

## Chapter 7 Are You Really My Parents

Last year, Mabel had participated in a music show and, aiming to boost her exposure, secretly hired someone to add lyrics to a piece of music that Elyse had composed.

Although she didn't win first place, she gained popularity and a steady stream of job offers.

By the time Elyse discovered her music had been plagiarized, it was too late. Not only did she miss the chance to register herself, but Glenda also tried to force her to go home and compose music for Mabel.

Elyse had shared this with Theo, hoping for some comfort, but he dismissed her concerns as overreacting and accused her of being selfish and lacking care for her sister. This left her feeling deeply wronged. Was she really being selfish?

Throughout her life, her parents had always catered to Mabel's desires. If Mabel wanted Elyse's room, she was expected to relinquish it. When gifts were bought, if Mabel liked both, she would take them, leaving Elyse with nothing. Even Mabel's academic failures were somehow attributed to Elyse for not tutoring her.

Thus, when Mabel aspired to be recognized as a "talented singer" and needed original music, their parents expected Elyse to support her. Over time, Elyse came to realize the stark bias in her family. All their affection was directed towards Mabel. It seemed her very existence was merely to facilitate her dreams.

But she harbored her own aspirations. She dreamed of being a violinist, performing on larger stages.

"Please give me one more chance!" she pleaded, bowing deeply.

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Seeing her earnest appeal, Wanda accepted the registration form. "I will trust you again. Don't let me down."

"Thank you, Ms. Hopkins!"

Elyse was profoundly moved. She recalled how Wanda had previously tried to convince her not to abandon the opportunity.

Back then, she had been too timid, overwhelmed by her parents' gaslighting, and had retreated, leaving Wanda greatly disappointed.

But this time, Elyse was determined to pursue her dream.

After bidding farewell to Wanda, she stepped out of the office and received a call from Lanny.

"What did you do? Why did Theo cancel the cooperation with my company?" Her father's angry voice boomed through the phone. Yet, Elyse felt a calm within her that she wouldn't have felt a year ago.

"He abandoned me at the wedding, so I broke up with him," she stated plainly.

"Stupid! Come home now!" Lanny shouted before hanging up the phone.

Elyse had anticipated Lanny's call and the interrogation that would follow.

Her father placed a high value on power and business interests. If she had been involved with an ordinary man, he would have demanded she end the relationship. His acceptance of Theo was purely because of the Ward family's potential business benefits.

The call she had just received was Lanny's attempt to coerce her into apologizing to Theo, but she stood firm in her refusal. Having taken a day off for her wedding the day before, Elyse didn't plan on requesting another leave today. Now that she had signed up for the tour, she was committed to practicing



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By six o'clock that evening, Elyse made her way to her parents' home at a leisurely pace.

Upon entering, she found Lanny and Glenda seated on the sofa. Mabel reached out to her in a feigned gesture of kindness, but Elyse dodged her hand and continued into the living room.

"Why did you ask me to come back?" she inquired.

"Look at what you've done! It was true he left you at the wedding, but why make such a fuss? Why did you break up with him? Do you know how much money I've lost?" Lanny slammed his fist on the table.

"He left me for another woman and made me the subject of ridicule. And you think he did nothing wrong?" Elyse retorted.

"Men are like that. It's your fault for not keeping his attention. Go and make amends. Make him forgive you," Lanny insisted.

His words struck Elyse like a sharp blade. With that, the last flicker of hope inside her was extinguished.

She closed her eyes briefly, then reopened them with resolve. "I won't go to see him. It's over between us. Besides, I'm not your only daughter."

Her gaze then shifted to Mabel, whose eyes gleamed expectantly.

"Fool!" Lanny exclaimed, slapping Elyse across the face.

Elyse's head snapped to the side from the impact. She clenched her teeth, absorbing the pain without a sound.

Lanny, furious at the thought of losing projects worth millions, grew even angrier at her defiant expression. He grabbed a stick, poised to strike again.

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Glenda intervened swiftly, adopting the role of the concerned mother. "It was indeed Theo's fault. He called later to explain that he had to handle something urgent, which is why he left you at the altar, Elyse. He didn't intend to cause such embarrassment. Remember, for men, their careers often come first. He's even promised to arrange another wedding. He has apologized. Why must you be so stubborn?"

Elyse stared at Glenda, incredulous. "Yesterday, when he walked away from the wedding, you and Dad accused me and left immediately. You never even considered defending me."

Tears streaming down her face, she cried out, "Dad! Mom! Are you really my parents? You didn't care about my feelings at all. You just want me to forgive him? You can't be my real parents –I feel no concern from you at all!"