

## Chapter 1 Don't Get Up Until You Apologize

Lambridge City, Promenade 1st Villa Area - the Hatcher Mansion.

Today was the Lantern festival. Colorful lights were decorated around the house, giving a touch of warmth to the cold atmosphere of the Hatcher family.

Suddenly, a scream echoed across the mansion.

"Ah-"

Followed by thudding, a large-bellied woman fell from the stairs!

Everyone was surprised and hurried toward her.

Stephen Hatcher, the president of Ador Hatcher Corporation, quickly asked, "Debbie, are you alright?"

The woman's face turned pale when she saw fresh blood trickling down her legs. Horrified, she replied, "Stephen, it hurts... Our baby..."

Quickly, save our baby!"

The house's madam, Paula Anderson, panicked and asked, "What happened?!"

Debbie looked toward the top of the stairs with tears in her eyes.

Everyone looked up and saw a girl, about three years old, standing at the top of the stairs. Upon seeing everyone's gaze, she hugged the toy rabbit in her arms tightly in fear.

Richard Hatcher roared angrily, "Were you the one that pushed Debbie?!"

The little girl pouted. "It's not me, and I didn't..."

While crying, Debbie begged, "No... Dad, it's not Lilly's fault. She's still young, and she didn't mean it..."

Her words quickly reaffirmed that it was Lilly's fault.

Stephen's eyes darkened, and he immediately ordered, "Lock her in the attic! I'll deal with her once I return!"

The other hurriedly sent Debbie to the hospital while the servants dragged Lilly upstairs.

Even when a shoe fell off, she kept a stubborn face and did not beg or cry for help.

No light or heat could reach the dark and cold attic. The windows squeaked as if a monster would appear at any moment...

Lilly hugged her stuffed bunny tightly and curled up in a corner.

*It's so cold...*

The truth was she never pushed anyone, but no one believed her.

As it was cold spring weather, the snow and the wind made their way into the attic through the window cracks, piling layers of coldness onto little Lilly.

Soon, an entire day had passed by.

No one cared about Lilly, and no one even knew that Debbie had punished her the day before. She was already in a daze as she had yet to eat anything.

Richard had ordered that she was not allowed to leave until she admitted that it was her fault.

"Mommy..."

Lilly's lips were turning purple from the cold, and she was shivering. She could only close her eyes and mumble, "Mommy... I didn't do anything wrong... It's not my fault..."

She knew that her mother had died from an illness a year ago.

After her mother passed on, her dad found another woman, and soon the woman was pregnant with a baby...

However, the woman was two-faced. She was only nice to Lilly when others were present; otherwise, she would act like a demon punishing her.

*Mommy...* Lilly thought as she squeezed her toy rabbit's ears before losing consciousness.

Not knowing how long it had been, the door suddenly opened with a loud bang.

Stephen was furious when he picked up the unconscious Lilly, dragging her down the stairs and throwing her outside into the snow!

Lilly shivered from the cold surface and struggled to open her eyes...

"Daddy... I'm hungry..." She muttered.

Stephen scoffed. "You killed Debbie's unborn child, and the first thing you're telling me is that you're hungry?! I can't believe I have such an evil daughter!"

Lilly's eyes were hollow, and she could not speak as she was frozen stiff.

The more Stephen looked at her, the angrier he became. *Why is she still acting stubborn despite being at fault? You malicious child!*

"It is my fault as a parent that you're behaving this way! Now that you've killed your unborn brother, who knows if you will start murdering people when you grow up? As your father, I must teach you a lesson!"

He looked around and picked up a broom from the corner, snapping the broom head off.

The thick broomstick landed on Lilly's body with a thud, causing her to scream in pain!

"Is it your fault?!" Stephen glared.

"It's not me. It was really... not me!" Lilly bit her lips and maintained a stubborn face.

Stephen was getting more furious upon hearing her words. "Then are you saying your stepmother willingly fell down the stairs?! Why would she want to fall after being six months pregnant?!"

He could not help but think back to what happened in the hospital. Debbie was bleeding heavily, and the doctor had declared her situation as critical twice, but even on the brink of death, she insisted on asking him to not blame Lilly!

She said that Lilly was still young when her mother passed away. She was simply afraid that her baby brother might get the attention away from her and did not mean to push her.

Stephen felt angrier as he thought. He beat Lilly while scolding, "You're still trying to deny it! Stop denying it!"

With every sentence, Lilly would get hit by the broomstick.

He was so engrossed in hitting her that he did not even realize that his phone had fallen out of his pocket. When Lilly was severely beaten, he finally stopped, so she lay paralyzed on the snowy ground.

"Stay here and kneel until your stepmother is discharged!"

Stephen tugged his tie after he scolded her and left the broomstick behind before walking away.

He had been feeling irritated recently as his company had been facing a loophole for half a month and had yet to receive help resolving it.

Then today, Debbie fell from the stairs and lost their unborn child, losing the only hope for the Hatcher family.

The consecutive unfortunate events stressed him, and he could not help but vent it all out on Lilly.

Lilly's rabbit toy had already been beaten to pieces. She tried to stand up but fell back onto the snowy ground with a thud...

She felt that she was on the brink of death.

*If I die, will I finally be able to see mommy?*

At that moment, she heard a blurry voice.

"Lilly, call for your uncle! Your uncle is Gilbert Crawford, his phone number is 159xxxxx..."

"Call..." Lilly opened her eyes and noticed the black phone lying in the snow. Her survival instincts kicked in as she desperately crawled toward it.

"159..."

Lilly stuttered and stammered, her stiff fingers struggling to move, and finally, she managed to make the call...

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Meanwhile, Hugh Crawford lectured at a courtyard house in Clodston, "Another year has passed. Gilbert Crawford, when will you take the test for the Chief Physician role?!"

The eight brothers of the Crawford family looked at each other while Gilbert touched his nose.

Suddenly the old man changed the topic and asked,

"Also, it's been four years, and have you not found your sister?"

The looks on the brothers' faces changed, with their lips pursed. Their indifferent eyes now had a slight hint of sorrow.

Their younger sister, Jean Crawford, was diagnosed with acute promyelocytic leukemia at a young age. Since then, she had been carefully nursed by the Crawford family as she went through blood transfusions, anti-infection treatments, and bone marrow transplants...

However, her condition worsened and even affected her memory.

Then, four years ago, she suddenly went missing.

Gilbert was a physician at the Shercaster Cancer Hospital and was in charge of Jean's treatment.

That day, he had to save a critically ill patient, and it was at that moment... that Jean disappeared.

For the past four years, guilt and regret had been tormenting him. Even with his outstanding medical talent, he had been unable to move forward since then.

The Crawford family had eight sons, and Jean was the only daughter.

After their daughter's disappearance, Bettany suddenly fell ill, and Hugh's temper grew unstable.

A heavy stone lay in the hearts of everyone in the Crawford family, rendering them restless.

The eldest son, Anthony Crawford - the CEO of the Crawford family's business empire - worked day and night tirelessly, causing his health to worsen and requiring him to take daily medication.

The third son, Bryson Crawford - the outstanding pilot of Swift Airlines- failed the psychological tests and had been resting at home for the past four years.

The others...

The study room fell into silence before suddenly, Gilbert's phone rang!