## Chapter 1361

"After getting married, any woman should act obediently and virtuously just like your mother. She takes good care of her
family, her children, and her husband. However, the husband thinks those are all that she should do. $\mathrm{He}^{\text {' }}$ $s$ never given her a single word of approval or appreciation. You should know it yourself. Your mother ha $s$ never dared to go against my father's will."

The car was parked outside the apartment. Lucy unfastened her seat belt but did not get out of the car. Instead, she turned to look at Elaine.
"So, is that why you don't like my mother?" Lucy waited for her answer in silence.
Elaine leaned on the back of the seat. "I just can't stand your mother's aggrieved looks and pleading ma nners.

Lucy lowered her gaze and said nothing.
It was not that she did not know
that her mother felt aggrieved and wronged. After getting married to the Xaviers, she could no longer en gage in the profession that she liked. Edward wanted her to be a housewife and even asked her to cut ties with her own social circles.

Her mother always said that her marriage to Edward was her second marriage, making her unworthy of Edward, not to mention that she had married him with a fully grown daughter.

Edward was a successful businessman, and a man's reputation had always been important in the outside world. Thus, he had asked her to cut ties with her own social circles only because he did not want her identity to disgrace the Xaviers' reputation.

But to put it bluntly, her mother had remarried only to become a nanny for the Xaviers.
Not only did she have to place her
husband first in all aspects of life, but she was also prohibited from having her own thoughts.
Lucy had once asked her mother if she regretted the decision, but she did not answer.
'In fact, I think she regrets it too, but it was her choice, so what's the use of regretting that?‘
Watching Elaine drive away, Lucy stood downstairs for a while before turning around and walking into th e apartment.

At that time, at. Soul...
Maisie obtained Elaine's information. Elaine indeed shared the same
college and course as Nolan back then, and she had studied computing science as well. She had created half of the data
codes of Beyond Tech Corporation. She was not only the daughter of the owner of Beyond Tech Corpora tion but also the deputy director of the IT department.

Maisie flipped through the documents and smiled. "This woman is quite capable."
'No wonder she would say those words when they came to Nolan looking for a collaboration.
'Although Nolan majored in finance, he also majored in computing science. His company owns many out standing technology companies, and most of them excel in overseas e-commerce and e-sports.

So; Elaine probably thought of this when she came to Nolan too."
Quincy grinned. "Mrs. Goldmann, I've given you the information, so can I leave now? Mr. Goldmann is w aiting for me to return."

Maisie waved her hand, and Quincy left immediately.
Maisie supported her forehead with one hand and looked at the information on the desk with a slight frown. Unexpectedly, Elaine failed to obtain the shares of Beyond Tech Corporation.
'Elaine is Mr. Xavier's only daughter, and she should inherit Beyond Tech Corporation in the future, but Mr. Xavier distributed his shares to several of the shareholders in charge Elaine didn't get anything that she deserves!
'It's like Elaine is only working for Beyond Tech Corporation.
'Mr. Xavier is actually approaching the age of retirement already, not to mention that his daughter is so capable..

There was a knock on the door, and Saydie was the one who opened the door and came in, "Ma'am, I've already made a trip to Beyond Tech Corporation."

Maisie looked at her. "How was it?"
Saydie replied, "Ms. Xavier has no connection with the board of directors. The employees in their company told me that Mr. Xavier would rather cultivate outsi ders instead of handing the opportunity to Ms. Xavier.
"Also, Ms. Xavier is
the major contributor when it comes to the design of the Kontact software, but the one who got to the c redit of the software's development was the director of the IT department, and not her.'

## Chapter 1362

Maisie was stunned. "Does she have a bad father-daughter relationship with Edward?"
Savdie shook her head. "I'm not sure about that, but that's the general situation. Ms. Xavier would have a fight with her father from time to time, and the staff often heard him say that it's a shame that Ms. Xavier is a woman."
'It's a shame that Elaine is a woman?'
Maisie frowned, and understanding soon dawned upon her.

Edward did not plan to nurture Elaine at all. In his eyes, his daughter was going to marry another man in the future, so no matter how capable she was, she would never stay in Beyond Technology and the Xaviers forever.

She thought for a while and said to Saydie," Help me to make an appointment with Ms. Xavier." •
Several days later, at Beyond Technology...
Elaine walked toward the CEO's office with a document in her hands, her face grim. The staff in the department had already gotten used to it, and just as they expected, a smack" echoed from $t$ he CEO's office as she hurled the document on Edward's
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Edward frowned and lifted his head. "What is this about, Elaine?"
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"What is this about? Why don't you ask yourself? I'm the one who led the IT department crew to do Kon tact's planning all these years, and without us, Kontact wouldn't be as popular as it is today. It doesn't matter if you don't ask my opinion, but how can you transfer me to another department without my permission?"

Elaine shouted so loud that the people outside all turned their heads to look toward the CEO's office.
They could see everything that was happening inside. All of them put their heads together and talked to each other." Mr. Xavier transferred Ms. Xavier to another department?" |
"Isn't Ms. Xavier Mr. Xavier's daughter? She and her team
in the IT department have contributed a lot to Beyond Technology. Even if he chose to ignore her contri bution, how could he transfer her to another department for no reason? Don't you think it's a little bit unreasonable?"

After all, nobody would be able to accept it if they were transferred to another department despite having done a great job in their department, were part of the administrative level, and had their contributions taken away from them.

If it were another person, they might have quit already.
Another staff member said in a low voice," I heard that it's because Mr. Xavier doesn't want to pass the company to Ms. Xavier, so he intentionally ignores her contribution. Besides, Ms. Xavier is goin $g$ to marry another man in the future. Once she gets married, does it not mean that she has become an outsider?"
"There is no such thing. Even if she's married, they're still a family."
"That's because your emotions easily sway you people. What if your husband is a bad guy and takes advantage of your feelings to take over the company for himself? In my opinion, I don't think MF. Xavier has done anything wrong."
"That's stereotyping. Who told you that our emotions easily sway us?"
At that moment, Maisie and Saydie emerged from the elevator. They heard the discussion between the staff, but she did not interrupt them. Instead, she looked toward the CEO's office. After a long while of si lence, Edward said in a serious voice, "Elaine, I
have my considerations. It's without a doubt that you're very capable and I'm very proud of you. Howev er, you're a girl. You don't necessarily need to be better than men in your job. After all, when you get married in the future, I'm sure your husband won't want a pushy wife, right?"

Elaine did not know
if she should be laughing or getting angry right now. "Is this how you look at me, Dad? It's because I'm n ot a man, so I don't deserve to get what I want, right?".

Edward's face turned stern as
he said," Alright, Elaine. Let's stop arguing over something useless like this.
"I really feel sorry for your current wife.'
"Elaine!" Edward smacked the desk and roared, "I said stop it!"

## Chapter 1363

Elaine ignored his anger and continued." Dad, I hate your selfishness, and I hate your toxic masculinity e ven more. My mom made the right decision when she left you."

She grabbed her ID card and threw it on the floor. "You look down on me just because I'm a woman, rig ht? Alright then. I'll auit. I'll show you that I'm no worse than any man!"

Without waiting for Edward to say anything, she pulled the door open and went out.
She lifted her head and saw Maisie. She was stunned for a moment and said, "If you're looking for my fa ther, he's in there."

Maisie smiled and said, "I'm here looking for you."
Elaine was stunned.
Elaine led Maisie to a small restaurant not far away from Beyond Technology.
Although this restaurant was not as classy and comfortable as those upscale restaurants, it was her favorite. She took two bottles of beer out of the fridge, popped one open, and poured it into her glass." Since you asked me to pick a place, I picked this one. I'm sure you don't mind, right?"

Maisie sat in front of her and said, "I'm not as prissy as you think I am, Ms. Xavier."
After all, she had eaten in diners or food courts before.
Elaine picked up the large glass of beer and chugged
it down, much to Maisie's surprise. After emptying her beer, she put the empty glass down and asked, "I s there anything I can help you with, Mrs.

Goldmann?" "Initially, I asked my assistant to make an appointment with you, but... I thought I should co me and see you personally" Maisie said as she poured herself a glass of beer. "It's been a long time sinc e I sat in such a relaxing place to drink beer, and it's an honor to have a few drinks with you today, Ms. X avier."

Elaine was dumbfounded and looked at Maisie in surprise.
Maisie emptied the beer into her glass and heaved out a sigh. Then, she laughed" Nothing is more relaxi ng than having a big glass of beer!"

After the waiter served their dishes, Elaine and Maisie clinked their glasses. Elaine was not in a good mo od to begin with, and after taking a few glasses of
beer, she became drunk. "I don't like my dad. He has always been looking down on me because I'm a wo man. He said that women don't need to work hard on our
job since we're going to get married anyway. We should just stay at home to take care of the kids and ou r parents."

Maisie just listened to her ranting without saying anything in return.
Elaine kept her head low, and her face was written with disappointment. "When I saw my parents fighting when I was a kid, I couldn't wait for them to get divorced. My dad always complaine $d$ that my mom wasn't doing well enough here and there.
"When my mother wanted to go out to work, my dad criticized her for not taking care of the family. Wh en my mother
bought a dress she liked with the money she saved, my dad said she was a spendthrift and that she didn' $t$ behave like a good mother and wife. Even when my mom wanted to get a divorce since she couldn't ta ke my father anymore, he didn't give her a single cent.
"My mom didn't think she could provide me with a good life, so she asked me to follow my father. Howe ver, since I'm a girl, my dad rarely took care of me. Even when I wanted to buy a toy, he would say I don' t need it since I'm a girl. He wanted me to focus all my schoolwork so that I could get into a good college and marry a good husband after graduating."

After she finished speaking, she laughed at herself. "If every man is like my father, then why should I get married? Why should I put myself in such a low position? Why should I be the housewife, endure all unfair treatments, and have
to beg for my husband to buy something I want since I don't have any source of income? I just want to know what makes men think they can do something like that to us.
"Just because we're a baby-
making tool they bought with a bride price? Just because they're working hard outside to support the Ef amily, so our contribution to the family is worthless in their eyes?"

## Chapter 1364

Maisie
lifted her eyelids to look at Elaine." Marriage is something that's difficult to uríderstand. Everyone has th eir own difficulties. Women can understand men's difficulties, but not every man can understand wome
n's difficulties. You aren't married yet, so you can choose whatever life you want without caring about t he views of others, right?"

Elaine was stunned for a while. She lowered her head and chuckled. "Yeah, you're right. It's a little bit to o soon for me to trouble myself with
something like this. Life is long. There are still many meaningful things to do besides getting married." "A re you-sure you want to leave Beyond Technology?" Maisie asked.

She nodded. "Yes, I want to prove to my dad that I'm not inferior to any man."
Maisie smiled and did not say anything.
Elaine was an independent woman who knew what she wanted. She bore a bit of resemblance to Mada m Nera. She chose what she wanted to have in her own life.

Everyone had the right to choose what kind of lifestyle they wanted. Some chose love and family, while others chose career and freedom. No matter what kind of life one chose, as long as it wasn't something immoral and didn't cross over the line, it was praiseworthy

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Maisie sat at the back and rubbed her temples when they were on their way back. She had drunk too m uch beer and felt her head was swimming right now.

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Saydie could smell the alcohol and said,‘
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Miss, should I send you home right away?"
Maisie opened her eyes and said, "Bring me to the Blackgold."
When they arrived at Blackgold, Maisie took the elevator and headed straight toward the administrative office. The receptionists were busy doing her own stuff when a figure that reeked of booze suddenly flit ted past their vision. Both of them looked at Maisie , who was heading toward the administrative office with a surprised expressions on their faces. "Isn't that... Is Mrs. Goldmann drunk?"
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Nolan was not in the office. Maisie sat
on the couch, waiting for Nolan while she slowly fell into slumber...

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Maisie did not know how long she had been sleeping. She felt a little bit hot. It felt as if there was a furnace next to her. She nudged that thing with her head, and suddenly, she cracked he $r$ eyes open.

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Nolan was sitting beside her. Even though she had been sleeping on him for the whole afternoon, he ha d never once changed his position, for he was worried that he might wake her up.

Even he himself had fallen asleep.

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Maisie looked at the face of the man beside her and chuckled. Just when she propped herself up to kiss his cheek, he turned his head around, and she kissed on his lips instead,

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Nolan wrapped his arms around her and said, "Have you sobered up?"
She replied embarrassingly, "I guess so."
Nolan picked her up and placed her on his!ąp. He bit her neck and said, "You drank too much beer in the morning and came to sleep in my office? What are you thinking,

Zee?"
Maisie shuddered and held Nolan's head." I'm not drunk. I just had a few glasses of beer. I came to your office because I wanted to see you."

He chuckled, and then in the next second, he suddenly said in a serious voice, "You came here to sleep because you wanted to see me?"

Maisie was stumped and pouted in a small voice. "I was waiting for you until I fell asleep!"
He coiled his finger with a strand of her hair and asked, "Who were you drinking with?"
"Your coursemate," Maisie replied.
Nolan lifted his eyelids to look at her and chuckled. "Since when did you two become good friends?" "Di dI ever say that we're not good friends?" she mumbled.

Nolan lifted her chin and kissed her lips.

## Chapter 1365

Maisie was stunned. "You're kidding, right?"

Nolan smiled at her and replied, "I know you can't wait
any longer but I still need to work. So, let's wait until we get home, alright?" Maisie was so exasperated t hat she was tongue-tied, and her face turned red in embarrassment.

At the Lakeview Apartment...
Lucy had just finished making her dinner when she heard someone knock on the door. She did not know who it was, so she went to answer the door. She was stunned when she saw Elaine standing in front of $t$ he door with her luggage. "What on earth is Elaine went into her apartment directly and said, "I need to stay with you for the time being."

Lucy closed the door and looked at her.' Are you serious? You have a big villa to stay in yet want to sque eze in with me in a small apartment?"
"I have fallen out with my dad, Elaine replied with her arms in front of her chest' Even though we're not blood-related, I'm still your elder sister. Why can't I stay here with you?"

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Lucy did not say anything in return.
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Honestly, she was kind of surprised that Elaine would have fallen out with her father.
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When they were eating, Elaine told her that it was
because of the things that happened in the company that she had a fallout with her father.
She asked, "Are you not going to go back anymore?" "Nope," Elaine replied, "I'll move out from here aft er I get a new job."
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Lucy did not say anything anymore.
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Next morning....
Lucy woke up, but Elaine was still sleeping. She left a key for her and went to work.

Suddenly, her mother called
her and asked if she had seen Elaine or not. Lucy replied," She's here with me."
"Lucy, you need to persuade Elaine to come home. She should try to understand her father. He's doing e verything for her own good-"
"Mom, it isn't that I don't want to persuade her. It's just that nobody can force her to do anything she d oesn't want to do. Eli knows
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After listening to what Lucy said, Jenna hung up the phone.

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Lucy lowered her head to look at her phone and let out a sigh. In the eyes of her parents, both Elaine and she were bratty and willful little girls, but they were already adults. They had their own thoughts, th ey could make their own judgments, and they had their own lives.

When the thought surfaced in her mind, she seemed to be able to understand Elaine a little more.
Elaine just wanted her father to understand and support her decision.

At Morwich's Maple Lane...
Pearl was flipping through the photobook that recorded the growth of her kid. A surge of warmth filled her heart when she saw the smile on her kid's face.

Kamala pushed the door open and came inside. "Pearl."
She lifted her head and closed the photobook. "What's wrong, Mom?"
Kamala sat beside her and placed her hand on her back. "Ever since Tanner came, Noah has been very fo nd of him. He has been in Morwich for some time, and I can see that he likes the kid very much. We're ol d and worried that no one will take care of you two after we're gone. Besides, Noah is still so young." "Mom, stop beating around the bush." Pearl knew that her mother was implying something. It was just that she did not want to hurt her daughter anymore, so she did not say it explicitl $y$.

Kamala lowered her head, and her face turned serious. "I don't want to do this either. I don't want you $t$ o have any relationship with Tanner, but after seeing the interaction between Noah and Tanner, I changed my mind. Tanner can take good care of the kid, and Noah has gotten used to him as his father. If you two split up, Noah will lose hi s mother or father, which will be detrimental to his growth.
"Most children of single-parent families are rebellious, and only a few will be more mature.
"Noah is only two years old, and kids at his age already have the ability to recognize people. He'll reme mber how good Tanner is to him, and once the memories are formed, he won't be able to forget him easily in the future."

## Chapter 1366

Pearl lowered her head and didn't speak.
Kamala put her hand on her shoulder." Pearl, I know you've been wronged, but the past is already in the past, and we need to move forward. You should think about your child."

Pearl nodded, then answered, "I know."
Tanner only came back with their son in the afternoon. Noah happily ran toward Kamala with a toy in ha nd. "Grandma, Daddy's toy

Kamala touched his hair and smiled. "Do you like it?"
Noah nodded and continued playing with the toy plane. "Yes!"
Kamala didn't want to interrupt her grandchild's happiness.
Tanner walked toward her. "Where's Pearl, Ma'am?"
She answered neutrally, "In the room."
Tanner walked to her room and opened the door. He saw Pearl standing in front of the window, the pink curtains covering her body. She looked as if she was floating by the window, suddenly disappearing in fr ont of his eyes.

His heart ached immensely, and he suddenly ran forward to hug her.
Pearl was shocked. "What are you doing?"
"... I thought you-
" Tanner calmed down and noticed that he was hugging her tightly. "I'm sorry, I was just worried that yo u did what you did three years ago.".

Pearl was surprised and could feel him shaking while she was in his arms. Her heart pounded, and a tear rolled down her cheek and burned her, but she was certain that wasn't her te ar!

She raised her hand and touched his face.
Tanner was stunned but retracted his arms and avoided her gaze. "Why are you standing by the window ?".

She didn't answer. "Tanner, you... thought I was going to jump?"
He didn't reply.
Pearl pressed her lips together the wetness still lingered on her cheek: Tanner could cry.
She turned around and walked to the window. "I was just moving the nest here. It fell down and had bee n raining for the past few days. I was afraid that the mother bird wouldn't be able to find her nest when she returned."

Tanner paused and calmed down as he listened
to her explanation. He walked to Pearl and leaned out. "Where's the nest?"
Pearl pointed. "It's stuck on the branch."
The tree wasn't too far from the window.
Tanner rolled up his sleeves to climb out, but Pearl immediately grabbed him, "Be careful."
Tanner looked back at her, but she looked away and didn't see him smiling. "Alright, I will."
Tanner stepped on the branch and moved the nest, but the branch couldn't handle his weight and snapp ed.
"Tanner!" Pearl shouted.
Luckily, Tanner immediately jumped back onto the balcony and managed to protect the nest when he landed.

Pearl ran to him and leaned down to check on him. "Are you alright?"
Tanner
lay on the ground frowning but couldn't help but smile when he saw how worried she was. "I'm fine."
She paused. "You"
"Pearl, what happened?"
Kamala had heard the
commotion and thought something had happened, so she came to check. She saw Tanner sitting up while her daughter was on the floor, helping him up.

## Chapter 1366

Tanner smiled. "I'm fine.".
Kamala turned around and left without a word.
When Pearl looked back at
Tanner, she looked into his eyes and then looked down. "Are you... really fine?"
Tanner looked away. "I'm fine. Let me put the nest back." ,
After placing the nest back, Tanner turned to look at Pearl, who stood there unmoving. He slowly got clo ser and stopped in front of her. "Pearl, there's no need to feel guilty. I'm fine."

But when he saw her tears falling, he was surprised and didn't know what to do.
He held her face and wiped away her tears.
"Pearl, why are you crying?"
She didn't know why she was feeling so bad. Maybe she remembered their past, or maybe she just remembered the feeling, but her tears just kept falling.

Tanner lowered his head and lightly kissed where the tears rolled past.
Pearl's lashes fluttered, but she didn't move away when he stopped at the side of her lips. Tanner stared at her for a long moment before slowly kissing
her when she didn't push him away as if she had given him permission.
Tanner kissed her deeply, and he lost it the moment she
hugged him. They both leaned back. He didn't ignore her feelings like before but instead asked if it was okay.

She looked at him as if she silently agreed.
Tanner brushed his fingers across her cheeks, smiled, and kissed her forehead, nose, and lips.
The sun was redder
than usual and turned the maple leaves red. They shook and gave a warm sheen while casting a shadow on the curtains.

Tanner hugged Pearl from behind, planted his
face on her neck, and held her hand while they both looked out the window. "Pearl, I'm content with wh at I have now." ***

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He didn't want to be greedy and ask for more. ::
This was already the best ending he could ask for
Pearl looked around. "Would you let Noah have your name?"
Tanner paused and moved the hair away from her neck. "Yes." He then added, "Not just Noah, you too."
Pearl was silent.
Tanner kissed the back of her hand. "Even if you don't marry me, I
won't marry anyone. I'm happy to have a son, and I'll reserve the title of my wife for you.".
She slowly closed her eyes.
At Bassburgh's Private Middle and High School...
Lisa returned to school after her legs were better. The moment she stepped into the classroom, she saw Leah and a few others standing in the corridor.

Lisa's heart pounded, and she looked away to avoid them.
"You're alright now?" Leah walked over with her arms crossed. "I guess you've been doing well, gaining weight and all.".

Lisa kept her head low and didn't say anything.
Lead tapped her shoulder, "Daisie knows about your influencer gig.".
That statement made Lisa turn pale. She bit her lip and held her bag tightly.

Leah was bored. "Don't worry. I won't speak to you after
this. I just wanted to tell you." She leaned in close to Lisa's ear and whispered, "A chicken will always be a chicken even if it spends time with a phoenix."

Leah walked away with the others, leaving Lisa frozen on the spot with tears in her eyes.
Lisa seemed to be avoiding Daisie for the next few days. Whenever Daisie went to see her, she would never be in her classroom, and she couldn't get in touch with her. After asking a few friends, she discovered she was on the rooftop.

Daisie got to the rooftop, and Lisa was there sitting on a bench.

## Chapter 1367

Daisie walked over and sat down next to Lisa. "Lisa, are you alright?"
She didn't reply.
Daisie was worried about her, so she placed a hand on her shoulder, but at that moment, Lisa moved it away. "Daisie, let's not be friends."

Daisie was startled and curious. "Why?" Something came to her mind, "Did Leah say something to you?"
Lisa lowered her head and wiped her teass away. "I know that I'm not from a rich family. My parents can 't give me anything more than the fees for this school. I just wanted friends. Why.!! Why did they have t o say that about me?"

Daisie slowly walked in front of her and knelt down. "Lisa, ignore what they say and think. You know tha t Leah loves to manipulate people. I only see you as my friend."

Seeing that Lisa was still crying, Daisie got up because she was angry. "I'm going to speak to Leah!"
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Lisa held her back, "Please, Daisie, there's no point. Do you think she will stop targeting me if you speak to her?"

Daisie paused because she made sense.
She had warned Leah not to bully Lisa, but she never listened.
*Daisie, if you think of me as a friend, we should stay away from each other in

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school for my own good." Lisa stood up and left with swollen eyes.
Daisie didn't have her dinner. She hid under her blanket and cried her eyes out after returning from scho ol.T

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When Maisie brought her food to her room, she placed her cutleries
on the desk and pulled up her blanket, "Daisië, you won't have the energy to cry if you don't eat. You ca n continue crying after you eat."

Daisie moved to the edge of the bed, pouting. "Mom, Lisa just wanted to be friends with me. Why did th ey have to berate her?"

Maisie had heard about the whole situation from Colton, so she sat down next to her." Daisie, everyone has their own advantages and flaws. No one in this world is loved by everyone. If there are people who li ke her, there will be some who don't."

## Daisie looked at Maisie. "Mom, I don't get it."

Maisie touched her hair and frowned, "Your father, Wayion, and grandpa have really spoiled you, Daisie. Remember, there's no way you can buy friendship. A real friend would not want anything from you.
"Friends should help each other. The expensive gifts and beautiful clothes that Wayion and your grandp a gave you shouldn't be given to someone eise.
"If you want to give her gifts, you need to work for
it. If she doesn't accept it, you can't insist, or people will think you're giving it out like charity and look d own on your friend."

Daisie started worrying, "I didn't look down on her!"
Maisie was helpless. "I didn't say you did that, but think about it. If you
didn't keep giving all those gifts to her without thinking if she really wanted them, people wouldn't think that Lisa just became your friend to get gifts from you. I know you wanted to help her, but your kin dness was misused, and this was your mistake."

Chapter 1368
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## Chapter 1369

Daisie was too well protected and didn't understand how the world worked. She wanted to give Lisa the best gifts because she wanted her to be confident, but confidence couldn't be boosted with material go ods.

People werent bom greedy. If they got
things they wanted without putting in any effort too often, that was when greed started growing

Thus, Daisie was naive.
'What should I do then?Daisie suddenly realized that she had given Lisa a terrible burden,
Maisie smiled and stood up. "Change before it's too late."
On the other side, in the suburbs...
Lisa wandered around and only got home when it was late. The door opened when she was putting her keys on the door lock.

She curiously pushed the door open and went in. "Dad, Mom, I'm home."
She took off her shoes and shouted, but there was no reply.
She walked in and placed her bag on the couch. She suddenly heard a noise from the kitchen, so she wal ked over, but when she stood at the door, she saw her mother lying in a pool of blood.

Lisa froze, and her face slowly turned pale." Mom-"
When the ambulance got there, the neighbors stood around and watched while the paramedics put her mother in the back while Mr. Fraiser rushed home.
*They're so unlucky to have an *sshole of a son."
"Exactly. Not only did their son not give them money, but he also tried to take her life."
"That's why I saw the kid run out after an argument. That's such a horrible thing to happen."
Mr. Fraiser didn't let Lisa follow along because she had school tomorrow and got her to wait at home. Li sa stood there and listened to her neighbor's discussion, her expression bleak while she watched the am bulance drive away:

She then sat on the couch in
their empty living room and stared at the family photo next to the television. Her brother was in it. How ever, her brother slowly started changing when she was in elementary school. He didn't care for her any more and started losing his temper and did nothing all day.

Why did she have to go through all this? Why did she have to suffer? Why?
"Can't you just work harder?"
"Don't bother me. I know you have a rich friend. These are all from her, right?"
A chicken will always be a chicken even if it hangs out with a phoenix."
"Who could you blame for your misfortune? Blame that little Ms. Goldmann. She would have other frien ds even if you died, but you would only be the friend that she left.

Lisa's hands that were on her lap curled into fists. The hurtful words still rang in her ears and attacked $h$ er. She covered her ears, but they went on and on

Lisa took a week off from school, but nobody knew why

Daisie sat in the classroom doing her homework when she heard a few classmates discussing. "Is it Lisa f rom the other class?

Daisies hand paused, and she slowly looked up.
The voice continued behind her. "Yes, I heard that her mother passed away. That's so sad.
Daisie turned to look at them, making them realize that Daisie and Lisa were best friends, so they scat tered and stopped talking.

## After school, Dalsie went to speak to a teacher from the other class and asked about Lisa.

The teacher knew they were close, so she told her, "Her mother passed away, and she has taken some time off from school."

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Daisie was surprised. She quietly thanked the teacher and left.
In the suburbs...
Lisa's father collected his wife's items and started balling when he saw their family photo.
Lisa, who saw everything, held her fists, turned around, and walked to her room with no expression. She took out everything Daisie had given her, put them in her backpack, and walked out with it.

There was a cyber cafe at the end of the street, and she knew that her brother Evan and his gang would hang out there. She also knew that Evan had a 'boss' there who the boys called Tvanka'.

Ivanka was the owner of the cybercafe, but she looked like she had a lot of money. The red sports car th at was always parked outside belonged to her.
1.

LE

VR

Lisa walked into the shop and to the cashier. The keeper had a sandwich while gaming and didn't notice her.

H

## All

Lisa hesitated before speaking. "Is Ivanka here?"
"She's-
" The man looked up and saw that she was just a girl who looked underage, so he put down his sandwic h. "You know our boss? Who are you?"

## INN

"I'm Evan Eraiser's sister. I need to speak to her."

## C

There was no way that man didn't know Evan because he was there frequently and worked for Ivanka. When he heard that she was his sister, he stood up. "Wait here." He walked away from the counter and toward a room blocked by a curtain. Soon after that, he came back. "Come in. She's in there."

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Lisa followed him to the room in the back, which looked very different from the front. There was a long corridor, and it was dimly lit. There were a dozen doors on both sides, and they were numbered and clos ed. The noises that came from inside scared Lisa,

The man brought her into a room that had no number and looked like an office.
A woman in her 30 s sat behind the desk with a lit cigarette between her fingers.
She was voluptuous with big curls and heavy makeup. The two men standing next to her looked scary, a nd Lisa didn't dare look at them.

The man walked to Ivanka and said something to her. She then crushed her cigarette in the ashtray and poured some tea on it to put it out. "Evan's sister?"

Lida stood there, a little nervous.
Ivanka looked at her. "Why do you want to see me, girl?"
She carefully walked toward the desk. "Can ... Can I speak to you alone?"
Ivanka squinted and waved to ask the men to leave.
That evening, Evan and his friends went to the shop, but before they could walk in, a few men rushed to ward them and beat them to a pulp.

Lisa, hiding in a corner watching, couldn't help but smile.
Lisa didn't tell her father that Evan had been beaten up so badly he was admitted to the hospital until th e hospital called him. When she saw that he was leaving, Lisa, who was in her room, rushed out." Dad, a re you going to see Evan?"

Mr. Eraiser looked up. "Lili, your brother... is my child too."
"But he killed Mom for money. He and his gang of friends did it. It's their fault!" Lisa yelled.

Her father was surprised. "Lili, what are you talking about? Your brother doesn't know what happened t o your mother.

