

Secret Admiration Finding True Love After Prison

Chapter 181 – 190

Chapter 181 Malicious Girl

1/4

Anne nodded. “Think about it. You have studied from experienced practitioners for years. You wouldn’t make such a basic mistake. And Lydia was **right** there at the time. If it wasn’t her, who else could it have been?”

Meryl remained silent. All these years, she had resisted thinking the worst of people.

First, she had just been reunited with the Stone family. She had no prior conflicts with Lydia. That was their first meeting.

Second, Lydia was only fourteen or fifteen at the time. To harm her by taking an innocent life? It was too far-fetched to believe.

Meryl had always thought that her issues with Lydia were just between them. She couldn’t believe Lydia could be so malicious.

“She managed to frame you and send you to prison for three years. What else is she not capable of?” said Anne.

Anne’s lips pressed into a tight line. “Meryl, you’re too kind to even begin to understand how twisted her mind is.

“But for someone like her, there’s nothing she won’t do. It’s just a matter of you not imagining it,” Anne added.

Meryl remained silent.

“Was it Lydia?” Meryl wondered.

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left now,” said Meryl.

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Anne gently took Meryl’s hand. “So, since you’re so skilled in acupuncture, you shouldn’t let that talent go to waste,” she said encouragingly.

Meryl smiled and placed her fingers back on Anne's pulse. Then she looked at her in surprise.

"Anne, you..." said Meryl.

"What is it?" Anne asked and smile. "Did you find something?" she teased.

Meryl's gaze slowly moved to Anne's abdomen, and Anne followed her eyes to look down at her own stomach.

Neither of the two friends spoke another word.

After a long silence, the door suddenly made a sound.

It was Yancey who had returned.

Yancey was given the guest room to sleep in that night.

When Meryl woke up in the morning, she **was** surprised to find breakfast already set on the table.

Yancey wore an apron. He walked out of the kitchen at that moment.

His long fingers gently gripped the edge of the plate.

Seeing Meryl come out, Yancey instinctively turned his head to

Chapter 181 Malicious Girl asleep?" he asked.

"Yes, Anne doesn't usually wake up early. You don't need to prepare so much breakfast in the future," said Meryl.

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"Okay," Yancey replied, turning to the kitchen to fetch two sets of utensils.

Last night, when Anne suggested keeping Yancey, everyone knew it was just to irritate Dante. Meryl hadn't **given** it much. thought.

But now, she suddenly thought it might be good for Anne to have someone around.

Today was a workday. Meryl remembered Yancey mentioning that he was a college student.

She asked curiously, "Don't you have classes to attend?"

Yancey lowered his head. "I... took a break from school," he said quietly.

Meryl thought for a moment, then understood.

Because he couldn't afford tuition and was in a rush to earn money to pay off his father's gambling debts, Yancey had to take a break from school.

"What's your major?" Meryl asked.

"Medicine," said Yancey. His voice was steady.

"How are your grades?" Meryl asked.

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"They're... okay," Yancey replied, hesitating slightly.

Meryl nodded. "I'll talk to Anne later and have her advance

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some money to you. But don't give it all to your dad at once," she advised.

The easier it is to get money, the less it's valued. Especially for a gambler, that'll only make things worse in the future.

Meryl knew this all too well. After all, she had seen the same thing happen before.

Yancey nodded. "I understand."

In a rush, Meryl quickly ate a little and then grabbed her bag to head to work.

On the way, Meryl pondered that it would be a shame for Yancey to give up his studies. Especially since he was already in his third year of university.

However, since it's Anne who's supporting him financially and taking care of him, it only makes sense that she would be the one to help him continue his education.

Write your comment

Chapter 182 Perform

no at

After the company, Meryl sent a text to Anne to update her on the situation.

Anne replied with an “OK” emoji.

“Meryl, you’ll be performing at the annual meeting in a few days. Have you been practicing the cello lately?” Freya asked.

Freya kindly came over to Meryl’s desk.

1/4

“Have you decided what piece you’ll play? I think there’s a cello in the music room down stairs. Want me to join you for practice during lunch?”

Meryl froze for a moment. She had almost forgotten about performing at the **annual** meeting.

She didn’t have a cello at home, so she would have to borrow the one at the company to practice.

However, if she remembered correctly, her old cello should still be at the Stone Villa.

While she was thinking, a call came in.

It was from Bianca, using the housekeeper’s phone.

“I went to the market early this morning to buy groceries and made all your favorite dishes. Sweetie, why don’t you bring Chandler home for lunch?” Bianca said.

Chapter 182 Perform

Bianca used to treat her like an enemy. But now that she was married to Jacob, Bianca was eager to cozy up to her.

2/4

Meryl found it ironic and instinctively wanted to hang up, but then she remembered she needed to return to the Stone Villa to get her cello.

“Alright, around noon then? I’ll be there,” Meryl said.

Bianca was overjoyed when she heard Meryl agree to come home. “Great! We will be waiting at home. Make sure you bring Chandler back early.”

After hanging up, Bianca was so excited that she immediately called Malcolm.

“Quick, come home! Forget about signing any contracts. Chandler is coming over for lunch...”

“Yes, they’re coming together. Just a flick of his fingers is enough for us to make money . Why bother signing contracts? Hurry back, and don’t miss it!”

After finishing the call, Bianca thought about how it was Chandler’s first visit. They had to be present to make it look

proper.

She sat down on the couch and called Lydia. “Lydia, bring Dalton home for lunch today.”

Lydia was silent for a few seconds before quickly responding, “Is Meryl coming home?”

“Yes, she said she’s bringing Chandler with her.” Bianca’s mood

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Lydia frowned and instinctively tightened her grip on her cup.

“Meryl clearly has something against me. Last night, I invited her. But she said she wouldn’t come and even claimed that the

house we lived in was hers. She threatened to kick us all out.”

“She dares!”

Bianca’s expression darkened instantly. “If she dares bring this up when she gets here, I’ll ensure she can never hold her head high **in** front of Chandler again!”

In Bianca’s eyes, Meryl’s marriage to Chandler was something she shamelessly begged for.

She should be keeping **a** low profile.

By noon, the Stone family was **all** sitting neatly **in** the living.

room.

As the clock ticked to 12:30, no sign of Meryl and Chandler remained. Malcolm’s expression darkened.

“What’s going on? Why aren’t they here yet?” Malcolm asked.

Bianca frowned and said, “I’ll call and check. Maybe they’re stuck in traffic.”

Lydia **lightly** tugged on Dalton's sleeve and said, "Sorry, Dalton, for making **you** wait with me for Meryl. Is this delaying your work?"

Dalton had been busy with **an** important project lately. So, he barely had time to spend with her.

Chapter 182 Perform

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After she spoke, Lydia looked at Malcolm and said, "Dad, Dalton came straight from Galaxy Holdings Group after I called him. There probably isn't traffic. Could it be that Meryl hasn't left yet?"

Sure enough, upon hearing this, Malcolm's expression grew even darker.

Did she think she could do whatever she wanted just because she married Chandler?

Write your comment Write

Chapter 183 Angry

Bianca walked back in with the phone. "She said she's busy this afternoon and can **only** come after work."

"This

is outrageous!" Malcolm slammed his hand on the table. "She keeps making excuses not to come home. If she doesn't want to return, she shouldn't bother!"

Lydia chimed in. "Is Meryl really busier than Dalton? He made time to come over. She could have at least called ahead to let us know. Now, we've all been waiting for nothing. Let's just eat."

As she finished speaking, Lydia picked up a spoon. She was ready to serve Dalton.

Dalton gently held her hand. "Since they won't be here until the evening, I'll head back to the office. I still have work to do."

Lydia was taken aback. "Dalton, why don't you stay and eat lunch first?"

"No need." Dalton put on the suit jacket that was draped over the chair.

After speaking, Dalton nodded slightly to Malcolm and Bianca. He then turned to leave.

Lydia walked him to the door. She watched his car drive away and then returned to finish her meal.

Bianca noticed something was off. "Lydia, did you and Dalton

Chapter 183 Angry

Dalton seemed a bit cold toward Lydia.

2/4

Lydia shook her head. "We didn't quarrel, Mom. Didn't you notice? Meryl stood him up, making him come for nothing. He's upset because he's so busy, yet Meryl made excuses not to

come."

Hearing this, Bianca felt even more annoyed with Meryl.

Making everyone wait for so long, and not even calling?

Chandler didn't come to the office all day.

However, Walter did come around noon.

Walter went to Chandler's office. He grabbed two documents, packed them into a briefcase, and handed them to Meryl.

"Mrs. Aniston, these are the documents Mr. Aniston needs. Could you please take them home to him?" Walter said.

The rest of the office had gone to **the** cafeteria for lunch.

Hearing that Chandler was still at home, Meryl was a bit surprised. "What's wrong? Did he not come in this morning because he wasn't feeling well?"

"It's nothing serious. He just drank too much last night with Mr. Paltrow," Walter said.

"Dante Paltrow?" Meryl asked.

Walter nodded.

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3/4

It seemed that after being kicked out by Anne last night, Dante **was** upset and dragged Chandler out for drinks all night.

Meryl grabbed the documents and rushed home.

The house was quiet when she arrived. She placed the documents in the study.

Chandler was still asleep.

She didn't wake him. She closed the door quietly, and headed to the kitchen to start cooking.

Walter had said Chandler drank all night, so she worried his stomach might be upset.

She made a simple spaghetti and prepared two side dishes to go

with it.

Just as she finished, she saw Chandler sitting on the couch. He held the documents she had just brought back.

He was still in his pajamas. His hair was slightly tousled from sleep, which made him look more approachable than usual.

"Come eat," Meryl said, smiling as she set the table.

Chandler walked over. He wrapped his arms around her waist from behind. He pressed his cheek against her hair near her left

ear.

"Mrs. Aniston, thank you for your hard work," Chandler said.

The sudden hug caught Meryl off guard.

Chapter 183 Angry

Catching the scent of his cologne, Meryl's heart began to race. Chandler must have just showered. His hair was still slightly damp, and a few strands brushed across her lips.

It tickled.

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Meryl instinctively scratched her lips with her fingers. At **that** moment, Chandler sat down **on** the chair behind them.

With his arms still around her waist, his legs spread slightly as he sat. Meryl ended up half-sitting on his lap.

Her face turned even redder. Meryl curled her fingers, trying to get out of his embrace.

Write your comment

Chapter 184 Bad Mood

“Stop messing around and eat your food.”

Chandler’s eyes held a hint of a smile. He didn’t make things difficult for her.

Meryl asked, “How much did you drink last night?”

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Even though he had showered and it was already late morning, the smell of alcohol still lingered on him.

Chandler held up two fingers.

“Two bottles?” asked Meryl.

“Add a zero to that,” Chandler said.

Meryl was speechless.

Chandler explained, “Dante was in a bad mood.”

Meryl knew very well why Dante was upset.

After everything that happened last night, it would be strange **if** he wasn’t upset.

Chandler had known Dante for many years, but this was the first time he’d seen him cry like that.

When Dante was drunk, he clung to Chandler’s arm. **He** said, “Chandler, how can I win Anne back? She bit me so hard I

Chapter 184 Bad Mood

2/4

“And right before me, she was all lovey–dovey with that pretty boy. I was about to get angry, but she didn’t care.

“What should I do? Do you think they’ll sleep together tonight? I’m going crazy! If that pretty boy touches Anne, I’ll have him. castrated! Then I’ll turn myself into the police,” Dante said.

Dante held his head in his hands. The tears and snot mixed with the alcohol on his face.

Chandler sat beside him. He pulled his arm away in disgust and handed him a couple of tissues from the table.

Dante wiped his nose, then continued drinking and crying.

Chandler wasn’t in a great mood either. What should have been a good night had turned into a bad mood.

He should have been in bed, holding Meryl’s body and sharing kisses.

Instead, he didn’t even see Meryl and ended up being Dante’s emotional trash can in the middle of the night.

“Meryl is still at Anne’s place. What could they do?” asked Chandler.

Hearing Chandler say this, Dante finally let out a breath of relief.

But then Chandler said coldly, “But she should come back soon. Now that Anne has a pretty boy to keep her company, why should Meryl stay there like a third wheel?”

Chapter 184 Bad Mood

to Anne’s side!” he pleaded.

“If Meryl leaves, won’t that pretty boy be alone with Anne?” Dante thought, panicking.

“If they’re alone, they’ll have no boundaries. How can that be okay?”

Just thinking about it was driving Dante insane.

Chandler gave Dante a sideways glance.

3/4

“What the hell is wrong with **you**? You and Anne are divorcing, and now my wife and I are forced apart because of you.

“I just got married a month ago. It’s our honeymoon period.

“I didn’t beat you up out of respect, and you still want my wife to be a third wheel?

“Stuck at Anne’s house? If anyone should be stuck, it’s you. Why drag others into your mess?” Chandler said, glaring **at** him.

Chandler had a point, but hearing this made Dante even more miserable.

Drowning his sorrows in alcohol only made things worse. He held onto Chandler and drank the entire night until the bar closed at dawn.

After leaving the bar, Dante started vomiting violently at the entrance.

He was so defeated he couldn’t even form a complete sentence.

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Of the twenty bottles they drank, Chandler had five. Dante finished the remaining fifteen by himself.

4/4

Chandler tried to stop him, but he couldn’t. So, he just watched Dante drink.

Chandler told Walter to take Dante home. Before they could get him into the car, Dante clung to Walter’s waist and wouldn’t let

1. go.

He was drunk out of his mind. Dante slurred his words.

“No, I’m not going home. It’s full of Anne’s memories. What’s the point of going back alone?”

“Do you know what waiting from dusk till dawn is like? Since Anne left, I’ve been waiting, day after day,” he continued.

Walter pulled the car around, but Dante refused to get in. So Chandler lifted his leg and kicked him **in**.

“Only useless men hide and drink. If you don’t want a divorce, then go after her! Saying you can’t let go means nothing. You coward,” Chandler said.

Write your comment.

Chapter 185 Gaining Weight

Not long after dinner, Chandler went into the study to handle some work.

Meryl vaguely heard Walter calling to remind him about an evening engagement.

1/4

Her work clothes weren’t very comfortable. They had picked up the smell of cooking, so Meryl took a shower and changed into a long dress.

In the mirror, she looked a bit fuller than she did half a month ago. She was not as skinny as before.

She was quite pleased with the results of gaining weight over the past few weeks.

The weather forecast said it would rain that evening.

Meryl thought about getting her cello early and coming back quickly to avoid the rain.

So she grabbed her phone and sent Chandler a message: [I’m going back to the Stone Villa.]

When the message came through, Chandler was still working. But since his phone had a special alert for her, **he** immediately picked it up and left the study when he saw it was from Meryl.

Just then, he heard the sound of her closing the door

downstairs.

Chapter 185 Gaining Weight

engagement later, he just replied: [I’ll pick you up after I’m done.]

[No need,] she replied.

2/4

Meryl **wasn't** one for dramatics. She could just take a cab back. There was no need to make Chandler run back and forth.

A few minutes past six, Meryl arrived at the Stone Villa.

The sky was dark, and a large cloud loomed in the distance.

The housekeeper opened the door for her and said, "Miss, you're back."

Hearing the commotion, Malcolm and Bianca came out, wearing forced smiles.

When they saw Meryl at the door, they instinctively glanced behind her.

She was alone. Chandler hadn't come with her.

Their expressions instantly turned cold.

Malcolm snorted. He turned and went back inside while Bianca scolded Meryl.

"What's going **on**? Where's Chandler? Didn't you say you'd bring him back for dinner? Chandler hasn't even formally met us. Isn't that against protocol?"

Meryl responded coolly, "Rules are rigid, but people aren't. He's got a lot on his plate and hardly any time to rest. How could he

Chapter 185 Gaining Weight

3/4

She glanced inside and was surprised to see that in addition to Lydia, Dalton was also t here.

Meryl's gaze paused briefly before she quickly looked away.

What bad luck.

Over on his side, Dalton was also watching Meryl.

Lydia noticed Dalton's gaze lingering on Meryl and felt a bit stifled.

She peeled a grape and popped it into Dalton's mouth.

When Dalton looked at her, Lydia smiled softly. She lowered her head and gently held his hand.

“I don’t believe Chandler’s that busy. Too busy to even meet us?”

“Let’s be honest. If you mattered to him, would he treat you like this? Look at Lydia. Whenever she comes home, isn’t Dalton always by her side? You’re both my daughters. Why is there such a big difference between you?”

Malcolm said, glaring at Meryl.

Meryl’s expression instantly changed at these words.

Pointing at Lydia, Meryl angrily retorted, “Yeah, I’m not as shameless as Lydia, stealing men and keeping Dalton wrapped around her finger. I should be asking you how you raised her to be such a disgrace after twenty–some years.”

“You!”

Chapter 185 Gaining Weight

4/4

Malcolm’s face turned pale with anger. Meryl’s words were an insult to everyone in the room.

Lydia’s eyes turned red. Her hand trembled as she held Dalton’s.

“Meryl, if you’re angry, take it out on me. Why are you dragging Mom, Dad, and Dalton into this? What did they do wrong?” Lydia said.

“Cut the act,” Meryl said.

Meryl gave Lydia a cold look. She then turned and headed straight into the storage room.

Chapter 186 Slap

She quickly found the cello that had been stored for over ten years. She slung it over her shoulder and prepared to leave.

She didn’t want to stay another second in this miserable Stone Villa. She did not need such a family.

“Stop right there!”

As she passed through the living room, Bianca called out to her.

“Look at how your reckless words made Lydia cry! And you **think** you can just leave? Apologize to her right now!” Bianca said.

Lydia was crying in Dalton’s arms. When she saw the cello on Meryl’s shoulder, her crying paused for a few seconds.

Meryl had stopped playing the cello long ago. Why was she suddenly taking it away?

Was she planning to start playing again?

Lydia’s face suddenly turned ugly.

Meryl looked at the room full of faces with sarcasm in her eyes. “Apologize? What did I do wrong that requires **an** apology?” she said. Her voice was cold.

Malcolm angrily said, “Go ahead. If you leave now, don’t ever come back to this house! I’ll just consider you no longer my

Chapter 186 Slap

She put the cello down and sat on the sofa.

2/4

“Malcolm, do you remember the bet we made? You said that if I married Chandler, Lydia would have to give up the deed to this house.

“I know you’re not someone who goes back on their word. When will you transfer the deed?”

“In the meantime, you might want to start packing up. Get ready to move out.”

At the mention of the bet, Malcolm’s face showed a flicker of guilt.

When they made the bet, he was hoping to get Meryl to give up her 8% share in the company.

He didn’t expect that she would get Chandler **to** marry her.

Bianca immediately chimed in. “You’re disrespectful! Are you thinking of kicking us out? How dare you!”

Meryl ignored her. “This bet was between Malcolm and me. It’s none of your business,” she said, dismissing her.

“You...”

“I recorded our conversation at the time. What? Planning to back out?” Meryl said, slowly reaching for her phone.

Lydia clutched her clothes tightly. Her face was pale. “Meryl, how can you be so heartless? Isn’t having company shares enough for **you**? Now **you** want to take **my** house too?”

Chapter 186 Slap

3/4

Meryl’s gaze on Lydia’s face **was** icy. “Calling **an** elder by name? Is that what your parents taught you? Let me remind you, I’m your Auntie Meryl! The house? Just because it’s under your name doesn’t make it yours. Grandfather’s will clearly state the house belongs to **me** and John,” she said firmly.

Lydia lowered her head, feeling guilty.

Malcolm glared at her. “Auntie Meryl? This is the Stone family, not the Aniston family! You and Lydia are both my daughters. Why should she call you that?”

“As for the house, I was just joking back then. I never meant **it** seriously. I’m still alive. Who the house goes to is my decision, not yours!” he said.

He clearly had no intention of honoring the bet.

“Huh...” Meryl sneered. “Malcolm, you don’t even respect your father’s wishes. Aren’t you afraid he’ll crawl out of his grave to curse you for being unfilial?” she said.

Dalton was present, and Meryl’s words left Malcolm feeling humiliated.

He raised his hand and swung **it** towards Meryl’s face.

Meryl hadn’t expected Malcolm to actually hit her.

By the time she realized and tried to dodge, it was too late. The forceful slap was already inches from her face.

But the expected pain didn’t come because Dalton caught Malcolm’s

Chapter 186 Slap

hand.

Write your comment

Chapter 187 Respectable

Dalton was seated to the right of Malcolm, so stopping him was just a reflex.

Dalton could have stayed out of it. But somehow, seeing Malcolm about to hit, he acted faster than he could think and instinctively intervened.

“Let’s talk this through. We’re all respectable people,” Dalton said, trying to calm things down.

Malcolm gave an awkward smile and pulled his hand back.

He had really let his anger at Meryl get the better of him.

Thinking about it **now**, it wasn’t dignified to lash out at Meryl in anger.

Especially with Dalton present, he needed to maintain his elder’s demeanor.

Lashing out like that would make **him** seem petty and intolerant.

Lydia was stunned.

She hadn’t expected Dalton to defend Meryl, leaving her with mixed feelings.

She looked at Meryl, then at Dalton. She felt a surge of jealousy.

“Dalton, you protected Auntie Meryl from getting hit. I’m sure

Chapter 187 Respectable

With **the** words “Auntie Meryl,” Lydia deliberately reminded him of the distance between him and Meryl now.

This was a reminder that Meryl now belonged to Chandler.

2/4

As expected, Dalton was momentarily stunned by her words. He then lowered his gaze and fell silent. He was lost in thought.

Bianca hurried over to smooth things over. “Meryl, apologize to your dad. Look how upset you’ve made him.”

For the sake of Malcolm's dignity, if Meryl apologized, the thing could be settled. They were family. No one would hold a grudge.

This was also a way to get Meryl to back **off** from claiming the house.

"I did nothing wrong," Meryl said firmly.

Her voice was unusually strong as she continued, "I'm just taking back what's rightfully mine. How is that wrong?"

Bianca frowned. "What do you mean? The shares and the house. all belong to the Stone family."

"Yes, Stone family property. But now it's in the hands of Lydia. She's an outsider with no blood ties!

"You all favor her, transferring the estate **my** grandfather left to me over to Lydia.

"I know Dad made that bet with me just to get me to give up the shares my grandfather left me.

Chapter 187 Respectable

3/4

"But don't you think that's too much? That was my grandfather's gift to me. If you don't care about me, why can't he?"

"Lydia took the man, the house. You've given her the dividends. from the shares for years without my consent. Now, you're all forcing me to apologize, calling me unfilial and rebellious. How exactly am I unfilial? How am I rebellious?"

"If you don't like me, you could just pretend I don't exist. So why did you call me back? I know in your eyes, I'm just a burden. Only Lydia, the fake heiress, is your treasure.

"If that's the case, let's make it easy on each other. I won't come back again. Just pretend I was never born!"

Thunder rumbled outside, one after the other, while the living room fell silent. Only Meryl's voice echoed in the room.

A piercing pain shot through her ankle, but it didn't hurt nearly as much as the ache in her heart..

She realized she was wrong to have harbored any illusions about family.

She had come back partly to get her cello, but also because today was Bianca's birthday.

Meryl thought that since Bianca had given birth to her, the least she could do was come back and share a meal.

Moreover, Bianca had suffered back problems from giving birth to her. As her daughter, Meryl couldn't just ignore that.

But now, she had completely given up hope.

Chapter 187 Respectable

B

Chapter 188 Shame

Three years ago, Meryl still had hopes for her family.

When Lydia framed her and sent her to prison, she kept hoping her family would come to get her.

For three years, she never saw them until she was released.

Day after day, she underestimated their cruelty and overestimated her place in their hearts.

From now on, Meryl wouldn't wrong herself like this again.

After saying this, Meryl calmly looked at everyone in the room. She stood up and took a box out of her pocket.

"Mom, this is for you. Happy birthday," Meryl said.

Meryl opened the box to reveal a string of beads.

Even though Galaxy Holdings Group paid well, a month's salary couldn't buy any valuable diamonds.

Meryl didn't have much money. She certainly wouldn't use Chandler's money to buy a birthday gift.

So, she chose the beads, which symbolize good fortune and peace.

Bianca was stunned. Was it her birthday today?

Chapter 188 Shame.

Naturally, no one remembered.

2/4

Now that Meryl reminded her, Bianca realized it was indeed her birthday.

Lydia was stunned. Meryl had a birthday gift, but she hadn't prepared anything, which made her feel awkward.

She glanced at the beads string Meryl had given and quickly said, "Mom, I was in a hurry today and forgot the diamond necklace I bought for you at the office. I'll bring it next time. It cost over two million dollars."

Bianca loved diamonds the most. Lydia knew that mentioning a diamond necklace would please her.

But Bianca wasn't too happy. She saw that Lydia said this on purpose to avoid being outdone by Meryl.

In the past few years, Lydia hadn't given her **any** gifts.

Seeing Bianca accept the bead string, Meryl turned around.

She bent down and tore the hem of her long dress. A piece of fabric instantly fell to the ground from her hand.

"From now on, I am no longer part of the Stone family. Mom, Dad, thank you for raising me for over ten years. From now on, **if** we meet again, let's be strangers.

"I'm sorry for making you angry over the years. **I** won't do it anymore.

Chapter 188 Shame

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"Take care of yourselves. Pretend you never had me. If I had known you would treat me like this, I wouldn't have returned all those years ago.

“I don’t want anything from the Stone family anymore. I’ll return all the shares Grandpa left me. You can give them to whoever you want,” she said.

There was a look of determination and resolve in Meryl’s eyes.

This time, she was completely giving up on her family and ending things with them.

She only fought for those things to show her parents their unfairness.

But Meryl had been wrong. Biased parents would never see themselves as biased.

With that, Meryl bent down to pick up the cello **on** the table.

Everyone in the room was shocked by her actions.

When they first brought their biological daughter back, Malcolm and Bianca were happy.

They never expected that after more than ten years, the father–daughter relationship would deteriorate like this.

After all, she was their flesh and blood. Even though Malcolm and Bianca didn’t treat Meryl well, if word got out that they severed ties with their biological daughter, how would it look?

Meryl was on the family registry and was the legitimate

Chapter 188 Shame

But now she wanted to sever ties and give back the shares?

Other wealthy families would laugh at the Stone family.

Even the uncles in the Stone family wouldn’t agree with this!

Others would think they were coveting Meryl’s shares and kicked her out because of it.

4/4

Malcolm’s chest heaved with anger. His face was pale and grim.

“Severing ties? Where did you learn this nonsense? How dare you! You don’t want to support your parents anymore?” Malcolm said.

Today, he had complete shame in front of Dalton.

Chapter 189 Cello

Bianca said, “Why are you so temperamental? I just said a few words, and you can’t handle it. Now you’re talking about cutting ties with us!”

Meryl acted like she didn’t hear. She slung the cello on her back and turned to leave.

The pain in her ankle was sharp and piercing, and the rain outside seemed to be coming down even harder.

“Fine, go! But **if** you leave, don’t ever come back!”

Malcolm shouted at Meryl’s back. “You think threatening to cut ties will scare me? After raising you all these years, you can’t even take a little criticism without throwing a fit!”

Bianca pulled at Malcolm. “Alright, stop talking.”

They raised her for over ten years. With all the effort it took to give birth to her, Bianca couldn’t help but feel a pang in her heart as she watched Meryl about to leave.

The main thing was that out of the whole family, only Meryl remembered her birthday.

Suddenly, Bianca felt like Meryl wasn’t as cold–hearted as she had thought.

Lydia, on the other hand, was feeling quite pleased.

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could sweet–
talk Malcolm into transferring those shares Meryl gave up into her own name.

By then, she would not only hold 8% of Celestial Ventures Group but also have the deed to the Stone Villa, even more than John had.

It was absolutely delightful!

However, there was still one little problem.

“Meryl, are you really going to leave Mom and Dad behind and not care about them? You say you want to cut ties with the Stone family, but can you really do it? Isn’t that cello on your back something from the Stone family?”

Meryl had already opened the door, but suddenly stopped in her tracks.

She turned around and looked coldly at Lydia. Her eyes were completely devoid of warmth.

Lydia was startled by the look in her eyes. "Why are you staring at me like that? I'm not wrong, am I?"

Meryl yanked the cello case off her back and slammed it heavily onto the ground with a thud.

The cello hit the floor with a screeching wail. The case tore open, and the instrument slid out. Its body was scratched and marked with a long, shocking crack.

Outside, the rain was pouring down. A gust of wind swept the heavy rain inside, quickly soaking the floor.

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Without looking back, Meryl plunged into the darkness.

Bianca stared at the broken cello on the floor. She was momentarily lost in thought.

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If she remembered correctly, that cello was a birthday gift she had given Meryl the year she was brought back home.

When she first got it, Meryl had loved it. But later, for some reason, she just stopped playing.

A sturdy cello just broken like that?

What a pity.

This was really embarrassing.

Meryl hadn't intended for it to turn out like this, but at least she was free.

Raindrops trickled down from her head. It slowly ran down her cheeks to her neck, sending a shiver through her as it soaked.

into her clothes.

With an old injury in her foot, every step she took in the rain felt like walking on the edge of a knife.

She gasped in pain.

There was still a long way from the **villa** to the road. She had to make it out before she could catch a ride.

In the darkness, a blinding light suddenly shone from behind.

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Chapter 189 Cello

A Bentley drove out from the Stone Villa, with Dalton at the wheel.

With her leg injury, Meryl had only managed to walk about a hundred meters in several minutes.

Dalton pressed the brake and stopped in front of her.

“Get in.”

The car window slowly rolled down, and Meryl saw Dalton’s face.

The light inside the car was dim, but his eyes were locked on her.

Meryl instinctively glanced at the passenger seat.

Lydia wasn’t there.

B

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She had a slight smile and said, “Dalton, what’s this about? You left your precious Lydia behind and came out here? Aren’t you afraid she’ll cause trouble when you get back?”

Dalton replied softly, “Lydia wouldn’t cause trouble with me.”

Meryl’s smile grew more sarcastic. Did that mean she used to cause trouble with him?

Dalton himself didn’t know what was going on with him.

Seeing Meryl sever ties with the Stone family, watching her drop the cello and walk away into the rain without looking back.

He felt a tightness in his chest, a deep discomfort.

Each limping step she took felt like **it** was pressing on his heart. When she hurt, he could almost feel her pain.

Dalton

suddenly remembered the **day** two months ago when he picked her up from prison. It was also a rainy day.

Meryl **was** also limping like this.

His gaze unconsciously fell on the long scar on her ankle. Had it left her with a permanent injury?

But before she **went** in, she was perfectly fine. Who had dared to hurt her in prison?

Chapter 190 Permanent Injury out after her.

He was even shocked by his own actions.

2/4

At the Stone Villa, Malcolm and Bianca were still reeling from the shock of Meryl severing ties with the family. They hadn't recovered yet.

Lydia was dumbfounded.

She hadn't expected that less than five minutes after Meryl left, Dalton would follow her.

A huge wave of panic surged in her heart. Her body began to tremble.

She was about to lose her composure!

She had thought that as long as Dalton never knew it was Meryl who played the cello and woke him up from his coma years ago, he and Meryl would never reconcile.

So, when Meryl was leaving, Lydia had made her leave the cello behind.

But she didn't expect that even though Dalton didn't know it was Meryl, he still chased after her when he saw her leave.

Lydia **was** visibly irritated. She couldn't just sit there and do nothing.

She had to think of a way!

Right! Uncle Chandler!

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Chandler wouldn't allow him to turn a blind eye if Meryl made him a fool.

But what was Uncle Chandler's private number?

Lydia didn't know. She paced around in frustration before finally rushing out into the pouring rain as well!

On a rainy night, Meryl looked at Dalton coldly and said, "So, Dalton, you followed me out here and want me to get in your car? Is this how you show respect to your elders?"

Dalton furrowed his thick eyebrows tightly.

He saw Meryl's wet hair sticking to her cheeks. The raindrops formed streams and soaked into her clothes.

She was drenched. Her thin clothes clung to her body, outlining her curves.

Dalton's Adam's apple bobbed slightly, and he irritably looked away. He suddenly felt a wave of heat throughout his body.

"Think whatever you want. Just get in the car," he said.

Not wanting to see her standing in the rain any longer, Dalton opened the car door. He was ready to step out when he saw Meryl just standing there, not moving.

"Don't bother," she said.

Meryl took two steps back, putting more distance between her and the car. "Just the two of us alone? Your precious Lydia loves to slander me. If I get in your car, there's no way I'll be able to

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away," she said.

When Meryl refused, Dalton's expression changed.

He took off his suit jacket and casually tossed it over her. His eyes briefly swept over her neck. "At least cover yourself up first," he said.

4/4

Meryl froze, only then realizing that she was drenched. Her thin dress clung to her body, making the situation quite awkward.

Just then, **in** the distance, Lydia came running over.

“Dalton, why did you leave without waiting for me?” she said.

It seemed she had fallen on her way over. The hem of Lydia’s skirt was stained. She stood in the rain looking pitiful, as if a gust of wind could knock her over