

You, Me and Our Genius Twins Chapter 71

Chapter 71 Be Still

Crystal didn't even look at her. She kept filling Madeline's bowl with food.

Everyone was confused and in chaos.

Sebastian, Aldo, and Buddy were the calmest of them all. Sebastian was sitting beside the boys and helped them with their meal. The boys' table manners were immaculate. Their posture was upright, and they wouldn't stir the plates to get their food. All they did was eat their own food quietly. Their cheeks would puff up every time they popped something in their mouths, and they looked like hamsters that had stuffed their faces full of nuts.

Crystal glanced at them by chance, and she couldn't look away. She had never looked at them seriously before, thinking that they were Cameron's grandsons. But now that she knew they were her grandsons, she felt like she was stabbed in the heart. Her daughter and grandsons were right under her nose all this time. She had seen them countless times at the Taylor Residence, but not once did she ever love, hug, or even keep them safe.

Michael noticed her peculiar behavior, and he looked where she was looking. Oh, she's looking at the boys. He wanted to ease the tension, so he smiled at the boys gently. "Aldo, Buddy, she's your grandmother, you know."

"Grandmother?" Buddy blinked, then tilted his head to the side to examine Crystal. "Are you sure about that? She looks really young to me. She can't be my grandmother. I'll call her pretty lady."

Madeline chuckled. Her biological mother was indeed really young. Time was kind to her, and she kept herself well, so she didn't look a day over thirty. If she was in the entertainment industry, she would be praised as someone with eternal youth, and countless people would try to ask her for some tips to care for their skin.

Crystal felt a little better after hearing that little joke.

"You idiot!" Aldo looked at him and frowned, as if he was looking at an imbecile. "Don't you get it? She's Mom's Mom, and that makes her our grandmother no matter how young she looks."

Buddy blinked innocently. "But Mom didn't call her Mom."

Crystal was just starting to relax, but now she tensed up again. Her appetite was already bad to begin with, but now she lost all of it. She put her cutlery down and held Madeline's hand. She asked Madeline to sit beside her earlier for a purpose. Crystal stared at her daughter for a while, her eyes filled with tears. "Maddie, can you ever forgive me?"

"It is not your fault." Madeline smiled gently. "You are a victim too, Mom."

Crystal's eyes widened. "What did you call me, Maddie?"

"Mom!" Madeline gave her a hug and patted her back gently. "I am a mother too, Mom. I can understand you. If someone took my boys away, it would be the same as killing me. I know how you feel, Mom."

"Maddie... Maddie." Crystal could no longer hold back, and she hugged Madeline tightly. "Maddie, my daughter. I am sorry. I've failed you." She cried. "You're a good girl. I failed you."

Michael never expected Madeline to call his wife 'Mom' so easily, and he felt jealous. He met her first, but she hadn't called her 'Dad' just yet.

Cedric was sitting beside Angie, and he pouted scornfully. I knew it. Anyone would love to be the young miss of our family. Lots of people try to get closer to us just because they're our relatives. Now that she knows who she really is, of course she wants to make Dad and Mom happy. Makes it easier for her to establish her presence.

What about Angie? She's been with us for more than twenty years, and now she's going to be kicked away? Her whole family's going to be taken away from her. I can't imagine how she's going to take this. He noticed Madeline whispering something to Crystal and making her smile. Mom is in a good mood. Great. "Dad, Mom, I have something to say."

Crystal let Madeline go and turned around sheepishly to wipe her tears away, then she turned back and looked at Cedric. "What is it, Cedric?" Crystal felt a lot better now that Madeline was calling her 'Mom' and kept assuring her that it wasn't her fault that Cameron did the switcheroo. A smile was curling her lips, even.

Cedric felt even more certain now. Good. The timing is right. He suggested, "Dad, Mom, I know it's great that Madeline is back, but what about Angie? I have a proposition here."

The mention of Angie wiped the smile off Crystal's lips, and her face fell. "What is it?"

Michael knew that out of his four sons, Cedric loved Angie the most, and he was arrogant and impulsive. Crystal just felt better. He'd better not do anything stupid. He warned, "You'd better think before you speak, Cedric."

“Dad, Mom, it’s fine. I’ve thought about this long and hard.” He looked at his parents. “Dad, Mom, Angie might not be your daughter, but it’s true that she has lived with us for more than twenty years. You can’t brush that off so easily. Even though we’re not related to her, she thinks of us as her family all this time.”

“No, this can’t be,” Angie mumbled. “This can’t be real. You’re my real family. Dad and Mom are my real parents. You’re all my real brothers. We’re a family. A family.”

Cedric patted her back and continued, “Dad, Mom, here’s a plan. We can tell the public that Mom gave birth to twins. That way, Angie and Maddie can both stay with us, and you get another daughter in the family. It’s a win-win situation, right?”

Crystal adjusted her position and sat up straighter. “I’ve decided to call the cops to arrest Cameron after dinner,” she said clearly.

“As you should.” Cedric nodded. “Cameron is an evil witch. She should be arrested.”

“No, Cedric!” Angie grabbed his arm with trembling hands. “Cedric, what if she tells everyone about this when the cops arrest her? If she tells them that she actually did a switcheroo just so she can get back at me, that’d be bad.”

Cedric paused for a moment and looked at Crystal. “Mom—”

“What? Are you going to tell me not to call the cops on Cameron?” Crystal stared at her son darkly.

Jonathan hissed, “Cedric, Mom just got better, so quit it, will you?” They knew how much Crystal despised Cameron. Cameron was their grandfather’s illegitimate child, and she was only born because Cameron’s mother deceived their grandfather.

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Chapter 72 Foolishness

Their grandfather said that despite Cameron’s mother’s sin, Cameron was innocent. He forced Michael to swear that he and Crystal would never hurt Cameron unless she did something outrageous. With that protection draped over her, Cameron would harass Crystal all the time, but she couldn’t do anything about it because of the oath. Even if she did something outrageous, they would have to hand her over to the law instead of doling out vigilante justice.

Their grandfather knew that Crystal loved Michael, so instead of having her make the oath, he asked Michael to do it. Because of her deep love, she didn’t want Michael to break his oath, so she never laid a finger on Cameron no matter how horrible Cameron was to her. Now that she finally had the chance to get revenge, she would do it through the only way she could—the law. She would expose Cameron’s heinous crimes and

make sure justice was served, but that would mean Angie's real mother would be exposed as well.

It was a dilemma. Cedric had to choose between his mother's grudge and Angie's future. Cedric was silent, contemplating his choice.

Angie was trembling in fear, and she looked at Crystal with a plea in her eyes. "Please, I beg you, don't do this to me, Mom. I'm your daughter. This must be Cameron's conspiracy! She must have set this all up so Madeline can take my place as your daughter! You can't fall for this! You can't fall for Cameron's scheme!"

"The truth is clear now, and I don't wish to speak further on it." Crystal looked at Angie. "Angie, you are not our daughter, and I will not help Cameron raise you anymore. Once this dinner is over, so are your ties with us. From now on, you have nothing to do with the Wendels. Whether you live or die has nothing to do with us anymore."

Angie was flabbergasted. "No!" She blanched, shaking her head violently. "You can't do this to me, Mom. I'm your daughter! And you're throwing twenty years of love away for a-a paternity test result? Mom, you love me! You can't just dump me like this!"

"I loved you because I thought you were my daughter. Because Cameron set me up." Crystal stared at Angie, her eyes filled with hatred that could burn a city. "While I was loving you with all my heart, Cameron was laughing at my foolishness. My idiocy. While you were enjoying all the Wendels have to offer, she was torturing and yelling at my daughter. She almost killed my own girl." The more she said, the more agitated she became. She slammed the table and shot up from her seat. "Angie Wendel... No. I suppose you're a Colt now. You are the daughter of Xander and Cameron. You can leave now. I'm not waiting until dinner is done. You can see either of your parents, I don't care. The point is, you have no ties to us anymore."

"No, Mom. No..." Angie was still shaking her head, tears streaming down her cheeks. Xander? The Colts used to be rich, but they've declined because of his incompetence. He divorced Cameron and married a strong woman with a powerful background to save his ailing family. He has a powerful wife and children of his own. I might be his daughter, but he didn't raise me, so he won't care about me. Cameron? The Wendels are going to sue her and send her to jail. Asking her for help is just a death wish.

No. I won't go anywhere. I'm the Wendels' daughter and the young miss of the family. My place is with the Wendels, and I won't go anywhere. She stood up, tears still streaming down her cheeks, and she wobbled over to the Wendel couple and knelt before them. "Dad, Mom, I'm your daughter. You've raised me up, and I've spent all this time staying by your side and cheering you up whenever you need it. I care for you whenever you are sick, and I am the one who has done her job as a daughter. Dad, Mom, are blood ties that important? Isn't our love more important than something as

insignificant as blood? Dad, Mom, I love you and our family. I won't leave you or the family unless I die."

Michael wanted to cave in then, but he looked at Crystal. He wanted to keep Angie around, since he did raise her up, and she was a part of the family for many years. It broke his heart seeing her cry, but he knew his wife was the one who was hurt the most in this matter, and she was the only one who could make the decision, not him.

Crystal looked at her calmly, her face deadpan. "Angie, if it was an accident, I would let you stay and keep you around. I can still see you as my own, but it was not an accident. Cameron planned this. She wanted you to take my daughter's place and enjoy the Wendels' wealth as well as my love. And she did it. You enjoyed a great life for many years, while my own daughter suffered hell. I can't forgive myself, nor can I forgive you. Every time I see you now, I am reminded of my foolishness and Cameron's wickedness. You must leave."

"But I'm innocent!" Angie wouldn't stop crying. "Cameron did that. I had nothing to do with it. And maybe this is a conspiracy. Maybe I'm your daughter, while Madeline is a fake."

"Enough," Crystal answered coldly. "You are already of age long ago, and we've been kind enough to keep supporting you until this day. You took my own daughter's place and enjoyed the family's love and wealth for more than twenty years. For old times' sake, we aren't punishing you for that. You are allowed to leave unscathed, so why must you stay and make me suffer?"

"Angie, Mom is right." I can't let Mom get angry again. It's not good for her health. He agreed, "Angie, I know it's hard for you to accept that you're not Mom and Dad's own daughter, but Mom has a point. You're a grownup now. Even if you are their daughter, they have already fulfilled their responsibility as parents. It's not out of line to ask you to fend for yourself."

"That's not right, Jonathan," Cedric protested. "If Angie is really Dad and Mom's daughter, they'd marry her off to a great family, and they'd give her a lot of dowry too. But now that she's going to get the boot, she'll be losing everything."

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Chapter 73 You're Still Scamming?

He looked at Crystal and negotiated, "Can't we put this off for now, Mom? We can marry her off to a good family before calling the cops on Cameron. It's already been more than twenty years. You're not in a hurry, are you?"

Sebastian snorted. He cocked his eyebrow at Cedric and smiled elegantly. "So you're still going to scam someone out of a good marriage?"

Cedric flew into a rage. "This is our family's matter, Sebastian, so stay out of it!"

"Oh, you want me to stay out of it, eh?" Sebastian smiled and stood up. "Since you think it's not my business, then that means it's not my wife and kids' business either." He held the boys' hand and looked at Madeline. "Looks like we can go back now."

"Nice!" Buddy chirped. "I wanna go home. I miss Grandpa."

Michael's face fell. "Cedric, can you just shut up?"

Jonathan quickly went up to Sebastian and blocked him. "I see everyone's done with dinner. Why don't we move to the living room and let the kids have desserts and fruits?"

Buddy's eyes shone when he heard the mention of food.

Jonathan saw this and said instantly, "Come, Buddy. I'll take you to where the delicious food is."

Buddy looked at Madeline, and Madeline looked at Sebastian. Sebastian helped her earlier, so she had to let him make the choice. If she let the kids stay despite him saying that they were going to leave, it'd be ungrateful of her.

Sebastian noticed the look from Madeline. She's just too understanding. Since Madeline was willing to let him make the decision, he didn't want to make it difficult for her either, and he nodded at Buddy. Buddy looked delighted, and he asked, "What kind of food do you have, uncle?"

Jonathan's heart melted, and he beckoned to Buddy. "Come with me, Buddy."

Buddy looked at Sebastian. Sebastian nodded at him, and he quickly went to Jonathan.

Amused, Sebastian shook his head, and he whispered, "We had better keep an eye on the boys, or he might get taken away with just an offer of a biscuit."

"That's him, not me!" Aldo scoffed. "I'm not like that idiot."

Madeline patted his head. "Don't call him an idiot, or he'll really become an idiot."

Cedric saw her smile, and he went to her side. He said in a soft voice, "You already have a happy life, so why do you want to ruin Angie? Just tell Mom to keep Angie around. She'll do what you tell her to."

Madeline frowned, and she looked at him. "You should know what Angie and Isabel have done to me all my life. It's already kind of me not to make them suffer. How can

you even ask me to defend Angie? Are you trying to be kind, or do you think I'm some sort of pushover?"

"Why you little..." Cedric flew into a rage. "You had better show mercy whenever possible. If you defend Angie today, I promise I'll be nice to you. I'll take care of you and make up for the lost years."

"Oh, you're getting carried away, Cedric." Sebastian wrapped his arm around her waist. "I can take care of my wife. You don't have to do it for me."

Cedric shot him a glare and took a step toward Madeline. He growled, "Don't feel too smug just because you're married to Sebastian. That's just because you have your sons with you. Once the boys have established themselves in the family, they won't need you anymore. Sebastian will get a divorce and keep the boys for himself, while you will be chased away. Do you think you can do anything about it without us helping you?"

Sebastian laughed mirthlessly, and he looked at Cedric. "Rumors say that all the Wendel boys are elites among the elites. Well, the rumors are wrong. I can't say much about your brothers, but you... You're a total and utter imbecile. Trying to turn us against each other right in front of me? Do you think I'm a pushover, you imbecile?"

Cedric's face fell. "Did you just insult me?"

Sebastian answered, "No. I was just making an accurate commentary."

"Why you..."

Before he could finish, his mother—who was helping Jonathan prepare the food for the kids—quickly came over. "What did you say to Maddie again? Don't say anything stupid. I wanted Angie to leave. It's my decision, and she has nothing to do with it."

"She has everything to do with it." Cedric glanced at Madeline angrily. If it weren't for her, we'd still be a happy family instead of being in this mess. Now, my beloved sister is going to get the boot.

"Shut up!" Michael came over and growled, "One more word and you're going to your room."

Cedric was furious, but he had to shut up.

Joseph and Connor came over and put their hands on his shoulders. "Cedric, please grow up and just stop talking, will you?"

Cedric glared at them. "Grow up? Grow up? Hey, Angie's the victim here. If none of us are going to defend Angie, she's going to get the boot, and that'll ruin her life!" His anger

flared, and he shoved his brothers away. "I don't care anymore. I need to make this clear with Dad and Mom."

He strode back to his parents and said loudly, "Dad, Mom, I'm a part of the family, so I have the right to voice my opinion. Angie's been living with us for more than twenty years. I always thought she's your real daughter, but now that she's not, you want to chase her out? What if you find out that we aren't your real kids? Are you going to chase us out too? Dad, Mom, I love and respect you, but I can't believe you could be so cruel as to deny Angie's love just because of a piece of paper. Don't you think that's heartless of you?"

Crystal couldn't believe her own son just called her cruel and heartless. She felt everything around her spin, but she tried to control her emotions despite her heart thumping so crazily it could leap out of her chest. She asked her son calmly, "So you're calling me cruel and heartless? Does that mean you're kind and compassionate? What do you want to do then?"

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Chapter 74 Murphy's Law

Michael patted her back and kept calming her down. Then, he roared at Cedric, "What the hell did you just say, Cedric? Do you think we want this to happen? Can you be a bit more understanding? Let your mother calm down, will you. We can talk about this tomorrow."

"Tomorrow?" Cedric flailed his arms around angrily. "Mom's going to call the cops on Cameron tonight, and everyone will know she's Angie's real mother. Angie will be ruined, and everything will be too late then."

Angie was hiding behind Cedric and holding his arm, crying her heart out.

"So?" Crystal stared at him. "Tell me then, what do you want to do?"

"I told you what I want to do," Cedric said. "We're keeping this a secret and pretend nothing ever happened. Once we marry Angie off to a good family, we'll call the cops on Cameron and make her pay the price."

"And what if I refuse? What will you do?" Crystal stared at her son darkly, her eyes looking like two little black holes that could suck all the light around her. "I can't wait anymore. Cameron took my daughter away for twenty years, and I can't wait any longer. I want to call the cops on her now, so what will you do, Cedric?" She went to take her phone, but she didn't look away from him.

Cedric's face was red with anger and he held Angie's hand. "Fine; if that's what you want to do, I'll take Angie and leave. You might not want her anymore, but I do. I'll keep her safe. I'll make enough money for the both of us. I'll—"

"Very well then. If you wish to cut ties with your own mother for her enemy's daughter, then so be it." Crystal looked at him and she laughed. "I see now. I see that I raised you only for her to cash in on my efforts. Very well. Take her and leave. Leave!"

He froze up. "Mom, I never said I wanted to cut ties with you. I..."

Cedric was still talking, but Crystal couldn't hear him anymore. All she could hear was the thumping of her heart. It was like thunder roiling within her, beating her eardrums, threatening to make her fall at any moment. She didn't want to fall. She just found her daughter, and she hadn't gotten to know her yet.

She hadn't called the cops to arrest Cameron and make her pay for her crimes yet. She hadn't asked her family if they thought she was cruel as well. She didn't want to fall, but that was not up to her. The last thing she remembered was spewing blood everywhere and everything turned dark.

Michael stared dumbly as his wife spewed blood and collapsed to the ground, but he reflexively held her in his arms. Her face was deathly white, but her lips were eerily red and his mind blanked.

Jonathan blanched. "Dr. Ziegler! Dr. Hiddleston!" he roared.

The doctors rushed to their side.

As Cedric was standing right in front of Crystal, her blood was splattered all over his face. He didn't even manage to close his eyes and avoid the blood before he already saw his mother falling backward, much to his shock. M-Mom just spewed blood? B-Because of me? No. I never wanted this.

He staggered backward as his legs turned to jelly and he almost fell down. Everything around him disappeared for a moment, but when his brothers called out to their mother, he suddenly snapped out of it. He rushed to his mother and kneeled beside her. "D-Don't scare me, Mom. I-I didn't mean it. I didn't mean to make you mad. Wake up, Mom. Don't scare me."

"F*ck off!" Joseph pulled him up by the collar and punched him square in the face. There were tears in Joseph's eyes as he shouted, "I f*cking told you to let Mom calm down and put off this sh*t for later! I f*cking told you, but you didn't f*cking listen! Now, nobody's going to call the cops on Cameron! Are you happy now?"

Cedric fell down from the punch, but he crawled back to his mother in tears. "I'm sorry... I'm sorry, Mom. I shouldn't have argued with you. Please, wake up! I'm sorry! Please..."

If something happens to Mom, Dad and the others will never forgive me. I will never forgive myself. She can't die! She must not. Joseph is right. Why couldn't I have just put this off until later? I could have talked with her about it after everything had settled down. Why did I have to argue with her? I already know she has a heart condition. Why did I go and make her mad?

The doctors were trying their best to save Crystal, but she just wouldn't open her eyes or say anything.

Cedric slapped himself, but he couldn't even muster any strength. Fear robbed him of everything including his strength.

Nigel and his family had arrived at the worst of times. They were late because Nigel had something to do and the first thing they saw was the living room looking like a mess. The door was open as the butler and maids came out in a hurry to see if the ambulance had arrived.

Nigel knew about Crystal's condition, and the sight of the Wendel Residence in a mess reminded him of that. Please don't let that be the reason. He strode to the living room, but his prayers weren't answered.

His sister was lying in Michael's arms, her face deathly white, and her breathing almost nonexistent. The doctors were kneeling beside her while administering emergency treatment. He pushed the throng away and kneeled on one knee beside Michael, but he held Michael by his collar. "What happened? What happened to Crystal?"

Michael's eyes were red and tears were streaming down his cheeks. He loved all his children, but the one who would stay with him for the rest of his life was his wife. They were childhood friends and fell in love with each other along the way. They never argued once after they got married, and they were each other's soulmates. Their hobbies matched, and after so long, Crystal was still the only one who truly understood him.

What should I do if she leaves me behind all by myself? How should I face life? Fear was gripping his heart tightly. He never wanted to cry, but the tears kept falling by themselves. He had never felt so terrified in his life before. Ever since he knew about his wife's condition, he had feared losing her to death. When the time to face that fear came, he realized that the pain he had imagined paled in comparison to the real thing.

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Chapter 75 Repentance

"What are you crying for?" Nigel shoved Michael away. "Crystal will be fine. She will be."

Sirens blared outside, and the butler came in. "The ambulance is here."

The family physician was sweating, but he was too busy to wipe it off. He quickly said, "The madam is in critical condition. She probably has to undergo a bypass surgery, so she must go to the hospital."

Nobody was going to argue with the expert. A chaotic process later, Crystal was sent into the operating room.

The red light above the doors lit up. Madeline stared at it for a while and looked at Buddy, who was holding her hand. She had to come with the Wendels to the hospital, as Crystal was her mother. Initially, she didn't want the boys to come with her, as hospitals were full of germs.

The boys had protested, especially Buddy. He wouldn't let her hand go, and he was tense, as if worried she might abandon him.

She then relented and brought the boys with her. When she looked down at Buddy, he was staring up at her as well. She smiled and crouched down beside him. "Buddy, can we talk a little?"

Buddy pounced at her and gave her a tight hug. "I'm not going home. I'm staying here with you."

Madeline couldn't do anything about it, and she patted his head. "Your father will go with you and Aldo, alright?" She looked at Sebastian. "Your grandmother's surgery will take a long time, and I have to stay with her. But you're still kids, and it's bedtime."

"No!" Buddy wouldn't go with that plan. "I can only sleep when you hug me."

"It's alright." Sebastian bent down and patted his head. "Let them stay. It's already unnerving for them to be in an unfamiliar place. If you're not around, that'll frighten them more."

I guess I have no choice then.

Sebastian picked Buddy up and sat on the bench so the boy could sleep on his lap. "Can you sleep in my arms, son?"

"Okay!" Buddy patted the empty spot beside Sebastian. "You sit here, Mom."

Madeline got up and sat beside Sebastian. She then held Aldo's hand and tried to get him to sleep in her lap as well.

Aldo shook his head in disgust. "I'm not that big of a baby." He climbed up the bench and sat beside his mother. "I'm not sleepy." He sat up straight. "I'll stay up with you, Mom."

Madeline shook her head, but she knew she couldn't do anything to change his mind.

The surgery lasted for more than three hours, but fortunately, it was a success. When the doctor told them that Crystal was out of critical condition, all the strength left Michael, and he wobbled. So death decided to show her mercy. I can still go on in life with her by my side.

Crystal was sent to the ICU when she was deemed fine after some observation. The hospital wouldn't allow anyone to stay back, so the doctor suggested that they go home and come back during visiting hours the next day.

Michael came up to Sebastian and Madeline. Buddy was asleep in Sebastian's lap, but Aldo was still wide awake. He was holding his mother's hand, staring cautiously at everyone who showed up around his mother.

Michael patted Aldo's face and told the Hart couple, "Come with me," he said softly, but he sounded adamant.

He couldn't care less about anything else. He didn't care about his son, fake daughter, or the twenty years Angie had with them. He cared naught about those. He just wanted to make his wife happy. Since his wife thought she failed her daughter and wanted to make up with her, he would ask Madeline and the kids to stay. Since his wife didn't want to see Angie, he would send her away.

Madeline nodded when she saw how firm he was. With how Crystal was doing, she had to stay here for a while. At the very least, until Crystal had stabilized.

As they were in Wendel City, and Michael was inviting her to stay, she had no reason to find an abode outside.

Sebastian had no objections. He would stay where Madeline and the kids were.

After they came out of the hospital, Michael looked at Angie and Cedric. "Don't come back ever again. You can go wherever you want. From now on, you are no longer related to the Wendels."

Cedric blanched, and his voice trembled as he said, "Dad..."

"And as for you three..." Michael looked at Jonathan, Joseph, and Connor. "Your mother and I have done our job of raising you up. Now it's time for you to repay that debt. If you want to abandon us because you too think we're heartless, then so be it. You can go anywhere in the world. We've raised you up, and our job is done. You can

do whatever you want now.” After he said that, he didn’t look at anyone and went straight to his car.

“Dad, please, don’t...” Jonathan ran to catch up with Michael and said softly, “Cedric feels sorry about this. He only did it on impulse. He didn’t mean it.”

Joseph kicked Cedric angrily. “Don’t just stand there! Are you really going to abandon your own parents?”

Cedric snapped out of it and went to stand before his father, then he knelt on the ground. “Dad, I’m sorry. I’m an idiot! I made Mom mad, and I know that, but I won’t ever do it again. I’ll apologize when she wakes up. I won’t do it ever again.”

And he wouldn’t. Just this once was enough to horrify him. When he was waiting outside the operating room earlier, all he could think of was his parents. For as long as he could remember, his mother had always been a stay-at-home mother, and she took care of them every day. His mother was the gentlest, sweetest soul around. She would do everything herself when it came to her kids.

Every time they were sad or sick, their mother would care for them. She would stay with them when they were sad, console them when they were unhappy, and care for them when they were sick.

Angie didn’t do any of that. She only grew up with them. She might be important, but his mother was more important than she was. If he had to choose between his sister and mother, he’d choose the latter every time. It was a shame that lesson was only learnt after his mother almost died and had a bypass surgery. After what happened, his perfectly fine mother had become more fragile than glass. They had to take great care of her heart, or her life would be in danger, and that was all his fault.

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Chapter 76 A Different Brother

A lot of kids could leave their parents behind at the drop of a hat, but not many parents could do that to their own children. Michael only chased Cedric away because he was furious. Now that his son was kneeling before him and crying, his anger waned. “Suit yourself,” he said curtly and went around Cedric.

Joseph kicked his brother when he went past him. “Get up.”

Connor shook his head and pulled his twin up, and he patted Cedric’s shoulder. “Think before you leap next time, or the price might be too steep to pay.”

Cedric hung his head low and nodded. Connor wrapped his arm around his twin's shoulder and led him to the car park.

Angie chased after them, crying. "Connor, Cedric!"

Connor stopped in his tracks and looked back at her. "Angie."

Angie came up to them tearfully. "What about me? I want to go home too."

"Angie, if I were you, I would find a spot to stay for the time being," Connor said. "If you actually love Dad and Mom, you should stay away from them. Go independent and start a new life."

"H-How can you say that, Connor?" Angie's eyes widened in disbelief. "Connor, you're my family. My place is with the Wendels. And now I lost both of them just like that. How am I supposed to start again?"

"Angie, you're an adult. You should learn how to take care of yourself," Connor said. "If you really love Dad and Mom, you will get a job, settle down, and take care of yourself. You can see them if you have time, but don't trouble them with your matters. I'd do that if I were you."

"No, no, no! Connor, you say that only because you are not me." She shook her head in agony. "You're my family. I did nothing wrong, but now you want to dump me like I'm some kind of trash? What do you think I am? I'm your sister! I'm Dad and Mom's daughter! You can't throw me away just like that. How am I supposed to accept this?"

"Angie, Dad and Mom owe you nothing, and neither do us," Connor answered calmly. "Just like what Dad said, he and Mom have done their jobs of raising us up. Now it's time for us to repay that debt. Is it so wrong that they want you to leave the house and start a new life?"

"It's not the same!" Angie broke down. "You're abandoning me and stripping my status away. And you're going to tell everyone who my real mother is. If you do that, you'll ruin my whole life."

"You are the daughter of Xander and Cameron. Nobody is stripping you of your status. Dad and Mom are only exposing the truth," Connor said. "You say being Cameron's daughter will destroy your whole life. Well, Madeline has been her daughter for more than twenty years, but she's living well."

And it doesn't get any better than that. She's the young madam of the Harts. Not many girls her age can be her peer.

Angie had no comeback at all. She thought Michael was cruel, and Crystal was crueler still. She had a lot to complain about them, but Connor refuted all her arguments before she could bring it up. Angie had nothing to say, but she was frustrated.

But I am the young miss of the Wendels. I am Dad and Mom's daughter. I'm your sister. How can you deny me just because of a piece of paper? How can you chase me out and ruin my life just like that? How can my parents, who loved me so much, turn their backs against me just because we're not related by blood? Just because I'm Cameron's daughter? She couldn't accept it at all.

Connor sighed. "Angie, Dad and Mom have given you a lot of money and jewelry over the years. You can live a better life than most people in this city with that kind of money in your hands. Just find a place to stay and settle down. Time can heal everything. Give them some time to handle Cameron's case. Once they forget about her, maybe they'll accept you back."

Give them some time to handle Cameron's case? Angie smiled bitterly. It'll be too late then. When the truth is out, everyone who knows me will know I'm Cameron's daughter. How am I supposed to marry into a rich family then?

She was the only daughter of the Wendels since she was little. No matter where she went, she'd be the star of the show, but once the truth was out, she would be cast out from the circle. No rich man would ever like or marry her.

The friends who used to envy her would laugh at her misery. Some would even make her life even worse, while the one whom she had bullied for years would take her place and pay her back for what she did. That's not my life.

I was born on a silver platter. I'm an elite. I should live my whole life in riches and wealth. I'd rather die than give up that life. "Fine. Leave. Just leave me behind." She knew she couldn't count on Connor or Cedric. One was cold, while the other was gripped by fear. I can't count on anyone. I can only count on myself.

"Angie, don't do any stupid things," Connor advised her one last time. "Dad and Mom are only asking you to leave because they're really angry. Just find a place to settle down. Once this is over, they'll start to miss you. I'm sure they will take you home. Don't do anything stupid to ruin yourself."

"I know." Angie wiped her tears off and smiled self-deprecatingly. "I'm not the Wendels' young miss anymore. I have no money or power. What can I do anyway? I won't do anything, so don't worry."

Connor noticed the hatred in her eyes despite the calm front she was putting on, and it displeased him. She has no right to hate anyone. None of us owe her. A famous master noticed Connor's talent when he was eight, and he was taken in as his disciple. He spent little time at home and didn't have the deep love toward Angie like his brothers

did. He preferred kinder, more compassionate people. Angie's cruelty displeased him. Cedric might be a fool, but at least his heart was in the right place, and he was compassionate. He thought someone like that was more reliable. At least he wouldn't have to worry about being backstabbed someday.

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Chapter 77 New Backer

He lost all interest in talking to her once he saw the hatred in her eyes. She was just an ingrate. No matter how much they helped her, she would bite the hand that fed her the moment they failed her expectations. He had seen a lot of people like that, but it took a long time for them to show their true colors, just like how gold-plated copper had to be burnt to show its true colors. It was only then he realized that the cute sister he thought he had was just an ingrate who would tear them apart once they couldn't satiate her appetite.

He glanced at her and said coldly, "You're on your own now." He left with his twin after that.

Angie watched them leave, and it felt as if she had fallen into an ice pit. The chilling air pierced through her soul, but she wouldn't leave her fate up to chance. Before the truth was out, she knew she must do everything she could to keep the truth concealed and stay with the Wendels. She had to remain as the Wendels' daughter. Only then could she keep her identity and bright future.

She took a deep breath and hailed a ride. They didn't even leave me a car. The Wendels' cruelty fueled her hatred. She got into the ride and sat back, closing her eyes. I won't fall just like this. If I'm going down, then I'm dragging the Wendels and Madeline together with me. I did nothing wrong, but they cast me aside just like that. I can't be the only one who suffers. All will suffer like I did. If they're doing this to me, then I'm messing up their lives.

When she came to her destination, she got out of the car and came to a gate that had engravings on it, though it was shut.

The guard saw her. "Who goes there?" And he came to see who it was.

"It's me, Angie," Angie answered.

"Oh, Miss Angie." The guard's stern look was replaced with a smile. "What brings you here so late in the night?"

"I need to see Grandpa and Grandma," she said.

She was at the Wendel Residence, where Robert and his wife stayed. As the only daughter of the Wendels, she was spoiled by Robert and Harriet. The guard quickly opened the gates, and Angie came in.

Robert and Harriet were asleep, but the butler went to wake them up. They knew it must be urgent, as they were woken up at one in the morning.

Robert wore a robe and came down with Harriet. Harriet was more than ten years younger than Robert. She wasn't Robert's first wife, but the sister of his first wife. Robert had three sons with his first wife, and he loved her deeply. After her death, he was planning on never remarrying, but then Harriet would come over to take care of her nephews, and they eventually got married.

Harriet spent all her youth taking care of Robert's sons, and he was touched by that. Eventually, he married her, and she became his second wife.

Michael and his brothers got along swimmingly with Harriet. They didn't really refuse it when she married their father and became their stepmother. She had no children of her own, so she saw Michael and his brothers as her own kids. Robert and his sons respected her greatly because of that.

When her grandparents came out, Angie went and hugged Harriet tearfully. "Grandpa... Grandma..."

Michael and his brothers called Harriet 'Auntie', but since she was legally Robert's wife, so Michael and his brothers' kids called her 'Grandma'. Harriet loved her step-grandchildren, as she had no kids of her own, and she loved the only girl—Angie—even more.

The boys were raised by Crystal, but she helped bring Angie up. Crystal lost a lot of blood when she gave birth to Angie, but she was eventually saved. Crystal's health wasn't really great even after she was discharged, so Harriet helped Crystal take care of Angie.

Angie grew up a bit cheeky, and Crystal was a strict mother. She might love her only daughter, but she would never spoil her rotten. However, Harriet would give Angie anything she wanted, and thanks to that, Angie was close to her.

Robert had eight grandsons and one granddaughter. His family was big, but Angie was the closest to Harriet among the grandkids. They were her only hope now, and she made herself look like she was in the worst agony in the world.

Angie was the only one Harriet raised, and she poured her heart and soul into the child. She was heartbroken seeing Angie cry so pitifully. She patted her back, asking, "What is it, Angie? Why are you crying? Did someone hurt you?"

“Grandma... Dad and Mom are abandoning me!” Angie started hiccuping.

Harriet frowned. “What are you talking about, you silly girl? Everyone knows they love you the most out of all their children. They won’t abandon you.”

“It’s true. G-Grandma, it’s true,” Angie said through tears. “Dad said I’m not their real daughter. He says I’m Cameron’s daughter. He doesn’t want me anymore, and he wants to chase me out. I don’t want to leave, Grandma. This is my home. I grew up here. Where can I go? I-I don’t want to leave you, Grandma...” Angie hugged Harriet tightly, crying her heart out.

“What did you say? You’re not their real daughter?” Harriet looked at Robert, shocked.

Robert was confused as well. He didn’t stay with his sons, so he didn’t know what had happened in Michael’s household.

“I-It’s true, Grandma. Dad said I’m not his daughter, and Mom doesn’t want me anymore. She wants to chase me out, and Dad is doing what she says.” Angie was still crying while hugging Harriet. “Can you help me, Grandma? I don’t want to leave you guys. This is my home. If I leave, I’ll be without a family. I’ll lose Dad, Mom, and you two. I’m so, so scared, Grandma.”

After a lot of explanation, Harriet finally understood what was going on. She looked at Robert with complaint in her eyes. “This is preposterous. Even if she isn’t their daughter, we still raised her. They can’t abandon her just like that.”

Robert nodded. He was shocked by the news, but he reflexively thought Harriet was right. The Wendel Family was rich enough to keep another kid, even if she was not their own. She’s been with us for more than twenty years. They can’t dump her just like this. “Let’s go.” He looked at Harriet and Angie. “I’m going to ask Michael and Crystal about this. We raised Angie up. They can’t throw her out just like this. If this goes out, the public will call us heartless.”

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Chapter 78 Are You Stupid?

They raised her for more than twenty years, but now, they’re chasing her out just because she isn’t their real kid? If this gets out, everyone’s going to call us heartless. You’d cherish a pet after you had it for a long time, let alone a living, breathing human. This is insane. Robert took Harriet and Angie and rushed to Michael’s house. He lived close to his sons, and it didn’t take long for him to arrive.

Michael and his family had just come back, and they hadn’t slept yet. Things were too chaotic for them to get some sleep. Then the butler led Robert, Harriet, and Angie in.

Michael went to welcome them, though he looked harried. "What brings you here, Dad, Auntie?"

"Because of this ridiculous thing you did," Robert said sternly. "I've heard about it from Angie. You found your real daughter, didn't you? You can keep her if you want, but Angie is my granddaughter too. I've watched over her since she was a baby, and I won't let you chase her away."

"Dad, please, just let me rest, can you? Please don't make me do this." Michael wiped his face. "Crystal just got out of the woods, and everything's a mess. Can you just let me catch a break?"

Robert paused for a moment. "What happened to Crystal?"

Nigel came over. "My sister wanted to cut all ties with Angie, but Cedric argued with her. Her condition acted up, and she was sent to the hospital. She just got out of the woods."

Cedric hung his head low, his face pale, and he was tense. Connor looked at him. He knew Cedric wasn't feeling great either. Anyone would feel horrified if their mother was sent to the hospital and had a brush with death because of them. He wouldn't chastise him, but not because he couldn't.

Cedric was already blaming himself for this. He had a feeling that Cedric might harm himself if he chided him. Crystal had already fallen, and he would not let anything happen to Cedric. He patted his twin's shoulder consolingly. However, he could only do that because their mother was fine. Otherwise, he might never forgive Cedric.

Robert shut up. The Wendels and the Taylors were great friends. He was good friends with Crystal's father. Now that she was hospitalized because of this whole thing with Angie, he couldn't do anything about it. Forcing Crystal to keep Angie would just be killing her.

Angie was leaning against Harriet, crying in silence. Harriet patted her and said softly, "Michael, I raised Angie because Crystal wasn't in the best condition to do so after giving birth to her. If you want to cut ties with her, shouldn't I get a say in this?"

Michael frowned at her. "Auntie..."

"Michael, I don't agree with this. Angie is innocent." Harriet held the girl in her embrace, patting her back. "Michael, I'm stopping you for you and Crystal's own good. You're acting on impulse, and most decisions done in that state are wrong. You'll regret this once you calm down."

She kept herself well, and since she had no kids, she was still slim. Even though she was already in her forties, she was still beautiful. Harriet looked at Michael and persuaded, "Michael, believe me. I'm doing this so you and Crystal won't regret this. You've raised her for more than twenty years. There's no way you don't love her. If you expose the truth about her impulsively, it'll be too late for regrets later." She then looked at Madeline. "You must be Madeline, correct?"

Madeline went up and nodded at Harriet. "Hello, Grandma."

"Hello." Harriet looked at her and said softly, "Maddie, your parents want to cut ties with Angie because of you. Please, will you speak up for Angie and ask them to keep the truth a secret so she can stay? They feel guilty for not seeing the truth sooner, so they'll do what you say. As long as you help Angie, it'll be great for the whole family. Everyone can be happy."

Madeline frowned at Harriet. She had a feeling Harriet wasn't as nice as she looked. She might sound gentle and look like she adored Madeline, but what she said was a trap. To put it blatantly, she was saying that Madeline was the reason for the Wendels' chaos, and if she didn't speak up for Angie, that would mean she was a petty woman.

God, this is so annoying. I'm just here to get reunited. Why do I have to go through all this? To the Wendels, Angie was innocent since Cameron was the one who did the switcheroo. But to Madeline, Angie was not innocent.

Previously, no matter if she was at the Colts or the Taylors, Angie would always mock or abuse her every time they met. She was already kind enough not to make her pay for what she did, but she never thought the Wendels would keep asking her to speak up for Angie. Are they stupid?

She laughed mirthlessly and ignored Harriet, then she looked at Michael. "Mr. Wendel, the boys are getting sleepy. Where is the guest room? It's time for them to sleep."

Harriet frowned and looked at Robert. "Rob..."

She was more than ten years younger than Robert. Even though she was past her prime, she still looked gorgeous. Moreover, she never got pregnant because she took care of Robert's sons. Robert had always respected her, so seeing her getting ignored angered Robert.

"Madeline!" he scolded. "Your elder is talking to you! Mind your attitude!"

Madeline looked at him calmly. "I haven't gotten back into the fold. Strictly speaking, none of you are my elders yet."

“Why you...” Furious, Robert looked at Michael. “This is the daughter you want? This is why you’re dumping Angie away? She has no manners at all! Why did you let her back? To make a mockery out of the family?”

Nigel looked at Sebastian, who was standing beside Madeline. “Mr. Robert, do please mind what you’re saying.”

“I’m telling the truth! Why? Can’t bear that?” Robert growled. “Angie is our real daughter. She represents our family’s best values. That little b*stard isn’t! She’s mannerless and disrespectful to her elders. Do you really want everyone to laugh at us for having a descendant like her?”

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Chapter 79 Stand Up

Madeline was about to reply, but Sebastian stopped her. He took one step forward and guarded Madeline. A smile curled his lips as he looked at Robert coolly. “Well, well, well. Nerve thought someone would call my wife a mannerless, disrespectful b*stard right in front of me. That’s quite cultured and courteous of you, Mr. Wendel. Oh, I’m Sebastian. Sebastian Hart.”

Robert was shocked. “Sebastian Hart?” He didn’t know Sebastian, but he had heard that name before.

He was Philip’s only son and the only heir to the Harts. He was the most powerful man in the Hart Family and was a business genius that dominated the business world. He looked at Madeline, then at Sebastian. “Y-You are...”

Jonathan quickly went up to Robert and introduced, “Oh, I forgot to introduce him, Grandpa. Maddie is Sebastian’s wife now, and her boys are his sons.” Too many things were happening at once that night. Then, his grandparents had arrived without notifying them, and they went into interrogation mode the moment they came in. Thus, Sebastian slipped their minds in the heat of the moment.

Robert was dumbfounded. If Madeline was just a poor girl without anyone backing her up, nothing would happen if he yelled at her, but no. She was Sebastian’s wife. Even if she was raised by the Wendels, they couldn’t yell at her whenever they wanted after she got married. After all, she would have her husband’s side to back her up, and if her husband’s side of the family wouldn’t let her get insulted, not even her own family could insult her. Naturally, Sebastian wouldn’t let her get insulted.

Robert was put in an awkward situation. His face kept twitching, but he could say nothing.

Jonathan quickly stepped up and smiled at Sebastian. "Sebastian, my grandfather had a slip of the tongue in all this confusion. We're all family here, so I think Maddie won't mind, right Maddie?" He looked at Madeline. Jonathan liked Madeline. She was incredibly gorgeous, but not seductively so. She seemed pure and innocent, relaxed and easygoing. He hadn't talked to her much, but no matter where and when, she'd always be calm and confident. He admired that part of her, and she was obviously more agreeable than Sebastian was. Convincing her to let things slide was easier than convincing Sebastian.

Jonathan was looking at her, but Sebastian stepped in and kept her from talking. He cocked his eyebrow at Jonathan and said, "So you're saying that your grandfather is a bully? If my wife is just a regular woman, he can yell at her however he wants to? Now that he knows she's my wife, it becomes a slip of the tongue?"

Jonathan wanted to bullsh*t his way out of this, but Sebastian wouldn't let him, and Jonathan shut up. He opened his mouth, but he could find no excuse to weasel his way out.

Robert's face paled with anger, but he couldn't find any comeback either. After all, Sebastian spoke the truth. He knew Madeline and was clear about how she grew up. All he had for her was disdain, so he had yelled at her without caring if he was right or wrong.

After all, she was his granddaughter, and he could yell at her if she angered him. Nobody could chastise him for that, but he never thought she was Sebastian's wife. Now that she had someone backing her, he couldn't yell at her whenever he wanted to. To make things worse, Sebastian kept backing him into a corner.

Harriet noticed his dilemma, and she stepped in. She smiled gently at Sebastian, saying, "So you're Madeline's husband! That makes you family. Oh, you should have introduced him to us, Maddie. He's such a charmer. We're happy that you found yourself a good partner."

"Oh, I'll get back to you later." Sebastian glanced at Harriet and set her aside, then he went back to Robert. "Mr. Wendel, you insulted my wife for no reason. I think an apology is in order."

Robert almost blacked out from fury. I'm an old man, and she's my granddaughter. You want me to apologize to a young girl like that? Does he have no idea how our society works?

His father was looking bad and might pass out at any time, so Michael had to stand up. His wife just got out of the operating theater, and he did not want to send his father in next. He heaved a sigh and walked up to Sebastian. "It's all a big misunderstanding. A lot has happened today, and tensions are running high, so people get a bit short-

tempered. They don't mean it. It's really late now, so get some rest and we'll talk tomorrow."

Sebastian didn't want to rest. His wife was called a mannerless b*stard, and the man who insulted her showed no signs of apology. I will not rest. My family has been everywhere in this nation, and none of us have been insulted this way, not even the servants. He called my wife a b*stard and thinks he can sleep it away. In his dreams. No pun intended.

He snickered and put his hand in his pocket. "So you're saying that anyone from your family can insult my wife whenever they're angry then?"

"That's not what I meant." Michael felt awkward, and he was having a headache. "I'm just saying that it's late, and the boys can't sleep well in their arms. Let's get some rest and talk about it tomorrow."

Aldo couldn't hold on anymore, so he had fallen asleep on the way back. Sebastian and Madeline were each holding one when they got out of the car. They were just talking to Michael and his family and were about to retire for the night when Robert and Harriet barged in.

When the argument started, they handed the boys to Weylam and Desmond for fear that they might be woken up from the noise. Weylam and Desmond stood far away from the battlefield, but they were not out of sight. The boys slept well in their arms, and they didn't even stir despite how bad the argument got.

"Mr. Wendel." Sebastian looked at the boys. Since they were sound asleep, he could rest easy, and he said coldly, "We know what happened here, so drop the pretense. If someone insults my wife, then they have to apologize. Even a kid knows how to say sorry when he or she did something wrong. Don't tell me your own father doesn't know that."

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Chapter 80 Unworthy

Nobody would take a step back, and Jonathan felt like his head was about to explode. He stepped up and stood in front of his father, who looked really upset. He gazed at Sebastian and said, "Sebastian, honestly, I'm grateful that you're standing up for my sister. Really, I am, but Sebastian, think about this. Everyone here is her family. If you keep pushing us, it won't be good for her. If you do this, it'll put her in a dilemma. She'd have to choose between you and her own family."

"Family?" Sebastian looked at him and snorted. "I didn't see you defending her when your grandfather called her a mannerless b*stard, and now you're calling yourself her family? Sorry, but you're thinking too highly of yourself."

Jonathan's face fell. "That's too far, Sebastian. I was nice to you because you're the boys' parents, and I don't want to put Maddie in a tough spot. I'm not afraid of you." He was the eldest son of the Wendels, and he was a brilliant man who got successful at a young age. His whole life was paved with praises and accolades, but this was the first time someone was being so rude to him.

"As I said, you think too highly of yourself. You're nice to me because my family is more powerful than yours, and you don't want to antagonize us." Sebastian scoffed. "Ever since Maddie and I came to your place, only your mother actually cried because of all the suffering she endured. None of you actually cared about her. Did you ask her how much she suffered? No. All you care about is Angie. All you did was try to come up with a plan to keep Angie. All you tried to do was come up with an idea so Angie wouldn't have to suffer. You guys keep arguing and arguing and arguing, but none of you actually care about Maddie."

He smiled sardonically. "Well, I can understand you. Blood isn't more important than the time you spent with Angie, so of course you side with her. But calling yourself Maddie's family when you're siding with Angie is a bit disgusting, don't you think?"

Jonathan opened his mouth, but he couldn't say a word, and his eyes that shone with anger dimmed, and his head hung low. Sebastian was right. Ever since Sebastian and Madeline came to their place, Jonathan and the rest of his brothers were hoping that Angie could stay, despite the fact that only Cedric had spoken up.

They didn't say it because they knew about their mother's grudge, and they were worried about her health. They didn't want to anger her, but deep down, they cared about Angie and were trying to see if they could help her out.

Aside from his mother, nobody cared about the suffering Madeline had endured in the past. Nobody cared that she was chased out of the Colts and almost died when she was just a child. Nobody cared that Phoebe and Isabel physically abused and almost killed her when she was taken to the Taylors. It was as if the suffering wasn't important because it was in the past. As if they could pretend it never existed.

They were already worrying about Angie before she even started to endure hardships, but none of them cared that Madeline had almost died multiple times. Sebastian is right. We call Madeline our family, but we still won't let Angie go despite what she did. That's disgusting. "I'm sorry," he said softly. "You're right, Sebastian." He looked at Madeline. "Madeline, I'm sorry."

"It's alright." She shook her head and smiled. "I have a brother. When he was fifteen, he almost died in a car crash, but I took him to the hospital in time. He's an orphan who had nowhere to go, so I took him into my firm after he healed up and raised him for five

years. We have only known each other for five years, and he is not related to me, but he's more important to me than you are. So..."

She looked at Jonathan and smiled. "I can understand why you side with Angie. That's human. Besides, you can't get along with all the people in the world. It depends on a lot of factors. I can't force anyone to get along with me, so I don't particularly care about how you treat me, but Sebastian is right about one thing." She looked at Sebastian before she turned back again. "Just don't demand anything from me using the pretext of family while you actually don't think of me as family. I don't mind anything else."

Her smile embarrassed him, and it tugged on his heartstrings for the first time. For the first time, he felt that she was truly his sister.

Her voice was soothing, like clear stream water. It was calm and sweet, and Sebastian loved it. He wrapped his arm around her shoulder and looked at Robert. "Hear that, Mr. Wendel? That was for you. Don't call her a b*stard and act like you're so high and mighty. If you don't think she's good enough to be a part of the Wendels, then you're not good enough to be her elder. Don't even think for a moment that you can insult my wife just because you're old enough."

Robert had never felt so embarrassed in his life. He was already an old man, but a young man was insulting him without fear or fervor, and he couldn't do anything about it. Philip alone could bankrupt the whole Wendel Family if he wanted to, and not to mention Sebastian had an uncle who had an army of talented people as well as another uncle who had a nation's wealth living overseas.

His uncles had no children of their own, making Sebastian the only descendant. They were the Harts' everything, and Robert could never cross them. All he could do was vent on Michael. "This is all your fault! You just had to let them in!"

Michael shook his head, smiling bitterly. "Dad, I'm a failure of a father. I've never been by her side ever since she was born. I failed her."

"That's not right," Harriet said after being quiet for a long time. "Maddie is still your daughter no matter what. You and Crystal gave her life." She went up to Madeline and said softly, "Maddie, parents can do no wrong to their children. You won't be here without them. Your mother almost died because of the matter with Angie, and your father is exhausted just handling this matter. You can't let this go on, can you?"

Madeline looked at her, smiling. "So? What are you trying to say?"