

## A Spoonful of Sugar: Don't Beg for Love By Oopsie Daisy

### Chapter 371

During the second half, after an introduction by Arthur, Hesper met everyone from her generation from the other families. Based on what he said, she gleaned that she could pick anyone from that group, they'd marry her to anyone of her choice.

That stunned Hesper and she distanced herself from Arthur's eyes.

Renfrew called her that evening and said that he learned a lot from the new teacher. He ate his food and missed her a little.

The snow outside did not stop falling. Hesper listened to him and sighed.

It would be the new year in two days. She didn't get to spend it with Renfrew on the first year that they reunited, but she had to sacrifice times like that to make sure that he was able to grow up safe.

"Don't worry, Mommy. I'll be a good boy and wait for you to come home."

Hesper said alright, took a deep breath, and pretended to be relaxed. "It's getting late. Time for bed. I'll be home soon."

"Okay, Mommy. I believe you."

After hanging up, Hesper stood in front of the window and watched the snow fall into the garden. She didn't know when it became so thick.

Suddenly, she got a call, which interrupted her thoughts. Hesper looked at the unknown number on her screen. She had a feeling that the call was from the killer.

She answered.

"Ms. Rivera, we meet again."

Hesper's face dropped as she looked at her own reflection in the window. "What do you want? If it isn't because of Juniper or anything, I can't think of anyone who would want me dead."

"Oh, really?" 013 chuckled. "Didn't you notice that your life is a giant puzzle? Can you promise that all of the questions in your mind have nothing to do with you?"

Hesper wasn't surprised that he knew what was going on in her life.

“This is about Rachel Lane, so what does it have to do with me?”

Right after Hesper said that, the call was cut off. There was a dead tone on the other side. It wasn't time for her to find out about the truth yet, so it was fate that the call was cut off.

However, Hesper didn't believe in fate, so she called back.

The call was connected but no one spoke. Hesper kept quiet too, but she quickly sent a message

to Renee.

Hesper: Track the IP of this phone number ASAP.

Renee: OK.

There was a long silence from the other end. Renee worked quicker than expected and she had the IP. It was in a small town in Fredonia.

“I won't just sit around. We'll see who gets to the other person first, Hesper said “You better pray that I don't catch you. What's the point of pretending?”

There was a calm breathing sound from the other end. Hesper didn't give the person a chance to speak and hung up.

After so many things that happened, Hesper knew that a hacker would be able to reroute their location. The assassin had really good hackers working for him, and that was how she couldn't find them.

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This also meant that they would soon discover that she had traced their IP.

It would be too difficult to catch someone based on the address that was all the way on the other side of the ocean, so Hesper didn't plan to catch them with this trick. She just wanted to taunt them and show them that she wasn't predictable.

Since she was in the light and they were in the dark, all they could do was play little games.

That being said, Hesper still sent someone to the location to see if they could find any valuable clues

There was a lot to prepare for the new year countdown at the Lane household. Arthur loved to be surrounded by people. Maybe he wished that he had his family around him at his age, so Matthew was back early

Hesper had been busy with all kinds of work previously, so now that she had some free time, she didn't know what to do. She went to the kitchen to learn how to cook.

Everyone knew that Hesper was a good cook, but there were a lot of dishes from Emperion that she never heard of before, so they were new to her,

"If you knead it gently it will be crispier later."

Okay, like this?"

When Matthew walked into the kitchen, he saw Hesper learning how to make cookies from the cook. There was some flour on her face, which neither of them noticed.

Hesper probably scratched it because it was itchy, and now the flour stuck to her face, making a white patch. Matthew chuckled.

Hesper looked up while holding a slab of dough. She placed it down when she saw him. "You're back."

"Yup. Grandpa said that you're cooking, so we're going to have delicious food later."

A little shy, Hesper started scratching her face again. However, then she noticed the flour on her hand and stopped. She felt more awkward after hearing what Matthew said.

"I've learned for more than half an hour and I still don't know how to make this well enough... If we rely on me to cook, everyone will die of hunger." Hesper shook her head. Matthew walked over and wiped the flour off her face.

The cook was enjoying watching them. She was an old cook there, so she wasn't shy to speak. "You're really talented. This is something that takes years to learn."

Hesper turned around and looked happy. "Oh, I just knew that there was nothing I couldn't make."

"Sure." Matthew leaned against the wall and watched the cook knead the dough. Hesper gave up and started cooking something else. They looked like a happy family.

Fireworks were banned in Emperion, but since it was the countdown, a lot of people did it illegally. The Lanes prepared some sparklers. It was a tradition they had. Hesper lit one up on her balcony and watched the flame burn in the night air.

No one interrupted her, so Hesper lit another and listened to the fireworks going off. It sounded

calm.

Suddenly, fireworks went off in the sky a stone's throw away, but it was a small and sad one that didn't go much higher than their walls.

Hesper quietly watched. Even though it was a small one, it was beautiful. There were different colors and patterns that went off quietly in the night sky. Silent but beautiful.

Nobody noticed that these small fireworks were going off in front of her window. When the final one went off, Hesper stood up and walked over to the wall. The winter night was usually cold and silent.

"Who are you?"

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The person outside the wall didn't speak, but Hesper had her answer.

"Aren't you going to speak, Rickard?"

Rickard wasn't surprised that Hesper knew it was him, but he still kept quiet and leaned down to light up another one.

It went off outside the wall and Hesper looked up in silence.

"Happy new year, Hesper."

Hesper didn't reply but Rickard didn't speak after a long time because he had left. Only Hesper was there with a floor full of firework debris, evidence of the firework show that was for one

person.

Happy new year."

Hesper only had a sweater on. The cold wind blew and she looked down while blinking her dry red eyes. "Happy new year."

There was a rule that fireworks were banned in Genecity.

The new year was always lively, but if fireworks were banned, there was nothing to look forward to. Hesper left the orphanage a long time ago, so all she remembered about the place was that the rich families would donate some to them.

She had only just gone to stay with the Duvals that time and wasn't used to a lot of things. Since she was staying at someone's home, she didn't want to make requests, so she soon became quiet. because she just wanted to silently compromise.

Julian knew that Hesper loved fireworks, so he tried to get a dozen sticks of sparklers. However, he bumped into the officials and they were all confiscated.

“I’m sorry for messing it up.” Julian sat with her on the balcony.

She shook her head. “You’ve done enough, Ian. Thank you.”

Right when she said that, fireworks went off near the balcony. They were the most luxurious and beautiful fireworks that Hesper had ever seen. It went on and on and finally stopped after about

ten minutes.

Julian stood up in awe while Hesper still stayed seated. She was looking forward to something.

However, soon after that, more fireworks went off not too far away and Hesper finally got on her feet. She ignored Julian calling out to her and ran downstairs to find out where it was coming from.

Rickard frowned as he lit up the fireworks while someone was calling out to him from not too far away, asking him to freeze. Hesper watched as he lit up the last one and looked straight at her.

“What are you looking at?”

Hesper was stunned, but Rickard grabbed her wrist and ran away with her the second after that.

...Idiot. Do you want to get caught?”

The fireworks were still going off behind them. Hesper was confused about what was going on. She heard her heart beating, thumping. The sound drowned out the fireworks and all the yelling.

However, Rickard was still caught in the end. Ernest didn’t understand why his usually obedient grandson would do something so out of character, but Hesper suspected that he did it for her.

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She had a crush on him for over a decade. Hesper came back to the present and smiled at herself.

She always thought that she found some sort of evidence of his feelings for her, so she was willing to give everything up for that illusion.

“Hesper, what are you doing out here in the cold?”

Hesper turned around and saw Helen walking over. She put a jacket on her. “I saw that you disappeared after dinner so I came over to take a look.”

Helen saw the debris on the floor but didn’t comment on it and instead said, “It’s too cold outside.

You’re going to be sick for a long time if you catch a cold. Come inside, I’ll get the cook to make

some soup for you.”

“...Thanks.”

Even though Hesper didn’t think Helen was sincerely nice to her, she didn’t want to reject her offer, so she went in with her.

Matthew could tell that something was wrong with her and walked over while Helen went to the

kitchen.

“What’s going on?”

Hesper knew that she couldn’t hide anything from him, so she came clean. “Rickard came and set

off some fireworks for me.”

“... What is he playing at?” Matthew frowned. He saw with his own eyes how Rickard treated Hesper. Even if he had changed, to Matthew, he was someone who would frame his own wife.

Hesper shook her head.

Rickard did that because he wanted to repay Hesper for loving him for more than a decade.

Hesper never realized that Rickard knew all the love and regret she felt. He had intentionally ignored the burning passion she had for him.

In Rickard's eyes, none of that was important. However, now he was trying his best to come up with a way to remind her.

Matthew could tell that she wasn't herself, so he walked over and rested his hand on her shoulder. "Don't overthink. Have some soup and go to sleep. You won't remember any of this tomorrow."

"Alright."

Maybe it was psychological but Hesper kept feeling that her head was aching worse. After drinking the soup Helen brought to her, she went to sleep.

"I'm sure that you've caught a cold." Helen helped her up. "Go sleep. I'll bring Hesper to her room. Matthew, don't stay up too late too. We don't want you two to fall sick."

"Alright."

Hesper pressed her lips together as Helen helped her to her room.

"Thanks, Aunt Helen."

Helen paused and leaned closer, then put her hand on Hesper's shoulder. "We're a family. There's no need to say thanks."

Hesper went to sleep after speaking to her for a little while. Helen stood next to her with a few strands of hair in her hand. She watched her sleep and looked like she had an internal struggle but soon turned around and left the room.

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On new year's day, Hesper got ready to return to Genecity.

After drinking the soup and resting, Hesper didn't catch a cold and was energetic the next day.

Hesper had originally wanted to find out more about Shawn when she went back to Emperion and also cancel her wedding agreement. However, now it seemed that she

had to take a trip back to the orphanage to find out more about Shawn. As for the wedding agreement... It seemed less like a lock and more like something she could use to avoid questions.

Realizing that, she suddenly felt helpless.

She had to admit that the agreement was a good shield. However, to ensure that Nathaniel understood how she felt about their relationship, she said a lot of things to make it very clear.

If they were to continue their current relationship, she had to find time to talk to him.

That afternoon, Hesper arrived at Genecity. Most people were on holiday, so Hesper didn't work and instead went to the hospital to see Roberto.

"Happy new year."

Roberto was recovering well and was able to move slightly. He could also sit up and draw.

Hesper was in his position before and knew that it was very boring. Roberto's eyes were still kind and she saw that he had flecks under the sunlight.

"I had someone investigate the scene. Myriade... is Zoya. I guess she took the clothes you made. for me." It had been a while, so Hesper was able to casually bring Zoya up. "I haven't heard. anything about her ever since, so that's all that I can tell you."

"Thanks for that." Roberto motioned for her to take a seat. "I've thought a lot about what happened recently. Zoya is young. I've thought about what she said to me over and over again. My wife is no longer around... That's the truth."

"...I'm sorry." Hesper didn't know what to say. Death felt so far away.

Roberto shook his head. "It's fine. Hope is just lost again. I've suffered loss before, so this isn't too bad.

"However, something happened during the time that I had no knowledge about and it doesn't match what I knew," Roberto said. "Not only does Zoya know of my existence, she probably lived with Yuna for a while, so Yuna definitely didn't die in the accident."

Hesper forgot about that, but now she wanted to...

Based on the timeline that Roberto knew, Yuna got into an accident when she was pregnant with Zoya. It seemed as though both mother and child didn't make it, but in reality, not only did Yuna survive, she gave birth to Zoya and they lived together somewhere nobody knew.

Why did Yuna fake her death?

How did Zoya know that Roberto was her father, and why did she hate him?

“I think all of these are related to Daybreak, so I’m going to go back earlier, as soon as I recover.”

Hesper looked up. “You’re leaving?”

“Yes, I’m sorry.” Roberto lowered his eyes. “I want to stay in Halwanest for a while longer because I have a lot to teach you. However, I have to find out the connection between Daybreak and Zoey. She’s my daughter and now the most important person in this world.”

Hesper understood because she would disregard everything for Renfrew too. Roberto finally had news about his child, so he wouldn’t want to be anywhere else.

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“If you need help in the future, talk to me. I’m your mentor.” Roberto placed his hand on her shoulder. “I hope that we’ll meet again soon.”

Hesper smiled and her dimples showed.

“I hope that you’ll find out the truth of what happened soon too and reunite with your daughter.”

On the way back, Hesper suddenly received an invitation to join a group chat.

She frowned but clicked on it. The number was her private account that only a few colleagues had.

Since she was feared in the office, even the employees who had her number wouldn’t text her. Did they all see things differently in the new year?

Hesper accepted the invitation.

Employee A: Someone new joined. Did we get a new recruit?

Hesper looked at the name of the group: ‘Tear down the capitalists’. She frowned in silence. The group chat was busy, possibly because it was a holiday. Hesper had a good memory and saw that a few numbers belonged to employees at Lane Holdings.

No one replied to the message about the new recruit, and it was quickly replaced by new ones. Hesper sat there quietly reading the messages, which were a mess.

Hesper guessed that someone mistakenly added her to the group, so she muted it. She was going to leave the group when she saw something about her.

“I’m declaring that the week Ms. Lane wasn’t around was my happiest week!”

“Me too. The air seems to be fresher since Ms. Lane started becoming busy with her personal work.”

“That’s such an exaggeration. All I did was eat more during lunch...”

“”

The final question mark was sent by Hesper. Employee A explained.

“You seem to be new to the company. Ms. Lane looks really pretty, right? But when she works, she

is the devil!”

“The last naive one who thought that she was a nice person with a good temper has now locked their heart up.”

The next few messages agreed. Hesper scoffed. She didn’t know this was how her employees viewed her. That was why they always avoided her in the office.

That was why the group was named ‘Tear down the capitalist’. It was a group the employees

created.

“What are you talking about?”

A new message popped up and Hesper frowned when she saw the number. It was Isaac’s other

number.

Oh, they had a spy.

Isaac obviously saw the previous messages and sent her a private text.

Hesper: Enjoying the show?

Isaac immediately called. Hesper found it more funny than infuriating. She wasn’t that serious of a person and could tell that they didn’t really hate her. That was just how people talk about their bosses.

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Isaac sounded guilty. “Did you see everything in the group chat?”

"I'm not blind." Hesper stifled a laugh and sounded cool. "Reading about gossip, Mr. Lennon? You must feel nice every day."

"...I'm sorry!"

Hesper chuckled. "Alright, am I that petty? The group sounds interesting. I'm going to leave for now. Do you get what I mean?"

"I won't expose you!"

"Good." Hesper chuckled, then asked, "Where were you counting down? Do you want to grab

dinner?"

Isaac was an orphan who grew up in Emperion with Matthew. The new year was nothing special to him. He would just spend the holiday in his apartment.

Hearing that, Isaac was a little embarrassed. "I shouldn't be bothering you on new year's day."

"I'm just at home too. You can come over and make the place more lively," Hesper said. "I'll call Renee after this and ask if she wants to come over too."

Isaac agreed, so Hesper called Renee, who agreed too.

"I'll get the food. You just have to show up." Hesper asked the driver to go to the closest grocery store and checked the shopping list on her phone.

After getting all the food she needed, she finally got home. No one had stayed there in a while. Hesper didn't hire a cleaner because she had a lot of documents there, so she worried that an outsider could just come to her home.

She opened the windows to air her home, and the cold air and smell of fresh snow rushed in. Hesper felt a lot better.

Suddenly, there was a knock on the door. Hesper looked at the time. It was too early.

"Hesper!"

She opened the door and Jessie immediately gave her a bear hug. "I'm here to ask you something. Would you take me in?"

Hesper poured a glass of water for her and didn't know what to feel. "Why would you leave home on new year's day? Professor and Mrs. Jenkins must be very angry."

“I would die if I didn’t leave!” Jessie took a big gulp of water and was out of breath. “You don’t know the person they set me up for a blind date with... He handed me a credit card and asked me to not take advantage of him.”

“What?”

“I’m happy to take the money but that attitude deserved a slap.”

Hesper noticed that Jessie had makeup on, which was rare. She rolled her eyes and crossed her legs as she sat on the couch.

Jessie sighed. “I don’t get it. I don’t see how the information given to my mom has anything to do with him. Other than the picture that looked like him, everything else was fake!”

Hesper could tell that Jessie was infuriated but also realize that some other emotions were added to the mix.

She always looked in control whenever she went on blind dates, but this time, she was more upset about the person she was meeting than having to go on the date.

Jessie cleared her throat when she noticed that Hesper might be making fun of her.

“You can’t blame me. I was never interested in going on blind dates, but that person... he was quite good looking.”

“Oh-”

Jesser pressed her lips together. “My mom said that the man was her student and had a good temper. I thought he was handsome, so it would be better than just going on some random blind date. But he was nothing at all like what she described. He even brought his next date to our date.”

“What?”

Hesper thought that there might be a chance, but when she heard that, she knew that that was the end.

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“Even if his family forced him to go on a blind date and he was just humoring them, that was rude.” Hesper grabbed Jessie’s hand and pulled her up. “We’re going to have dinner at my home today. I’ll call Professor Jenkins and tell him that you’re here.”

“Thank you!”

It wasn’t the first time Jessie visited her place. She knew the place well, so Hesper went into the kitchen to start cooking.

Hesper rarely invited friends over for dinner. Before ending her failed marriage with Rickard, she didn't have friends. After going to live with the Lanes, she focused on self-improvement and pretending to be someone she wasn't, so she didn't have a lot of time to breathe.

It was difficult for her to find time to enjoy a holiday alone.

Isaac and Renee came together. Even though Hesper said they didn't have to bring anything, Renee bought a few types of wine. Hesper didn't get any drinks because they would be too heavy for her to carry. She was planning to get them from the store nearby.

"You're so thoughtful."

Renee usually wore a suit; that day, she wore casual clothes. Under the yellow lighting, her ears looked red. "I didn't want to come empty-handed."

"I'm the one who carried them over," Isaac mumbled.

Hesper laughed. "You're really thoughtful too. Thank you both."

"You're Hesper's assistants? That's so cool." Jessie started chatting with them. "I know Isaac. You're the one who appeared in the news with Hesper before. I was so shocked when I saw the news, but you look outstanding."

Isaac and Renee weren't used to being around extroverts. Luckily, Jessie didn't really need them to reply. Hesper took the food out.

The place was much livelier with Jessie around. Hesper, Renee, and Isaac were the quiet ones, so they wouldn't talk a lot when they were together.

Hesper gave Professor Jenkins a call.

He sighed. "Alright, I'm relieved knowing that she's with you. Her mother is so worried."

"She's an adult now and has her own mind. If there's something she fancies, she'll find a way to get in touch with them. Otherwise, there's no point forcing it. She wouldn't be happy if she married someone she didn't love."

Professor Jenkins sighed, then said, "This kid really thinks that she still has all the time in the world. She should start worrying about things when she reaches a certain age, but she still acts like a child."

Jessie and Isaac were talking next to them, so Hesper smiled. "But it's quite good to be like a child."

“Alright, coddle her. I’m going to have dinner with my wife now. Take care,”

Professor Jenkins hung up, and Hesper went back to the dining table.

“You talked to my dad?” Jessie sat closer to her and looked at her nervously. “What did he say? Is he going to teach me a lesson when I return home?”

“No,” Hesper said as she handed some food to her. “Eat so you can stop talking.”

The office was busier than usual after the year end holiday.

There was a lot of work to be done, so Hesper pretty much slept at the office, and the air was dense.

The thing that cheered her up the most was reading all the messages complaining about her in ‘Tear Down the Capitalist’.

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“The celery at the cafeteria was horrible today. If I went to the restaurants nearby, I might bump into Ms. Lane, so I just swallowed it.”

“That’s an exaggeration I bumped into her when I was getting coffee this afternoon. I had my head low the entire time because I was worried that she might chat with me.”

“An exaggeration? After I finished the awful food, I realized that she was sitting next to me in the cafeteria. I was impressed.”

“Haha...”

“The food there is awful. Hesper hates celery.”

Hesper frowned. The message about her hating celery was quickly replaced, but she had already

seen it

She checked the sender’s number, the name was just a question mark and the profile picture was the default photo. It looked like a second number.

A lot of people knew that she hated celery, but how would people in the office know?

She gave the number to Renee, who was confused. “Where did you find this number? Where should I start investigating?”

“Hmm. Where I got it from isn’t important. Just find the IP of the account. I want to know who’s behind it.”

Hesper felt guilty. Unlike Isaac, Renee didn't know about the existence of the group chat and had always been protective of her. If she knew that people were complaining about her in a group, she would definitely fly into a rage and the employees would suffer.

"Alright."

Luckily, Renee wasn't that curious. She wouldn't ask if Hesper didn't offer the information. She turned around and went to the IT team for help

Personal accounts were easy to hack. It belonged to Benji

Hesper didn't think that Benji would say that, so it must have been Rickard.

So Rickard was doing something unbelievable that she didn't know.

She became troubled.

Hesper stopped caring about the account and stopped reading the messages in the group chat.

Time passed and the lunar new year approached. Hesper finally had time to visit the orphanage.

"Ms. Rivera."

The security guard knew her and was aware that she was rich now. He greeted her and invited her in. "Considering the size of your company, I'm surprised that you'd have time to visit. I'm sure

you're a busy woman."

Hesper shook her head. "Not really. It's easing up soon."

"Oh, it didn't feel like the new years in the past few years. I remember you loved fireworks..."

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The orphanage director was still the same person. Hesper quickly met the director that used to take care of her. She was aging a lot faster recently, but she looked a lot friendlier.

“I received your donation a few days ago.” The director held her hand and sighed. “There’s no need to give us so much money every year. Fewer orphans have been sent here in the past few years, so you’re giving too much.”

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The amount was manageable to Hesper. She shook her head and was honest. “I came here today because I need your help.”

“Alright, go ahead. I’ll do my best to help.”

Hesper stood on the spot and said, “I want to know who sponsored me. Maybe I had a friend when I was a child who wasn’t Julian.”

The director hesitated. She didn’t have to check her records to remember who Hesper’s sponsor was. However, when the person gave them the money, the biggest request was not to tell Hesper their identity even when she became an adult.

“Your expression shows that that person is very special and didn’t just randomly sponsor me. There must be something behind that.” Hesper’s voice was clear.

She had thought about it a lot. Even her surname, Rivera, was given by the sponsor, and Rivera ..... wasn’t a unique last name where she was from.

“You told me that I was abandoned outside the orphanage. I never questioned that.” Hesper sighed, then softened her tone. “I just want to know my past. If you know anything, please don’t hide it from me.”

The director sighed and her eyes darkened. “You’re older now and brighter.”

They walked to her office and she closed the door then asked Hesper to take a seat.

“I don’t know a lot about what happened in the past, but you weren’t abandoned in front of the orphanage.” The director looked guilty. “You came back to see me a few years ago and I thought that I’d be able to hide it from you for your entire life. That was why I felt extra guilty when I received money from you.”

Hesper listened intently and didn’t interrupt, so she continued.

“You might not know the person who dropped you off, but I’m sure you’ve heard of her.”

Before the director told her, Hesper already had the answer.

“Yolanda Chisolm.”

“...Yes. You’re a lot smarter than I imagined.” The director opened up her old financial records. Nothing was recorded digitally, so all the donations were written in a book. It said that the person who sponsored Hesper was Yolanda.

Hesper looked at the records that lasted for ten years and asked, "Didn't Yolanda Chisolm die when I was eight? How did she keep donating after that?"

"Um..." The director was surprised at how calm Hesper was after finding out about her past. She explained, "Yolanda did visit every year at first, but after her death, a man would visit instead, and sometimes a boy would come with him."

Were they Theodore and Shawn Lane?

"Alright, thank you."

The director shook her head. "I'm sorry. You have the right to know about your past."

Hesper could tell that the director might have thought that she was Yolanda's daughter because there was news about her having children out of wedlock. She was the hottest star at the time, so she had reasons to hide her child's identity.

However, she knew she couldn't be her child.

Shawn got to stay with Theodore, so if she really was the daughter of Yolanda and Theodore, there was no reason to leave her at the orphanage.

Even though the director made a mistake, it was so long ago, so Hesper would let it slide.

After walking out of the orphanage, Hesper looked up at the bright sun. It was rare that the shine shone so brightly in winter. It didn't feel hot even when it shone on her face.

She seemed to be part of a huge conspiracy. Simon who knew about her identity had an inexplicable gripe with Rachae Lane. Theodore seemed to be the only one who knew her true identity.