

Passing a server, Madeline took a glass of champagne. Holding the wine glass in hand, she found suspicious and inquisitive gazes sweeping all over her.

Smiling, she brought the glass of silvery liquid to her lips gracefully.

Right then, Madeline felt someone approach her from behind.

She was about to lift her gaze to look when Eloise's warning tone drifted into her ears. "I'm warning you, Vera Quinn. Jeremy is my daughter, Meredith's, fiancé. Their relationship is

great and they're about to get registered. Don't even dream about coming in between them!"

Madeline's fingers tightened around the stem of the glass as she shook her head with a soft smile.

Her mirthful gaze locked with Eloise's hostile ones. She felt a stab of pain in her heart as she was taken off guard.

"If my memory serves my right, wasn't your daughter a mistress in the beginning? Oh, and I hear that the original wife whose marriage she went in between, Madeline Crawford? I heard we look almost the same. Perhaps that's why you're speaking to me in such a tone, Mrs. Montgomery?"

Eloise's expression immediately darkened. "What are you talking about? My daughter has never gone in between anyone's marriage. Madeline Crawford was the shameless one who climbed into my son-in-law's bed. Meredith and Jeremy would have had a happy family long ago if it were not for her!"

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Madeline smiled casually. "Did you see it with your own two eyes, Mrs. Montgomery? How are you so certain that Madeline Crawford is the shameless woman you claim her to be?"

"Of course, I'm certain! I watched with my own eyes how shameless and merciless Madeline Crawford is! Time and time again she hurt my precious daughter and grandson. Death is the lightest punishment for a woman like her!"

Eloise clenched her jaw, spitting out word after word that dripped with the hatred and disgust she felt for Madeline. It was almost as if death was not enough to relieve the hatred in her heart.

Seconds later, Madeline heard a mocking scoff from Eloise.

"While you may share Madeline Crawford's appearance, Miss Vera, I do hope that you'd refrain from acting as shamelessly as that woman!"

With a condescending look, Eloise left Madeline's side and walked back to Meredith.

The 'mother-daughter' duo held each other's hands, looking closer than ever.

Madeline pursed her lips gently as she stared at the sickening sight.

'Oh, Mother.

'My dearest mother.

'I wonder whatever you would do the day you find out that the very 'shameless woman' is your biological daughter.

'Would you continue to believe the lies Meredith fed you and continue to call your own daughter a wretched b*tch, or... would you hold me tightly in your arms and call me 'dear'...'

Madeline's heart was suddenly overwhelmed with pain.

Her lips pulled into a self-deprecating smirk. Raising the glass to her lips again, she felt a small tug at the skirt of her gown.

"Big Sis Vera." Jackson's clear voice sounded in the air.

Looking down at his small handsome face, Madeline felt the wound in her heart suddenly heal a substantial amount.

"Good evening, Jack." She reached out to ruffle Jack's hair.

"Lillian didn't come with you, Big Sis Vera?" Jackson blinked in expectancy.

She parted her lips to answer, but before she could, she heard Jeremy's attractive baritone voice drift over from the stage.

Mrs. Whitman who was supposed to announce the wedding had been ushered off the stage, while Jeremy stood in her place now to give a formal opening speech.

In his tailored suit under the spotlight, Jeremy oozed with power and nobility. Charisma was flowing from every gesture he made.

A man like him was probably the subject of most women's admiration and dreams.

Yet admiration was all it could be, for it was too easy for one to lose themselves, burned by the searing light that made him so blinding...

Madeline chuckled. She had realized it too late, and for it, she had almost given her life.

Swirling the liquid in the glass, she caught a figure from her peripheral vision. She shot Jackson a warm smile. "Big Sis Vera needs to take a trip to the bathroom, Jack. I'll see you in a bit, okay?"

"Okay, Big Sis Vera. I'll wait for you." Jackson nodded seriously, his promise reminding her of the one Jeremy made her years ago.

'He's your son, down to the point of making promises.

'Although, Jeremy, I must say, you have not the innocence of your child.'

Smiling, Madeline followed the figure from the corridor to the bathroom, hearing the carefree and familiar hum of a tune.

Calmly, she waited by the door. It was only when she heard footsteps approaching from inside did she slowly turn on the tap and pretend to wash her hands.

Seconds after, a man walked out of the male bathroom. Humming a tune, he walked over to the sink and began to sweep his intoxicated eyes over Madeline's above-average physique.

His eyes squinted as they made their way up before finally settling on Madeline's face.

The man's eyes were blown wide the instant they made contact with Madeline's appearance. Staggering backward, his back knocked against the door. "I-It's you..."

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Tanner's complexion paled as he pointed a finger at Madeline who was currently washing her hands. Shocked, he crawled up from the ground with a hand on the wall for his strength seemed to have vanished from his legs.

It was the first time he had participated in such a high-class celebration. As a result, he had drunk a good amount to take full advantage of the situation.

Under the effects of alcohol, Madeline's enchanting smile floated about in his vision. Her face duplicated as the figures began to approach him. He could not breathe!

Too afraid to look her in the eye, he started to stutter and mumble.

"Mad-Madeline Crawford! Why won't you leave me alone? The person you're looking for is Meredith! Not me!"

Watching Tanner tremble in fear before her, Madeline stepped over with her high heels clicking and a smile on her curled lips.

"You're asking me why Madeline's spirit is haunting you? I'm sure you know exactly why."

"Ah!" Tanner dashed into the male bathroom, terrified. "I don't know! I don't know anything at all! Find Meredith if you want revenge! Leave me alone! Go away!"

He mumbled, his heart racing in utmost fear.

After a while, the sounds of activity vanished outside. Tanner took a tentative step only to realize there was no one at all!

It fueled his fear. He turned on the tap to wash his face in hopes of sobering up, yet regardless of how much he splashed, the image of Madeline's thought-provoking smile continued to echo in his mind...

Madeline returned to the ballroom. The atmosphere had lightened greatly and the guests began to drink and dine, enjoying the food as they chatted with each other.

When her eyes fell on Old Master Whitman, Madeline held back the overwhelming urge to greet him, for she knew impulsiveness would do her no good.

Meredith was frustrated and pissed now that her plans had been ruined. She had the urge to rage and vent, yet this was a setting where she had to continue to act as a gentle and kind woman.

The perfect words to get Madeline in trouble formed in Meredith's mind now that the other had returned. She watched Jeremy approach Madeline and lean over flirtatiously to whisper in her ear.

After that, she watched Jeremy lift an arm for her to hold in his own volition and Madeline actually linked arms!

Meredith's hand balled into a tight fist, the strength she was exerting almost strong enough to crush the stem of the glass.

She was fuming with anger as she stared at how Jeremy had brought Madeline over to Old Master Whitman and how Old Master Whitman noticeably brightened up at the sight of Madeline. He even raised an arm to pat her shoulder affectionately.

"You're here, Madeline. You've made Grandfather's day." Old Master Whitman treated Madeline as if nothing had happened.

He was never disgusted by her identity. If anything, he was the only one who had placed his unbridled trust in her and protected her ever since she got married to Jeremy.

As grateful as Madeline was for Old Master Whitman, she was also moved.

She had been extremely worried when the old master was admitted to the hospital due to heart complications three years ago. To see him energetic and alive now placated the unease in her heart.

However, the old master sighed as he stared melancholically at Madeline. "Such a great girl, beautiful and smart. It's a shame this grandson of mine was too blind to appreciate such a great wife."

The old master spared Jeremy a displeased glance. "Tell me, what's so bad about Madeline? I can't believe you'd dump such a beautiful wife to get married to that other one! Hmph!"

"It's not Jeremy's fault, Grandfather. It was never our fate. Right, Jeremy?" Madeline lifted her onyx orbs, not expecting for them to lock with Jeremy's deep ones.

Had he been staring at her this whole time? His gaze enveloped her with nostalgic warmth as his lips parted to answer. "Rather than blaming fate, it would be more accurate to say that I was never deserving of you."

His words stunned Madeline.

"Tell me, Madeline. Should we get to start all over again, would you let me fall for you?"

"..."

Madeline felt Jeremy's elbow inch toward her as he spoke, almost as if she would disappear if he relaxed his hold.

"Hmph! I'd never say yes if I were Madeline!" The old master's voice reigned Madeline's emotions back in check.

She had almost allowed herself to hope.

Such was merely a skilled ploy Jeremy was using to placate the old master.

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'To start all over again is too much easier said than done, Jeremy.

'For all the pain you've put me through and all the fatal scars and wounds you left me would never be erased!

'The fact that I loved you is one of the past.

'All I have left for you, is hatred!'

Right then, Eloise walked over with Meredith in tow. "You look happy, Old Master. What are you and this lady over here talking about?"

"What 'this lady'? This is Madeline." The old master emphasized with displeasure.

"She's not, Grandfather. This isn't Madeline. Madeline died three years ago. This lady is Miss Vera Quinn, she just looks like Madeline." Meredith explained with a smile, then turned to look at Jeremy. "Aren't I right, Jeremy?"

Smiling, she was so sure that Jeremy would lean over to speak in her ear. Instead, he frowned in distaste.

The old master was infuriated, frowning as he stared at Madeline. "Nonsense! She's Madeline!"

"She really isn't Madeline, Old Master!" Mrs. Whitman had arrived to join the group. Glancing warily at Jeremy, she opened her mouth to speak anyway. "Just think about it, Old Master. Would we let her in if she's Madeline?"

"You're right, Mrs. Whitman!" Eloise agreed, sparing Madeline a belittling look. "We would have thrown her out already if she's Madeline Crawford. That shameless and ruthless woman died three years ago!"

Hearing her, color began to drain from the old master's face as his energy and spirit dampened.

Madeline faced Jeremy and frowned with concern.

Jeremy's expression turned horrifyingly frosty. "Are you guys done?"

"Don't blame Mother, Jeremy." Meredith furrowed her brows and held Jeremy by his arm to persuade him. "Mrs. Whitman and my mom are right. She isn't Madeline. Grandfather has to know the truth someday."

Meredith gave Madeline a deep look. "You don't have to pretend to be Madeline just to make Grandfather happy, Miss Quinn. What's fake will never be real! Grandfather will know one day, and to delay the truth would only have him feeling worse."

"Plus, you must know that the things my sister did were hardly good. Pretending to be Madeline will only garner you more looks of disgust and hatred."

Hearing her, Madeline turned to look at her surroundings and smiled. "Oh? Is that so? Was this Madeline really that bad?"

"Of course!" Meredith ascertained in a heartbeat, her voice climbing a few decibels. "She threw away her dignity just to be with Jeremy! Not to mention how easy she was, having relationships with all sorts of men. Then, to hurt me, she even teamed up with someone to kidnap my and Jeremy's son. Are you sure you want to be a double for such a person, Miss Quinn?"

"Shut up! Madeline would never do something like that!" Old Master Whitman knocked his cane against the ground in fury.

Meredith sighed with pity. "That's the truth, Grandfather. Madeline was not as pure as you think. She even kidnapped your great-grandson. Jeremy is well aware of these things too!"

She asked rhetorically, "You saw it with your own eyes, didn't you, Jeremy?"

Jeremy's expression darkened, bile rising within him after hearing the events Meredith recounted.

He had realized the very moment he fell for Madeline that every 'sin' she committed could all be forgotten.

Not to mention how he had suspected if what he saw was the actual truth when Madeline lay in his arms on her dying breath. Perhaps everything he saw back then was merely what someone else wanted him to see. Perhaps everything he saw was false.

Meredith tugged on him with a coquettish tone in response to Jeremy seemingly ignoring her. "Why aren't you saying anything, Jeremy? Unless you actually want Miss Quinn to replace Madeline? But what if Miss Quinn's reputation gets tarnished for pretending to be such an evil woman?"

Crash!

Just as Meredith finished talking, the sound of a wine glass shattering on the floor sounded in the room.

"Are you alright, Sir?"

"A ghost! It's a ghost!"

At his words, everyone's gazes flew toward the direction of the man. Meeting their eyes was the sight of a server helping a man who had slipped and fallen.

Meredith spared a casual glance in that direction only for her expression to shift dramatically when she realized the man who had fallen was Tanner, and the 'ghost' he was pointing at was Vera Quinn!

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Tanner Long!

This tramp!

How could he have gotten in?

Confusion and unease settled in Meredith's stomach.

Tanner was pointing at Vera, claiming she was a ghost with eyes blown wide and fright written all over his face!

That could only mean that he had mistaken Vera for Madeline and was sent into shock. Being sent into shock meant that he could end up saying things he should not!

However, Madeline's lips quirked at Tanner's terrified scream. From the corner of her eyes, she watched anxiety flash across Meredith's expression. Then, Madeline approached Tanner with a confused look.

Locking eyes with Madeline, Tanner's fright grew as he began to shout. "Ah! It-It's really... It's you!"

Coupled with the influence of alcohol, he believed without a doubt that Madeline's ghost had come to haunt him!

For all the horrible things he had done in his life, it made sense to feel such a heavy weight of guilt.

Madeline raised a brow and asked with mock confusion, "Do you know this man, Mr. Whitman? Why does he look so afraid of me?"

Jeremy had no idea that Madeline was the one who sent Tanner the invitation, allowing him to attend tonight's celebration.

He furrowed his brows and walked toward Tanner, frost seeping from his attractive features.

The sight of Tanner reminded him of how this horrendous man had tried to rape Madeline twice and how he proclaimed to have an illicit relationship with her.

"Jeremy!" Meredith quickly ran over to pull Jeremy back by his arm. "Today's the 50th anniversary of Whitman Corporation, Jeremy. Let's not ruin the atmosphere for everybody

just because of him, alright? Just have the bodyguards throw him out. You shouldn't have to deal with it yourself."

"Am I safe to presume that you all recognize this man, Miss Crawford?" Madeline walked over curiously. "Who is he exactly?"

Meredith frowned, displeased. "He used to be one of Madeline's friends, or rather, Madeline and he were involved in that kind of relation—"

"Enough."

Jeremy parted his lips to interrupt, the ferocity in his icy tone rendering Meredith silent.

His gaze and expression as of that moment had people shivering.

"Oh... Is that who he is?" Madeline nodded in understanding before slowly walking toward Tanner who was stumbling on his feet with a hand on the table for support. "Well then, Sir. You don't seem very welcomed here. Perhaps you should leave..."

"Don't come close, Madeline! Go away! I get that you have unfinished business, but if you're going to haunt someone, I'm not the one you should be haunting! If you want to haunt someone, go haunt Meredith instead! It's her! She's the one who killed you!"

With that, the ballroom fell into pin-drop silence.

The corners of Madeline's lips curled as she tilted her head to stare innocently into Jeremy's ice-cold eyes. "What is this man saying, Mr. Whitman? What haunting? What does he mean haunt Meredith instead?"

At that, Meredith felt the air around her turn void. She felt as if she had been thrown into an ice house.

Not daring to look at the expression on Jeremy's face, she rushed up to Tanner instead. "What drunk nonsense are you saying, Tanner? There's no ghost at all! Madeline's not here anymore! Also, I've never done anything against my conscience! When have I ever hurt her? I saw Madeline as my own sister. Don't frame me for things I didn't do!"

Tanner found himself sobering slightly thanks to Meredith's shouting, but the sight of Madeline's intrigued smile seconds later had him once again petrified.

"Madeline's right here! Can't any of you see her? It can't be that I'm the only one who sees her, right? I knew it. She has definitely come to haunt me!"

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Tanner was positively terrified, the color draining from his face as his pupils dilated from the fear.

"Go away, Madeline! Stop bothering me! I... I was just doing what I was paid to do!"

"Tanner Long!" Meredith immediately interrupted him and nervously called for the bodyguards. "Quickly, take this man away!"

Tanner pointed a trembling finger at Meredith, paying her words no heed.

"Madeline Crawford! If... If you want to haunt someone for revenge, then haunt her! It was all Meredith's orders!"

With Tanner's words, Meredith felt her body growing cold. Feeling a tyrannical storm of frost swirling around her, she could not imagine the expression Jeremy was wearing on his face.

"What's happening? Who is this man? What does he mean?" Mrs. Whitman quickly rushed over to ask.

Meredith frantically tried to change the subject. "Mrs. Whitman! This is Tanner Long. He and Madeline used to be involved illicitly. They also planned Jack's kidnapping together!"

"So it's you!" Eloise glared furiously at Tanner. "You were the one who helped Madeline kidnap my grandchild! You b*stard! Madeline Crawford has already died for her sins, yet you're still alive? You need to die!"

"Indeed."

Jeremy's icy tone froze Meredith's breath in her lungs.

Now that he had sobered up, Tanner felt the need to flee. However, he felt something tighten around his neck.

"Repeat the words you just said."

Jeremy's bloodthirsty eyes reminded him of a sharp sword that was about to be unsheathed and coming for his neck.

Tanner shivered, cold sweat beading unstopably from the fear he felt.

Meredith's pupils constricted at the scene before her. She was afraid that the truth of what happened back then would come out.

She staggered forward. "Calm down, Jeremy. Let's just ignore this person, okay? He's ostentatious, and all he does is lie. We can't trust a man who lied his way into drinking and eating our food. Let's just let him go!"

Jeremy sent her a cold glare from the corner of his eyes. The corners of his lips tilted into a cold but handsome curve as he stared at Meredith before parting his lips. "Ostentatious? All he does is lie? I'm pretty sure that's not what you told me back then. You were very assertive and certain when you told me he was Madeline's ex-boyfriend."

"I... Jeremy, I didn't lie to you. If anything, it would be Tanner and Madeline who lied to you..." Meredith rambled anxiously.

"I guess we'll find out then... Who actually lied to me."

Jeremy's frosty tone sunk ice slabs in Meredith's heart, freezing over the blood in her veins.

"..."

With that, Jeremy pulled Tanner by his tie and drilled his icy gaze into the man. All while reaching out to point a finger in Madeline's direction. "You see that face? Tell me why you think she's haunting you of all people."

"..." Tanner had just sobered slightly when Jeremy spoke. However, all efforts were wasted as he followed the other's hand to look at Madeline. His mind fogged as his legs grew weak.

It was hard to stand strong and good when you had done so much bad.

Staring at Madeline, his complexion paled as he began to beg for mercy. He blurted out the truth to distance himself.

"It's got nothing to do with me! Really, it doesn't! Yes, Madeline, I did something wrong, but I only wanted to sleep with you back then! Everything else was Meredith's plan. She was the one who told me to lie! I never even touched you at all! Madeline, if you want revenge, get it from Meredith! She's the one who pulled the strings!"

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Just like that, the truth back then finally came to light thanks to Tanner's ramblings.

Jeremy's expression darkened instantly as unrestrained bloodthirst flared in his eyes.

In his fury, he raised a fist that crashed hard against Tanner's cheek.

Tanner stumbled backward, losing his footing. His mind was muddled by the hit.

Wine glasses and plates crashed all over the floor upon impact to the long table behind.

However, Jeremy did not stop. Rather, he pulled Tanner up to deliver two more punches.

Blood trickled from the corner of Tanner's lips as his face turned distorted.

However, no one dared to stop Jeremy.

The man looked terrifying that very moment and too scary. Everyone felt that getting too close would leave them burnt by the flames of fury that engulfed him.

Jeremy kept thinking that he had been wrong for the past three years.

Especially on the topic of Madeline's purity. He could not shove off the feeling of being blindfolded.

Right now, he had finally taken off the veil that covered his eyes. In light of the truth, he found it hard to face his heart, let alone the face that swam in his mind...

Watching the scene unfurl, the pretty corners of Madeline's lips tugged up infinitesimally.

Finally.

Finally, she heard Tanner reveal the truth behind her slander.

Finally, she was deemed innocent.

Madeline felt the wounds in her heart hurt a little less.

However, she was still far from healing all the holes that riddled her heart or from pacifying the red-hot burning rage of hatred within her.

"Tanner! How could you say something like that to slander me?" Meredith accused, her eyes red. She was angry from feeling wronged.

She had to defend herself now.

Naturally, Eloise did her best to protect her. "What nonsense is this b*stard spewing? As if we needed Meredith to slander her. Everyone already knew about how easy a woman Madeline was!"

Tanner had suffered quite a few blows, as evident from the taste of blood that filled his mouth. As afraid he was of Madeline haunting him, Tanner was more afraid that Jeremy would strike him to death.

The hits seemed to have sobered him up as well, and he realized that he had told everything—the things he should and should not have said. His only priority now was to protect his own life!

"I've really got nothing to do with it, Mr. Whitman. I was merely following Meredith Crawford's instructions. She was the one who told me to lie about having done something with Madeline. Yes, I liked Madeline Crawford, but I swear I've never touched her! And the thing about the kidnapping, that has nothing to do with Madeline either. It was all Mer—"

"Tanner Long! The Lord sees everything you do. How could you frame me for something I didn't do? I'll sue you for defamation if you keep slandering me!" Meredith was determined not to let Tanner continue. "What are you still waiting for? Throw him out! Or are you waiting for Jeremy to do it himself?"

She ordered the bodyguards impatiently.

The bodyguards immediately turned to pick up a fainted Tanner, kicking him out the doors of the hotel.

Tanner may have been thrown out, yet everyone in the ballroom had clearly heard the words he said.

"It... It was just a small squabble. Please, everyone, it's over now. Please enjoy the rest of the night." Meredith forced out a smile as she tried to revert the atmosphere of the night, then she turned to Jeremy after fixing a hurt expression on her face. "Jeremy. Please don't believe a word Tanner said..."

"I knew it. Madeline would never do such a thing!" Old Master Whitman interrupted Meredith's excuses with his infuriated tone. "So it was all you! You were the one who joined forces with that thug to frame Madeline. How could you kidnap your son just to harm her? You, you... I can't believe you!"

Meredith shook her head, tears brimming in her eyes. "That's not true, Grandpa Whitman. You can't just convict me based on the thug's words alone. How could I possibly kidnap Jack? He's my son! How could I have the heart to?"

"Yeah. My daughter would never do such a thing, Old Master Whitman. How could we believe the words of a thug?" Eloise's expression was stern, her emotions much calmer than Meredith's.

That was because she firmly believed that her precious daughter would never do such a thing.

"Hmph!" Old Master Whitman huffed coldly. He did not believe a word she said.

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Meredith did not care about how Old Master Whitman thought. What mattered to her was how Jeremy did.

Her glistened eyes turned to look at the frosty man. "You believe me, right, Jeremy?"

Meredith's tone was soft as she reached out to grab Jeremy's hands, trying to get him to believe in her.

Instead, all she got was a cold look filled with doubt that swept sharply over Meredith's face from the corner of his eyes. Without giving her an answer, he walked away.

"Jeremy, Jeremy..."

Feeling hurt, her tears began to fall cooperatively as Meredith watched Jeremy's retreating figure.

Eloise began to comfort her sympathetically. "It's alright, Meredith. Jeremy is smart. I'm sure he wouldn't fall for such lies!"

Meredith nodded and wiped off her tears. "I'll go look for him."

"Meredith." Eloise sighed sadly. Lifting her gaze, she glared at Madeline with displeasure.

On the receiving end of Eloise's disgusted gaze, Madeline found herself smiling and walking over without a care. "If memory serves me right, you were very certain that you had seen how shameless and ruthless Madeline was, right, Mrs. Montgomery? Yet the truth speaks otherwise. This precious daughter of yours seems more like the horrible person you described."

"You... Don't spout nonsense, Vera Quinn. Or I'll sue you for defamation!"

"Shouldn't Madeline be the one suing if anything? Your daughter was the one who employed someone else to slander her innocence and frame her for kidnapping."

"You..."

Madeline found herself unwilling to continue after watching Eloise comfort and stand up for Meredith.

The truth was out in the open, yet Eloise chose to protect and believe in Meredith anyway.

Everyone liked to call themselves logical, yet feelings had always been something selfish. Something so selfish that it could blind you from black and white, from right and wrong.

Madeline smiled bitterly before turning around and walking away with a glass of wine in hand.

Night fell and the soft summer breeze caressed Madeline's cheeks.

Through the corridors, she found herself staring at an ever-so-familiar silhouette leaning on the balcony at the end.

Against the glass railing stood Jeremy's tall and lithe figure. A wine glass sat between the man's fingers, and there was a bottle of red wine on the small table next to him.

He quietly lifted the glass, his Adam's apple bobbing as he downed the wine in his glass.

Another breeze of night wind blew, ruffling his chestnut brown hair.

Under the dark of the night, Madeline stared on. A heavy dose of melancholy seemed to have taken root in his drooping eyes and defined brows.

'Are you blaming yourself, Jeremy?

'Or are you regretting the things you've done?'

Madeline chuckled lightly.

Jeremy slowly lifted his gaze, almost as if he had heard the clickity-clack of her heels.

"Are you drinking your sorrows away, Mr. Whitman? Perhaps the incident just now has destroyed your mood?" Madeline asked casually, walking toward Jeremy. "You seem like you need company, Mr. Whitman. Shall I join you for a drink?"

Madeline lightly swirled the champagne in her hand and reached over to knock their glasses together, only for Jeremy to pull her by the wrist before their glasses could even touch.

Curiously, she stared at the inquisitive look in Jeremy's eyes, albeit glazed over by the influence of alcohol.

"Mr. Whitman?"

"It's you, isn't it? Madeline."

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Jeremy's gaze looked exceptionally abstruse and complicated. He clasped Madeline's slender wrist tightly, tightening his hold on her inch by inch to not allow her to break free.

He could not let go of her hand again. He could not...

Madeline behaved coolly and calmly in the face of Jeremy's doubts.

She curled the corners of her lips, seemingly revealing her annoyance. "If I remember correctly, Mr. Whitman, you promised me that you'd no longer suspect me of being your ex-wife, Madeline Crawford."

Hearing her answer, the anticipation in Jeremy's eyes seemed to have been extinguished instantly and his hand that was holding Madeline gradually relaxed.

Madeline withdrew her hand and took a sip of champagne. "To be honest, it's really annoying to be treated as a dead person every time. If it wasn't for me being afraid of pain, I would have really considered giving myself a makeover."

Jeremy suddenly raised his eyes. "Don't get plastic surgery."

"Hmm?" Madeline raised her eyebrows lightly.

Jeremy paused slightly, then opened his mouth. "Sorry, this is the last time." He promised. "You don't need plastic surgery. Your natural appearance is the most beautiful."

His words were meant to be for praise and appreciation, but it was merely because her face was exactly the same as Madeline.

He slowly turned around as he spoke, and the bustling city under the night could be seen from this angle.

There were intertwining neon lights and dazzling illuminations, but it seemed that the chill between his brows still could not be dissipated.

"Miss Vera, can you accompany me for a few drinks?" His emotionless voice sounded.

Madeline looked at his back and found it to look quite lonely and depressed.

She walked to his side with a glass of wine and shot him a neutral glance. "Although I'm quite disgusted that people keep treating me like a dead person, it seems that the 'dead person', who's your ex-wife, was wronged by mistake. She doesn't seem to be the shameless, cruel woman as rumored."

She expressed the hidden grievances and powerlessness in her heart in a joking manner.

Her heart was bitter even though she had finally claimed her innocence.

After saying these words, Madeline observed Jeremy's eyebrows furrowing tightly.

He looked at the night city and closed his eyes, the evening breeze softening the sharp corners of his eyes and eyebrows. Jeremy spoke after a long silence.

"What has been the most regrettable thing in your life, Miss Vera?"

"The most regrettable thing?" Madeline took a sip of champagne thoughtfully. "Probably my mistake of a marriage. I was too naive then and was cheated on by my ex-boyfriend. Even now, he remains at ease."

Jeremy pulled at the corner of her lips. "Miss Vera, you're outstanding and perfect, yet there are still men who don't know how to cherish you?"

"There are too many blind men in this world and I'm not the only one to be disappointed." Madeline mocked.

She saw Jeremy's eyes drooping as if he was thinking about something. He smiled after a few seconds.

"You're right, there are too many blind men in this world."

Jeremy laughed at himself and looked at Madeline. "However, the man who failed you is still alive at least. Miss Vera, you still have a chance to right this regret."

His tone sounded weaker than it had ever been before and his alluring eyes seemed to have lost their light, looking so depressed and lonely.

His words had also seemed to reveal what his irreparable regret was.

Madeline casually picked up the glass and drank the liquid in it, then chuckled lightly.

'Jeremy Whitman, I'm afraid your regret is only because you feel ashamed for having done something bad, no?

'You've never cared about me. More misconceptions will only hurt me more and make me regret more.

'I don't need your regrets either.

'What I want is to restore my innocence and have you blind, heartless people witness another face of Madeline's!'

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...

Meredith had originally wanted to take advantage of this good day that was the 50th anniversary celebration of the Whitman family and borrow the power of the media to help establish her identity as well as status. She did not expect that Tanner and Vera's appearance would completely disrupt her plan!

Not only that, but there were also various searches being made on the internet that were not good for her.

Meredith could only ask Eloise for her help to remove the searches.

Even though all these public opinions had been suppressed, she was still feeling uneasy when it came to Jeremy.

Meredith never saw Jeremy again in the entire night that passed. His phone line was always busy when she called him that Meredith had even wondered if her number was blocked.

Worried that Jeremy would believe whatever Tanner said, Meredith went to Jeremy's villa early in the morning to wait for him.

She had also deliberately chosen not to disturb or enter the house. She kept herself waiting at the door.

Jeremy had stayed up all night.

Ever since the day Madeline turned into a handful of ashes, he had never once slept peacefully ever again. He was only able to sleep peacefully when his father asked someone to buy him a very special aromatherapy kit.

Last night, however, even when he had that aromatherapy, he still could not sleep.

After tossing and turning all night, Madeline still lingered in his mind. She was looking at him with such eager and expectant eyes again and again, begging him to believe her just once.

However, he had never believed her.

When Tanner slandered her for having an improper relationship with him, he chose to believe the *bstard*, *believing that she was the kind of btch* who would do anything for money.

He had so cruelly destroyed the hope in her eyes bit by bit, finally turning her into ashes...

His heart hurt, but it was too late.

The corners of Jeremy's eyes were sore. He washed his face, and when he went downstairs, a servant told him that Meredith had been waiting for him at the door for more than an hour.

Without any response, he asked the servant to wait upon Jackson to get up, wash up, and eat breakfast with him.

Seeing the face in front of him that was almost the same as his when he was a child, he suddenly felt repulsed.

He had treated the child born to him and his wife so cruelly but allowed the child born by another woman to lead such a well-fed life.

Jeremy instantly lost his appetite and got up, walking toward the hallway.

Jackson raised clear and honest eyes, looking at his father who had always been so indifferent to him. He did not know what he had done wrong. He only knew that in this family, his father did not like him and that his mother also hated him very much.

He lowered his misty eyes and ate breakfast silently while thinking of Big Sis Vera.

Jeremy opened the door and the gray sky occupied his sight.

Meredith, who had been waiting outside the door, greeted him happily upon seeing Jeremy open the door.

"Jeremy!"

Meredith pretended to accidentally fall on the lawn and sprain her ankle after having been standing for a long time as well as from being too excited.

"Ah!"

Meredith made a muffled sound of pain. She thought Jeremy would have hugged her nervously as before, but this time, he stood there motionless like a beautiful sculpture. He looked at her without moving.

Meredith sat up slowly, looking at the man in front of her sadly. "Jeremy... Jeremy, I know you must suspect me because of what Tanner said, thinking that it was he and I who conspired to wrong Madeline together, but I can swear to God that I've never done anything against my conscience. If I did, let me be punished by getting myself separated from Jackie forever!"

Meredith was so moved that even her tears began to fall.

Jeremy looked at her, then walked in front of her with a grim expression. "I only have one question for you now."

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Meredith nodded sincerely. "Jeremy, no matter what you ask, I'll answer you truthfully."

"Okay." Jeremy's deep, black eyes were fixed on Meredith. "Did you really see the b*stard Tanner and Madeline together?"

"Yes! I really saw them with my own eyes!" Meredith answered without thinking.

Jeremy's black eyes gradually sank and there was a chill in those bottomless eyes.

Sensing that the surrounding airflow had suddenly become abnormally heavy, Meredith panicked, but she still insisted. "Jeremy, what I've said is all true! Jeremy, you have to believe me..."

"Believe you..."

Jeremy repeated these two words as a mocking tint surged in his eyes.

"She spoke to me the same way back then, wanting me to believe her."

"What?" Meredith looked at the unsmiling Jeremy. "Jeremy..."

He parted his thin lips slightly. "I've already given you the chance." After saying this, he turned around coldly.

The underlying meaning of this was obviously that he did not believe her!

Meredith did not care then that she was pretending to have a sprained ankle and immediately stood up to catch up with Jeremy, hugging him tightly from behind.

"Jeremy!"

She pressed her face tightly into Jeremy's back.

"Jeremy, I've been with you for so many years. Don't you know what kind of person I am? Why would I be lying?! Everything I've said is the truth. Madeline really spent time with Tanner! Not only Tanner, but also Daniel! And your uncle, Felipe! Madeline loves entangling herself with those men, she—"

"Enough!"

Jeremy interrupted her angrily, his stern face filled with indignation.

Meredith quickly closed her mouth in fright.

The air condensed again and Meredith felt a tremor of anxiety.

She hugged Jeremy tighter but suddenly heard Jeremy's commanding voice. "Let go of your hands."

Meredith's eyes widened in shock, unable to accept Jeremy's rejection and alienation from her.

"No! I won't let go! Jeremy, I love you. I just want to be with you forever. Don't let those meaningless people influence our relationship, alright?"

With a crying voice, Meredith hugged Jeremy's waist even harder.

However, in the next few seconds, Jeremy pried open her fingers forcefully one by one, and very quickly, her embrace was empty.

"Jeremy..." Meredith looked at the expressionless man with tears in her eyes.

Jeremy glanced at her. "If Jackson's kidnapping was related to you, I'll officially declare my engagement to you invalid."

"..." Hearing this, Meredith was instantly in disarray!

They had been engaged three years ago!

Everyone in Glendale already knew about it!

Yet, what was he saying now about declaring the engagement invalid?!

What was the meaning of this?

Meredith resolutely refused to accept such a plot twist. She recovered and saw Jeremy preparing to drive out. She hurried to the car and grabbed the half-open window with both hands.

"Jeremy! Jackson is my biological son. How could I ask someone to kidnap our son? My own flesh and blood? How could I do such a crazy thing?!" Meredith clutched the car window tightly as she continued explaining to the indifferent man.

Jeremy slowly drove the car out of the villa yard while turning a deaf ear to Meredith's explanation.

Meredith chased on to explain, her voice getting louder and louder. However, Jeremy sped up instead and closed the window.

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"Jeremy! Jeremy, you have to believe me! You can't condemn me for that madman Tanner's nonsense! Have you forgotten the days when we were at the beach? You said that I was the most innocent and kindest girl you've ever met! You said that you'd always be with me and make me your bride, that you would protect me and trust me forever. Jeremy, Jeremy, Jeremy!"

Meredith did not think that Jeremy would ignore her up until this point.

Seeing the sports car zipping away, Meredith stamped her feet in anger.

"Madeline, you b*tch! Why couldn't you just die in peace?!"

She turned around angrily and entered the villa. Seeing Jackson who was carrying his school bag and heading out, Meredith stepped forward while sending the servant to go buy vegetables. This left only her and Jackson in the house.

Jackson looked at Meredith, his beautiful black eyes filled with defensiveness and repulsion. His little hand was gripping the shoulder strap of his school bag.

The more she looked at him, the more hateful he became!

Meredith rolled her eyes at Jackson with extreme disgust, suddenly stretching out her hand to grab Jackson's thin little arm.

Jackson did not speak, but his body resisted. In the end, he was still just a five-year-old child who was unable to repel the strength of an adult.

Meredith dragged him to the utility room, pushed him in without any explanation, and locked the door.

Bang!

Jackson slapped the door hard.

Meredith kicked the door viciously. "Shut up, you annoying child! I knew I should've strangled you when you were in the belly of that b*tch, Madeline!"

She cursed and transferred all her resentment as well as dissatisfaction onto Jackson.

After struggling and crying for help, Jackson finally shrank helplessly in the dark corner while hugging his small body tightly.

"Big Sis Vera..." he murmured in the darkness. It seemed that only by calling this name could he see a little light.

Meredith knew that Jeremy could not be allowed to investigate the truth of the kidnapping incident back then. Otherwise, she could not imagine what kind of punishment Jeremy would give her, let alone when she could no longer be the young wife of the Whitman family.

After thinking about it, Tanner was still the only one who knew the truth.

Madeline was already dead and the dead could not speak.

As such, it was now enough for her to just deal with Tanner!

In any case, she could not let Tanner talk nonsense!

...

After Madeline had sent Lillian to the kindergarten, she then returned to the apartment. She lit up the new incense she had just made and took a fine brush to draw a portrait on the drawing paper.

'Jeremy, oh how much I once loved you and how much I hate you now.

'I can't wait to see the look on your face when you discover Meredith's true face.'

The mobile phone on the table vibrated suddenly. Seeing the caller ID, the corner's of Madeline's lips rose. She quickly picked up the phone, the smile on her face revealing her

joy at the moment. "Do you want to come back now? That's great, Lillian and I will pick you up."

After hearing the man's quiet, water-like voice on the other end of the phone, Madeline then hung up, feeling much better.

The doorbell rang just then and Madeline unexpectedly saw Jeremy's stern face through the peephole. His expression was deep while his eyebrows were furrowed tightly. He looked to be in a bad mood.

Thinking of what had happened last night, Madeline could roughly guess why Jeremy was in a bad mood.

After he rang the doorbell again, she then slowly opened the door with a surprised expression. "Mr. Whitman? Why are you here?"

Jeremy looked at Madeline with a tired gaze as his lips moved lightly. "Miss Vera, I want you to do me a favor."

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Madeline stared at the deep, sea-like eyes in front of her with curiosity. "What's the matter?"

"I hope that you can help me find out the truth," Jeremy said the words softly, his deep eyes pleading with anticipation.

After Madeline quietly listened to what Jeremy wanted her to help him with, she was surprised.

She thought for a moment before nodding.

"Okay, I'll help you."

"Thank you." Jeremy thanked her.

At this moment, Madeline vaguely saw a faint smile in Jeremy's eyes, but it was fleeting. Madeline never thought that she could be herself again.

Jeremy took her to the beauty salon. Madeline saw that Jeremy had shown a photo to the stylist, and the stylist nodded to express their understanding.

Madeline did not know what photo Jeremy showed the stylist, but she saw herself in the mirror an hour later.

Her long, dark, and smooth hair set off her clean and elegant face, giving her the illusion of having come from worlds away.

Afterward, Jeremy took Madeline to the villa.

Looking at the villa that used to be their wedding home, Madeline's heart carried mixed emotions, but there was an ironic smile on her lips.

She followed Jeremy in and upstairs.

Three years had passed.

She did not expect that she would step into this house again one day, into the bedroom that she had once shared with him.

As soon as she entered, Madeline smelled a faint and unique fragrance. She was familiar with the fragrance of this incense because she had made it herself.

It was also after her 'rebirth' that she discovered her sense of smell was sharper than that of ordinary people. When she was bored with designing, she would study some spices and incense to broaden her knowledge and creativity.

She did not want to have herself be the pretty dunce who blindly chased after love.

Jeremy took her to the closet. He opened the closet, and the neatly arranged dresses in front of him surprised Madeline a little.

When she entered the bedroom just now and saw that there were no changes in the interior inside, she was already a little surprised. What was even more unexpected was that her clothes from three years ago were still here .

"Miss Vera, you can pick out a suitable one to wear. I'll wait for you outside." Jeremy finished speaking, then went out.

The door closed and Madeline was the only one left in the room.

She stretched out her white and beautiful hands, gently placing them on the clothes she had worn before. She stroked them one by one as if she was touching them for the first time again back when she was still her.

However, her former self's body was covered in bloody scars.

Touching them at this moment, Madeline felt her hand ache.

'Jeremy, the hurt you've inflicted on me, no matter how you make up for it, you can't heal those wounds. I will have you remember that all your life, and I'll make you remember for your entire life about how wrong you were!'

"Mr. Whitman, you can come in now."

Jeremy was waiting silently at the door. Hearing the voice from the room, he suddenly opened his tired, black eyes and opened the door before walking in.

It was obviously a dim and rainy day, but when Jeremy opened the door and saw Madeline who was wearing a clean white skirt with her black hair swishing as she smiled gently, it was as if she was a beam of bright sunshine shining through.

He could not help but think of the first time he had seen Madeline. It was her first day in college.

Her smile was also very sunny and innocent.

Madeline...

Jeremy's throat moved, and in the end, he swallowed back her name.

She was dead.

She had died three years ago.

The one in front of him was not her.

"Mr. Whitman, is my current look exactly the same as your ex-wife's?" Madeline smiled and walked in front of Jeremy. There were no flaws in her gestures and she looked extremely natural.

Jeremy looked at her and nodded lightly. "Very similar."

He smiled faintly, but no matter how much she looked like her, it was just 'like'.

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It was still not her.

"That's good." Madeline smiled, satisfied. "I heard that Mr. Whitman hates Madeline very much. She has been dead for three years. Why do you still keep her old clothes in your room? "

Jeremy locked his gaze on Madeline's face when he heard these words. "How do you know that these are my ex-wife's clothes?"

Madeline smiled calmly. "This is a very simple guess, isn't it?"

Hearing this rhetorical question, Jeremy smiled. "That's right."

At the same time, Meredith contacted Tanner who had just come out of the hospital.

Tanner had not gained anything last night, having been scared to death by the sudden appearance of a 'ghost'. He was also severely beaten by Jeremy until he lost a tooth. He had simply suffered double the loss.

He came out of the hospital as soon as he heard that tooth fillings cost tens of thousands of dollars.

Where was he to get so much money as a quack? When he received a call from Meredith, he felt as if an opportunity had come.

Meredith was very cautious and did not transfer anything to Tanner, fearing that Jeremy would find a trace.

She put on a wig and sunglasses, changed her outfit, and arranged for Tanner to meet her at a remote cafe.

Upon meeting, Meredith generously gave away 100,000 dollars in cash.

As soon as he saw the amount of money, Tanner's eyes lit up. He snatched the bills quickly and repeatedly agreed. "Miss Montgomery, don't worry. This isn't the first time we've cooperated. Your business is mine!

"Oh, I blame myself for my drunkenness and misstep last night, but you said that... Who's that Quinn..."

"Vera Quinn." Meredith repeated impatiently. "You'd better remember it. That's not Madeline! That b*tch Madeline died three years ago. There are no such things as ghosts in this world! Even if Madeline has really turned into a ghost, I can also make her go away!"

Tanner shrank his neck when he heard the word 'ghost'.

It was hard to straighten oneself up when they had done a lot of bad things.

"You can keep the money as long as you keep your mouth shut about the kidnapping. I promise you won't ever have to worry about having nothing to eat or drink in your life!"

"Miss Montgomery, don't worry. I know what to do," Tanner replied repeatedly, then said unhappily, "That Vera Quinn, how dare she frighten me?! I have to let her know how good I am!"

Meredith was satisfied with this.

It would be a good thing for her if Tanner could deal with Vera.

She also hated the woman!

Yet, now the most important thing was about the kidnapping. In any case, Jeremy could not find out that it was related to her!

On that rainy day, night fell early.

Madeline sat in Jeremy's car as they waited on the route that Tanner used to go back to his rental house every day.

It was almost ten o'clock when Tanner finally appeared.

He got off a taxi and started humming while feeling in a good mood.

Madeline got out of the car immediately and walked under a tree.

"Tanner," she called out.

Tanner stopped abruptly and looked toward the source of the voice.

Seeing a white shadow in the night, he paused for a while. Then, he showed a frightened expression.

"Madeline!"

Madeline felt very comfortable seeing Tanner who she had frightened.

She knew that she was not helping Jeremy—she was helping herself.

She would not let go of these people who had harmed her.

However, to Madeline's surprise, Tanner suddenly showed a playful expression after being frightened. "Maddie, do you miss me? Is that why you've become a ghost? You want to make things up with me, don't you? If you want to find me, just give me a reminder. Don't pop up all of a sudden. Did you know that yesterday, you scared me till I spoke nonsense at Whitman Corporation's 50th anniversary party? You've even wronged your sister, Meredith."

Tanner suddenly turned the conversation around. There was no longer a look of fear on his face. Instead, he walked toward her with a frivolous expression. His face was hurt, making his appearance even more ugly.

"Maddie, I miss you too. I want to relive my old dreams with you, especially the mole on your chest. It's so beautiful!"

His words were getting nastier and nastier while his expression became more and more wretched.

Madeline looked at this man who had used violence against her with hatred. Even her fists were shaking.

"Maddie, since you keep pestering me like this, why don't you follow me upstairs now and we can be gentle and affectionate with each other?"

After saying these words, Tanner stretched out his hands and pounced on Madeline!

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Seeing Tanner charge over, Madeline thought of the atrocities he had done to her.

After a flash of a moment, when she had finally reacted to counterattack, a gust of wind roared from behind her all of a sudden.

Jeremy's warm palms held onto her shoulders tightly, bringing her to the side.

Madeline was instantly surrounded by a familiar yet unfamiliar warm breath. Before she could see clearly, she saw Tanner swiping the air before hitting the tree. It was followed by Jeremy's right hand twisting him around.

Tanner suddenly screamed, "Ow, ow!" However, Jeremy did not let up. He lifted his foot to Tanner's knee and kicked him viciously, forcing Tanner to kneel down before kicking him away.

Madeline thought that Jeremy wanted to continue to teach Tanner a lesson, but he suddenly hugged her tightly, worried.

"Don't be afraid, I'm here. I won't let anyone bully you again."

His gentle voice slipped into her ears like water in the night. It was so unbelievably gentle, carrying a trace of tension and worry as if he was really worried that she would be hurt.

Madeline opened her eyes blankly, feeling Jeremy's embrace increasingly tighten.

Fine beads of rain fell from the sky, then densely. It was accompanied by the late summer breeze. It was so cold.

Yet the heat from his chest, which was pressed close to her and penetrated into her skin through their clothes, was so hot.

At such a close distance, she could hardly tell if it was her own heartbeat or Jeremy's heartbeat that was disturbing her thoughts at the moment.

When she was almost lost in a daze, the pain from her invisible wounds made Madeline sober. "Mr. Whitman, if you continue doing this, I'll get angry," she spoke softly, and the meaning of refusal was obvious.

Jeremy's eyes froze as if he had just walked back from a beautiful dream.

"Sorry," he whispered softly in her ear, then let go of his embrace.

He grabbed Tanner, who had wanted to run, and pushed him to the tree. His deep black eyes pierced Tanner like a poisonous sword.

"Listen, I'll only give you one chance." Jeremy's thin lips parted open a little and his tone was cold. "The kidnapping of my son. Who did it and what did they mean by it?"

Tanner tilted his swollen mouth and stretched his trembling finger out to Madeline.

"Yes, it's her! It's Madeline! It was Madeline who contacted me and asked me to kidnap your son!" He was completely denying what he said at the dinner party last night.

Obviously, such a sudden change was definitely bought.

Jeremy furrowed his eyebrows and pressed his strong arm against Tanner's neck. "So, are you asking for money or life?"

Upon hearing this, Tanner's pupils shrank. As he looked at Jeremy's sharp black eyes, he could not help but shudder. "Whi... Mr. Whitman, it really is Madeline! I'm not lying!" He pointed at the silent Madeline. "Madeline, don't think just because you've become a ghost that I'm afraid of you! A sinister and vicious woman like you who can sleep around for money deserved to die, you—"

Crack!

Before he could speak anymore, he got another punch in the face.

Jeremy seemed to have been rubbed the wrong way and his eyes were dark like he was Satan from hell. He raised his fist and slammed it on Tanner's body.

Tanner screamed with pain and kept bleeding from his mouth.

At the end of his screams, Tanner was almost dying.

Madeline was quite happy watching Tanner suffer, but if he was killed in this way, Meredith would still be at large.

She walked over and grabbed Jeremy, who was squeezing his fists and still trying to beat Tanner. "If you hit him again, you'll kill him."

Jeremy's fist stopped mid-air. His expression was gloomy and his eyes were red as if he was about to swallow the whole world. It was terrifying.

His right hand was also covered with blood, but he could not tell whether it was his or Tanner's.

If it was not for Madeline's prevention, he would have really killed Tanner.

Jeremy drove Madeline back to the apartment. He did not say a word on the way back and the atmosphere was very strange.

They were originally supposed to go find Tanner so that he could learn the truth about Jackson's kidnapping back then, but someone had obviously found him before them.

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The person who looked for Tanner must have been Meredith.

Madeline knew it very well, but she did not think Jeremy did.

He had always believed in Meredith blindly.

It was also because he had indulged Meredith again and again that it brought her such deep pain previously.

However, if he really wanted to cover for Meredith, why did he take the extra effort to ask Madeline to pretend to be who she was back then to worm facts out of Tanner?

Madeline thought that Jeremy would leave right away, but she did not expect him to follow her to the door of her apartment.

"Can I go in and sit for a while?" Jeremy parted his lips lightly, requesting.

It was already late at night. Madeline wanted to refuse, but she glanced at his bleeding hand and decided to open the door to let him in. "Come in."

She did not think she was feeling sorry for him. She just wanted to get some information from him.

Madeline brought out the medical kit. Seeing the man sitting impassively on the sofa, she walked in.

Jeremy lowered his hands and sank weakly into the soft sofa. There was intense melancholy between his eyebrows, and he looked depressed.

Madeline did not say a word. She just quietly took out the alcohol swab and treated the injury on the back of Jeremy's hand, then gently wrapped it with gauze.

"I never believed in her."

Jeremy suddenly said such a sentence.

Madeline's movements stopped for a bit. She then asked with a calm and composed smile, "Mr. Whitman, who are you talking about?" she asked, but she then heard Jeremy chuckle in a low voice.

He seemed to be talking to himself. "I really didn't expect her to do such a thing. I had trusted her so much all this while."

Madeline understood that he was referring to her past self in his earlier sentence and was now talking about Meredith.

'Oh Jeremy, there are many things you didn't expect. What you've seen is just the tip of the iceberg of Meredith's false front!'

Madeline raised her beautiful eyes calmly and asked knowingly, "Mr. Whitman, do you mean that regarding your ex-wife kidnapping your son, you had already known who was the real perpetrator? It was just that you didn't want to believe it, did you?"

Hearing her question, Jeremy seemed startled.

His slender, dewy eyes suddenly became a little hazy. That deep gaze was scrutinizing her clean and clear eyes. He was feeling complicated.

Jeremy slowly raised his hand after a while. His warm fingertips touched Madeline's delicate cheeks as he bobbed his Adam's apple a few times until there was a lump in his throat.

"I'm sorry."

He suddenly spat out these two words. His voice was low and charming, but very hoarse.

Madeline kept smiling all the time, but she could not control her stunned expression at this moment.

She seemed to have caught a light flashing through Jeremy's eyes. In the next second, he spread his arms and took her in, hugging her tightly in his embrace. His warm breath was fanning out on her ear.

"I'm sorry..."

She heard his apology again. Jeremy hugged her tighter as his scent enveloped her more profoundly.

Madeline's hands dangled at her side. She was unable to control herself for a while.

She could not tell who Jeremy was apologizing to at this moment, whether it was to her current self or to her former self...

Click!

Suddenly, there was a clear sound of the door opening.

Madeline returned to her senses all of a sudden. Seeing the man coming in from the door, she pushed Jeremy away.

"Mr. Whitman, you should go back now. My fiancé is here."

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As Madeline's voice fell, Jeremy's embrace then became empty.

A sense of endless loneliness occupied his heart for a moment. He seemed to have just gotten back from getting lost.

Looking at the face in front of him, Jeremy realized that he had lost his cool just now.

He had even shown her that depressed and gloomy side of his that no one knew. Moreover, he had craved for her hug so much, even longed for her to feel sorry for him and hug him tight...

This was something that had never happened before.

Yet he knew that he was only like this all because of this face.

This face that was almost identical to hers back then.

"Didn't you say you'd arrive tomorrow? Why are you back so sudden?" Madeline brought Jeremy back to his sense with her somewhat cheerful voice.

Only then did he realize something and remembered what she had just said. 'My fiancé is here.'

Fiancé?

"Is there a guest home?" A man's voice was heard.

Jeremy frowned. Although this voice was not particularly familiar, it was not foreign to him either.

However, if the owner of this voice was Vera's fiancé, he was really shocked.

"Jeremy, is that you?"

Just as Jeremy raised his gaze and looked over, that voice sounded again.

Felipe Whitman, who was wearing a black suit, slowly walked in. It was raining outside, so his shoulders were dotted with raindrops, but it did not affect his overall elegant and gentlemanly manner one bit.

The two pairs of slender black orbs encountered each other like that.

Jeremy's eyes were obviously as dark and deep like water with a tranquil atmosphere, but at this moment, an undercurrent was quietly surging out from Jeremy's eyes like a burst of invisible gunpowder smoke.

"It's actually you?" Jeremy stood up slowly.

At this moment, Madeline smiled faintly and walked to Felipe's side while holding his arms naturally and affectionately.

"Mr. Whitman, this is my fiancé, Felipe Whitman."

She introduced him with a smile before raising her puzzled eyes to look at Felipe's gentle face.

"You just called Mr. Whitman 'Jeremy'. Do you guys know each other? No, you both share the same surname..."

"Jeremy is the nephew I've mentioned to you before." Felipe parted his lips to answer unhurriedly. His voice was mild as the night outside the window, slipping into her ears as quietly as gentle water.

Madeline looked surprised, then she smiled. "So it turns out that Mr. Whitman is your nephew." She sighed. "Ever since I came to Glendale, the only friend I made was Mr. Whitman."

"How fated." Felipe smiled gently and looked at Jeremy who had not said a word. "Jeremy, thank you for taking care of Vera all this while."
After he said this, there was a low chuckle in the silent air.

Jeremy walked toward Felipe. Both of them were over six feet tall. They were neck and neck, and their appearance was even more difficult to judge.

Yet, compared to Jeremy's assertive edge, Felipe displayed a somewhat more graceful and gentlemanly temperament.

Jeremy's meaningful gaze flicked across Felipe's face and finally landed on Madeline's slightly smiling palm-sized face.

"Is he really your fiancé?" he looked at Madeline and questioned.

Madeline nodded without thinking. "Of course, could he be a fake?"

"Huh." Jeremy smiled sarcastically. "A woman who looks exactly like my ex-wife has become my future aunt-in-law?"

"Jeremy." Felipe interrupted calmly. "I know Vera and Madeline look alike, but they're two different people. I hope you're not imagining things."

"It's hard for me not to imagine things." Jeremy looked at Madeline with an intrigued smile.

After he said this, he walked to Madeline's side and suddenly bowed his head. A warm breath slipped past Madeline's ear.

"I've suddenly begun to look forward to my next meeting with you, Miss Vera."

Accompanied by his somewhat joking and profound words, Madeline's hand that was holding onto Felipe's arm tightened slightly by an inch.

Sensing Madeline's uneasiness, Felipe raised his hand and gently held hers.

"Don't worry." He soothed, his tone always so unhurried, soft, and calm.

Soon, Jeremy left on his own.

It was only after the door closed did Madeline let her guard and vigilance down.

She quickly withdrew her hand from Felipe's arm. Lifting her eyes to meet those smiling and gentle black orbs, the uneasiness and anxiety in her heart seemed to disappear in an instant.

"It's really good that you're back." She smiled, her eyes flashing with endless gratitude and joy.

Felipe raised his hand and tucked Madeline's long hair on the side of her face behind her ears. It was evidently such an ambiguous action, but when he did it, it seemed very natural and generous.

"I've seen all the news during this time and you've done a great job."

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Madeline shook her head. "I still didn't handle it well enough. Otherwise, he wouldn't be suspecting me again and again for being his damned ex-wife."

Madeline carried bitterness in her emotions when she said the last two words, but she quickly smiled at Felipe faintly.

"Don't worry about me. I'm no longer the silly and stupid Madeline Crawford. I won't disappoint you with the chance of rebirth that you've given me."

Felipe curled the edge of his lips and smiled. There was a touch of mystery in those bright and deep eyes.

Madeline helped him to take off the coat that had been dampened by rainwater and got him new toiletries.

He took a shower and put on a white bathrobe, wiping a few strands of his wet hair with a dry towel.

He entered Madeline's room naturally. Seeing the cutie asleep on the bed, Felipe bent down slowly and dropped a loving kiss on Lily's cheek.

"Felipe, I've cleaned up the room." Madeline entered the room softly.

Felipe turned and walked toward her. "I'll be going back to Whitman Manor in two days. Come with me."

"Okay." Madeline nodded.

"Rest early. Goodnight," Felipe said with his head bowed. His thin, pale lips landed between Madeline's eyebrows without staying on unnecessarily long. He turned around and went out quickly, closing the door smoothly.

Madeline stood still in a daze, feeling somewhat complicated. She was not a fool. Felipe only helped her so much because he had romantic feelings for her to some extent.

Especially when she was accused by Meredith of stealing the necklace six years ago. At that time, he had provided her with evidence that could prove her innocence.

He had already been helping her secretly since back then.

However, in the three years she spent with Felipe, she felt that he was too mysterious. It could even be said that he was unpredictable.

He was a gentleman, a decent gentleman.

However, Madeline's instinct told her that he had a hidden secret.

Madeline shook her head to force herself to stop thinking about it.

After Jeremy left, he sat in his car. Even after the lights in Madeline's apartment were switched off, he still did not leave.

"Felipe Whitman."

Felipe's name came out from his lips.

Thinking of how Felipe used to care about Madeline's every move, he gradually lowered his gaze.

"No."

He suddenly denied something and thought of Madeline who had been on the operating table with no vital signs.

Her breathing had stopped and there was no pulse. She was a dead person.

Yet, if Vera Quinn was just Vera Quinn, he could no longer doubt it anymore. It was just that Vera was having such a relationship with Felipe, so it was hard not to arouse his suspicions again.

Thinking of Vera's conversation style and manner, he could not help but think that she could be the Madeline from back then.

Jeremy looked at the wound that had been bandaged not long ago. He caressed the gauze as though he could still feel someone's remaining warmth on the bandages.

He looked down and his gaze suddenly became tender.

'Madeline, I would rather it be you.

'Even if you no longer love me and hate me to my bones, I can accept it.

'As long as you're alive.

'As long as you're still alive in this world, whatever you want to do, I'll accompany you.'

The next day, Madeline woke up early to make breakfast for Lily. Seeing that Felipe was still resting, she closed the door gently and sent Lily to the kindergarten.

When she was about to leave after sending Lily, Jeremy's car stopped in front of her.

"Mr. Whitman?" She behaved very calmly.

Jeremy got out of the car and opened the door to the passenger seat for Madeline. "Future Aunt-in-law, would you do me a favor and get in the car?"

"..." Although she was not used to hearing this form of address from Jeremy, she still got into the car calmly.

The car sped down the busy street and finally stopped at the intersection of the commercial street.

"There's a breakfast shop here that makes delicious food," Jeremy said while getting down the car to open the door for Madeline.

Had he brought her here for breakfast?

Madeline somehow felt a little weird about it.

She got out of the car hesitantly. Seeing so many office workers rushing to work, she then seemed to have seen a familiar figure passing by in the crowd.

"Ma-Maddie?!"

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In the crowd, there was suddenly an overly familiar voice that came from nowhere.

Madeline's heart was in her mouth all of a sudden and her heartbeat also increased. Yet, her face revealed no reaction. She walked toward Jeremy without even a single ripple.

"Mr. Whitman, did you deliberately bring me here for breakfast?" She smiled, the morning rays after the rain falling on her immaculate and delicate face, shining beautifully.

Jeremy seemingly glanced in a certain direction, then nodded. "Won't my future aunt-in-law show deference in a public setting? Or are you worried that Uncle Felipe will be jealous?"

"Why would Felipe be jealous because of such a thing?" Madeline smiled calmly, but her heartbeat was erratic.

She could still hear that familiar voice calling out 'Maddie' again and again.

That voice, accompanied by rapid footsteps, got closer and closer.

However, she just calmly followed Jeremy's footsteps to the breakfast shop.

"Maddie!"

At last, just when Madeline was about to step into the breakfast shop, the person in front of her held her hand tightly.

"Maddie! Maddie! It really is you!"

Ava held Madeline's hand tightly with excitement. Her tears were like a broken dam, cascading down from her eyes without restraint while smudging her delicate makeup in no time.

"Maddie?" Madeline raised her eyebrows in confusion. "Could it be that you're Madeline Crawford's old friend and you also think that I'm her?"

Hearing Madeline's answer, Ava's tearful eyes whirled from shock.

"What do you mean 'think' of you as Madeline? Maddie, what on earth happened? Why did you show up here?"

Ava had many questions, but in the end, it was incomparable to the surprise of seeing Madeline at this moment.

She spread her arms around Madeline excitedly, feeling the realness of her friend's flesh and blood. Ava's voice trembled. "Maddie, it's really you! That's great! You're still alive!"

She took Madeline's hand in agitation and glared at Jeremy fiercely. "Maddie, why are you still with this scumbag? He and Meredith almost killed you back then! How can you still forgive him? Come with me! Don't be together with this scumbag anymore!"

Ava glared at Jeremy angrily and pulled Madeline up to leave.

However, not only did Madeline not take a step, but she also withdrew her hand forcefully.

"Miss, you've got the wrong person. I'm not Madeline Crawford."

She handed her business card calmly as she said.

"This is my business card."

Ava stared at the business card Madeline had handed over blankly. The words 'Vera Quinn' looked unusually strange.

"Maddie, what are you saying? How can you not be my Maddie?!" Ava raised her hand, wiped her tears, and looked at Madeline's face carefully. These delicate eyebrows were exactly the same as Maddie's and even the dimples that appeared when she smiled slightly were exactly the same. How could it not be her?!

"Maddie, are you being threatened by this scumbag? Or have you lost your memories? I'm Ava! Don't you know me anymore?"

Ava's wet eyes looked at her hopefully.

Madeline curled her lips calmly and met Ava's eyes with a smile.

"Miss, I really don't know you. I also didn't lose my memories. Please stop saying that Mr. Whitman is a scumbag, and don't call me 'Maddie' anymore. I don't want to continue to be recognized as a dead person."

Ava looked at Madeline who had said these words in disbelief. The excitement and eagerness in her heart were gradually extinguished by Madeline's indifferent gaze.

"Maddie, what... What are you saying? Why did you become like this? I'm Ava! Your best friend, Ava!"

She stressed hard, trying to find something in Madeline's eyes that could tally with her, but there was nothing.

Madeline gave Ava a cold look and turned her head. "Mr. Whitman, I've suddenly lost my appetite to eat. Please send me home."

"Okay." Jeremy agreed readily.

"Maddie? Maddie!" Seeing that Madeline had turned around to leave, Ava caught up grudgingly but was stopped by Jeremy. "Jeremy, you scumbag! You must've done something to Maddie! Otherwise, she wouldn't have become like this!"

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Jeremy sneered lowly, his slender, dewy eyes looking at Madeline's elegant back. "You really think she's Madeline?"

"Nonsense! Of course, she's Maddie!" Ava affirmed without a doubt. "Jeremy, I'm telling you, don't think about hurting Maddie anymore. If Maddie gets hurt again, I'll fight you tooth and nail this time!"

Hearing Ava's warning, Jeremy suddenly curled his lips in self-mockery.

A friend who would fight tooth and nail for her.

However, what about this husband?

Jeremy did not say anything. He then got into the car and started the engine.

Madeline was seated in the car. She caught a glimpse of Ava's dejected figure in her peripheral vision. She gradually became smaller and smaller in the rear-view mirror, and her heart hurt more and more.

'I'm sorry, Ava.

'Now is not the time to acknowledge you.

'I'll offer you a humble apology after I take my revenge.'

Madeline recollected her attention. When the car passed by an intersection, she requested. "Stop the car."

Jeremy looked at her, puzzled, but he saw Madeline's solemn face.

He stopped the car. Madeline then opened the car door and left.

Jeremy's expression changed slightly. He hurriedly got out of the car to chase after her and grabbed her slender wrist. "Where are you going?"

After getting stopped, there was a bothered look on her graceful face. "I have deliberately saved your reputation just now with so many people around, Mr. Whitman, but I'm really tired of you trying to see if I'm Madeline Crawford again and again."

She frowned, looking extremely unhappy. "I don't have to guess it. I know you didn't want to take me to breakfast at all. You just knew that Madeline's friend would show up there, so you brought me there on purpose, isn't that right?"

"Yes." Jeremy admitted flatly. He stared deeply at Madeline. "You look exactly like my ex-wife, which is completely fine, but you're a woman who looks exactly like my ex-wife and is Felipe's fiancée. It's hard for me not to suspect you."

Madeline chuckled upon hearing this. "The world is large and full of wonders. Mr. Whitman, didn't you also commit marital infidelity and conspire with your mistress to drive your first wife to death? In that case, is there anything else that is impossible?"

Jeremy's gaze gradually sank.

This face was not similar, but it was exactly the same!

Yet, her words and actions were the complete opposite of how she used to be.

She had always been so careful, so inferior and cowardly. She was never this eloquent and her gaze was never bright like a torch.

"Can you let me go?" Madeline looked askance at her wrist that was being held tightly by Jeremy.

However, she never thought that not only did Jeremy not let her go, he instead gripped her wrist harder as he took her into his arms.

She fell into his arms without warning. A once familiar scent surrounded her all of a sudden, and that was Jeremy's scent.

Madeline looked lost. "What are you doing?"

Jeremy just curled his lips. "It turns out that in your eyes, Miss Vera, I'm such a scumbag."

He tugged the corners of his thin, sexy lips up and smiled evilly. "Since you've already seen through my scumbag nature, then you'd better be careful, Miss Vera. Because I like to challenge relationships that breach common sense, Future Aunt-in-law."

"..."

Facing Jeremy's profound provocation, Madeline pushed him off angrily. She turned around and walked across the road, trying to avoid Jeremy as quickly as possible.

She had only taken a few steps when suddenly, she heard a rapid honking.

Madeline stopped abruptly and looked sideways. She saw a car speeding toward her, about to hit her in the next second.

Jeremy, who saw this scene, had his heart come up to his throat.

"Madeline—"

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Just as an accident was about to occur, Jeremy reached out and grabbed Madeline's wrist, pulling her into his arms with all his might.

The car that ran the yellow light whizzed past Madeline's side.

As Jeremy had been too forceful, he lost his balance and fell backward. The person in his arms fell to the ground with him, leading to a heavy crash.

"Don't be afraid, it's alright now."

Madeline vaguely heard Jeremy said.

She wanted to get up but was enveloped tightly in Jeremy's embrace. His right hand was pressed on the back of her head as though it was a subconscious act of protecting her.

Madeline just lay on Jeremy's body. Her nose picked up the unique fragrance on his body. It was a familiar scent in her memory.

She felt her heartbeat and breathing going a little erratic. She did not know if it was the shock from almost being hit by a car just now.

When a breeze blew over, Madeline recovered her heartbeat and breathing. "Mr. Whitman, you can let me go now."

Upon hearing her voice, Jeremy seemed to return to his senses.

He slowly loosened his clasped hands and recalled how he had called her 'Madeline' just now.

"Thank you, Mr. Whitman." Madeline stood up and thanked him.

Jeremy also stood up. Looking at the unscathed lady in front of him, he was inexplicably relieved.

Madeline wanted to find a reason to leave as soon as possible, but then she saw Jeremy's palm bleeding.

Fresh blood had oozed out once again from the place where she bandaged him last night.

Madeline took out the disinfectant wipes from her bag. She held Jeremy's palm and casually treated his wound. Then, she wrapped it gently with a handkerchief.

Jeremy stayed still, watching Madeline carefully treat his injury.

He looked at her delicate eyebrows that looked serious. Her eyelashes fluttered gently, like small feathers falling on his heart, leaving invisible scratches after.

Jeremy felt his own heart skipping a beat for no reason.

"Thank you for before, Mr. Whitman. I have matters to attend to, so I'll leave first." Madeline let go of his hand and turned around after speaking.

"I'll fetch you there."

"No need." Madeline stopped and glanced at him. "I really don't want to be treated as a dead person anymore."

After her voice fell, Madeline got into a taxi on the side of the road.

Jeremy stayed in place. After seeing the car disappear from his sight, he then slowly lowered his gaze and looked at his wounded palm that was wrapped in a handkerchief.

Jeremy went back to the car when he received a call from Meredith.

Looking at the name displayed on the screen, Jeremy's brows furrowed. After pondering for a moment, he at last swiped the answer button.

Meredith's somewhat excited and somewhat aggrieved voice quickly came from the other end of the phone.

"Jeremy, are you finally willing to answer my calls?

"Jeremy, I know you must still be suspecting me for being involved in Jack's kidnapping back then. I don't blame you for misunderstanding me.

"Jeremy, can we meet? I have something to tell you."

Meredith said many things as if she was talking to herself. She could not wait for his response and became more anxious on the inside.

"Jeremy, I really haven't done anything that's against my conscience. Moreover, Jack is our biological son. How could I—" Meredith said pitifully, but before she finished speaking, Jeremy's low voice was heard.

"I'm not free today. Call your parents and go to Whitman Manor tomorrow night. All of you. After everyone arrives, I have something to announce."

Meredith initially thought that Jeremy would not care about her, but who would have thought that she would get such a reply from him.

"With my parents together, right?" she asked with uncertainty, her heart beating happily.

For her parents to be there, it had to be an announcement of their marriage!

"Yes," Jeremy responded.

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Meredith agreed impatiently. "Don't worry, Jeremy. I'll be there on time tomorrow night with my parents."

"That's great, then." Jeremy hung up the phone after saying those last three words.

He looked at the darkened screen, his slender, dewy eyes reflecting a secretive light.

Madeline had gone straight back to the apartment. After entering the house, she saw that Felipe was already up.

He sat at the table by the French windows, wearing loose casual clothes. He was watching the financial news on his phone while elegantly biting on a piece of toast for breakfast.

Seeing that Madeline was back, he gave her a gentle smile. "Miss Lady's sales performance is booming. Every piece of jewelry that you've designed has become popular. I think you stand a great chance of winning the grand prize for this year's GMA International Jewelry Design Competition.

"Also, I brought you the fragrance materials you need. You can continue with your dreams and career here with peace of mind."

Listening to every word Felipe had said, Madeline was grateful. "Thank you, Felipe."

Felipe smiled faintly. The pair of mysterious eyes showed a gleam of bright light. "What I want is never your thanks."

His voice was soft and warm like a spring breeze.

Seeing that Madeline was a little lost, Felipe laughed a little. "Don't worry, I won't force you to do anything. As long as you're happy, I'm willing to be your knight forever."

Madeline looked at the gentle, smiling face in front of her, and her heart felt warm.

It was this smile that had scattered the haze in her heart.

If it were not for Felipe's company and encouragement in the past three years, she would not be here today.

The evening of the next day.

Madeline followed Felipe to Whitman Manor. He walked into the villa compound with a gift in one hand and Madeline's hand in another.

Seeing that it was Felipe, the butler immediately reported to Old Master Whitman.

Old Master Whitman, who was resting in his room, suddenly tightened his loosened nerves.

Felipe had come back to the manor three years ago, but back then, he avoided seeing Old Master Whitman with the excuse of being unwell. Such a thing could not be repeated.

Madeline, on the other hand, really wanted to meet Old Master Whitman. She just did not expect to see Eloise and Meredith sitting on the sofa while chatting happily with Mrs. Whitman when she entered the house. Sean was also speaking with Jeremy's father on the side.

'What day... is today? Is everyone here?'

Seeing Madeline and Felipe entering while holding hands, everyone in the room was shocked.

Jeremy, who was coming down from the stairs, saw Madeline and Felipe's interlocking fingers. He lowered his gaze.

"Aren't you Jeremy's uncle, Felipe?" Meredith was suspicious. "Uncle Felipe, why are you with this woman?"

"Miss Crawford, please be careful with your words. Vera is my fiancée." Felipe seldom got angry and had always been a gentleman, but at this moment, Madeline clearly felt his displeasure.

"What? This woman is your fiancée?" Mrs. Whitman stood up with a whoosh. She sneered, "Felipe, you sure know how to find a wife!"

Felipe curled his lips lightly when he heard those words. "Vera is the best woman I've ever met. It's my greatest honor to marry her and make her my wife."

"..." Mrs. Whitman had nothing to say momentarily.

It was also the first time Madeline had heard Felipe praise her like this.

She was a little flustered and her cheeks heated up slightly.

She did not think she would happen to meet Jeremy's deep gaze that was looking at her meaningfully when she looked up.

"Mr. Whitman," Madeline spoke calmly.

Upon hearing this, Meredith quickly looked over and saw Jeremy coming. She hurried to his side and cast a mocking look at Madeline. "Jeremy, who would've known that the boyfriend that Miss Quinn mentioned before is Uncle Felipe. Don't you think this is fate? It seems that Miss Quinn and Uncle Felipe are a good match, Jeremy. What do you think?"

Jeremy glanced at Meredith's smiling face indifferently. With one hand reaching into his pocket, he walked straight toward Madeline.

"Jeremy?" Meredith stared blankly, the smile on her face disappearing instantly.

Jeremy completely ignored Felipe and everyone else, only walking straight to Madeline.

He looked at Madeline, curled his lips, and smiled. The hand in his pants pocket moved as though he wanted to take something out.

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Under everyone's puzzled gaze, Jeremy took out a dark blue velvet box from his pants pocket.

He held the box to face Madeline and opened it. Inside the velvet jewelry box was a sparkling diamond ring.

Meredith looked at the ring box that Jeremy was holding in shock. She hurried over.

"Jeremy, what... What are you doing?" she asked nervously, trying to maintain a smile.

"Jeremy, you asked my parents to come over today. Is it because you want to propose to me? This diamond ring is also for me, yes?"

Meredith looked expectantly at Jeremy's impassive side profile.

However, Jeremy did not spare a glance at Meredith even from the corner of his peripheral vision. Instead, he took out the ring and reached out to Madeline's left hand that was being held by Felipe.

Madeline quickly withdrew her hand. "Mr. Whitman, what are you doing?"

Felipe also protected Madeline by his side. "Jeremy, although Vera and Madeline are very similar, but as I've told you, they're two different people."

"Why are you so nervous about her?" Jeremy suddenly let out a chuckle. His smile was really intriguing, and no one could see through it. "This is just a welcome gift for my future aunt-in-law."

"Thank you, Mr. Whitman, but a diamond ring is best not to be gifted casually, or your fiancée will be jealous." Madeline declined with a smile, glancing at Meredith whose smile had been distorted.

"Meredith won't be jealous!" Mrs. Whitman disdainfully rolled her eyes at Madeline. "Miss Quinn, although you look very much like Jeremy's hateful ex-wife, don't ever flatter yourself and think that Jeremy would have any special affection for you!"

She gave a contemptuous smile.

"That Madeline is simply a thorn in the eyes of everyone in our family! Jeremy hated her to the bone! After she died, all of us were much at peace and Jeremy could finally be with his beloved. We're all happy, so you don't have to worry about my future daughter-in-law being jealous. Jeremy and Meredith are in a good relationship! Their son is already five years old!"

Upon hearing this, Meredith quickly restored her smile and echoed, "Miss Quinn, did you hear that? Why should I be jealous? This is only but a welcome gift, so you don't have to make a big fuss over nothing. Mrs. Whitman is right. It doesn't matter if you look just like Madeline. Jeremy will never be interested in you because he hates Madeline the most!"

"Is that so..." Madeline smiled faintly, but there was sarcasm on the inside.

'Turns out that my death is exactly what everyone wanted.

'I didn't expect you guys to feel even a little sad about my death.

'But I never thought that you would all be happy for it.'

She was a lawful wife and a daughter-in-law. She had never hurt anyone but had to suffer such cruel treatment.

If it were not for the warmth brought by Felipe's hand holding hers, Madeline would be having a breakdown.

"Jeremy, I appreciate your kindness on Vera's behalf, but a diamond ring is more suited to be given by me, her fiancé." Felipe rejected him on Madeline's behalf. He then took her hand and walked into the hall.

Meredith glared at Madeline's back before reaching out to hold Jeremy's hand. "Jeremy, the style of this ring is very special. I really like it."

She was clearly hinting, 'Jeremy, my parents are here and so is everyone else. Are you about to announce our wedding date?'

Jeremy looked at the ring and retrieved it with a smile. He looked toward Madeline. "Before I make an announcement, I have to clarify one thing."

"What is it?" Meredith asked expectantly.

"You'll know soon enough." He glanced at her and walked to the living hall.

Meredith followed hurriedly.

At this moment, Old Master Whitman had also come down the stairs. He had seen and heard it all from the second floor just now.

Felipe heard footsteps coming down the stairs and looked up.

Seeing that aged face, Felipe's eyes did not show any adoration and sentiment.

However, when Old Master Whitman looked at him, he showed a faint smile for a moment. "Felipe, I haven't seen you in years. It seems that you've been leading a good life these years."

"Thanks to Great Uncle, I've finally succeeded in my business career in the past few years. And I'll be getting married soon," Felipe looked at Madeline gently as he said.

Old Master Whitman nodded and looked at Madeline with scrutiny. "I really thought it was Madeline. What a shame..."

He sighed, curious to see so many people in the house.

"Why is everyone here?"

"Grandpa Whitman, it was Jeremy who asked me to call my parents over!" Meredith offered to explain. She glanced at Jeremy while smiling shyly. "Jeremy said he wants to announce an important matter here!"

"Important matter? What is it?" Old Master Whitman looked at Jeremy in confusion.

"Surely, it must be about their marriage! It's been so long. The wedding date should've been set long ago!" Mrs. Whitman cleverly supplied an answer.

Eloise and Sean were very pleased. "They should've been married long ago. Their son is already so grown! Jeremy, we can entrust our dear daughter to you. You must take care of her well!"

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Meredith blushed and leaned close to Jeremy's side lovingly. "Don't worry, Mom and Dad. Jeremy will take good care of me, right, Jeremy?"

She cast her bright and clear gaze at Jeremy and happened to see him looking down at her.

It was just that his eyes were so cold that she was stunned.

"Je-Jeremy?"

"What I want to announce is the dissolution of our engagement."

"..."

"What?"

Meredith was instantly petrified. Eloise, Sean, and Jeremy's parents all looked shocked.

Madeline looked calm, but she also felt surprised on the inside.

Did Jeremy actually say he wanted to break off the engagement with Meredith?

This was really mind-blowing.

He adored the two-faced Meredith. He had been indulging and pampering her without limit for so many years.

How could such a decision suddenly be made?

"Jeremy, what are you saying? How can you break off your engagement with Meredith when she has even given birth to your child?!" Eloise said angrily. She suddenly pointed to Madeline. "Is it because of this woman?!"

Jeremy frowned, discontented. "It has nothing to do with her."

He said while looking at Meredith, "Do you still remember what I told you that morning?"

Meredith's face stiffened as she unbelievably recalled what Jeremy had said that day. 'If you had anything to do with Jackson's kidnapping back then, I'll officially announce that my engagement to you is invalid.'

Her face was instantly as white as snow. "Jeremy, you still don't believe me? I've told you, I wasn't involved in Jack's kidnapping. He's my own son! How could I partner up with an outsider to kidnap him? Why would I do that?" Meredith explained anxiously. This also made everyone who was present understand why Jeremy said that he wanted to dissolve the engagement.

"The reason was to frame Madeline, to make me hate her," Jeremy calmly stated the reasons.

Meredith was stunned. "Jeremy, I-I didn't! You can't deny me just because of what Tanner said. We've been together for so many years. Why don't you believe me—"

"It also has nothing to do with what the thug said," Jeremy spoke coldly.

Meredith was even more confused now. They were all irrelevant? Then how was he so sure? Could there be any witnesses back then? No, that was impossible.

"I found the driver of the car that Madeline and Jack took back then."

"..." Meredith's mouth twitched as her pupils shrank.

The driver!

That driver!

She had actually completely forgotten about the driver!

Seeing the change in Meredith's expression, Jeremy looked at her with disappointment. Then, he smiled. "That person confessed to everything. He made Madeline faint and brought her back to the dormitory, then handed Jack over to Tanner according to your instructions. The rest all happened according to your wish."

"No, Jeremy, the driver's lying. I didn't—" Meredith quibbled in panic.

Jeremy looked at her with cold eyes. "You still won't admit it at this point? Do you want me to bring the driver over to confront you in person?"

"Bring that driver over for a confrontation! I'll never believe that Meredith would do such a thing! Everything was concocted by Madeline! It has nothing to do with Meredith!" Eloise defended resolutely.

Jeremy smiled and picked up the phone. "Okay, I'll call him over for a confrontation now."

"Jeremy!" Meredith suddenly called out to him nervously with tears all over her face.

"Jeremy, I just love you too much. I didn't want to see Madeline continue to pester you and that's why I lost my head for a moment. Forgive me! Jeremy—"

Who knew that at the very last moment, Meredith would actually confess on her own!

She was afraid that if she did not admit it at this moment, she would not even have the chance to regret it.

Eloise and Sean were instantly dumbfounded, looking at Meredith who was begging Jeremy for mercy in disbelief.

"Jeremy, I know I was wrong. Please forgive me. Don't break off the engagement, okay? Jeremy..." She begged Jeremy in tears.

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Jeremy looked down at her, the girl he had once said he would guard forever, and a sarcastic smile crawled onto his handsome face. "I didn't even find the driver."

"..." No one had thought that Jeremy would suddenly say such a sentence.

The air in the entire living room seemed to freeze instantly as Meredith's eyes went wide like saucers. She was looking at Jeremy's handsome face that was full of disappointment and mockery with shock.

He had actually set her up!

She had admitted to framing Madeline with Tanner out of fear!

Madeline was sitting quietly at the side, but her heart was not calm at the moment.

Just the previous day, Jeremy had asked her to dress like Madeline to set Tanner up, but that failed.

She initially thought that no human or physical evidence could be found to prove the fact that Meredith did such an evil deed back then. However, what she did not expect was that Jeremy would actually use this tactic at this time to make Meredith obediently confess.

Her heart trembled acutely.

She could not tell what she was feeling at the moment.

Felipe reached out and held her hand gently.

They exchanged glances. Although there was no communication, there was a mutual and tacit understanding through the signal in their gazes.

"It really is you!" Old Master Whitman picked up his cane and pointed it at Meredith angrily. "You actually partnered with an outsider to kidnap your own son and frame Madeline for this crime! You... You're abominable!"

Old Master Whitman's hands trembled in anger. His face was livid, and as he spoke, he was about to beat Meredith with the cane in his hand.

Seeing this, Eloise hurried forward to stop Old Master Whitman. "Old Master, what are you doing? How could you hit Meredith? She must have her reasons!"

Reasons?

Seeing that Eloise was still defending Meredith even at this point, Madeline's heart seemed to sink into the glacier inch by inch.

She had initially thought that maybe on the day when the truth came to light, she would become soft-hearted and long to return to the embrace of her biological parents. When that happened, she would let all bygones be bygones.

However, Eloise's behavior of defending Meredith blindly made her completely and bitterly disappointed.

At this moment, Meredith had tears streaming down her face, looking aggrieved. "Old Master Whitman! I never thought about partnering with outsiders to kidnap Jack. That's my flesh and blood who I nurtured in my stomach for ten months. How could I be willing to?!"

She looked at Jeremy while holding his arms tightly with both hands. "Jeremy, I didn't want to do it either. I was forced by Madeline!"

Meredith once again shifted all the blame to Madeline.

'Forced by me?'

Madeline smiled without a trace.

She really did not know how she had forced Meredith to do such a thing. Madeline looked at Meredith who was crying so hard with a smile, then she heard her continue to say, "At the time, Madeline had hurt me again and again. She even hurt Jack. Although I was repeatedly tolerant, Madeline still challenged my limit again and again..."

"And every time I think of our first child who was killed by her, my heart ached even more. That's why I lost my head for a moment and was instigated by Tanner to do such a thing..."

"Jeremy, I was forced. Madeline forced me! Jeremy, think about our first child. Think of how cruel and vicious Madeline was! Every time I think about that miscarried child, my heart hurts so much..."

Meredith's explanation fell in a series of words. The huge living hall was so quiet and she was the only one crying.

"Meredith, don't cry. I'm here." Eloise hugged Meredith, comforting her with much adoration.

Seeing this, Sean also stepped forward and patted Meredith's shoulder while consoling her. "You all heard that. Meredith was forced by that Madeline. If you want to blame someone, blame Madeline. She had always bullied Meredith, and Meredith was just retaliating!"

Hearing what Sean had said, Madeline's already frozen heart suffered another blow.

Her heart seemed to be broken instantly, the pieces of debris falling into her thoracic cavity. She was attacked by a burst of intense stinging.

At this time, Mrs. Whitman also stood by Meredith's side decisively. "Old Master Whitman, what Meredith and the in-laws have said does make sense. It's all because of Madeline seeking her own death! She killed Meredith and Jeremy's first child. What happened afterward was all her own retribution and not anyone else's fault!"

"You... You're all ridiculous!" Old Master Whitman was furious. He pointed at Meredith angrily. "You still speak plausibly and volubly after doing such a thing, and all of you still defend her like this!"

"But it's always been like that! Old Master Whitman, think about it. If it weren't for that damn Madeline who bullied Meredith all those times, how could Meredith resort to such a thing? A good person was bullied, but that doesn't mean that they should be bullied!"

Mrs. Whitman stuck up for Meredith resolutely and turned her head to look at Jeremy coldly.

"Jeremy, Meredith is not at fault. It's all Madeline's fault! And it's been so long, so there's nothing to investigate. Your and Meredith's engagement has been witnessed by all of Glendale, so how could you say to cancel it just like that? Don't say such words out of anger."

As soon as Mrs. Whitman said that, Meredith quickly raised her teary eyes to look at Jeremy.

"Jeremy, I know I was wrong. Will you forgive me? Let's live well in the future, okay?"

"I wasn't joking with you," Jeremy said with a cold voice.

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Hearing this, Meredith looked like she was drained of strength.

It seemed that he was serious.

"Jeremy, how can you do this?" Eloise immediately sought justice for Meredith. "Meredith has been with you for so many years, and the child she gave birth to is already five years old. In the past five years, she has been maliciously discredited as the mistress. Now, because of that damned Madeline, you don't want Meredith anymore?" she questioned.

Jeremy's temples suddenly pulsed, and his gaze suddenly became dark.

He really did not want to hear people always using 'd*mned Madeline' when addressing Madeline.

"Shut up!" Old Master Whitman scolded back furiously, "Mrs. Montgomery, although this lady is your long-lost daughter, you shouldn't use this manner to compensate for the debt you owe your daughter! Madeline was also raised by her parents! If her parents know that she has suffered such a great grievance, they'd also feel sad and distressed!" Old Master Whitman heaved a long sigh as he said.

"That poor child, Madeline, having to bear such a crime even after she's died..."

Sighing once more, he turned slowly and went upstairs.

Madeline pursed her lips. There was a burst of sourness surging from the bottom of her heart.

'Grandpa.

'Thank you for feeling sorry for me.

'As for my parents...'

She looked at Eloise and Sean. They still spoiled Meredith without principle, even when she had done something heinous.

The air suddenly quietened. In the silence, Jeremy's cold voice sounded. "I won't fight with you for Jack's custody. As matters stand, think about what you did wrong."

As he spoke, he turned around coldly. Madeline looked at his back which looked unusually lonely for some reason.

"Jeremy! Jeremy, where are you going? Jeremy!" Meredith chased closely after him, but soon there was the sound of Jeremy's car starting.

Meredith looked in the direction Jeremy had left. She clenched her fists, her eyes and heart full of unwillingness!

She had initially thought that Jeremy had called her parents over to announce the wedding date. She never would have thought that it would be their last supper!

No!

She would never give up like this!

She also would never give up on the chance to sit on the throne of being Old Madam Whitman just like this!

As soon as Jeremy left, Felipe left with Madeline.

Madeline sat in the passenger seat, feeling restless.

Suddenly, Felipe held her hand. "Your hands are cold. Is it because of what Eloise and Sean said earlier?"

Madeline smiled a little, feeling the warmth in her hands. However, she still could not stop the sourness in the corner of her eyes.

"Perhaps I'm destined to have no parents in this life."

"Did you decide not to acknowledge them? But they'll always be your biological parents."

"It's better not to acknowledge them." Madeline laughed lightly. Even if she did not acknowledge them, she would not continue to let Meredith be the eldest daughter of the Montgomeries.

She would not let Meredith pretend to have the title that belonged to her, even if she did not want to go back.

She sighed. The car stopped at the traffic light. She looked out of the window and unexpectedly saw Jeremy's car parked by the roadside. In the next second, she saw Jeremy coming out of a flower shop while holding a large bouquet of roses.

"Jeremy?"

"Hmm?"

Following Madeline's line of vision, Felipe also looked over.

He saw Jeremy carrying a large bouquet of roses while getting into his car.

"Why did he buy so many roses?"

Could it be that he secretly had other women besides Meredith? Was that why he broke off his engagement with Meredith so simply? This was only Madeline's guess, but the flames of hatred in her heart burned again.

She thought that he resolutely broke off the engagement with Meredith because he felt somewhat guilty toward her, but at this moment, that did not seem so.

"If we want to know, let's follow him and look." Felipe stepped on the accelerator and followed Jeremy's car as he spoke.

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Madeline did not think she cared about Jeremy giving roses to other women. She just was not reconciled.

Jeremy's car went straight all the way. There were gradually lesser cars along this road.

In order to avoid being found out by him, Felipe stretched the distance very far.

After about 20 minutes, Madeline saw Jeremy's car had stopped.

However, the place he parked his car made Madeline and Felipe feel confused.

"A cemetery?"

Jeremy had actually come to a cemetery.

Why would he come to this place while carrying a bouquet of roses?

Furthermore, this cemetery was exactly where she once buried her grandfather and her first child. It was also the place where he had cruelly killed their child in front of her. Madeline's heart trembled fiercely thinking about it. The snow floating in the sky on that fateful day seemed to float into her heart at this moment, so cold.

She would never forget how desperate and helpless she was when she pleaded with him. Yet, he ignored her pleading and tears, ruthlessly cutting up her heart a thousand times. In the end, he even let Meredith disfigure her.

"Do you want to follow him in?" Felipe asked.

Madeline suddenly withdrew her thoughts and shook her head. "There aren't many people here and not many cars either. If I follow him, he'll surely realize."

"Then we wait?"

Madeline was silent upon hearing this.

Did she want to wait?

However, what was she waiting for?

The cemetery was so big that Jeremy's figure could no longer be seen.

What could she get from waiting here?

"Your hands are cold." Felipe held her hands again. "Is it because you're thinking of the unhappy things in the past?"

His voice was as soft and warm as ever, quietly trickling through her injured heart.

Hearing Madeline's silence, Felipe curled his lips. His fingertips gently patted the hair beside her ear. "Don't worry, you have me."

...

At the cemetery.

Holding 88 red roses, Jeremy walked along the familiar road and finally came to a tomb.

Looking at the name carved on the tombstone, he reached out and gently grazed over each word as though he was able to sense her warmth this way, but the coldness on his fingertips reminded him that everything was just his illusion and fantasy.

Jeremy put down the roses and lit a cigarette as usual. Sitting on a stone bench by the side, the lingering smoke was blown away, but the gentle breeze blurred the tombstone in his eyes.

The moment when he believed that Madeline and Tanner had partnered to kidnap Jack and the scene of him cruelly pushing her away emerged clearly in his mind.

The rain had been so heavy that day.

Now that he thought about it, she was already sick with such a serious illness back then. Her body had to be in so much pain.

She had said, "Jeremy, believe me."

She had also said, "Jeremy Whitman, why can't you just believe me for once? Just once!"

In the end, he used all kinds of insults to pinch out the hope in her eyes bit by bit.

He had actually seen her pale face from the rear-view mirror, sitting in the rain like a broken doll.

He had also felt his heart aching at that time but thought his heartache was over Meredith. He never realized that it was her he was feeling a heartache over.

Hiss.

The pricking sensation pulled Jeremy's thoughts back from three years ago.

Letting the cigarette butt burn, he quietly looked at the tombstone in front of him and smiled bitterly.

"I regret it. Do you hear me?"

He lifted the corner of his lips, his eyes starting to feel sore.

He never thought that after Madeline died that he would have a tough time every night and that he would be thinking of her all the time.

He slowly got up and walked to the tombstone. Crouching down, he reached into his pocket and took out that dark blue velvet jewelry box.

Opening it, the diamond reflected a bright halo under the sun.

"Do you like it? I designed it for you." Jeremy smiled to himself. "She looks like you and I keep on having illusions, but not anymore. You are you, and she is her."

After promising this, he gently stuffed the jewelry box into the gap beside the tombstone.

"Linnie... Can I call you this from now on?" he asked, but the answer he received was only the rustle of the branches after a breeze blew past.

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Jeremy gently grazed his fingers over the words on the tombstone before standing up.

His surrounding was empty, just as his heart was desolate at the moment.

When a drizzle suddenly began to fall from the sky, Jeremy reluctantly left.

After Madeline picked up Lilian and went back to the apartment, she received a call from Jeremy.

He had said that he was at the community gate and was looking for her for something important.

Madeline hung up and looked at Felipe who was playing with Lilian.

"Go and do the things you want to do." Felipe had already read through the embarrassment and hesitation in Madeline's eyes.

He knew that all she wanted to do now was to take revenge.

Jeremy was one of the targets for revenge.

Madeline changed her outfit and went downstairs with her bag. As soon as she got out of the elevator, she saw Jeremy's car parked outside.

It was raining heavily in the evening before night fell.

Seeing that Madeline was approaching, Jeremy braved the rain and opened the door to the passenger seat for her.

In the car, Madeline asked straightforwardly, "Mr. Whitman, is there anything urgent you have to talk to me about at this time?"

"I want to put a complete end to my bothering you all this while."

"What does that mean?" With a confused look, Madeline stared at the man who was driving.

The dim light in the car scattered quietly across his handsome and resolute side profile. Madeline saw Jeremy glancing at her with a smile in his eyes. "It's nothing. I just want to treat you to dinner." He explained. "I won't ever think of you as her again."

"Her?"

"My ex-wife."

Jeremy opened his mouth to answer before suddenly stepping on the accelerator.

The tires rolled up onto the rain-drenched dead leaves on the side of the road, silently sweeping away his inner thoughts that no one knew.

Madeline thought Jeremy would have brought her to a restaurant, but who would have thought that he actually took her back to his private villa.

That was the villa where she once lived.

The house was very quiet as if even the servants were not there.

Was even Jackson not around?

He said he did not want to fight for custody of Jackson, but if Jackson ended up in Meredith's hands, she was afraid the child might not live a good life.

Madeline's heart became perturbed for some reason while thinking about this place.

"Sit anywhere you like." Jeremy took off his rain-drenched coat. He made a cup of black tea for Madeline, then turned and went into the kitchen.

Only then did Madeline return to her senses. She looked at Jeremy who had entered the kitchen and unexpectedly realized that he was actually cooking dinner himself.

After busying himself for more than half an hour, a simple yet stylish candlelit dinner was ready.

Jeremy even opened a bottle of good wine and lit a candle. The atmosphere seemed romantic.

"A candlelight dinner?" Madeline smiled faintly. "I'm afraid this isn't appropriate?"

"This is just a dinner," Jeremy said indifferently but very gentlemanly pulled the chair out for Madeline.

"Miss Vera, please sit."

"Thank you." Madeline was not refusing any longer.

It was just that she found it ridiculous while facing Jeremy's behavior.

She never thought that he would one day cook for her.

'But Jeremy, it's all too late.

'Although I'm still alive, my heart for you is dead.

'Now, I dream that you would lose sleep every night while regretting everything you've ever done to me!'

"Miss Vera, cheers." Jeremy held up the wine glass and stretched it out toward Madeline.

Madeline locked her gaze with Jeremy's deep eyes and smiled.

Ding dong!

The doorbell sounded abruptly just then.

Jeremy frowned slightly, seemingly a little unhappy.

"Jeremy, it's me, Madeline. I know you're inside." Meredith's soft voice came from outside the door.

"Jeremy, can you open the door? Just listen to my explanation, okay? I did all that only because Madeline forced me to. Will you open the door first?"

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Meredith was ringing the doorbell.

This really surprised Madeline.

Three years had passed. Did Meredith not even have the key to the door here?

She was puzzled. She saw Jeremy frowning slightly with a deep gaze as if he was thinking about something.

"Mr. Whitman, aren't you going to open the door? Miss Crawford is here. She's your child's mother, after all." Madeline smiled slightly.

Jeremy slowly raised his dark eyes when he heard her words. "I'll only be gone for a bit. Wait for me."

"Alright." Madeline smiled and nodded. Looking at Jeremy's turned back, a satirical smile appeared in her bewitching and beautiful eyes.

'Hmph, seems like you're still not willing to be apart from her, right?'

The rain outside was heavy. When the door opened, the late summer breeze poured in. It was quite cooling.

"Jeremy, you're finally willing to see me." Meredith rushed to Jeremy with a sense of urgency.

She was not holding an umbrella, so she was all soggy as if she had run over in the rain.

As soon as she saw Jeremy, her tears came streaming down as if she had suffered great grievances. Her voice was choked as she spoke, "Jeremy, I hope you can understand my ignorance at the beginning. Think about our first child. If Madeline had not been so vicious, I wouldn't have been forced to do something like that back then..."

"I never thought about kidnapping or hurting Jack. I warned Tanner to take good care of Jack. I did this just to give myself and our first child a breather, Jeremy..."

Meredith said this as she raised her hand to pull gently at the corner of Jeremy's clothes. She faced Jeremy's deep but cold eyes tearfully.

"Jeremy, shall we start over again? We should let the things of the past go. In the future, our family of three will have a good time, okay? Jeremy..."

Madeline could clearly hear Meredith's hypocritical voice, and once again, she was slandering her and pushing all the fault on her.

Madeline glanced at the wine glass she was holding in her hand and curled her lips unhurriedly. She let it go in the next second and the wine glass fell suddenly to the floor,

breaking as it hit the ground with a crash. The red liquid eventually dyed the silver-white marble red.

Meredith, who was waiting for Jeremy's answer, heard movement coming from the room all of a sudden. She raised her gaze in surprise.

"Jeremy, who's inside? Are there guests?" she asked softly.

Jeremy glanced at her lightly. "Why don't you go back?"

Meredith's face became stiff. She did not expect Jeremy to send her back like this, but of course, she was not willing to leave. She immediately pretended to be cold and hugged his arms. "Jeremy, I'm a little cold. I... Ah-choo!"

"Oh dear."

"..."

Meredith had just deliberately sneezed to make Jeremy worry about her, but suddenly, she heard the voice of a woman whispering from the room.

What made her even more unable to accept the situation was that after hearing this voice, Jeremy turned around and headed back in nervously.

Meredith's expression changed suddenly. "Jeremy!"

She wanted to stop him, but he went on without hesitation.

Meredith hurried to follow. She saw Jeremy stepping into the kitchen quickly before crouching down.

At the same time, she also saw Madeline crouching by the dining table as well as the shards of glass and the pool of red wine by Madeline's feet.

"Vera Quinn?"

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Meredith had been in such a bad mood these days that she was close to bursting at this moment. She did not expect to see Vera making an appearance in Jeremy's house!

That was it.

Meredith could neither accept the exquisite candlelight dinner in front of her nor the scene of Jeremy holding Vera's hand nervously whilst trying to deal with her wound.

"It's just a small wound. There's no need for you to worry, Mr. Whitman," Madeline said lightly, retracting her hand.

"Even if it's a small wound, it can get infected if it's not treated well. I'll get the alcohol swabs," Jeremy said softly and stood up. Seeing that Meredith had also followed him in, he just glanced at her before turning to get the medicine box.

"Thank you." Madeline thanked him before slowly getting up.

She raised her eyes, as if only just seeing Meredith with her gloomy and wet face. "Miss Crawford, we meet again."

Meredith's heart burned as she walked over with a strong smile on her face. "Miss Quinn, why are you in my fiancé's house?"

"Fiancé?" Madeline smiled upon hearing her words. "If I remember correctly, Mr. Whitman has already deemed your engagement invalid."

"You... Vera Quinn, what do you mean by that?" The hypocritical smile on Meredith's face instantly disappeared as her eyes stared at Madeline viciously. "Vera, I've seen through you. You just want to use your face to seduce Jeremy!"

"So what?" Madeline gave a carefree smile. "It's really hard not to be affected by a man like Mr. Whitman."

"You..." Hearing Madeline's answer, Meredith instantly exploded. She raised her hand angrily, moving to slap Madeline's face. "B*tch!"

Madeline calmly reached out to grab Meredith's outstretched hand, and at the same time, she raised her other hand to unceremoniously slap Meredith's face.

The sound of it was particularly crisp.

Meredith was stunned and her eyes widened in astonishment. "You... You dare hit me? Vera Quinn, do you know what will happen when I'm offended? Let me tell you this, no one who wants to fight me will have a good death. Neither Madeline nor you!"

After giving a vicious warning, she immediately raised her hand to cover her red cheek when she saw Jeremy returning. She ran over crying, "Jeremy..."

"Mr. Whitman, I think I'd better leave, lest I offend people who shouldn't be offended here."

Meredith had only uttered his name while complaining when she was interrupted by Madeline's clear and melodious voice.

Upon hearing this, Jeremy glanced at Meredith before walking straight to Madeline.

"I'll help you treat the wound first."

"No need." Madeline frowned. "Although I look almost exactly the same as that Madeline, I don't want to end up like her at all. I really can't afford to offend your fiancée this time. It's just a slap now, but I don't know what it'll be next time."

"..." Upon hearing this, Meredith's eyes widened. "Vera Quinn, what are you talking about? Are you saying that I slapped you?"

Madeline looked at Meredith who was about to explode from anger and sighed aggrievedly. "Miss Crawford, you should learn to take accountability. It's the same thing. Sooner or later, people will know that you're the mastermind behind it all."

"..." Meredith's face was blue and white. She was already full of anger but was feeling so suffocated that she could not strike out with even a word!

She had always been the instigator!

She had never been the one instigated against!

Meredith clenched her fists and strode toward Madeline but was blocked by Jeremy just as she started to move.

He was guarding Madeline, his cold and frosty face covered with gloom. "Are you still going to continue hitting people?"

"Jeremy, I didn't hit her! She hit me! She also admitted to me that she deliberately wants to use this face of hers to seduce you! Jeremy, please, believe me. I really didn't hit her. It was this b*tch who—"

"Why don't you leave?" Jeremy interrupted coldly.

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Meredith stared at this stern face, dumbfounded. "Jeremy, what did you say?"

"Why don't you leave?" He had lowered his tone, sounding as if he still had feelings for Meredith.

Meredith was so angry that she gritted her teeth. When she saw Madeline with her lips curled into a smile as Jeremy protected her behind his back, she felt furious.

Just when Madeline thought that Meredith would explode from anger, Meredith instead seemed to have turned into a different person all of a sudden. She let go of her fist and her anger disappeared. Then, she approached Jeremy and spoke slowly...

"Jeremy."

Meredith's eyes were red as she looked sadly at the man before her who maintained his cold expression.

"I know I did something wrong and that has disappointed you, but I didn't betray my conscience. Everything I've done is for Jack and you. I've never hurt innocent people."

While she was speaking, she teared up as well. Her pitiful appearance was really well performed.

"Jeremy, I know it's useless for me to say anything now, but I am innocent. I'll keep waiting until you believe me."

Without waiting for Jeremy's response, Meredith turned away and walked out of the house looking lonely.

Through the window, Madeline could clearly see Meredith standing right in front of the gate. She was soaked in the rain, but she had a stubborn and resolute expression on her face.

History was truly so shockingly similar.

Madeline thought of her previous experience of having been wrongly accused by Meredith. After she had come out of prison, she was locked outside of the door by Jeremy. Her pregnant self had knelt on the ground under the rain with much difficulty while waiting for his trust. Yet, after all of it, it was only a heart-shattering ending that she got in return for her wait.

Madeline swept her indifferent gaze over Meredith and from the corner of her eyes, she saw Jeremy looking at Meredith who was outside through the window with a solemn expression.

'Jeremy, does your heart still ache for her?

'After all, she's the love of your life who you cared about for so many years.'

Within a few seconds, however, Jeremy turned his gaze away and suddenly reached out to hold Madeline's injured hand to stop it from being stabbed further by the glass shards. After wiping it with alcohol cotton pads, he then carefully put a band-aid on her as well.

"Let's continue our dinner." He curled the corner of his lips, but it did not turn into a smile. It was merely just a movement of his facial muscles.

He was starting to feel sorry for Meredith, as expected.

"I think it's better to forget it." Madeline refused with a smile. "If I remain here still, I'm afraid my life in Glendale will be even more difficult afterward."

"I'm here. No one will dare to do anything to you." Jeremy made such a guarantee to Madeline with almost no hesitation.

Madeline looked at him with a surprised expression on her face, but her heart was filled entirely with ridicule and irony.

'Jeremy Whitman, during the time when I was married to you as your wife...

'Have you ever treated me so protectively like this?

'You and Meredith both brutally hurt me again and again.

'Yet, what are you telling me now? That you're here for me?

'Was it not entirely because of you that I was tortured till I was all bloody back then?'

Outside, Meredith was drenched in the rain and was really considering going all out.

She could not think of any other methods at present and so, she could only use this bitter trick.

She now hoped that the rain would get worse, drenching her till she caught a cold that would then make her faint. That way, she could definitely attract Jeremy's attention.

She still had her trump card in hand, after all.

Jeremy did not let Madeline go but still kept her for dinner.

Since Madeline was sitting at the dining table, she could see Meredith standing at the same spot in the rain from where she was. Meredith remained stationary, and the scene truly looked pitiful.

Yet, Madeline knew in her heart that this was simply Meredith's bitter trick.

'With a decade's fate now taking its turn, Meredith, you will also have to face the same fate today.

'Have you tasted what it's like to be wrongly accused?

'Does it feel good?'

Madeline curled her lips secretly and finished the contents in the wine glass in one sip, feeling very satisfied.

"Miss Vera, it seems that you can take your alcohol." Jeremy praised.

Madeline smiled and replied, "Yes, even Felipe is no opponent to me."

"Is that so?" Jeremy smiled, but he could not help but compare her to Madeline in his heart.

In his memory, Madeline did not know how to drink.

That one time she drank alcohol, she had gotten so drunk that she hugged him while being muddled, then saying such sweet lovey-dovey words.

Thinking about it now, those lovey-dovey words were really beautiful.

However, it was now an unattainable memory.

"Miss Vera, can we be friends from today onward?"

"As long as you no longer regard me as your ex-wife Madeline, we can be friends."

"Don't worry, there won't be a next time."

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Jeremy locked eyes with Madeline's beautiful ones with guarantee. He then raised his wine glass.

"This is to apologize for the one who slapped you earlier," Jeremy said before proceeding to finish the red wine in the glass. He then poured another glass.

"This is to celebrate my acquaintance with such an excellent woman like Miss Vera."

He spoke while he drank several glasses one after another.

The night became darker and darker. The rain had gradually weakened as well while Jeremy was done drinking the whole bottle of red wine.

His originally fair face was now flushed with slight tipsy redness, and his long, narrow, and alluring eyes were dazed from the alcohol's effect.

"The future Mrs. Whitman, let me send you back." Jeremy stood up, but obviously, he was already drunk.

"Mr. Whitman, you should rest. I'll have Felipe come pick me up."

"Him?" Jeremy laughed with a low voice. His low magnetic voice was filled with a kind of sexy charm.

He smiled and looked at Madeline. The halo of the crystal lamp had blurred his vision at the moment, and the face in front of him was the face of his dreams.

"I'll send you off." Jeremy insisted as he got up and walked toward Madeline.

However, his footsteps were feeble. His upright body was swaying and he was about to fall down before he reached Madeline.

Madeline did not want to bother at first, but as she thought of Meredith who was outside the window, she simply stretched out her hand to support Jeremy.

The weight of his body was pressed completely onto her own and Madeline confirmed then that he was really drunk.

"Mr. Whitman, let's sit here for a while." Madeline struggled to help him onto the sofa.

She also knew that the brighter the lights inside the house, the more clearly Meredith could see from the outside.

Right now, Meredith was probably about to burst from anger.

"Mr. Whitman, you're drunk. I'll help you to make a glass of lemon water to sober you up."

Madeline pulled her hand back as she spoke, but as soon as she turned around, her wrist was clasped tightly by Jeremy.

"Don't go," he muttered to stop her.

Madeline turned her head and saw the man half-lying on the sofa. His gaze was slightly drunk and his cheeks were flushed. His thin lips were whispering softly,

"Linnie..." Madeline heard Jeremy uttering out this name a few seconds later.

She stared at the drunken man blankly.

"Linnie, don't go. Don't leave me anymore..."

Linnie.

Madeline tightened her pink lips, knowing that Meredith was the one that Jeremy was calling for.

From the moment Meredith had snatched her identity as Miss Montgomery, Meredith also obtained another name—Eveline Montgomery.

She looked at Jeremy and sneered.

"Sure enough, you still can't forget that villainous Meredith. It seems that the cancelation of your marriage contract to her is just a cover? How could you, Mr. Whitman, possibly be willing to let her go?"

Madeline mocked the drunk man and had wanted to withdraw her hand, but instead of letting go, Jeremy pulled the unguarded Madeline into his arms forcefully.

Crashing suddenly into his generous embrace, Madeline's nose could pick up the familiar cold fragrance.

She suddenly raised her head, and her slightly disoriented gaze met Jeremy's dark and misty eyes.

He narrowed his slender and alluring eyes, his slightly drunk gaze seemingly like a bottomless pool—mysterious and attractive, but also appearing to be as gentle as water.

However, looking at him like this, Madeline's gaze was full of sharp edges.

"Jeremy, look at me clearly. I'm not the Linnie you're asking for. I'm the ex-wife you hated and wanted to kill the most!"

She tensed her pink lips tightly and glared at this handsome face with hatred.

"Jeremy, I'll take back what you owe me along with the interest accumulated. I want you to understand what it's like to be manipulated and hurt by your beloved one!"

As soon as Madeline said this, Jeremy unexpectedly stretched out his arms and circled her tightly into his embrace.

"Linnie..." His deep voice bloomed in her ears with heat.

Madeline was stunned for a bit until she felt Jeremy's lips pressing against her cheeks. She then finally came back to her senses and tried to struggle away from him.

"Jeremy, let me go!"

"I won't let go. I won't ever let you go again, Linnie..."

"I'm not your Linnie, Jeremy. Let go."

Madeline pushed him away angrily, but Jeremy did not let her go no matter what.

Amidst their pushing and pulling, Madeline suddenly heard the sound of something dropping. It seemed that something had fallen out of Jeremy's pocket.

She subconsciously looked at what it was, but after just a glimpse, she became completely stiff.

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Madeline could forget a lot of things in her life. She could forget the best moments of her life and the beautiful feeling she had when she was deeply in love with Jeremy, but she could never be unfamiliar with this thing in front of her for the rest of her life.

Dazed, she slowly reached out her hand to pick up the object that had fallen to the ground before placing it in her palm.

Looking at it, it was as if she could suddenly hear the sound of waves as well as the smell and the salty taste of the sea breeze. Even a boy's gentle promise sounded in her ears, "Linnie, when I grow up, I'll make you my bride..."

Yet, this promise was blown away by the breeze and ended up sinking to the bottom of the sea in the end. Things could never go back to that time again in this life...

"Linnie..."

Madeline stopped indulging in her walk down memory lane and looked toward Jeremy who was muttering.

He was still calling for Linnie.

However, the Linnie he was calling for was not her but Meredith—the vicious woman who he spoiled and loved without principles or limits.

Madeline glanced at the colorful shell in her hand and sneered coldly. She did not expect to see Jeremy still carrying the shell she had given to him when she was a child.

“Jeremy, why bother keeping this when you only have Meredith in your heart? The Linnie who had been waiting for you for more than ten years is dead now.” Her hateful gaze brushed across his drunken face. Just as she was about to throw the colorful shell in her hand into the trash can, Jeremy grabbed her wrist all of a sudden.

“Linnie, don’t go. Please don’t go, okay...”

Madeline looked at the red-faced, drunken man who was sleep-talking. She felt ridiculed and flung his hand away.

“Jeremy, your beloved Linnie is putting on a show outside now. If you miss her so much, go look for her outside!”

After saying this indifferently, Madeline then left Jeremy on the sofa alone and left decisively with her bag.

As soon as she opened the door, she saw a surprised smile on Meredith’s face. She was still standing in the rain, but when she discovered that the person who had opened the door for her was Madeline, her smile instantly disappeared. Her fierce gaze was glaring straight at her instead.

Madeline stared at Meredith with an indifferent look. She opened her umbrella and walked gracefully toward Meredith, curling up the corner of her beautiful lips slightly.

“Things really aren’t easy for you, Ms. Crawford. It hurts me to see you standing here in the rain for so long just to make Mr. Whitman change his mind.”

After Madeline said this, Meredith chuckled coldly. “Tsk, Vera Quinn, you don’t have to pretend in front of me. Let me tell you this. Don’t you ever think that this will be enough to separate Jeremy and me. From the beginning till the end, I’m the only woman who Jeremy loves most in his heart!”

Meredith looked over with a provocative and arrogant gaze.

“Vera, I advise you not to challenge my patience anymore. Once you’ve angered me, be careful that you won’t even have a chance to regret it! And that slap you gave me, I’ll make you pay the price!”

Hearing this, Madeline smiled light-heartedly. “I’m suddenly looking forward to that day.”

“You—”

"Mr. Whitman's cooking is really good. He has invited me to come and taste his dishes again the next time."

"Vera Quinn, don't you dare cross the line—"

"But Mr. Whitman doesn't drink very well. He started to speak drunkenly even though he didn't even drink that much. He even held my hand and refused to let go."

Madeline interrupted Meredith leisurely, but as soon as she said this, Meredith's expression started becoming a little nervous and anxious.

"What did Jeremy tell you?"

"Do you want to know? You can head in and ask him yourself."

When Meredith heard this, she glared at Madeline fiercely before immediately running toward the door.

Madeline looked at her calmly. "I've closed the door. It seems that you have to wait for Mr. Whitman to sober up if you want to go in."

"You..." Meredith realized she had been tricked.

She furiously retreated back to Madeline and raised her hand again.

Madeline easily caught and gripped Meredith's wrist once more. Her gaze was sharp and her words were like ice at this moment. "Meredith, you'd better not show your teeth and claws in front of me. I'm not the Madeline who can be bullied!"

She warned and threw away Meredith's hand decisively.

It might be due to the fact that she had been standing for too long, coupled that she was frightened by Madeline's aura at this moment, but as Meredith's hand was flung away like that, it also made her stagger several steps back.

"If you like getting soaked in the rain so much, just keep getting soaked. I won't be accompanying you."

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Madeline had already turned around carefreely when Meredith steadied herself. Upon seeing the other woman's back, Meredith became livid!

She pointed at Madeline's back furiously as her wrath poured out from her mouth. "Vera Quinn, you b*tch! I'll let you see what I can do! Just you wait!"

Meredith roared with all of her might. When she recalled what she saw through the window just now, her lungs felt like they were going to explode from anger.

No!

She had to recompose herself.

Meredith reminded herself that Madeline was not her opponent. After all, how could a woman who looked exactly like that woman win against her?

"Vera Quinn, I'll let you see what I can do soon enough!"

Meredith narrowed her sinister-looking eyes as if they were covered with a layer of venom.

...

Madeline waited for Felipe at the junction of the street. Then, he took her home.

It was in the dark of the night and Madeline was standing in front of the french window looking at the night view outside. The colorful shell kept appearing in her mind.

Why did Jeremy bring that shell with him everywhere he went?

Did he not deny making that promise a long time ago? Did he not deny what happened at the beach a long time ago?

Madeline could not figure it out. She turned around and looked at Lily who was fast asleep on the bed. She reached out and caressed her cheek.

"Daddy..." the little girl mumbled in her sleep.

Daddy.

She was calling for her daddy.

She thought Felipe was the greatest and best father in the world.

Perhaps, this beautiful misunderstanding would last forever.

The next day.

The sky was grey when Jeremy woke up from his sleep groggily.

He sat up with his head feeling heavy. He remembered fragments of what happened last night. He rubbed his temples and recalled that he had lost his cool last night. Not only did he hold Vera as he called out to Linnie, but he also kissed her cheek.

When he thought about this, Jeremy sat up in annoyance. He found his phone and called Madeline straight away.

After the call went through, he heard Madeline's refreshing voice. "Mr. Whitman, you're awake. You were drunk last night. I made you some breakfast and I'll be at your place soon."

Jeremy swallowed what he wanted to say initially as a strange feeling rose in his chest.

He did not reject her, and even a smile appeared on his face. "I'll wash up and wait for you."

He hung up the phone and took a shower before changing into a new set of clothes. When he went downstairs and walked past the sofa, he saw the fallen shell.

That shell...

Jeremy was stunned. He picked up the shell to examine it. Then, he remembered something and ran to the door.

Madeline walked into the house just in time to see Jeremy walking out.

Their eyes met under the dazzling morning light. Madeline noticed that Jeremy was not looking too good.

"Mr. Whitman," Madeline called out to him.

However, after she said that, she heard a muffled thud coming from the courtyard.

Madeline and Jeremy turned toward the source of that sound and saw a drenched person on the ground.

It was Meredith.

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Madeline saw Jeremy hesitating for a while. In those two to three seconds, she did not know what he was thinking about. However, after a while, he looked at her with a complicated look in his eyes before rushing over to Meredith.

He knelt and pulled the seemingly unconscious Meredith into his arms.

"Mer, Mer, wake up."

He patted Meredith's cheek lightly with worry in his eyes.

Madeline held the breakfast in her hands as she stood at the entrance. When she saw what was happening in front of her, she smirked sarcastically.

'Jeremy, you never disappoint me.

'You're still so concerned about that woman.

'Despite all those horrible things she did, she's still the love of your life?'

At this moment, Meredith opened her eyes slowly in Jeremy's arms. They were brimmed with tears as she looked at him pitifully.

"Jeremy, I was wrong. I know my mistakes. Please don't leave me, okay?" Meredith said weakly as tears started falling from her eyes.

"Jeremy, did you forget? You promised that you'll take care of me forever. You said you'll be good to me forever. My only wish in life is to marry you and become your bride. I want to be with you forever, Jez..."

Jez.

As she listened to Meredith, Madeline tightened her grip on the breakfast she had prepared.

She looked at Jeremy and saw him frowning. His expression looked solemn as if he was thinking about something.

"Jez, can you forgive Linnie? I'll listen to you in the future. I won't do anything impulsive..."

Meredith called herself Linnie and started calling Jeremy Jez. She was looking at him with so many emotions in her eyes.

Her acting skill was getting better and better. It was so good that even Madeline started to feel a pang of pain in her heart.

Heh, what an amazing Jez.

"Stop talking. You're a little feverish now. Let me take you to the hospital." Jeremy's voice was flat, and he helped Meredith up after he said that. However, Meredith hugged him all of a sudden. "Jeremy, are you still refusing to forgive me? If you don't want to forgive me, I'd rather die right here..."

Jeremy frowned. "Stop saying those kinds of things."

He sighed in distress before helping Meredith up.

He lifted his head and saw Madeline at the entrance, giving her an apologetic smile. When he was about to say something, Madeline said before him, "Take Miss Crawford to the hospital quickly, Mr. Whitman. It feels horrible when one has a fever."

Jeremy stared blankly at Meredith.

Meredith peered at Madeline with the corner of her eyes. When she saw Madeline turning around, she smirked and said weakly, "Jeremy, I've been standing for the entire night. I don't have any energy left. Can you carry me?"

Madeline had not gone far, so she could hear what Meredith said clearly. She felt an unknown agitation in her heart.

Jeremy would definitely carry her.

At least that was what she figured and it only made her agitated.

However, why should she still be concerned with whether he was getting close to another woman or not? She was upset because that vile b*tch Meredith was getting her way once again.

Jeremy, who was behind Madeline, did not carry Meredith. He drove the car out and let her get in. Then, he drove her to the hospital.

When he drove past the junction, he saw Madeline standing at the side of the street with the breakfast she had brought for him. He could not help but look at her for a few more seconds.

He was still concerned about that face at the end of the day.

After that day, Madeline did not see Jeremy anymore. These few days, he did call her and went looking for her at the shop, but Madeline chose to ignore or hide from him.

She once treated Jeremy like he was her entire world.

However, her world could be without him.

The only reason she allowed him back into her world was for revenge.

However, one should not try to run before one could walk.

Madeline knew she could not rush things now since Jeremy was starting to be concerned about her.

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Since the fish had caught the bait, it was a matter of time before she reeled it in.

Sunday.

Madeline and Felipe had promised Lillian that they would take her to the amusement park.

Even though Lillian was not Felipe's biological daughter, he still pampered her a lot.

He took good care of Madeline when she was pregnant until she gave birth. After Lillian was born, Felipe was even more considerate and caring than before.

Felipe was a perfect man that was one in a million.

However, Madeline knew that she was not worthy of him. She never thought about having any sort of romantic relationship with him.

"Daddy, I want that bunny." Lillian's sweet voice pulled Madeline's wandering thoughts back to reality.

She saw Lillian with her arms around Felipe's neck. Her legs were swinging happily as she nuzzled against Felipe sweetly. Her cute finger was pointing at a rabbit-shaped balloon in the distance.

"Please, Daddy?"

Felipe looked at Lillian with love in his eyes. "Of course, I'll grant our precious Lillian's every wish."

He joked and carried Lillian over to the balloon seller.

Felipe rarely called Lillian by her nickname. He would only call her by her real name.

"Daddy's amazing! I love you so much!" the little girl said sweetly before kissing Felipe's handsome face cheerily.

Madeline smiled and followed behind them. She looked at the grin on the cute little face and felt that she had given Lillian the perfect name.

Lillian. Lily.

The flower Lily meant rebirth and that was what Madeline wanted for her and Lillian.

She did not want this child to be like her mother. Her mother was destroyed by the man she loved and died from a broken heart.

She wanted a perfect life for this child.

Felipe bought a balloon for Lillian and went on a few rides with the little girl.

Time passed quickly and it was now time for lunch. Lillian held Felipe's hand happily and pointed to a themed restaurant in front of them.

"Daddy, I want to eat this! That burger is so big!"

"You're such a greedy little girl. No one will want you if you become fat," Felipe said while teasing.

Lillian blinked her pristine eyes blankly. She looked at Felipe seriously for a while and pouted before she started to cry.

"Boohoo... Daddy doesn't want me anymore. I don't want the burger. I don't want it..."

Felipe did not think that the little girl would misunderstand him to the point that she even started crying devastatingly.

Felipe carried her in his arms and started comforting her while feeling remorseful. "You silly girl, how would I not want you? You'll always be Mommy and Daddy's baby."

"Don't cry, Lily. Daddy was just joking with you." Madeline went over and comforted her as well. She wiped away her tears for her.

The little girl blinked her tearful eyes in disbelief. "So, Daddy, can I have the burger?"

"Of course. I'll buy you anything you want to eat." Felipe promised.

Lillian broke into a smile. "Daddy, I want to wee-wee now."

Felipe looked at Madeline after he heard that. "I'll go line up. You should take Lillian to the restroom."

"Okay." Madeline nodded and held the little girl's soft hand.

Lillian held Madeline's hand in one hand and held the balloon in another. She was happy, but when she did not pay attention, the balloon was blown away by the wind.

"Mommy! My bunny is flying away! My bunny!"

Madeline saw this and wanted to grab the balloon. However, she failed to catch it before it was blown even further away.

She watched as the balloon got away from them and at the same time, she was worried about Lily. As she was not paying attention, she crashed into someone behind her.

She felt a strong arm around her waist as a familiar scent wafted from behind her. Then, she felt a warm breath in her ear.

"Careful."

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When she smelled this familiar scent behind her, Madeline immediately knew who was the person holding her.

However, why was Jeremy here?

Had he brought Jackson here as well?

Was that child here too?

Madeline started thinking about Jackson all of a sudden. Then, she steadied herself and escaped from Jeremy's arms.

"It's that nice mister!"

Lillian called out toward Jeremy as a happy grin appeared on her pinkish face. It seemed that Lillian was pretty fond of Jeremy.

There was a slight smile on Jermy's handsome face. He looked at Lillian, then shifted his gaze to Madeline.

"I guess I made the right decision to come out today." He had some overtones in his sentence. "Why didn't you answer my calls?"

Madeline lifted her head and faked a smile. "I'm sorry, Mr. Whitman. I've been busy spending time with Felipe and my daughter. I don't have time to answer any meaningless calls."

"Meaningless calls?" Jeremy lifted his eyebrow. When he saw Madeline turning around to leave with Lillian, he reached out his hand to grab Madeline's arm.

Madeline stopped walking. "Mr. Whitman, please let go. I don't want to get beaten up by Miss Crawford again if she sees us and gets jealous again."

Jeremy stared at Madeline's face intensely. The sun was shining down on her flawless face, making her look so pretty that she was glowing.

When he recalled what happened, his gaze became softer. "I caused you to come all the way over for nothing. I'm sorry for wasting the breakfast you made me. However, I couldn't just leave her to die."

'Well, of course.'

Madeline smirked sarcastically.

'Jeremy, did you ever help me when I was struggling and pleading with you while I was falling into despair?

'Not only did you merely watch on as I was tortured, but you even came up to me and stabbed me in the back.'

"Vera, are you jealous?" he said that sentence out of the blue.

Madeline felt her heart tremble, and then, a nonchalant smile appeared on her face.

"Do you see this, Mr. Whitman?" She pointed at Lillian who was standing next to her. "I already have a child with Felipe, so how would I care about men who aren't Felipe?"

Jeremy's smile disappeared slowly after he heard what Madeline said.

He frowned, his thin lips pressing into a thin line.

"She's your and Felipe's daughter?" he questioned in an icy tone.

Madeline smiled. "Of course."

"How long have you two known each other?"

"Three years."

Three years.

In those three years, Jeremy kept on unconsciously recalling the day Madeline left him—the feeling of her icy body in his arms and knowing that she would never come back to life again.

It had also been three years since that day.

It had already been three years since she left him.

"Lily, let's go."

"Okay," Lillian replied obediently and blinked her crystal-like eyes. "Bye-bye, nice mister!"

Jeremy pulled back his wandering thoughts when he saw Madeline leaving. He grabbed her once again, his cold hand holding her thin wrist tightly.

"Mr. Whitman?"

Madeline frowned in agitation when she saw Jeremy looking at her intensely.

"Is there anything else?"

"How old is your daughter?" he asked directly with a solemn expression.

"Two," Madeline answered straightforwardly.

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"You've known him for three years but she's already two?" Jeremy frowned. He looked closely at Madeline. "It means that you started dating him after you got to know each other."

"Felipe and I fell in love at first sight. I knew immediately that I wanted to be with him and give him children. Is there a problem?" Madeline replied straightforwardly without hesitating one bit.

Jeremy's heart sank, but those disappeared suspicions rose within him once again.

"Jeremy!"

Suddenly, Meredith's shrieks penetrated their eardrums.

Madeline lifted her head to look over and she saw Meredith running over frantically. When their eyes met, there was obvious detest and anger in Meredith's eyes.

Meredith looked pretty spirited today compared to that day in the rain when she looked ever so weak.

She ran over to Jeremy and grabbed his hand that was on Madeline's. She peered at it before looking at Jeremy with worry in her eyes. "Jeremy, Jack is missing!"

Jackson was missing?

Madeline's heart skipped a beat for some reason and she felt uneasy. However, she was calm on the surface.

She also noticed that aside from the hypocritical worried look on Meredith's face, Jeremy's expression was also unperturbed.

It was as if Jackson was not related to him at all.

"He must be somewhere here. You don't have to worry," Jeremy said calmly before letting go of Madeline's hand.

"You should look for him, Mr. Whitman. There are so many people here and there might even be human traffickers among the crowd. Jackson is your only child. You'd be very upset if he goes missing."

"Of course!" Meredith glared at Madeline in disdain. "Jackson is my and Jeremy's flesh and blood. Of course, Jeremy is worried—"

"He's not my only child."

"..."

Before Meredith could finish, Jeremy interrupted her. Plus, it was as if he was replying to what Madeline was saying just now.

Madeline and Meredith were both taken aback at the same time. Then, they saw Jeremy smiling faintly.

"Jeremy." Meredith grabbed his arm. "Jeremy, let's go find Jack! Stop paying attention to these irrelevant people."

Jeremy's face fell, and it seemed that he was annoyed.

However, he still allowed Meredith to pull him away. Before he turned around, he looked at Madeline intensely with eyes that were as deep as the ocean.

Madeline felt uneasy after he looked at her like that. After bringing Lillian to the restroom, she went back to the restaurant.

Felipe had just ordered their food when they came. Lillian ran over to him happily. "Daddy."

"Good girl." Felipe caressed her little head and brought her to her seat. Then, he lifted his head to see Madeline spacing out.

"What happened?" he asked softly.

"I ran into Jeremy just now," Madeline replied, "He and Meredith brought Jackson here to have fun, but it seems like they've lost Jackson."

"By lost, you mean he's missing?" Felipe asked.

"I don't know. But I feel like Meredith's deliberately ignoring the child." Madeline voiced out the concern in her heart. Then, her eyes met Felipe's gentle gaze. "Felipe, please watch Lily for a moment. I need to leave for a bit."

"Are you going to look for Jackson?" Felipe could guess what Madeline was thinking about.

Madeline nodded. "Even though he's Meredith's son, he's innocent," she said before telling Lillian something. After that, she got up and left.

Felipe looked at Madeline's back as the warmth in his eyes disappeared.

Madeline looked for Jackson alone. She saw Jeremy and Meredith walking past her a few times, but it seemed that they still had not found him yet.

Time passed quickly and it was now dusk.

There were fewer and fewer people in the amusement park now. There were only ten minutes left before the park closed.

Madeline finally realized that so much time had passed. However, she only grew more restless over time.

She was worried about Jackson for some unknown reason. She was so worried about him that she was inattentive to everything else.

Felipe called her and told her he would wait for her at the parking lot. After she hung up the phone, Madeline was still looking around in the amusement park. It was getting darker and darker, and she started to become frantic.

Then, she recalled Jackson's peculiar behavior in her house. She immediately stopped in her tracks.

"C-Could it be that he's there?"

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At that moment, Madeline recalled something. She turned around quickly and ran toward a place.

The sky was already dark and the street lights were turned on. The empty amusement park had lost its liveliness from the morning. At this moment, there were only sounds of rustling trees.

"Jeremy, what should we do now? Jack must've been abducted!" At this moment, Meredith was leaning against Jeremy with fear and worry on her face.

"Jeremy, I can't lose Jack! He's our only child!"

She emphasized 'only child' and did not notice Jeremy's expression sinking when she mentioned that.

When he was about to say something, he saw a familiar figure from the corner of his eyes.

"You should go back first. I have something to take care of," Jeremy said to make Meredith leave before immediately walking away after that.

"Jeremy! Jeremy!" Meredith called out to him, but he continued walking without even turning back.

Meanwhile, Madeline went to several secluded locations based on her intuitions. Finally, she found Jackson behind a fake mountain.

The light from the street lights shone dimly inside the fake cave. Jackson's small body was curled up in a corner, and he was hugging himself tightly with his thin, slender arms.

When Madeline saw this, she felt her heart tightening for some reason.

When she saw Jackson with his head lowered as he shook in fear, she felt like something was piercing her heart.

Madeline did not hesitate and walked over hurriedly.

"Jack," she called out. Then, she saw Jack's trembling shoulders stop moving for a second.

"Jack, I'm Vera." Madeline squatted in front of him. She lifted her hand to caress his head.

Jack slowly lifted his pale face, and his lifeless yet horrified eyes were seen gazing at Madeline. Then, they started to well up with tears.

"Vera..."

"Yeah, it's me." Madeline looked at Jackson with a broken heart. She reached out her hands to pull his tiny body into her arms.

It was the end of summer and the cold wind was blowing constantly. Madeline realized that Jackson's body was cold. His soft hands held no warmth at all.

As if he had found a safe harbor, Jackson leaned against Madeline's chest and held her tightly.

"Jack, tell me, why are you here all alone?" she asked softly.

"There are so many people out there. I hate it..."

Jackson's childish voice was trembling as he spoke.

"It's dark and I'm scared..."

Madeline was shocked when she heard his reply.

This child was scared of crowded places and he was also afraid of the dark. He got so scared that he even secluded himself in a corner. Why?

Madeline instantly thought about Meredith. Perhaps she was one of the reasons why Jackson turned out like this.

She thought about this while holding Jackson close to her, feeling a wave of sadness washing over her heart.

She could feel the loneliness, coldness, and helplessness coming from Jackson. These emotions were so intense.

Madeline carried Jackson and he did not resist her. On the contrary, he held Madeline even tighter. It was as if he could only feel safe like this.

However, when Madeline turned around, she saw Jeremy standing under the street light. It seemed that he had been standing there for some time now.

The yellow light dimmed the expression on his face. It was hard to tell what he was thinking about.

He walked toward Madeline, his deep eyes wandering across Madeline's face.

He wanted to say something, but he did not.

The air between them felt eerie.

Madeline wanted to hand Jackson to Jeremy before leaving, but Jackson refused to let go of her no matter what.

She could only send a message to Felipe before following Jeremy back to his place in his car.

It was only when Jeremy got home did he realize he had left Meredith at the amusement park.

He comforted her with two sentences before hanging up the phone. He then walked to the door of Jackson's room and saw Madeline putting Jackson to sleep. Jeremy became absent-minded as he witnessed Madeline's gentle and kind side.

After a while, Madeline walked out of the room and closed the door.

She saw Jeremy outside the door and said flatly, "Mr. Whitman, at the end of the day, this child is the product of you and the woman you love. How can you be so inattentive?"

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Madeline turned around as she said, "Also, I suggest that you take Jackson to the doctor. I'll be leaving now."

"He's not my only son."

?

Jeremy's strange explanation sounded from behind her. He had also said this in the afternoon.

Madeline stopped walking, and she could feel Jeremy approaching her from behind.

"I have another daughter."

" ... "

Madeline felt her heart skip a beat as a flash of loss could be seen in her eyes.

Did he become suspicious after what she said in the afternoon? Perhaps he found out about something during this short period of time?

However, when Madeline's mind started to wander, she heard Jeremy's voice in her ears. "It was with my ex-wife."

" ... "

She widened her eyes slightly in shock, feeling a bone-piercing pain in her heart.

"Really?" she asked. She smiled as she turned around to look into the man's eyes. "Where's the child now?"

Jeremy stared deep into Madeline's eyes. There was an unpredictable smile on his lips. "She's dead."

" ... "

"She was killed by her cold-blooded father—me."

" ... "

Madeline clenched her fists uncontrollably. However, she still smiled slightly. "Mr. Whitman, you're such a jokester. How could a father hurt his own flesh and blood?" she said as she looked at her watch. "I should really get going. Felipe will worry about me."

After she said that, she turned around to leave.

The moment she turned around, the smile on her face disappeared as the endless darkness and pain began to drown her heart.

Madeline bit her lip and forced herself not to cry.

However, when she thought about the child who was killed by Jeremy, tears still escaped her eyes.

Jeremy stood on the second floor as he watched Madeline leaving in a haste. He took out his phone and called Ken. "Look into Vera Quinn's information again. I want the most detailed background check on her. Find out what Felipe has been doing and where he has been in the past three years. Update me the moment you find out something."

On the other side, Ken did exactly as he was ordered.

After Jeremy hung up, his heart started racing for no reason.

He remembered his conversation with Madeline that afternoon and recalled Lillian's naive, adorable face. Then, he remembered how he had dominated her in a fit of rage after seeing Daniel kissing her forehead three years ago.

After some calculations, if Madeline was not dead and if she got pregnant after that night, the child would be two years old as well.

He had deliberately said those things to Madeline just now. He noticed a strange expression flashing across her eyes after he said that he had killed his child with his own hands.

Madeline went back to the apartment and saw Felipe tucking Lillian into bed.

"Are you okay?" Felipe asked after he noticed Madeline's worried expression.

Madeline told Felipe everything and also voiced out the concerns in her heart. "Felipe, I think he's suspecting me again."

"Don't worry." Felipe smiled softly, looking calm. "I won't let him suspect you again."

"Do you have a plan?"

"Yeah, I have a plan to make him stop suspecting that you're Maddie." Felipe smiled lightly. He was like the night sky outside the window, quiet and gentle.

"I wanted to let you relax today. In the end, you've become so restless and upset." He caressed her cheek sadly. "Go take a shower and rest."

When his fingertips touched her, Madeline trembled slightly. Then, she nodded. "Goodnight."

"Goodnight." Felipe watched as she went back to her room. His warm eyes became dimmer like the dark sky outside. There was another layer of unpredictable mysteriousness to his gaze...

Jeremy tossed and turned in bed the entire night. When he was about to fall asleep, he received a call from Ken.

He regained consciousness almost immediately and looked at the information Ken sent him.

"Mr. Whitman, I've sent all of the information to you. I didn't find much to be suspicious about after glancing through it, but there's one thing that's pretty suspicious."

Jeremy stopped flipping through the information. "What is it?"

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Ken hesitated. Then, he voiced his suspicion, saying, "Felipe's company and business have been in Glendale this whole time, but for some reason, he left to go to F Country."

"Felipe has been staying in F Country for the past three years and rarely left. According to sources, he met Vera on the plane and fell in love with her at first sight."

F Country.

Jeremy remembered that Vera was also from F Country. However, from her appearance, she was obviously not a native of F Country.

After he hung up the phone, Jeremy read through the information slowly.

Nothing about Vera's information was suspicious. However, he saw a date that he would never forget from Felipe's file.

That day three years ago, Madeline's cold body had laid in his arms. She was no longer breathing nor did she have a pulse. She had left him forever.

However, it was that day Felipe left Glendale to go to F Country.

It was evident on Felipe's entry and exit information.

Madeline died that night and Felipe left Glendale without any special reasons.

Was this a coincidence?

Jeremy woke Jackson up with this suspicion in mind. After cleaning Jackson up, he brought him to kindergarten.

Jeremy drove his car and looked at Jackson from the rearview mirror. He was silent in the backseat the entire time. Suddenly, he recalled what Madeline said to him last night, 'I suggest that you take him to see a doctor.'

Her words kept repeating in his head after she said them.

"Jackson, are you feeling unwell?" Jeremy asked.

Jackson's dark eyes shifted slightly after he heard that. He held his bag tightly with his head lowered and shook his head.

Jeremy frowned.

Jackson had never been this depressed in his memory. Back then, he would always follow behind him and call him 'Daddy'. He used to be so cheerful and loving.

However, this child stopped calling him 'Daddy' after some time. In addition to that, he started drifting further and further away from this child.

Jeremy did not ask him anything anymore. He clearly knew the answer to this question.

When he realized just how much he liked Madeline, a lot of people and things changed...

Jeremy walked Jackson into the kindergarten. However, he did not leave immediately, but rather, he parked his car at the corner.

After a while, a familiar figure walked into his vision.

He looked at the woman who looked exactly like Madeline. She was walking Lillian into the kindergarten with a gentle smile on her face.

Jeremy narrowed his eyes and imprinted that beautiful smile into his mind.

His heart started beating faster as he grabbed the steering wheel. After Madeline got into the car and drove away, he drove to the entrance of the kindergarten. Then, he got out of the car and walked in.

Even though Lillian's homeroom teacher was responsible for the older children, when she saw Jeremy, she knew he was not a stranger. Moreover, she also knew that he was Jackson's father and was a VIP in Glendale.

Thus, when she saw Jeremy at the classroom door, she approached him with a smile.

"Mr. Whitman, are you here for Jackson? He's next door."

"I'm looking for that child." Jeremy pointed at Lillian who was playing with her classmates.

The teacher looked over to where he was pointing. "You mean Lillian Whitman?"

Lillian Whitman.

That was the child's full name.

Jeremy nodded. His intense gaze was locked on Lillian's fair and adorable face. "Yes, her."

The teacher smiled when she realized what was going on. "Oh, so Lillian is also one of the Whitmans. I was wondering why she's so close with Jackson. As it turns out, they're siblings!"

Siblings.

That word penetrated Jeremy's heart.

His heart trembled, and he could not shake this complicated feeling away.

Lillian was brought out quickly. When she saw Jeremy, she smiled and displayed her dimples. "Hello, nice mister."

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She called out in a bright voice, her face looking almost exactly like Madeline.

Jeremy squatted and caressed the little girl's head.

"Hello, Lily. I'm Jackson's daddy."

"I remember you." The little girl blinked her bright eyes. "Are you here to play with me, nice mister?"

Jeremy smiled warmly before taking out a doll from his pocket.

"I sent Jackson here today, so I came to see you since I'm here. This is for you."

"Wow, what a cute bunny!" Lillian was completely attracted to the delicate doll.

Using this opportunity, Jeremy plucked a single hair from Lillian's head.

Looking at this innocent and adorable face in front of him, he had too many expectations and yearnings in his heart.

Jeremy then came to a DNA screening agency with an indescribable feeling in his heart. He pulled some strings and fast-tracked his test.

The staff told him it would take at least eight hours before he could know the result.

After he left the DNA screening agency, Jeremy drove to Felipe's company.

After hesitating for a while, he eventually drove away.

If Felipe genuinely wanted to hide the situation about Madeline, he would not get an answer from him no matter how much he questioned him.

The eight hours were oddly tormenting.

At that moment, Madeline received a parcel from the company. She started to prepare for the commercial dinner party for the second anniversary of her jewelry brand. After working for the entire day, she was about to pick Lillian up from school. However, when she was at the entrance, she saw Jeremy's car stopping in front of the shop.

She remembered what she said to Jeremy last night and quickly recomposed herself in a few seconds.

"Mr. Whitman? Are you here for me? Don't you have anything to do?" Madeline smiled and asked when she noticed Jeremy looking at her intensely. She looked into his eyes calmly and smiled. "Why are you looking at me like that, Mr. Whitman? Is there something on my face?"

Jeremy walked toward her and a domineering air enveloped her in an instant. "I can't move my eyes away because you're so stunning, Miss Vera."

"..." Madeline did not expect him to say something so amorous in a public setting. She was taken aback. "Mr. Whitman, both of us are engaged to someone else. It's easy to elicit misunderstandings if you say that."

Jeremy ignored the looks from passersby and said, "Are you picking your daughter up from school?"

Madeline nodded. "So what if I am?"

"I'm going to pick up my son as well. Let's go together."

"..."

"Plus, I have something I want to ask you. It's about my son."

After Jeremy said that, Madeline did not want to reject him anymore.

Despite not knowing the reason, she did want to know more about Jackson.

She got into Jeremy's car and the car started quickly. It started driving along the busy street.

Inside the quiet interior of the car, Jeremy said in a mocking tone "So, Future Aunt-in-law, how do you know my uncle?"

She knew Jeremy must have investigated her behind her back, so Madeline replied without holding back, "On the plane. We fell in love at first sight."

"Really?" Jeremy gave a fake smile and scanned Madeline's face sharply. "What was it about my uncle that attracted you the most?"

"I'm attracted to him in every way. He's mature and reliable. In addition to that, he's gentle and handsome. He's one in a million. Meeting him is the luckiest thing that has ever happened to me in my life."

The moment Madeline stopped talking, Jeremy stepped on the brakes all of a sudden. The traffic light in front of them had turned red.

She frowned and lifted her head, coincidentally meeting Jeremy's deep eyes.

There was a thought-provoking smile on the man's face. He moved closer to her and leaned his body toward her, immediately making the distance between them amorous.

"What do you think of me then?"

Madeline looked at him calmly and smiled. When she was about to say something, Jeremy's phone rang, interrupting her answer.

Jeremy was unhappy. However, after he looked at the caller ID, his expression changed as he quickly picked up the phone.

"Mr. Whitman, we have your DNA result. I'm sending the data and results to your email. If you have any questions, you can call this number."

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After he heard what was said from the other end of the phone, Jeremy tightened his grip on it.

Upon hanging up, he opened the app on his phone and saw the latest email he received. His pupils constricted as his finger lingered above the screen, but he did not tap the screen.

Honk, honk!

The cars behind them started honking as the light had already turned green.

"Are you alright, Mr. Whitman?" Madeline looked at him curiously.

Jeremy pressed down on the lock key and tossed his phone to one side. "I'm fine."

He pressed down on the accelerator. His deep eyes looked at Madeline intensely before he looked back to the road ahead.

Madeline wanted to know more about Jackson, so that was why she got into the car. However, after that phone call, the air inside the car became tense and horrifyingly quiet.

After the car stopped in front of the kindergarten, Madeline picked Lillian up but she did not run into Jackson. The teacher told her someone had already taken Jackson away.

Madeline felt dispirited when she did not get to see Jackson.

However, she was also worried if Jackson was taken away by Meredith. Would Meredith do something heinous to that child again?

Jeremy stood at one side as he looked at the mother-daughter duo walking into the nightfall. He pressed his lips together.

There were a million expectations in his head but that was also the reason why he refused to look at the email. He was afraid that he would see something he did not want to see.

No matter what outrageous thing happened three years ago, he would be able to accept it. At this moment, he wished the woman in front of him was her.

Jeremy thought about that as he looked at Madeline. Suddenly, a car stopped in front of him.

Felipe walked out of the car and made his way over to Madeline. He picked up Lillian who was standing next to her. After conversing for a while, Felipe walked in front of Jeremy and smiled at him.

"Jeremy, thank you for driving Vera over to pick up Lillian."

Jeremy looked at him with a piercing gaze. "No need to thank me. I only did this to get closer to her."

His answer was frank and there was a hint of willfulness as well as brashness in it.

Felipe smiled lightly after he heard that. "So, you're still suspecting that Vera is Maddie?"

"Is she not?" Jeremy looked into Felipe's eyes and probed.

He hoped to find some flaws from Felipe's eyes, but there were none.

Felipe smiled calmly. "Vera isn't Maddie, of course. Maddie has already left this world. You should know this. Even if she's still alive, why would she stay with me if she loves you so much? Vera even gave birth to a daughter for me."

Jeremy felt his heart ache when he heard Felipe saying that.

Felipe was saying that with such a calm tone, but Jeremy felt like he was boasting. He was boasting to him that he owned her now.

He was still unable to prove that Vera was indeed Madeline.

"Vera and I will get married soon. I'll go back to the manor to announce this after a few days."

Felipe walked to Madeline who was waiting by the car after he said that.

"Vera, let's go home."

"Okay." Madeline nodded. She leaned against Felipe's body intimately.

She turned around and said goodbye to Jeremy casually before getting into the car.

In a blink of an eye, her body and smile disappeared from his vision.

Madeline let out a sigh of relief inside the car. "He's indeed suspecting me again."

"You two have the same face, after all. It's difficult not to make anyone suspicious, especially Jeremy. He's more observant than the average person." Felipe held Madeline's hand after he said that. His warm smile and gaze caressed her worried face like a spring breeze. "Don't worry. I've arranged for everything. He won't suspect anything after a few days."

Madeline felt slightly at ease after she heard Felipe's promise.

He was her light and safe harbor when she was in despair and met with trouble.

Madeline knew she could never repay him. She had heard him earlier as well. If Felipe wanted to marry her, she would not reject him.

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After a painful experience with her previous relationship, she would choose to be loved again if there was a choice.

...

Jeremy returned to the house while holding the phone tightly in his hand. There were answers in it that he could not wait to know.

However, as soon as he entered the house, he saw Meredith cooking in the kitchen while the maids instructed and helped at one side.

This scene made Jeremy think of Madeline.

He recalled the nights that she would be here making dinner for him and yet, he would just ignore her. He instead spent the night outside rather than coming back to face this woman who he thought was dirty and heinous.

When Meredith heard him coming back, she turned around and ran to him. "Jeremy, you're back. I picked Jack up and I made dinner especially for you guys tonight. This is my first time making dinner, so I hope you'll like it."

She looked at Jeremy with passionate and loving eyes. "Jeremy, today my mother received an invitation card for Miss Lady's anniversary party. Will you go with me?"

Jeremy furrowed his brows. "I'm not available."

"Jeremy." Meredith's smile disappeared gradually. "Are you still refusing to forgive me? It's been so long since that incident. I was forced by Maddie. Why do you have to be so heartless over a trivial matter like this?"

"A trivial matter?" Jeremy suddenly smiled upon hearing these two words. His smile was obscure and indistinct. It was hard to read his expression, but his voice suddenly went cold. "I'll find a time to announce to the public as soon as possible that I've already broken off my engagement to you."

"..." Meredith looked at Jeremy's back in confusion before hastily stopping him. "Jeremy, please don't do this. You promised. You promised me back then that you'd take care of me for the rest of my life!"

Recalling the promise from back when they were at the beach, Jeremy knitted his eyebrows together.

Jeremy would only be acting rashly if he did not take into consideration their relationship back then.

A few seconds later, he parted his lips coldly.

"I'll take care of you, but I won't marry you."

"..." Meredith's face turned white. "Jeremy, why? Why are you doing this to me?"

She nagged and pursued, losing control of her emotions.

"Is it because of Vera? Do you think you owe something to Maddie, so now that a woman who looks so much like her has appeared, you want to make up for this debt through Vera, right?"

"I told you, this has nothing to do with her." Jeremy's agitated gaze landed on Meredith's contorted face. "You're asking me why? Why don't you ask yourself?"

"Jeremy?"

"I like the Linnie I married back then. She was innocent and kind, but now, you've changed. You're not the Linnie I used to know."

"..." Meredith was at a loss as she looked at Jeremy's face that was gradually turning colder.

She had changed?

No, she had never changed.

It was because she was not the Linnie who Jeremy fell in love at first sight with.

She was just a fake good!

Jeremy indifferently retracted his arm and went upstairs.

Meredith ran over to him and put her arms around his waist from the back. "Jeremy, don't do this to me. Please don't. Yes, I've changed. The only change is that I love you even more now. I was afraid that you'll get pestered by Maddie because of marriage. I was afraid of losing you, so that's why I did something so stupid." She explained frantically. Tears started streaming down her cheeks.

"Jeremy, will you change your mind and not break up with me if I turn back into the Linnie from back then?"

Jeremy did not answer her, and he even pried her fingers away forcefully.

Meredith kept shouting his name from behind him, but he did not turn back. He walked straight into his bedroom.

He could not find any trace of Madeline on the double bed. However, he still sat on the spot that she used to sleep in out of habit.

After sitting down, Jeremy opened the email on his phone.

The result of Lillian's and his DNA test was in front of him.

This time, Jeremy did not hesitate before tapping into the email.

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Immediately, Jeremy saw a column of professionally analyzed data. He hastily glanced through it and scrolled directly to the end of the email.

After seeing the results, his breath froze for a second.

The doubts, expectations, and any traces of ridiculous hopes from the bottom of his heart turned into nothing in an instant.

The report clearly stated that he was not Lillian's biological father.

However, their chromosomes were identical, and there was only one reason why they were identical. It was because Lillian was really Felipe's biological daughter, which was why his DNA and Lillian's DNA showed a kinship.

The phone slipped from Jeremy's fingers unbeknownst to him.

The glow from the sunset scattered on his emotionless face. Jeremy eventually lifted the corners of his lips after a long while and let out a low laugh.

'It turns out that there are indeed people who look so similar in this world.

'The actual fact is, you've left me.'

His heart started aching as he recalled the loss from three years ago. Those feelings of regret and loss would be forever irreparable. He would never be able to sleep peacefully ever again.

...

Madeline was sure that Jeremy would not suspect her again, so she focused all of her time and energy on preparing the dinner party that was to be held two days later.

The most luxurious hotel in Glendale was without a doubt the six-star hotel that was owned by Whitman Corporation. Madeline had reserved the place beforehand. When she was about to go sign the contract, she saw Meredith walking to her shop the moment she stepped out of the door.

She looked down. Her usual vulnerable and pretty face was covered in sadness. She did not look as aggressive as she was after tearing away her hypocritical mask.

When she saw Madeline, Meredith quickly walked over to her. "Miss Quinn, I wonder if I can occupy some of your time? I need to talk to you."

Madeline looked at the hypocritical woman in front of her, peering at her in disdain. "There's nothing to talk about between us, Miss Crawford."

She walked away after she said that.

"Vera, I'm begging you."

Meredith's petty pleads sounded from behind her.

"I won't take up much of your time."

Madeline stopped in her tracks. She turned her stunning face around slightly. "Since you're begging, Miss Crawford, I'll give you ten minutes."

"Thank you." Meredith thanked her in a grateful manner.

However, this sounded extremely hypocritical to Madeline.

In a cafe nearby.

After they sat down, Meredith ordered some food and drinks courteously. She was smiling the entire time.

"Miss Crawford, just spit it out. I have something to take care of." Madeline did not waste any time beating around the bush. Then, she placed her phone on the table and started playing with it casually.

Meredith clenched her fists that were hiding under the table when she saw how coldly Madeline was treating her. There was a sad expression on her charming face.

"Vera, to be honest, you look exactly the same as my sister, Maddie. However, please, I'm begging you, don't repeat the same things my sister did, okay?"

After she heard this, Madeline lifted her head to look at Meredith with a smile. "Miss Crawford, please just be frank. What do you mean by not repeating the same things Maddie did?"

Meredith sighed, and her tone was soft when she spoke, "I hope you can stop pestering my fiancé.

"Miss Quinn, you're so beautiful and you have such good qualifications. Plus, you have the recognition from a brand like Miss L.ad.y. You've even joined their franchise and became the shop owner. There must be a lot of men after an exceptional woman like you. So, why do you want to be the third party in this relationship?"

Madeline finally understood what was going on after she heard this.

Meredith came all the way here to poison the well.

The third party in this relationship?

Madeline wanted to laugh at that term.

Before the silence could even set in, Meredith's eyes went red as she said with devastating pettiness, "Miss Quinn, I'm begging you. Please don't ruin my relationship with Jeremy. Please don't tarnish yourself as well. You won't be able to lift your head in this lifetime the moment you become the third party in a relationship."

Meredith's words sounded like well-meaning advice, however, Madeline burst out laughing after she heard that.

"The third party?" She scoffed. Her spirited eyes were shooting out invulnerable looks at Meredith without restraints. "It seems that you're holding your head pretty high, Miss Crawford. If not, how could you sit here and tell me that so shamelessly?"

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After she heard that, Meredith's face froze. However, she did not forget to maintain her vulnerable and pitiful expression. Her voice sounded so aggrieved as if she was going to cry at any second. "Miss Quinn, are you saying that you'll keep pestering my fiancé and continue to be the third party?"

Madeline parted her pink lips and said slowly, "Do you know why I gave you a mirror on your birthday?"

"..." Meredith's face fell.

"I guess you're still confused about your position. No wonder Jeremy still refuses to marry you after so many years." Madeline displayed a thought-provoking smile on her face before getting up and leaving.

Meredith stood up immediately as her hypocritical mask cracked. "Vera Quinn! I'm showing you kindness and yet you're refusing to accept it! Alright! If that's the case, just you wait. You'll know the consequences of crossing me soon enough!"

Madeline turned around nonchalantly. When she saw Meredith's furious face, she smiled even wider.

"Let that day come sooner. I can't wait," she said, holding her phone tighter.

Right.

She could not wait.

'Just come at me, Meredith.

'I'm ready to take anything you throw my way.

Meredith angrily ran to a room next to her after Madeline left the cafe.

"So? Did you get it?" she asked angrily.

That person shook the phone. "I got it all filmed."

Meredith was slightly relieved. She narrowed her sinister eyes.

"Hmph, Vera Quinn, since you refuse to accept my conditions, then I'll thoroughly ruin your reputation! I'll let you experience what Madeline experienced back then!"

Madeline went to the hotel after she left the cafe.

She did not expect Jeremy to be the one to welcome her.

Plus, Madeline noticed Jeremy looking at her much more normally compared to last time.

Perhaps Felipe had successfully stopped him from suspecting her.

Of course, Madeline did not tell him about her meeting with Meredith. She only focused on finishing the tasks at hand.

After that, Jeremy said to her, "Miss Vera, can I have the honor of buying you lunch? Just think of it as a taste test."

Madeline agreed. Then, she followed Jeremy into the VIP room.

The third floor was not too high up. The light breeze rustled the branches outside the french windows. The yellow leaves spun in the air like butterflies, fluttering across the window quietly.

The early fall after summer was much cooler.

Jeremy poured some wine for Madeline and he had some himself as well. After a while, there was a tinge of redness on his cheeks. His narrow eyes looked even more alluring now.

"It's best if you don't get drunk, Mr. Whitman," said Madeline with a smile, "If not, you'll babble nonsense to me again like that day. I don't want to hear those words again."

Jeremy looked into Madeline's eyes. "What did I say that night?"

Madeline lifted her glass and nodded. Then, she said profoundly, "You grabbed me and said, 'Linnie, don't go'."

After she said that, Madeline noticed a curious spark in Jeremy's eyes.

Madeline's heart skipped a beat. She quickly took a sip of her wine to hide her awkwardness.

That night, Jeremy had called her Linnie. Despite her knowing that he was calling out to Meredith, she could not deny that she was hoping for him to call out to her. When they were young, he had looked after her when they were at the beach...

A few seconds passed and Jeremy lowered his gaze, hiding the emotions behind his eyes. "Aside from that, what else did I say?"

Madeline looked at him. "You kept telling me, 'Linnie, don't go. Don't go'. Who is this Linnie? Isn't Meredith the person you love the most, Mr. Whitman?"

She deliberately asked him this question. Then, she added, "Right, that day, you were holding a colorful shell as well. It doesn't seem like something valuable, so why were you holding it so nervously?"

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There was a hint of misery in Jeremy's slightly intoxicated face. "It's her."

After staying silent for some time, Madeline got an answer from him.

It was her.

The person he loved the most was Meredith.

Madeline's grip on the wine glass tightened slowly.

The fire of rage in her heart started burning brightly, but it was unable to destroy the unwillingness and bitterness in her heart.

"Linnie, I'll stay with you forever. I will protect you forever. I'll take you as my bride..."

The little boy's promise was like the autumn breeze outside the window, caressing her ear before drifting away.

Madeline held the wine glass and downed the contents inside it.

She felt as if a million needles were piercing her heart. They were so light yet they hurt so bad.

She was feeling sad for her past self. She was so innocent for believing his promise to marry her. She ended up waiting for him to reunite with her like a fool. However, in the end, all she got was this man's merciless torture.

Madeline looked at the melancholic man in front of her with an icy gaze. There was hatred in her eyes.

'Jeremy, I thought you were just cruel and could never be satisfied with what you had. However, the truth is that you were never serious about me.

'You keep going on and on about Linnie, but that's just a hypocritical show of affection.

'Meredith Crawford.

'You love her, right?

'Alright.

'I'll let you love her until you can't love her anymore!'

...

Jeremy did not know when he had fallen asleep on the sofa of the room. After he woke up, the room was empty and Madeline had already left.

He massaged his temples and recalled what he said to Madeline before he passed out.

He quickly took out the colorful shell from his pocket and looked at it in his palm as his mind wandered. It was as if he was back to that year...

His grandfather had brought him for a vacation by the beach, but he was not happy as he had a lot of pressure on his back. He had lost the carefreeness and happiness people his age should have... All until a little girl appeared.

She said her name was Linnie.

It was such a simple name that sounded so pleasant to the ears and was easy to remember.

He could not forget it. The girl's eyes would become crescent moons when she smiled and she had light dimples on her face. Plus, her eyes were so clear and pristine like crystals. They looked so lively.

She called him Jez. Her voice was so sweet that it sounded as if it had been drenched in honey.

He would hold her hand as they ran barefoot on the beach. Without knowing, he had let go of all his troubles and stress. He had never been so happy before.

After that, he was brought away by his grandfather without even getting the chance to say goodbye to her.

He had been thinking about this girl named Linnie for so many years... Until the day he met Meredith.

Meredith had dimples when she smiled as well, so it caused him to have a misconception. After that, Meredith told him firmly that she was the same Linnie he met from when they were kids.

He was shocked, but he did not feel intense joy because whenever he faced Meredith, he kept feeling like something was missing.

Despite that, he still tolerated and indulged Meredith to no end just because she was the Linnie who he had been missing for more than ten years.

Now...

Jeremy was conflicted.

He should throw this shell away now.

After all, he did not love the girl who gave him the shell anymore.

The Linnie in his heart right now was the deceased Madeline who had hurt him so much that it felt as if he was skinned raw.

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...

Two days later, the dinner party went on as scheduled.

Since Miss Lady was getting big, the rich and famous from the upper-class were all here. Most of them were socialites and wealthy women.

Madeline had been ready for a while, but at this moment, she felt complicated.

She knew Eloise would be here tonight as well.

This person was her mother who gave birth to her and lost her.

After she got the call from the manager of the headquarters, Madeline sashayed into the venue.

When she walked in, she saw a lot of socialites and wealthy ladies gathering around while chatting. They were boasting about the expensive, limited, and custom-made jewelry that they were wearing.

When Madeline walked in, she earned shocked gazes from the guests there.

Her champagne-colored dress accentuated her perfect figure while her black hair contrasted the fairness of her flawless skin. She would leave a trail of sweet fragrance wherever she went. One would not be able to stop themselves from taking in a few more sniffs.

"Is that woman Vera Quinn?"

"I heard she's the one who won the shop on First Crystal Street. She's even working with Miss Lady and is the shop owner."

"She's the shop owner of Miss Lady on First Crystal Street? She's so beautiful and talented."

"Talented? I heard she's just some rich man's sugar baby."

"No wonder. I was wondering how she could have such a nice life without any backup. She finally has a chance to show her face now that Miss L.adY's anniversary dinner is being hosted in Glendale."

Madeline heard all kinds of malicious questions and suspicions coming from around her. She only smiled softly and continued walking.

After a while, she saw the manager from the headquarters as well as the head of design of Miss L.adY. They were talking to a few clients.

She was not seeing things. Among the clients, two of them were Meredith and Eloise.

While they were talking, the manager of the headquarters and the head of design spotted Madeline. "Everyone, let me introduce you to this lady."

The head of design looked at Madeline in admiration. Eloise and Meredith turned around at the same time. There was shock and surprise on their faces. However, disdain and contempt immediately replaced their looks of surprise. Meanwhile, there was a sinister smile in Meredith's eyes.

As the star of the night, Madeline walked over magnanimously with a huge smile.

The head of design gestured to Madeline and introduced her, saying, "This is Miss Vera Quinn. She's the shop owner of the first branch of Miss L.adY in Glendale. She's also Miss L.adY's..."

"I was wondering who it was. It's just this woman," Eloise said in a strange tone. She looked at Madeline with disdain. "Mer, let's go sit over there. I'm afraid I won't have an appetite to eat if I continue to stay here and look at a woman like this."

Madeline felt like someone had just stabbed her heart, but she still smiled.

She would never imagine the mother who she had fantasized about in her dreams for countless nights to be a woman who would feel disgusted from just looking at her.

How could this be the mother she longed to hug?

It seemed that Eloise was not bothered about Meredith admitting to working with Tanner to harm Madeline. On the contrary, she pampered her even more now.

Right, Meredith was her precious baby after all. How could she scold her?

"Mom, don't say that," Meredith smiled and said softly, "It mustn't have been easy for Miss Quinn to join Miss L.ady. It'll be bad if Miss Quinn loses her qualification after you say that. After all, I heard they have high requirements for the people who want to join the company."

Meredith was saying that innocently. However, it was obvious she was trying to start something.

The manager and head of design looked at each other curiously while smiling. "Do Mrs. and Miss Montgomery have some misunderstandings about Vera?"

"No!" Eloise interrupted in agitation. Her tone also became colder. "I'm glad that Miss L.ady is finally launching in Glendale, but it's such a waste for a heinous woman like her to join you and manage the shop. She's touched so many delicate and exquisite jewelry of Miss L.ady. How filthy! You shouldn't let a woman like her join your company! She's not worthy!"

Meredith was ecstatic when she heard Eloise belittling Madeline. She also noticed a lot of people looking at Madeline with suspicion in their eyes.

This was good because she needed this kind of attention. Now, she was about to give Madeline a huge 'gift' to make her look bad!

"..." After she said that, the manager and head of design's faces turned grim. They started looking at Madeline nervously.

However, Madeline only smiled and looked at Eloise with a weird glint in her eyes. "Mrs. Montgomery, you said I'm not worthy, so I wonder if the owner is your daughter, would she be worthy—"

"You thief! You stole my bracelet again!" Suddenly, a woman's shriek interrupted Madeline.

Madeline vaguely felt as if she had heard this voice before.

She lifted her head in confusion. However, she did not expect the woman to reach out and grab her slender wrist. She pointed at the amethyst bracelet with tassels on her wrist.

"I was wondering who would be so gutsy to steal my bracelet at an event like this. You're a recidivist! You've stolen once before at the Montgomeries' birthday party and now you're even wearing my bracelet so brazenly after stealing it! Back then, Mrs. Whitman stood up for you, but now, I want to send you to the police!"

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The woman's ear-piercing shrieks penetrated everyone's ears. The loudness of her voice attracted the attention of a lot of people around them.

Madeline lifted her head to look at this overbearing face. Immediately, the scene of her being falsely accused and bearing the burden of being called a thief appeared in her head as clear as day.

After she got news of her illness that day, she needed to go to Jeremy's mother's birthday party at Whitman Manor as per Jeremy's order.

However, the moment she walked in, this woman in front of her ran into her. This woman did not apologize but instead accused Madeline of running into her. She even accused Madeline of stealing her bracelet.

In the end, Meredith helped Madeline out of 'kindness'. However, during the commotion, she placed a bracelet into Madeline's pocket. Madeline was weak back then, so she got framed as the person who stole the bracelet and was berated horribly after trying to prove her innocence.

The most humiliating part was after Felipe sent her the evidence that would prove her innocence, it was overtly destroyed by Jeremy. He loved Meredith, so he would indulge Meredith in everything she did with no limits.

Madeline had not forgotten about it. Back then, this woman called her a beggar while Meredith had addressed this woman as Mrs. Langford intimately.

"What are you looking at? Take off my bracelet now!" Mrs. Langford was dressed extravagantly. She had a death grip on Madeline's wrist as she warned furiously.

Madeline stopped recalling what happened before and glanced at the woman's hand with her beautiful eyes. "Let go of your hand."

Her tone was cold. Despite the light smile on her face, there was a powerful aura around her.

The woman was shocked by the overbearing aura. She hesitated for a while as her grip on Madeline's hand loosened slightly. However, when she realized Madeline was talking to her with this attitude, she tightened her grip on Madeline's wrist again.

"Pah! Are you threatening me?" The woman was boorish. "Just look at yourself. How dare you steal from me in an event like this?" she said arrogantly as she lifted her pejorative gaze to look Madeline up and down.

"Tsk ts, it seems that you've stolen a lot of things during this period. If not, how would you have the money to dress up like this? Or perhaps you've gotten yourself a stupid rich man? If that's the case, why would you go as far as stealing at a dinner party?!"

"Madam, have you perhaps misunderstood something? Why would Vera steal your bracelet? Please let go of her now!" The manager approached them and started breaking them up.

The head of design came to Madeline's side hurriedly as well. She glared at the woman in agitation. "Madam, how can you falsely accuse someone with no proof? You're saying that Vera stole your bracelet and even claiming that she stole your amethyst bracelet? Do you know that this bracelet—"

"Where did you come from? How dare you accuse me of accusing her?" The woman scoffed and interrupted, saying, "Miss Crawford, you saw this woman stealing my bracelet back then with your own two eyes."

After she said that, she looked in another direction. Madeline noticed that Jeremy's mother was here as well. At this moment, the woman said, "Mrs. Whitman, you were there as well. You even pleaded for leniency on behalf of her. You said she's your maid, so that's why I let her off the hook. You have to be my witness!"

After she heard this, Madeline finally knew that Jeremy's mother had told this woman she was their maid when she whispered in her ear back then. That was why the woman stopped pursuing this matter.

Heh!

Maid!

How ridiculous!

Aside from Old Master Whitman, none of the other Whitmans had ever treated her as she was one of them.

She was just a maid in the Whitmans' eyes!

No, she was even more lowly than a maid!

"Vera Quinn was the Whitmans' maid?"

"She used to be a maid but she's able to get to where she is now. I'm sure she stole a lot from her master."

"A person like her even managed to join Miss L.ady. I have to reconsider whether I want to buy from them anymore."

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At this moment, harsh words of criticism started sounding out from all around her. Meredith was grinning as she said something in Eloise's ear.

After a while, Meredith walked over. She looked at Madeline and sighed. "Miss Quinn, I didn't expect you to be as careless as Madeline despite you two looking exactly the same!"

Meredith mocked her with contempt in her eyes. "Mrs. Langford, you're right. There was someone who stole your bracelet in front of everyone in Whitman Manor back then. However, it's not this woman you're holding onto right now. They just look the same."

"What? It's not her? I remember her face so clearly!" the woman pointed at Madeline's face and said definitively.

"Mrs. Langford, it's not her." Jeremy's mother walked over as well. She was looking down on Madeline too. "Vera, I didn't expect that as the shop owner of Miss L.ady that you would go as far as to steal a client's bracelet. Are you sick in the head?"

"She's not just light-fingered, but she even has the habit of stealing other people's fiancé!" Eloise added. She was looking at Madeline with despise and contempt.

The atmosphere of the dinner party changed with everyone looking at Madeline with suspicion and disdain.

Mrs. Langford grabbed Madeline's wrist even tighter now that she was feeling more confident. "So, even though you're two different people, you still stole my bracelet! Hmph, you shameless thief! I'm taking you to the police station now!"

She screeched rudely. At the same time, she started pulling Madeline with brute force.

The manager and the head of design could not watch this any longer. They were about to help Madeline, but before they could do anything, they saw Madeline standing her ground. Not only was she not budging, but she also got out of the woman's grip after pulling with all of her might.

The woman lost her footing and stumbled backward. Coincidentally, she stepped on Meredith's ankle.

Meredith wailed in pain and pushed the woman away furiously.

When the woman saw this, she targeted Madeline again. "You b*tch..."

"If you dare you to cause trouble for me again, I promise that when the police get here, they won't be arresting me but you instead," Madeline said, her melodic voice interrupting the woman's sentence.

Despite being faced with all kinds of criticizing gazes, Madeline was still composed and calm.

She stood with her head held high. Her beautiful twinkling eyes looked frigid and strict on her charming face. At this moment, she looked like a queen.

"You said that I stole your bracelet? This bracelet?" Madeline lifted her left hand, the amethyst bracelet shining dreamily under the light, looking very pretty.

Mrs. Langford gritted her teeth angrily. "You stole it! My amethyst bracelet is custom-made from Miss Lady's limited edition collection! I asked someone to bring it back for me from overseas. I'm the only one with this bracelet in Glendale! I deliberately wore it today for my friends to admire!"

As she said that, a pleased smile appeared on her face. She said it was for her friends to admire, but in fact, she just wanted to show off.

This amethyst bracelet was indeed special, and it looked lovely. Plenty of socialites and wealthy women in the upper-class would want their hands on it, but unfortunately, they could not.

"No wonder Miss Quinn wanted to steal it. It's a custom-made limited edition bracelet, after all," Meredith said. She was trying to add fuel to the fire.

"Do you guys still want to let a person like her become a member of your brand?" Eloise peered at Madeline and jeered, "If you continue to let a woman like her become the shop owner, all the gorgeous jewelry will be tarnished!"

"Right, you should remove her name immediately. If not, I won't go to your shop no matter how gorgeous your jewelry is!" Jeremy's mother joined in opposition to the same adversary. She started to boycott Madeline along with Meredith and Eloise.

When Mrs. Langford saw so many people siding with her, she felt loftier. "What do you have to say now? Give me back my bracelet now and go to the police station with me!"

After the manager and head of design heard this, they looked at each other. Their faces fell as they then said coldly, "Madam, you're right. This bracelet is a limited edition, but I guess you have no idea that we never sold this bracelet to the public.

"This bracelet was designed by the chief designer of Miss Lady, Vera. She designed this bracelet as a birthday present to herself. There's only one of this in the entire world and now it's on her wrist. So, pray tell, why would she steal her own bracelet?"

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