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Chapter 131 Caught

Katie was pale as she argued, "We found my bracelet in your room, and that was solid evidence. It's been so long, but you're digging it up again. Are you trying to ruin my reputation?"

"Who cares if it happened a long time ago?" Madeline smiled mockingly and continued, "Why do it if you don't want anyone to know? Do you think that the truth will be concealed just because it happened a long time ago, and I'll have to take the blame for you my entire life?"

"What about you? You're probably thinking you can blame me just because you're in a higher position now." Katie had tears in her eyes. "Yes, you're in a different position now. You're the young mistress of the Wendel Family, but I'm only a loose relative of the Taylor Family. You're blocking the entrance to the Wendels' living room and denying me entry, and you're also putting stress on Uncle George and Aunt Holly. You're forcing me to admit that I was behind that incident so that your name can be cleared, aren't you?"

"Quit trying to twist the truth. It's no use," Madeline said calmly. "Since I'm blocking you right now, that means I have the right and confidence to. Do you think that just because it happened so long ago, I won't be able to find any evidence? You're wrong."

Katie trembled in her heart, her face getting paler. "Madeline, what do you mean by that? What evidence? You stole my jewelry, so even if you found evidence, it will only prove that you're guilty. What does that have to do with me?"

"Katie, do you know that you weren't very smart when you tried to frame me? No one discovered the truth back then, but that's only because everyone believed that I was the one who stole your jewelry. No one bothered to investigate..." Madeline stared at her. "A few days ago, some people carried out an investigation and found evidence that could prove my innocence..."

"You're lying!" Katie was panicking now. "Even if they did find evidence, it must be fake. You must've faked the evidence so that I would take the blame!"

Madeline smiled. "This argument is meaningless. I've reported it to the police, and they will be here soon. When they get here, I'll hand over the evidence to the police—evidence that you framed me and involved a huge sum of money in the process... Katie, you will go to prison. You will pay for everything you've done!"

"W-What did you say?" Katie panicked.

Did she report it to the police?

How could she do that!

It's just a private matter within the family...

That day, everyone believed that Madeline was the one who stole her jewelry, but no one reported it to the police, so what right did Madeline have to file a report now?

She was so scared that her hands and feet went cold. She grabbed Holly's wrist in panic with tears welling up in her eyes. "Aunt Holly, I didn't frame her. She's trying to blame me for it, Aunt Holly..."

Holly patted her comfortingly. Then, she frowned as she looked at Madeline. "This is a private matter in our family, so how could you report it to the police? If everyone knows about it, both the Wendels' and the Taylors' reputations would be damaged."

"If I don't report this to the police, how will I clear my name?" Madeline looked at her with a clear gaze. "I was almost beaten to death by you people. I was young and couldn't prove my innocence, but now that I can do so, I'd want to clear my name."

"Mom..." Buddy, who was originally leaning in Sebastian's embrace, suddenly leaped into Madeline's arms. He buried his small face into her embrace and began to cry.

"It's okay, Buddy, it's over now. I'm not sad anymore, so please don't be sad too, Buddy!" Madeline hugged his little body, her heart aching for him. She gently caressed the back of his head.

She didn't purposefully ask the children to stay away.

To her, it wasn't a proud thing to be called a thief.

She feared that someone would tell her children nonsense in the future.

Her children would definitely believe her, but if they didn't know the truth, they might be hurt by the rumors that were circulating outside.

Instead of that, she would rather have her children know the truth.

Besides that, she didn't want her children to grow up sheltered and spoiled.

They had to experience the storms in life so that they would know how vicious people could be. That way, they would be able to learn how to identify and avoid these people.

Aldo also walked over to Madeline and held her hand. He looked up at her, his pretty little face tensed up. "Mom, I'm not afraid. I'll protect you!"

"Good boy!" Madeline patted his little head, her smile soft and gentle like water.

Holly frowned hard. She was about to say something when sirens were heard in the distance. They were getting nearer and clearer by the minute.

At the sound of the sirens, Katie trembled all over, the fear evident in her eyes. Her hands that held Holly's in a tight grip were as cold as ice.

Holly frowned and looked at her suspiciously. "Katie, what are you scared of? If you've never done it, no one can blame it on you."

She didn't want to suspect Katie either, but Katie's reaction was too unusual.

If it were her, she would be furious at Madeline for turning things upside down and accusing her. She would be more angry than scared.

However, Katie's emotions right now almost contained no anger. In fact, it was only fear.

She couldn't help but begin to suspect that Madeline really was innocent back then.

"Aunt Holly, I'm scared," Katie's voice trembled as she said, "Aunt Holly, Madeline is now the young mistress of the Wendel Family. I'm scared that she bribed the police to blame me. I would never be able to clear my name..."

"Are your Uncle George and I nothing to you?" Holly said, "Unless the police produce concrete proof that you really did it that day, your Uncle George and I are here for you. No one would be able to slander you!"

Katie wasn't the least bit comforted. When she heard the sirens coming nearer, she trembled even more.

She wasn't confident at all.

She was scared that Madeline really found proof that she had set up the incident all those years ago.

If Madeline really found proof, she would be sent to prison, and her life would be over!

In truth, she was secretly in love with Jonathan.

She didn't know when it started. When she realized it, she was already helplessly in love. She didn't have eyes for anyone except Jonathan.

Holly knew of her feelings and had tried to convince her by saying that she wasn't a good fit for Jonathan and that she should give up.

She had to kneel and beg Holly before the latter agreed to ask Michael and his wife to arrange a meeting between her and Jonathan.

If Michael, Crystal, and Jonathan agreed, she could be Jonathan's girlfriend. She might even marry him in the future.

She had a crush on Jonathan for the longest time, and she had hoped for years. She finally gained Holly's support and managed to take one step closer to realizing her dream.

However, this had to happen right now.

If the incident was exposed, how would Jonathan view her?

Jonathan would never like her back!

The more she thought about it, the more scared she got and the more painful it became for her. Tears began to stream down her face.

By then, the police car had arrived.

A few policemen got out of the car, and the policeman at the front showed Katie a warrant. "Katie Baker, you're suspected to be involved in a case of jewelry theft that happened six years ago. Please come with us; we require your assistance."

"No! It wasn't me, I'm innocent!" Katie was so terrified that she hid behind Holly and gripped Holly's arm tightly. "Aunt Holly, I'm innocent!"

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Chapter 132 She Would Rather Die

Holly shielded Katie as she asked coldly, "A girl's reputation is at stake here. You can't just take her away with no evidence. If you want to take her, you'll have to provide evidence."

"We do have evidence," the leading policeman said without emotion. "We have both witnesses and physical evidence."

Holly felt her heart tremble. "What did you say?"

"I said that we have both witness and physical evidence," the leading policeman said. "The witness would be Katie Baker's biological father. He can attest that six years ago, Katie once gave him a jade bracelet, a suet jade pendant, and a set of ruby jewelry. He had sold those items to a jewelry shop, and we already found transaction records from the shop itself. The signature of Katie Baker's father was also found on the transaction records."

Holly was so stunned that she couldn't react.

After a long while, she turned to look at Katie.

Katie gripped Holly's clothes tightly with a face full of tears. When she saw Holly looking at her, she bit her lip and shook her head. "No, I didn't..."

The leading policeman said, "We've brought Ian Daniels here. You can confront him here."

With a wave from him, one of the policemen immediately led Ian out of the police car.

lan was Katie's biological father.

When Katie's mother was ill and bed-ridden, Ian was found sleeping with his secretary.

Katie's mother divorced him during her last breaths. She thought that if she divorced Ian, her daughter would receive some of the property.

However, in truth, Ian was shouldering a large debt. The debt was shared between the couple, so the property under Katie's mother would still go to Ian for the debt could be paid.

After the two were done with the divorce procedures, Katie's mother only had about 100,000 left on hand. The shop and real estate her parents had given her as dowry were all used to pay lan's debt.

Katie's mother was struggling to stay alive and she passed away on the day she received the divorce certificate.

Holly's heart ached for her sister, and Holly hated Ian to the bone. She took Katie into the Taylor Family and raised Katie in place of her sister, which was how Katie cut off all ties with the Daniels Family.

When Holly saw Ian again, her eyes were filled with disbelief.

She couldn't believe that the jewelry she gave Katie had been given to lan by her own niece. Not only that, Katie even framed Madeline and shoved the blame on her. No, this cannot be true.

She had raised Katie herself and Katie should know that the person whom she hated the most was Ian. How could Katie give Ian the jewelry Holly had given her?

This couldn't be true.

This couldn't possibly be true!

Holly turned around and led Katie to her side. "Katie, please tell me that this isn't true. There must be some sort of misunderstanding, right?"

"Yes, yes! This isn't true, this isn't true at all..." Katie cried so much that her face was full of tears. She looked at Ian pleadingly and said, "Dad, I am your biological daughter. How could you slander me? Dad, tell the police and Aunt Holly that this isn't true. This just isn't true!"

lan looked defeated. "Katie, just admit it. I was the one who sold the jewelry to the shop. The evidence is clear as day. The jewelry was yours, but I had sold it to the jewelry shop. If you didn't give them to me, it would mean that I was the one who stole them. The jewelry was worth a million, so if I am really charged with theft, I would stay in prison forever. You don't want to put your biological father in jail, do you?"

"How could you say that?" Katie sobbed and gasped for breath. "How could you?!"

Holly stared at her with widened eyes. "What Madeline said was right? You really did it yourself? You gave your jewelry to Ian, but you blamed it on Madeline and caused her to be almost to death by Dan?"

Dan, who had been trying to hide, was suddenly mentioned in this terrible manner. His handsome face turned from pale to red and he could feel his stomach churning.

How could he have been such a jerk?

He wanted so badly to slap himself silly. He lowered his head as much as he could, not daring to look anyone in the eye.

Katie sobbed so much that she couldn't say anything; she knew that she was done for. With the concrete evidence, she could no longer wriggle her way out of this.

Madeline was right. This wasn't a well-planned operation; if someone were rich enough, and if they cared enough, they would easily find out the truth.

That day, the truth was covered up simply because as soon as the incident was discovered, everyone believed that Madeline was the one who stole her jewelry. No one exercised the effort to investigate the matter, nor did they try to prove Madeline's innocence.

Now, the past which had been hidden for six years was now exposed again. With both witnesses and physical evidence, she couldn't blame it elsewhere.

"I'm sorry..." Katie sobbed, kneeling on the ground and holding Holly's leg. "Aunt Holly, I didn't want to do that either... My dad borrowed money from the wrong people, and if he didn't

return the money, they would break his legs. I had no choice, so I could only... I could only give him the jewelry you gave me so that he could pay the debt..."

"Even though I hate him, I still know that he is your biological father. You couldn't sit by as your biological father got into trouble, and I can understand that. However, why did you blame it on Madeline?" Holly was so furious that her face went red and she was trembling all over. "Because of your slander, Maddie almost got beaten to death by Dan! Katie, how could you do this?"

"I didn't want to do that either, Aunt Holly, I really didn't. I hold no grudges against Madeline, and I didn't want to harm her. It was Angie and Isabel who forced me to do that..." Katie shook her head in tears. "I had the jewelry with me and was going to give it to my dad, but Angie and Isabel found me. Isabel told me to put the bracelet in Madeline's room. She said that if I don't do what she says, she would tell you that I was still communicating with my dad. She said that she would ask you and Uncle George to send me back to the Daniels Family..."

She held Holly's leg tightly, heaving silent sobs. "Aunt Holly, Isabel is the only young mistress of the Taylor Family. Angie was also the only young mistress of the Wendel Family. They are both treasured by the Wendels and the Taylors, but what about me? I'm only a poor girl staying with the second family of the Taylors. How would I dare to offend them? If I did, I would definitely be sent back to the Daniels Family..."

She didn't want to go back to the Daniels Family.

Her dad was a useless fellow who didn't know anything except for eating, drinking, and wasting himself.

Once upon a time, the Daniels Family was on the same level as the Baker Family. However, her dad had ruined the Daniels Family's company and racked up large debts.

She also had a stepmother, who had given birth to her younger sister.

If she went back to the Daniels Family, she would be her dad's and stepmother's servant. She wouldn't have a single day of happiness in her life.

However, Katie was still respected in the Taylor Family. She lived in a villa and went around in a luxurious car with servants and bodyguards serving her.

She was used to her luxurious life here. When she thought of her life after returning to the Daniels Family, she would shiver in fright.

She would rather die than return to the Daniels Family.

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Chapter 133 Especially Terrifying

When Angie and Isabel threatened her that if she didn't cooperate, they'd ask George to chase her back to the Daniels Family, she agreed without much resistance.

Katie's words put all the Wendels and Taylors present to shame.

Isabel was the daughter Nigel had raised for more than 20 years.

Angie had also been the apple of Michael and Crystal's eyes for more than 20 years.

However, neither Nigel, Michael, nor Crystal knew that the innocent, kind girls in their eyes were actually so cruel and vicious in private.

Crystal already had tears all over her face as she hugged Madeline, sobbing and repeating the same sentence. "I'm so sorry."

When she thought about everything Madeline went through before, she felt her heart ache as if it were being emptied.

The pain went deep into her heart and bones.

She wished she could shred Cameron and Angie to pieces, but even then she wouldn't be able to get rid of the hatred in her heart.

George sighed heavily before he talked to Michael and Crystal. "I was also in the wrong in that incident. I didn't investigate thoroughly, and I allowed Dan to do whatever he pleased..."

He was also prejudiced toward Madeline. Also, since Madeline was brought over by Dan to their home, he allowed Dan to punish Madeline and didn't interfere with Dan's decision.

He never thought that the seemingly kind Katie was actually so evil inside.

Also, the incident happened when Katie was in her teens. Those were supposed to be a girl's cleanest and most wonderful years, but she actually did something like framing Madeline and simply watched as Madeline was almost beaten to death, but she still kept quiet about the truth.

She never even begged for mercy on Madeline's behalf.

Now that he thought about it, it was terrifying.

He thought that they had raised a gentle and kind girl who knew how to repay kindness, but now, they realized they couldn't have been more mistaken.

She was more like a ruthless wolf.

Michael shook his head and stayed silent.

He didn't have the right to blame George.

In fact, he didn't have the right to blame anyone.

He only had himself to blame. That time when his wife had just given birth to his daughter, he had focused his entire attention on taking care of his wife, who was weak and frail. He had overlooked his daughter who was sent into the baby care unit, so Cameron had the chance to switch out his daughter.

He had neglected his duty as a father, so what right did he have to blame anyone else?

The policeman in the lead asked Holly, "Do you still have any objections? If not, we'll take Katie Baker with us to aid in the investigation."

"Aunt Holly, save me, Aunt Holly!" Katie knelt on the ground and hugged Holly's legs, screaming in terror, "Aunt Holly, I don't want to go to jail. Aunt Holly, I'm still so young; if the policemen take me away, my life will be finished! I was still too little then, and I didn't know better. I'm willing to apologize to Maddie, Aunt Holly. I admit to my wrongdoings. Please just save me, save me!"

Holly's heart softened at the sight of Katie weeping so bitterly.

She looked at Madeline, hesitant. "Maddie, Katie was indeed very young at that time. She didn't know better. Can you just, well..."

"I'm one year younger than Katie," Madeline said calmly, looking back at her. "Katie wasn't merciful to me despite my young age. Six years ago, if it weren't for my luck, I would've died."

"I know you've been wronged, but the incident has happened already, so it wouldn't help much if you brought Katie to justice now," said Holly. "Maddie, we'll get Katie to compensate you and apologize to you. Just tell us what compensation you'd like, and we'll do our best to provide."

"What compensation? Can money do anything right now?" Sebastian, who had been silent all this while as he focused on coaxing his precious sons, glanced sideways at her. "Were you underestimating me or Mr. Wendel when you said that? Look at me and Mr. Wendel; do we look like men who would mistreat our wife and daughter? Do you think that the daughter of Wendel Corporation's chairman and the wife of Hart Corporation's president would lack money or any physical thing?"

Holly had an awkward expression now. "Don't get me wrong, I didn't mean it like that. I was just trying to express my sincerity while apologizing..."

Sebastian said indifferently, "If you want to be sincere, quit yapping and let the police take her away. Don't waste our time."

Holly was at a loss.

Her sense of reason told her that letting the police take Katie away would be the fairest choice.

However, in terms of emotion, she couldn't accept this.

She and her husband only had two sons, and Katie was her biological sister's daughter who lost her mother at a young age. Katie's father was unreliable, so she took pity on Katie and raised her like her own daughter.

She worked so hard to raise Katie into the pretty and intelligent girl she was now. Now that Katie was of the age to marry, she would be able to quickly find a good man to marry. Then, she would bear his children and step into the next stage of a blissful life.

Now, if Katie were taken away by the police, her life would be ruined.

Even if they found a good lawyer to work on the fact that Katie was too young during the incident so that her penalty would be lessened, the amount of money involved was simply too big. If they couldn't get Madeline's forgiveness, Katie would have to be jailed for at least two years.

No reputable family would want a woman who had been in jail to marry into their family.

Katie's life would be over.

The more she thought of it, the more upset she got. She couldn't help but beg again, "Maddie, I admit that that incident was all Katie's fault. Katie has done you a disservice, but since it has already happened, even if you send her to jail, it wouldn't help anything. But to Katie, this penalty is too serious. She's at the age to get into talk of marriage, but if you send her to jail right now, her entire life will be ruined. She was wrong, yes, but she shouldn't need to be punished so severely. Maddie, I'm not trying to cover for her, but I want her to compensate you in a different way. Just some kind of way as long as it's not getting taken away by the police. Anything other than that would do."

"Sorry, I don't accept other forms of compensation," Madeline said calmly. "The incident happened six years ago, but no one ever felt like they wronged me or apologized to me. If Sebastian hadn't found out the truth for my sake, I would've bore the name of a criminal all my life. However, she would be able to live her life with peace of mind. She'd marry a good man and live her life in happiness. What about me, though? What did I do to her that I would have to endure the cruel things she did to me?"

Holly knew that justice was on Madeline's side.

She also knew that her request was a little too unreasonable.

However, she couldn't just let it go and let the police take Katie away.

She humbled herself and begged, "Maddie, no matter what, we're all family. Please just see it as a plea from your Aunt Holly to you. Katie is like my own daughter, so if you ruin Katie's life by sending her to prison, I would be heartbroken. I wouldn't be able to live my remaining life in peace. Please just pretend that you're doing a favor for your Aunt Holly and help me. I will be forever indebted to you!"

"A family?" Madeline looked at her, eyebrow raised and a half-smile on her lips. "Miss Baker, your niece falsely accused me of stealing her jewelry in your very own home six years ago. I was thrown into the basement and almost beaten to death. While that was happening, you never said anything about us being a family, nor had you asked Katie to be merciful and let me go."

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Chapter 134 Mocking in Secret

Holly's face went red at the retort, and she couldn't say anything for a long while.

George sighed and patted her softly. "That's enough, Holly. I know you love Katie, but you have to be reasonable. Crimes must meet their due punishment. Katie did something wrong, so she should accept her punishment. She did it to herself, and she had to pay for what she did. You cannot save her."

"No, Uncle George, please..." Katie sobbed as she shook her head. "Uncle George, please, I beg of you, please save me. I didn't know better, and Isabel and Angie forced me to do it. It's too cruel to ruin my life for a single thing I did wrong. Uncle George, save me, please save me..."

"No one is trying to ruin your life," George said. "It was definitely you who did the false accusations and framing. Now the police want to take you away, and that's simply because you should take responsibility for what you've done. That's just the consequences of your actions; you did it to yourself. No one forced it on you."

"She can save me, though..." Katie sobbed. "If she lets me go, she could change my entire life... The incident happened so long ago, so why should I be forced to take responsibility now? I know I've done wrong, and I'm willing to make it up to her. I will compensate her with anything as long as it's not getting jailed!"

"How would you expect to repay kindness with evil?" Madeline curved her lips coldly. "I almost died because of you that day, but you never let me off the hook. In these six years, you also never admitted your wrongdoings or apologized to me of your own accord. It's obvious that you have not really repented or come to your senses. Now, you're wailing because I found evidence. You say you were wrong and begged me to forgive you, but if

there was no evidence at all, I would be branded a thief all my life and you would never reveal the truth. If that's the case, why should I forgive you?"

"I know my mistakes now, I really do..." Katie cried as she crawled over to Madeline's feet and bowed her head in apology. "Maddie, please be merciful and forgive me just this once. I was also forced to do it; Angie and Isabel threatened me, so I had no choice... Madeline, you're only one year younger than me. You know how important reputation is for girls like us. If I really go to jail, my life would be over. Maddie, please take pity on me and let me go just this once. I'll be forever indebted to you. I swear that I'll remember your kindness all my life, and I'll do whatever you tell me to do in the future. I swear, I swear!"

"Yes, reputation is very important to a girl. If her reputation gets ruined, her whole life would be ruined as well..." Madeline smiled an ironic smile as she spoke. "Look, you know it so well! You know that, but you still wanted to frame me and ruin my reputation. Why should I forgive you if you're so evil?"

Cedric couldn't stand it anymore as he interrupted, "Maddie, why are you so unforgiving? Katie has already admitted to her mistakes, so why would you break Aunt Holly's heart because of her? I think—"

"Shut up, Cedric!" Crystal was furious. Her face was flushed, and she had a piercing glare as she reprimanded, "Get out right now. Get lost!"

Michael was taken aback by her outburst and hastily patted her comfortingly on the back. "Crystal, don't get so worked up now. He's an imbecile, so don't stoop to his level. I'll kick him out right now!"

Joseph, who was standing nearest to Cedric, gave Cedric a forceful kick on the thigh. "How dumb are you? Cedric, if you're so compassionate, why don't you try getting called a thief and then get beaten to near-death? If you were the one being called a thief and getting beaten almost to death six years ago, only then would you have the right to talk about forgiveness. If not, then shut your damn mouth! You're just a hypocrite!"

"He's right." Jonathan glared at Cedric. "Cedric, half a year ago, you got into a conflict with someone at the bar. They were many in number, but only a few were on your side. You were at a disadvantage, but since they were in the wrong, they had to take responsibility. After that, you called the police and got them all arrested, but they pulled some strings and asked you to let them go. What did you say back then?"

Cedric immediately went red in the face.

What did he say?

He said that revenge was inevitable.

That was the only time he had been mistreated in all his life. He was furious, and even when the other side asked his dad's business partner to beg for mercy, he didn't let up. In the end, all of them were sent to jail.

Even though they were only in jail for six months, it didn't matter. His wrath was quelled.

They had begged for forgiveness then, and they had asked a very important business partner of Wendel Corporation.

His dad went against the pressure and made the decision for him. That business partner's plea was ignored, and justice was served.

Of course, he also insisted that the other party pay for their crimes.

He felt like he had actually turned into a hypocrite like his brother said.

At that thought, he blushed in embarrassment and admitted his mistakes as he lowered his head. "I'm sorry, Dad, Mom, Jonathan, Joseph, and Maddie. I was wrong. I won't do that again..."

Madeline was speechless.

She had to admit that everyone was a contradicting individual, and they had many sides to them.

Take Cedric for example—he was an especially complex person.

He was always so bold and unafraid, and he was especially wild and proud. He looked like someone who would never bow his head and apologize to anyone.

In truth, he was really lacking in the intelligence department. However, he wouldn't get too stubborn. He would apologize sincerely once he knew his faults, and he wasn't even mad at his brother Joseph for kicking him. His apology was especially sincere.

She was truly mad when he offended her, so mad that she wanted to dice him up and ignore him for the rest of her life.

However, when he lowered his head and apologized, she couldn't bring herself to get mad.

Why would she get mad at an imbecile?

If he kept being like this, he would learn to improve soon enough when he stepped into the outside world.

Someday, he might get unfortunate enough that his lack of smarts would be the death of him.

She wasn't obliged to teach him, after all.

Hence, she ignored Cedric and comforted Crystal. "Mom, it's okay. I'm not mad, so you don't have to be mad either. Joseph had kicked him just now, so that counts as punishment for him. Do calm down."

Joseph not only kicked Cedric, he also gave Cedric a lesson.

Those words weren't meant only for Cedric; they were meant for Holly as well.

Would she want to be a hypocrite?

When Holly asked for mercy on Katie's behalf, she was already one.

Everyone there weren't fools, and they understood perfectly what Joseph secretly meant.

No matter how unwilling Holly was to let Katie go, she could no longer ask for mercy on Katie's behalf.

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Chapter 135 Do Not Wish Upon Others What You Do Not Desire

If she continued begging for mercy on Katie's behalf, she would be a hypocrite.

Her husband and sons were present, so how would she dare to be called so in front of them?

She could only watch as Katie was taken away by the police.

Katie wailed and struggled, begging for Holly to save her. Holly was heartbroken by Katie's weeping, and she cried many tears as well, but she couldn't do anything.

If Katie were innocent, she would protect Katie no matter what.

However, now they had both witness and physical evidence of Katie falsely accusing Madeline, Madeline called the police to arrest Katie so that she could clear her name. Madeline hadn't done anything wrong, but if Holly continued to beg for mercy on Katie's behalf, she would be the hypocrite Joseph spoke of. What could she do?

She couldn't do anything.

Katie struggled with all her might, but in the end she was still forced into the police car.

The car started, and her wailing screams for help trailed off in the distance.

Holly was so sorrowful that she felt her heart break.

Even if Katie really did something wrong, the incident had happened so long ago. Her two sons were studying overseas at that time, and they had graduated two years back. They were working in companies now, and they were swamped with work every day. They had limited time with her, so Katie was the one who stayed by her side and kept her company.

She loved Katie like her own daughter, so she couldn't accept the fact that Katie was suddenly taken away by the police, and that Katie's life was ruined.

She was angry that Madeline could be so heartless, and she even hated Michael and Crystal as well.

She was mad that Michael and Crystal hadn't respected her and refused to understand her. They didn't even try to convince Madeline to let Katie go.

The more she thought about it, the angrier and more unresigned she got. She reached up and pressed her temples as she said, "I have a headache. I don't think I can join the cocktail party tomorrow."

With that, she turned and walked toward her car.

Ethan and Stephen hastily blocked her way.

Ethan gripped her arm. "Mom, what are you doing? If you're feeling unwell, we can help you inside to rest. We'll ask Uncle Michael to fetch the family doctor to take a look at you. If you go home now, you'll get tired from the journey, so won't you feel even more ill?"

George also walked over and warned in a low voice, "Enough. Haven't you embarrassed yourself enough? Quit the nonsense and get inside."

When George said that, Holly felt even more upset.

She wanted Michael and Crystal to say something nice and allow her to go into the living room.

In the end, Michael and Crystal never said a word, letting her go just like she had said she would. Who did they think she was?

In her anger, she pushed George and her two sons away. Then, she strode toward the car. "Leave me alone. I'm feeling unwell and I want to go home!"

She hoped that Michael and Crystal would stop her and say something nice to her.

Her dear niece was taken away by the police in the presence of so many people. She didn't feel too good about it, and her pride was also wounded.

She needed Michael and Crystal to give her a way to back out of this situation so that she could remain at Wendel House and be with Michael and his family.

However, none of the Wendels came over to stop her even when she walked right next to the car.

Even the four Wendel brothers had no reaction.

She was so furious that her entire body trembled. She forcefully opened the door and got in the car.

George stopped her and scolded, "What are you on about? Six years ago, Maddie was almost beaten to death at our house. Crystal hadn't even voiced her displeasure yet, so what right do you have to sulk like this?"

"I wasn't the one who beat her!" Holly felt annoyed and wronged. Even her voice was shaking. "Dan was the one who did it, so what's that got to do with me?"

"Dan was a child back then. Were you a child also?" George was so furious that his expression turned dark. "If the beating didn't have anything to do with you, what about Katie framing Madeline? You had raised this niece of yours who is capable of framing someone else in her teenage years. She was indifferent when she saw Maddie being beaten almost to death by Dan. She deserves to be arrested. What right do you have to be sulking in front of my sister and my brother-in-law?"

"You also said that Katie is my niece who I raised on my own. Can't they just let Katie go for my sake?" The more Holly talked, the more her heart hurt. Tears streamed down her face. "I've spent so much effort raising her, but now she's taken away by the police just because they wanted it to happen. Have they thought about my feelings? You are Crystal's biological brother, and I am her sister-in-law. How can they not be considerate about me and my feelings and just let Katie go this once?"

"What about you? Can you calm down and be considerate of Michael and Crystal?" George looked at her, frowning. "Holly, stop thinking about what you want. Step in Michael and Crystal's shoes for a moment. What if it were Ethan or Stephen who was framed by someone six years ago and sent to the basement to be beaten almost to death? Six years later, you finally discovered the truth. Would you let the one who framed your son off the

hook?"

Holly was stunned.

Would she?

Of course not.

If anyone dared to frame her sons and even beat her sons almost to death, she would be merciful to not kill that culprit with her own hands. How could she forgive them?

George continued, "Holly, both Ethan and Stephen are here. Please, tell me your truest thoughts while they are listening. If six years ago, Ethan and Stephen were the ones who were framed and beaten almost to death, and you could forgive the culprit nonetheless, I won't stop you anymore. You can go wherever you want. Now tell me, can you forgive them?"

Holly's lips trembled. She couldn't make a sound.

Her two sons were standing right beside her, and she couldn't even lie in her anger.

If she said she could forgive the culprit, her sons would be heartbroken.

Her heart would ache for her sons as well.

If someone framed her sons and beat her sons almost to death, what sort of mother would she be if she could forgive them?

"You can't forgive them, can you?" George said in a low voice, "Holly, you shouldn't wish upon others what you don't desire yourself! If you cannot forgive them, what right do you have to ask Crystal and Michael to forgive Katie? Are they being disrespectful to you, or are you just causing unnecessary trouble?"

Since George had put it so bluntly, Holly couldn't help but admit that she was indeed causing unnecessary trouble.

What right did she have to ask Michael and Crystal to do something she couldn't do?

Michael and Crystal didn't owe her anything.

She even hoped that Michael and Crystal could come over to stop her. It would already be a miracle if they didn't hate her.

She lowered her head and covered her mouth. More tears ran down her cheeks, but she no longer said anything.

George knew then that she realized what she did wrong. She was simply too proud to admit it aloud.

He sighed and put an arm over her shoulder. He led her back to Michael and Crystal, then apologized in her stead. "Michael, Crystal, please don't be angry with her. She was simply heartbroken for Katie, and she couldn't properly understand what was going on. She knows her mistakes now. That incident was our fault. I hadn't taken good care of Maddie, and I allowed this injustice to happen to her in my own home. I promise that if I have the chance to, I will make it up to her. I will also take good care of her for you."

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Chapter 136 Even Better

Holly lowered her head without making a sound. She had silently agreed with George.

Michael didn't say any words of understanding. He simply gestured a welcome. "Come, let's sit in the living room."

He didn't even say a word to smooth things over, so it was apparent that he was angered as well.

Crystal didn't even spare Holly a glance as she took Madeline with her to the living room.

She had been spoiled since young, and her two brothers also loved her. After getting married, Michael also treasured her, so if she didn't like anyone, she could just express it without worrying about other things.

After all, she had the right to.

There was hatred lurking in Crystal's heart, whereas Holly lost all her confidence she had when she threw a tantrum just now.

Even though the Taylors and the Wendels were more or less evenly matched, upon closer inspection, the Taylors were quite considerably lower in status compared to the Wendels.

She had two outstanding sons, but Crystal's four sons were even more outstanding than hers.

If a family were to prosper and maintain that prosperity, simply having money wouldn't be enough. They needed people to handle business, politics, and military well, and it would be even better if they had people talented in the fields of science, education, and arts.

Of Crystal's four sons, her eldest son Jonathan had inherited Wendel Corporation, while her second son Joseph was a special researcher working with the country.

The national special researchers were all talents of the highest level. Only one would be picked out of ten million people.

Joseph had contributed vastly to the country at a young age, and that was how he was promoted to the level of a special researcher.

On the surface, Joseph didn't seem any different from a normal researcher, but as soon as Joseph left the research institute, bodyguards would come over to protect him, and those people were armed with guns.

In Wendel City, not many could be treated like that.

Joseph was only a little more than 20 years old now, so his future would be very bright indeed.

Crystal's third son, Connor, was working a top secret job; even George didn't know what exactly Connor's job was. Meanwhile, Holly suspected that even Michael and Crystal had no idea.

However, she had heard George mention that Connor got promoted recently, and he would be sent to Dusktown for work soon.

George also said that he once saw a middle-aged person standing with Connor. That person was famous in Dusktown, but they treated Connor with utmost respect and even a little bit of fear.

When Connor left, a large group of people followed him. George could recognize one of them; they were a senior cadre in the public service system of Dusktown.

Even a senior cadre would have to follow behind Connor. Connor looked like the leader of the group, so even George was wondering what exactly Connor's job entailed and what rank of cadre he actually held.

However, no one dared to ask Connor about it. Even if someone did, they would only get the same answer—it was a secret.

No one knew what Connor's job was, but anyone who knew Connor well enough would know that he too had a bright future ahead of him.

With his level at that young age of his, he would be formidable when he grew more mature.

Of Crystal's four sons, the least successful would be her fourth son, Cedric.

However, no matter how unsuccessful Cedric was, he was talented in business. He had announced early on that he would establish his own company and feed himself. He didn't want a single cent from Wendel Corporation, and he did exactly that.

Within a year after his graduation, the game company he established on his own was now famous and raking in large sums of money.

A game company might sound a little improper, but George had praised Cedric countless times in front of her. He said that Cedric had Michael's genes, and he was sensitive to business and full of vigor. He had a keen eye too, so if he continued developing, Cedric would turn his game company into a second Wendel Corporation given enough time.

Of Michael's and Crystal's four sons, Connor was half in the military and half in the political area. Jonathan and Cedric were both in business, whereas Joseph was working in the sciences. Of Michael's nephews, Eric Wendel was a professor in university, and David Wendel was an actor skilled in both song and filming. Jack was a lawyer, and Nicholas had just graduated from college and was poised to enter the entertainment industry...

All in all, the new generation of Wendels were all outstanding save for Nicholas, who had just graduated from college.

The Wendels had amazing talent in all the areas mentioned before, namely military, politics, business, education, arts, and sciences.

As such, Holly couldn't make enemies out of the Wendels.

Her sons were lucky to have such amazing relatives. She couldn't let Michael and his wife find fault with her sons simply because of her.

Some relatives would be closer than others, and if their relationship went well, they could even act like siblings. They would be able to look out and care for each other then.

If they weren't on good terms, however, cousins would mean even less than friends.

Even an extra friend could open up a new path, much less one's own relatives.

Her own family had fallen to ruin and couldn't help her sons much. She couldn't lose this support for her sons from her husband's side because of her one niece.

She endured it painfully, but she still managed to force a smile on her face. She endured the unfairness and humiliation as she walked with her husband into the Wendels' living room.

Having lived for so long, she finally understood what it meant to submit to someone simply because you needed them.

She couldn't blame anyone for her husband and sons who couldn't match Crystal's.

Since she couldn't win, she could only lay low and try to please Crystal's family.

If not, her days would get even worse than they were now.

Crystal was an intelligent and sensitive woman, and she knew what Holly was thinking.

She also knew that if she said some nice words and allowed Holly some grace, Holly would look better in front of those people, and she would also feel much better.

However, she didn't want to do what Holly wished and ignored the woman completely.

Because of some jewelry, her daughter almost died at their house. She was already gracious enough not to hold it against them.

However, Holly even had the nerve to beg for mercy on Katie's behalf, spouting nonsense about the damage being done and to let Katie off the hook, and that they'd make it up to Madeline.

Crystal's daughter wouldn't fancy compensation from others.

Also, Holly's argument that Katie should be let off the hook because the damage was already done was absolute nonsense.

Since the damage was done, shouldn't the culprit pay for what they did?

Since the damage was done, should the victim simply lament their misfortune, and the culprit could be free of all consequences?

She was so enraged by those words; if her sister-in-law wasn't the one who said it, she would've definitely slapped them across the face.

Yet, she was expected to comfort Holly and save her pride?

As if!

If it weren't for George's sake, Crystal would've kicked Holly out in an instant!

Some people would act high and mighty if one were meek in front of them, but if one showed one's strength, those people would weaken themselves instead.

Holly was one of those people.

If Crystal really spoke in Holly's favor, Holly would feel very humiliated, and she might even attack Crystal in return.

However, now that Crystal was unrelenting and refused to even look at Holly, Holly would panic even more. She would rack her brains and think of what to do so that Crystal wouldn't bear a grudge against her.

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Chapter 137 What Certificate?

Even though she wanted to apologize and pretend that nothing happened today, she was too proud to say sorry to Michael and Crystal. Hence, Michael and Crystal never spoke a word to her throughout that night, ignoring her as if she never existed.

Not only that, even the Wendel brothers and Madeline acted the same. No one spoke to her at all.

There were a few instances when she couldn't bear it anymore and wanted to just leave, but she didn't dare to.

She didn't want to turn against her husband, and she also didn't want Michael and Crystal to hate her sons by extension. As such, she could only endure it.

After dinner, the family left the dining hall and moved to the living room to chat.

Crystal led Madeline to sit beside her, and she kept singing praises of her daughter, going on and on about how good and outstanding her daughter was.

Michael sat on the other side of her, a smile on his face. He would voice his agreement sometimes, obviously thinking the same thing Crystal was.

Holly had known Madeline for more than ten years. Before this trip to the Wendel House, she thought of Madeline as the pitiful girl who was taken into the Taylor Family. Madeline was without identity or position, and she looked more like Isabel's servant.

It was because of that that she could be so bold when she asked for mercy on Katie's behalf.

After all, she looked down on Madeline from the bottom of her heart.

Wasn't she just a loveless little servant?

She could just say sorry and compensate her with something nice. It shouldn't be an issue so serious that her niece would have to be sent to jail.

After that dinner, she realized that she was wrong; she had been completely wrong.

Madeline was no longer the pitiful girl who had taken refuge in the Taylor Family.

She was now the young mistress of the Wendel Family, as well as the apple of Michael and Crystal's eyes.

From what she could see, even the Wendel brothers weren't as loved and Madeline was.

Not only that, judging from Sebastian's attitude toward Madeline, she was also wrong in thinking that he only stayed with Madeline for the sake of their sons.

Because of Madeline's unbearable experiences in her youth, she thought that Sebastian would look down on Madeline before coming here, and that he definitely had no love for Madeline.

He only did it for their two sons and to maintain some pride for Madeline.

After all, be it Dusktown or Wendel City, illegitimate children would always be regarded with disdain. They had no status to speak of.

She didn't see much future in Aldo and Buddy, and she thought of Madeline, Aldo, and Buddy as toys for Sebastian to while away the time with.

When Sebastian had had enough, he would naturally toss Madeline and her sons aside.

However, after being with them for a few hours that night, she realized that she couldn't have been more wrong.

Sebastian didn't just love his children—he absolutely loved them to bits.

His gaze was gentle and full of love whenever he looked at his two sons.

Since Sebastian liked Aldo and Buddy so much, would he marry Madeline for Aldo and Buddy in the future?

Madeline had truly gone through unbearable experiences when she was young. Her identity was humble and she couldn't even be shown in public, but now things were different.

Now, Madeline was the young mistress of the Wendel Family, and she was more or less on par with Sebastian now.

If Sebastian didn't mind Madeline's past, he could very well marry her, thus making Aldo and Buddy legitimate children.

If Aldo and Buddy were legitimate children, they would be Sebastian's eldest and second eldest son. In other words, they would have the right to inherit the property of the Hart Family.

Imagine, the Hart Family!

The Hart Family was the top family in Dusktown!

Even with the Wendels and the Taylors combined, they couldn't match the nobility of the Hart Family.

If Madeline really became the mistress of the Hart Family while Aldo and Buddy became the heirs, what would happen if Madeline, Aldo, and Buddy rose to power and targeted her because of the incident involving Katie?

As she thought that, she could feel cold sweat break out on her back.

She was feeling insecure now. Having stayed silent for the whole night, she finally couldn't hold it in as she forced a smile at Madeline. "Maddie, since you and Sebastian already have children, when are you holding your wedding?"

She was testing the waters.

She was trying to gauge Sebastian's attitude toward Madeline, and she desperately hoped that Sebastian had contacted Madeline solely for the children's sake.

Also, he might have treated Aldo and Buddy well because it was a new experience for him to suddenly have two children of his own.

When the novelty of the experience had passed, he would toss Madeline and her children aside.

Then, she wouldn't have to fret about her offending Madeline just now for Katie's sake.

Madeline was dumbfounded at the question.

A wedding?

She had never thought about having a wedding with Sebastian.

She and Sebastian had simply lived together so that their children could have a complete family. There was no need for a wedding.

When Holly saw Madeline's stunned expression, she sighed in relief, her tense lips relaxing.

Good.

Sebastian was only fooling around with Madeline, and he hadn't planned to marry her.

Sebastian, who was playing with Buddy, caught sight of her expression and smiled. "Maddie and I have already gotten the certificate, and as for the wedding..."

He glanced at Madeline. "Maddie has been a bit busy recently, so she doesn't have time for that. We'll wait a while until she has more time before we talk about the wedding."

"Certificate?" Holly widened her eyes. "What certificate?"

"The marriage certificate, of course. What else?" Sebastian glanced at her and put on a half-smile. "Miss Baker, I see that you're not quite elated to hear this news, and you look more scared instead... What's wrong? Do you not wish for Maddie and I to get our marriage certificate?"

Holly shook her head subconsciously. "That's not it. How could I? You and Maddie are such a great match, you're perfect for each other..."

Her face was pale and her heart was racing.

Madeline and Sebastian had gotten their marriage certificate?

They actually did it!

It turned out that Madeline was already the mistress of the Hart Family!

Aldo and Buddy, those two b*stards, would have transformed into the heirs of the Hart Family!

As for her, she had just offended the mistress of the Hart Family and the future heirs...

Sebastian ignored her and continued playing with Buddy.

Holly had thought viciously that Madeline's humble status couldn't compare to his. She also thought that Sebastian would look down on Madeline and that he wouldn't think much of her, hence he wouldn't dream of marrying her. Sebastian could see through those thoughts of Holly's perfectly well.

However, Holly would never understand that to him, Madeline was kind, brave, persistent, and real. She was much more adorable than people like Holly, who grew up in a normal family and was educated properly, but had no sense of right and wrong.

Indeed, Madeline was forced to kneel in front of people before, and she was slapped and shut in the basement and even beaten until she was gravely injured.

She had also bowed to people before, and was reprimanded and had to serve many people like a humble servant.

However, was that any reason for Madeline to be subpar and to be scorned at?

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Chapter 138 Understanding

She had never stolen anything; she was forced to kneel and was slapped and shut in the basement to be beaten because she was too young and couldn't resist. She never wanted those to happen.

She waited on the Taylors like a servant, acting so humble like a slave because she knew to repay kindness. She was grateful to the Taylors and was willing to repay what they did for her. She didn't really think of herself as a slave.

From all this time with her, he came to know about Madeline's bravery, persistence, optimism, sunny outlook, self-respect, and self-love.

This girl had too many brilliant qualities.

He only felt sorrow when he thought about her kneeling in front of people, of her getting slapped and whipped and having to wait on people like a servant. He never thought that she was lowly.

Apparently, people like Holly had other ideas.

People like Holly thought that the young master of the Hart Family should have a wife who was untouched by the world—a pretty flower who grew up in a prestigious family. They thought his wife should be someone who had never bowed to anyone before, and instead was the one being waited on and admired at, and be wholly unworldly.

However, they didn't know that he was once thrown into an organization that worked for the country because his father wanted to train him.

In that organization, there were all sorts of people from different backgrounds. With them, he had rolled on swamp grounds, ate rock-like bread, slept in caves, starved until his eyes went red, and even ate earthworms dug fresh from the dirt out of desperation.

He had traversed several cities, and could speak more than ten local accents. He could even swear in the local language.

He wasn't some unworldly person himself, so he wouldn't require his wife to be of a high position to shine brilliantly and remain untouched by the world.

His standard for choosing a partner was actually quite simple. He only had one requirement—he wanted to like what he saw.

Coincidentally, he liked what he saw in Madeline.

Even though she had knelt to people before, and she was slapped and had waited on people like a servant, he still liked what he saw.

Because of that, Madeline had the right to be his wife.

If the two really developed feelings for each other in the future, he might really hold a grand wedding for Madeline and amaze everyone who looked down on her!

Nigel and George both had houses in Wendel City, so they didn't stay in Wendel House. When it was about time, they bid farewell and left.

On the way back to the Taylors' other house, Holly was still in a daze.

She couldn't believe that the pitiful and lowly girl, who would be slapped and punished at the slightest inconvenience, would turn into the mistress of the Hart Family today!

"How could it be?" She mumbled, turning to look at George. "How could Old Master Hart agree to Sebastian and Madeline getting their marriage certificate? Families like us would want their sons to marry a nice woman of flawless upbringing and similar status. How could the Harts—"

"What's wrong with Maddie's background?" George frowned as he looked at her. "Maddie is my sister's and brother-in-law's only daughter, the young mistress of the Wendel Family. Even though the Wendels aren't as prestigious as the Harts, they're still the top family in Wendel City. They had been a famous family for a long time, and it wouldn't be too far-fetched for the young mistress of the Wendel Family to get married to the young master of the Hart Family, would it?"

"I'm not saying that the Wendel Family isn't on par with the Hart Family. I mean... Maddie didn't grow up in the Wendel Family..." Holly said, "Maddie had been considered Cameron's daughter for the last 20 or so years. You know how Phoebe and her daughter treated her. They slapped her and forced her to kneel before, and they treated her like the lowliest servant. Wouldn't a prestigious family like the Hart Family think that she's... too lowly?"

She wanted to use the word 'dirty', but Madeline was George's biological niece, so she changed her wording in case she offended George.

"How could you think that?" George stared at her in surprise. "Maddie was still young then, and she was bullied. Phoebe and her daughter had terrible character, so what does that have to do with Maddie's worth? I think Maddie is pretty decent. She speaks and acts elegantly, and I heard Stephen say that Sam was grateful to Maddie for saving him, so he hired a lot of teachers for her. She learnt martial arts, music, chess, calligraphy, and painting. She had her lessons on etiquette, horse-riding, golf, billiards, and even flower arrangement. Stephen said that Maddie would have at most six different classes every day. He also praised her for her smarts, and she was very quick to learn. He even felt sorry for Maddie for having been born in the wrong family, or she would've become the most prestigious lady in Dusktown..."

At that, he couldn't help but sigh. "Now, we're sure that Maddie was born to the right parents after all. She was just unlucky for the first 20 years, and her beautiful destiny was stolen. Now that the truth is revealed, she can go back to where she belongs. Maddie now has Michael and Crystal to protect her, and she also has her sons with Sebastian. Only happiness awaits her..."

Holly could no longer hear what George said next.

She could only think of Katie.

She was Crystal's sister-in-law, so how could Crystal get so lucky? Crystal hadn't taken care of her biological daughter for long, and when she was reunited with her daughter, her daughter had already become the mistress of the Hart Family.

Now, the Wendels and the Harts were joined by marriage, and the Wendels would rise to a higher status. Hence, the four sons of the Wendels would shine even brighter.

What about her, though?

She had raised her niece like her own daughter, and after a single meeting with Madeline, her niece was sent by Madeline into prison!

She even wanted her daughter to marry Jonathan so that their family would have a closer relationship with the Wendels. Now, not even a normal family would want their son to marry a woman who had been in jail, much less Jonathan.

When Katie was released, she would have no say in who she got married to. She couldn't even think about getting married into a decent family.

With that thought in mind, she felt so sorrowful that tears began to fall from her eyes again.

Noticing that she was crying again, George couldn't help but frown. "Come on, stop thinking so much. Don't worry about offending Crystal and Maddie today, or worry that they would take out their anger on Ethan and Stephen. They are both reasonable people, so as long as Ethan and Stephen are reasonable, Crystal and Maddie won't blame it on them."

The sense of understanding between a married couple was sometimes unmatched.

They had been together for more than 20 years now, so George knew what Holly was thinking about.

Holly must have misunderstood, but George didn't think Holly was unforgivable.

Everyone had biases, of course. Holly had brought up Katie herself, so if Holly were indifferent about Katie's imprisonment, that would be true terror.

As long as she didn't do anything too extreme, he allowed Holly to be sad about it.

After all, he and his sons would comfort Holly and bring her to the truth.

Time could change everything. In due time, Holly would finally understand, and things would be alright again.

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Chapter 139 Generous Move

The cocktail party convened the next day as expected.

After the party officially started, Michael, Crystal, Madeline, and four of his sons descended down the spiral staircase engraved with flowers slowly.

Madeline, who was walking between Michael and Crystal, was wearing a white gown that was embroidered with diamonds, and it shone brightly as if it was the night sky.

At this moment, everyone's gaze landed on her.

What happened in the Wendels recently had been circulating among the elitists in Wendel City.

Anyone with access to a wider circle would know that the young lady of the Wendel Family was switched at birth by Cameron, and the past young lady of the Wendel Family, Angie Wendel, was Cameron's daughter while Cameron's daughter, Madeline Taylor was actually Michael and Crystal's real daughter.

Now that the truth was revealed, Angie returned to the Colts in Dusktown while Madeline was taken back to the Wendels.

Some of them felt like the Wendels didn't handle the situation well because it was too cruel to discard their 'adopted' daughter without any warning. Nevertheless, those who knew more explained what happened between Angie and Nicholas.

Upon hearing that, those who pitied Angie stopped trying to defend her and ended up sympathizing with Michael and Crystal instead. So what if the Wendels are the richest in Wendel City? They can't even take care of their own daughter well and ended up raising their enemy's daughter for more than 20 years after they got switched at birth. How pitiful!

As Madeline grew up in Worrick, she never stayed in Wendel City before, so most of the people present tonight had never met her. It was obvious that they all thought that Madeline was raised up terribly because Cameron was an illegitimate daughter that was notoriously known for having a terrible reputation. It was rumored that Madeline was kicked out of the house by Cameron when she was ten years old and almost died on the streets. Just then, they all thought that a girl that had been roaming the streets ever since she was young would surely grow up to become a jittery person with no confidence, but they were all wrong.

Madeline, who showed up at the cocktail party, was not only gorgeous but extremely elegant at the same time. Just then, her tremendous charisma shocked everyone at the scene, especially the single men there as their eyes brightened up instantly.

As Madeline was the Wendel Family's only daughter, it was obvious that she was pampered seeing how Michael and Crystal stood at both of her sides as if they were her bodyguards.

Other than that, she was also a surreal beauty. Madeline had a pale complexion, thick eyebrows and bright eyes. Her facial features were extremely intricate, and her body was curvy without any hint of extra fat, especially her bewitching slender waist that made others somehow feel like touching it to feel her skin.

Even the thought of it was an enjoyment.

Love at first sight existed as long as someone was extremely beautiful.

During the cocktail party, many single men had completely fallen for Madeline's charms as they waited impatiently for Michael to do his opening speech before rushing to Madeline to introduce themselves to her in hopes that she would give them her phone numbers so that they'd be able to make their first moves.

If they could get the beautiful woman to fall in love with them, they might not even need to work as hard anymore considering the wealth that she could bring to them.

On the other hand, Michael and Crystal walked down the staircase along with Madeline before they stopped.

Then, a waiter came and bowed slightly before holding the platter filled with glasses of wine in front of Michael.

After taking a glass of wine, Michael raised a toast to express his gratitude to all the guests that came. "Friends and family of us Wendels, to celebrate my daughter's return, my wife and I decided to throw a cocktail party, and we would like to thank all of you for joining us tonight. I hope that all of you guys can take care of my daughter in the future after this. Here's a toast for you guys!"

He raised his glass at the crowd before bringing it to his mouth and downed the entire glass of wine.

After Michael placed the glass down, another waiter walked toward him holding a platter.

This time, there was a document on the platter.

At this moment, Michael took the document and declared, "I'm sure everyone here already knows that my daughter was switched at birth cruelly when she was born, and the truth was only revealed recently, allowing me to finally meet my real daughter now. I acknowledge that it was my inability that caused her to be stranded on the streets, so after discussing with my wife, we've decided to give Madeline 5% of Wendel Corporation's share as compensation to her, and all of you are to bear witness of it... Maddie..."

He called out for Madeline before taking the pen and gave it to Madeline. "Come sign your name on this."

What he said created an uproar among the crowd.

Even in Dusktown, the capital of the country, or Wendel City, the city adjoining Dusktown, daughters in influential families had no inheriting rights as per past agreements despite the law stating that both male and female had equal rights for inheritance. However, influential families placed strong emphasis on family traditions. As the share of the family business was fundamental for the family's growth, the inheritor of the family must have all of the share to prevent the company's share from getting divided and causing the inheritor to lose say in the company before the family business broke into shambles. Even a son who wasn't an inheritor could only get a small portion of share if they were extremely pampered, while

those who weren't had to work hard on their own as they wouldn't be able to get any assets or budget from the family.

When the head of the family was still healthy, he would already prepare a will to distribute his inheritance; the family business, company shares and assets would all go to the son.

For the daughter, she would only be able to get cash, a few houses and small companies if she was really pampered, while the others would only get one or two houses.

In short, it was extremely rare for the head of the family to give family corporation shares to daughters willingly.

Even though Michael and Crystal had four sons, they actually gave five percent of their company's share to their only daughter instead. Although five percent didn't sound like a lot, it was definitely still a generous move because Wendel Corporation had a total net worth of up to billions. While this didn't mean that Madeline had become a billionaire, she was definitely financially secure because she would be able to profit every year as long as Wendel Corporation was still around.

There were many guests of different genders that came to the party tonight

Upon hearing Michael's decision, the single men's gaze toward Madeline became more eager while the ladies stared at her with jealousy.

If only our fathers are as generous as hers!

Nevertheless, Madeline was shocked as well because Michael and Crystal had never told her that they were transferring her a small part of Wendel Corporation's share prior to the party.

Right then, she stared at Michael in shock before she tried to reject him. "Dad, I can't have this..."

"Why not?" Crystal grabbed the pen in Michael's hand before placing it in Madeline's hand. "Maddie, this is your father and my love for you. You should take it and sign your name."

Yet, Madeline hesitated. "I-Is this really a good idea?"

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Chapter 140 A Servant

Instinctively, she glanced at Jonathan.

As all of the company shares were usually meant for the male inheritor, it would mean that Joseph, Connor, and Cedric wouldn't be able to get any shares because all of it would be transferred to Jonathan in the future.

Wouldn't I be snatching what belongs to Jonathan away from him?

Despite that, Jonathan smiled when he noticed Madeline's gaze before he said gently, "Maddie, since Mom and Dad have decided to give it to you, you should take it. After all, I do feel guilty for not being able to take care of you for the past 20 years, and I'm happy that Mom and Dad have decided to give you some shares. I can assure you that I'll work hard in the future so that the shares in your hand won't lose their value."

"Jonathan, why are you even talking like that?" Connor patted Jonathan's back before he teased, "Why would you say that you won't let Madeline's share lose its value? You should say that you'll work hard so that her profits will double or even triple in the future!"

Immediately, Jonathan broke into laughter before he nodded. "You're right."

At this instance, Jonathan and Connor looked extremely relaxed and calm. It was obvious that the two of them were alright with Michael and Crystal's decision regarding the company shares.

Then, Madeline glanced at Joseph and Cedric before she noticed that they looked calm as well. There were no signs of anger or aggrieved at all.

Since she knew what Madeline was worried about, Crystal walked toward her before holding onto her arm. "Come on, stop staring at your brothers. Your father and I had already discussed this with your brothers, and they have also agreed to it. Your brothers claimed that they'd be less worried if you have those shares with you considering how delicate you are. Even if we won't be here many years later, your brothers will still take care of you for us!"

"Mom—" Madeline held Crystal's arm before she whined. "What are you even talking about? You and Dad are still young!

As Madeline was Crystal's child, she naturally liked Madeline. As Madeline was her own daughter, her presence was pleasing to Crystal's eyes, and she was starting to like Madeline more and more after spending time with her.

Miraculously, the estrangement between the mother and daughter pair disappeared within less than a month.

They'd spend their time every day together to eat, chat, and shop while Crystal would kick Michael to the guest room and get Madeline to sleep with her, so their relationship had been improving a lot.

Occasionally, she'd feel like she had never lost Madeline or missed her growth because Madeline had been growing up with her, and that was why they were able to get so close to each other within such a short time span.

Thus, Crystal felt really happy when Madeline finally started displaying affection to her.

Since she was unable to control herself, she held Madeline's hand and guided her to Michael's side before leading her to sign the document. "Come on, you have to sign this. The guests are still watching, and we can't waste their time any further."

Just then, Madeline had no choice but to sign her name on the share transfer document.

After that, Michael took the document and signed his name in front of everyone before handing the document to the lawyer that came to witness the share transfer process.

At that instance, the document came into effect, and Madeline had a net worth of billions from today onward.

Madeline's fate was a perfect example of Cinderella's transformation.

Just a few weeks ago, she was still an illegitimate daughter that was looked down upon by others, but now, she became the Wendel Family's prized daughter, and Michael even transferred 5 percent of the company's shares to her generously.

Right then, Madeline became popular among the single men.

Not only did she have a large net worth, she was also an exotic beauty!

For the beauty to hold Wendel Corporation's shares with Michael and Crystal as well as her brothers' permissions proved that all of them valued her.

There was a huge difference between marrying a girl who was prioritized by her family and a girl who wasn't.

If one were to marry a girl who was prioritized by her family, her family would surely help their son-in-law out for the girl to be able to live a comfortable life and do their best to help the son-in-law if he had any requests for their girl.

On the other hand, a girl who wasn't prioritized by her family would easily become a burden that would be abandoned if anything bad happened, and the son-in-law wouldn't be able to get anything from her family at all.

However, from the Wendels' attitude, it was clear that Madeline was extremely pampered in the family, so it was time to see which man would be lucky enough to be noticed by the Wendel Family's princess and become one of the Wendels in the future.

After the document was signed, Michael said a few more words before announcing the start of the cocktail party.

Before his speech even ended, there were already a few well-dressed young men walking toward Madeline.

In no time, she was quickly surrounded by a few young men.

At this moment, Madeline was speechless.

What's happening?

Still, all of the people who were invited to the party tonight were not ordinary people. Although they were all eager to get to know Madeline, they still valued their reputation and acted politely before introducing themselves to Madeline in a friendly manner.

Despite that, Madeline was still taken aback because she had never been well-received as a person ever since young.

In the past, she had never joined any of the parties held by the Taylors and would avoid them as much as she could so that Isabel wouldn't bully her.

Thus, she never knew that she could be so popular at an event.

While she was greeting everyone politely and accepting their name cards, Quinton squeezed through the crowd before reaching her and bowed respectfully. "Mrs. Hart, the little young masters miss you, so the Young Master sent me over to pick you up to meet them."

Upon hearing that, all of the single men at the party went quiet.

Huh? Mrs. Hart? Little young masters? Is this a joke?!

The Taylors had always kept it a secret that Madeline saved Sam by doing an in vitro fertilization as it wasn't something to be proud about. As Madeline had been growing up in Worrick ever since she was ten years old, and this was her first appearance in Wendel City, no one knew that she had given birth and was already the mother to two children.

Nevertheless, Madeline was planning to hide the fact that she was already the mother of two, so she smiled at the crowd politely before apologizing, "I'm sorry, but I have to leave now because my sons miss me. Excuse me!"

All of the men were rendered speechless.

S-Sons? The princess of the Wendel Family already has not just one but more sons? How old is she even? How can a girl who barely looks like she's in her twenties have more than one son?!

Those men, who had fallen in love with Madeline because of her beauty and net worth, as well as those who tried to gain her good impression, were all confused right then.

Meanwhile, Madeline ignored all of the shocked looks on the crowd's faces and nodded politely before following Quinton to the second floor.

At the same time, all of the men stared at Madeline and Quinton's retreating figures and started making speculations of Quinton's identity.

Based on Quinton's behavior, he was just a servant, but the way he dressed and his looks were definitely comparable to any of them right there.

If he hadn't said anything, all of them would think that he was just another good looking young master from a reputable family with a noble charisma, but he was none of that as he was just a servant.

At this instance, all of them couldn't help but wonder what kind of reputable family Madeline got married into as even their servant would look and act just like a young master.