

## Her Revenge 31

### Chapter 31

this? My mom and the Berry family won't let you get away with it," Helen

"I'm Helen Berry, heir to the Berry family. How could you treat me like this? I yelled at the police. "You're all going to be fired"

"Be quiet! The policeman was instantly enraged and showed her forward

She stumbled, fell to the ground, and was picked up again and pushed forward.

Her words triggered a collective rage. The students picked up the trash on the ground and continued to throw it at her

"What's so great about you,

Miss Berry!

"What's the big deal about your family?"

"Can your family influence public opinion? Or interfere with the law?"

"No wonder she dares to kill people: She has her family to back her up!" /

"I'm afraid that's how the Berry family grew big, right?"

"We should really push the police to look into the Berry family. If they're raising someone as wicked as that woman, there's definitely something off about their family values?"

"Investigate the Berry family. Investigate the Berry family.

Helen had already been pushed in front of the police car. She was terrified now. She suddenly looked ahead at Shannon, who was also escorted by the police. "It's her! It's her who killed Lily! it wasn't me, it was her....."

Shannon was shocked and turned her head, looking at Helen incredulously

"Get in." The cop pushed Shannon into the car. Helen was also forced into the car. The police took Lily's body with them for investigation.

Lea followed the police car forward. She was more than satisfied to see Helen being arrested

The murderer was arrested on the spot by the police, and the students around cheered.

"Who the hell does she think she is! She even dares to threaten the police"

"We recorded the whole thing and posted it online so everyone can see her arrogant face and true colors."

“Damn! She’s the most popular girl in school, always getting top grades, and she’s a murderer”

“Haven’t you heard about it? Someone took the exams for her”

“I heard about it. Words came from their class”

“There’s also a sex video of her with two old men, her contacts in the entertainment industry.”

I thought she was raped.”

“It’s hard to say.

You see, she dares to kill people. What else might she do

“There goes the daughter of the most prominent family in Vaporleon.”

“How can the Berry family raise such a demon?”

The internet was buzzing with public opinions, and people’s words were even harsher, taking direct shots at Helen and the Berry family.

Lea listened to them talk and frowned, afraid that the Berry family’s stock would plummet. Alfred should have already sold her shares by now, so she had nothing to lose. She was relieved.

After following the police car to the school gate, she saw the Maybach across the street. It was Alfred’s car. Her eyes lit up, and she walked over. Standing before the car, she looked in and knocked on the window. There seemed no one inside.

As she turned around, she almost crashed into Alfred’s chest. He had also just come out from inside the campus. “Alfred! What brings you here?”

When she started talking, Alfred’s tall frame pressed up against her, sandwiching her between him and the car. She was surrounded by the strength and scent of his body. With all eyes on her and the situation she was in, he resisted the urge to hold her close, keeping her out of trouble.

“Leaf Helen’s sharp voice came.

Lea and Alfred turned to look, only to see Helen frantically banging on the police car window.

Inside the car, Helen saw Lea and Alfred close together. “This line bastard must have hooked up with Alfred, she thought.

Helen was overwhelmed by anger and growled, “Lea, my mom won’t let you go. You can’t get away with it!”

This whole thing must have something to do with her. She had set me up, just like she did at Grandpa’s birthday party, thought Helen.

Lea looked at her coldly. She guessed that Helen wouldn’t make it easy for her when she asked her to go to the top of the building under Zed’s name, but she didn’t realize that this was what she had planned. Now, Lea had realized how vicious and ignorant Helen was, and it was frightening.

With Matilda protecting her and taking care of the aftermath for her, there was nothing Helen wouldn't dare to do. In Lea's last life, Helen dropped Lea's three-month-old son on the ground in Lea's face and caused his death. When she thought of this, Lea's gaze gradually darkened, with a dim firelight of hatred flickering in its depths.

Alfred looked at her eyes. His heart sank, and he heartbrokenly called out in her ear, "Lea"

Hearing his voice, Lea came back to her senses and looked up at him, and her gaze gradually softened.

She was about to say something when she heard someone call her. "Lea!"

The two of them looked to where the volder came from and saw Zed walking out of the campus.

Zed's gaze fell on Alfred, and his expression darkened uncontrollably.

Earlier in the classroom, Lea said she loved someone else, and Zed didn't care. In Vaporleon, no one was more attractive, talented, or had a more influential background than him. But this man in front of him, just looking at him, Zed felt inferior and jealous.

"What do you want?" Seeing him, Lea was instantly cranky and impatient.

Zed stepped closer but didn't dare approach Alfred. "Is he the one you love?"

Her brows wrinkled in annoyance. "Zed, I've made things very clear. You are in no position to ask me about this."

They had been classmates for three years. During those three years, when Lea was bullied by Helen and her crew and everyone else in the class kicked her when she was down, Zed didn't do it. But it was only because he thought it was dishonorable. He didn't help her, either. He just endlessly looked on and despised her.

"The note you asked me to pass to Lily, what did it say!" Zed raised his voice. His tone was oppressive, intending to hold Lea hostage.

He was just asking about Alfred, and she said he was in no position to ask. Zed was mad at her indifference.

Lea walked up to Zed. "I didn't send it out. I just passed it."

"But she died! We're talking about a real person here. He pressed on."

Lea sneered. "You should know who sent out that note. If you really care, you should go and assist the police. You can't bring Lily back to life, but it's great to get justice for the dead? When Lea finished, she was leaving again, not wanting to say one more word to him."

"Lea, what if I tell the police you passed her the note? Aren't you afraid?" Zed asked.

"Lea, what if I tell the police you passed her the note? Aren't you afraid?" Zed asked.

“I didn’t push her off the building, did I! Why should I be afraid?” She had a candid look on her face. “Besides, how many times have they passed notes like this over the past three years? Countless, right?”

Zed pursed his lips, unable to say a word.

Alfred shot him a piercing look, his icy eyes making Zed feel suffocated. Zed subconsciously lowered his gaze, not daring to meet Alfred’s eyes.

“Just a random guy. He’s not worth your time. Lea stood on her tiptoes and whispered in Alfred’s car. “Can you send me home?”

Alfred’s gaze softened a bit. He nodded and held her shoulder, and they got into the car.

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Zed stood still, watching the car drive away, his hands clenched into fists, Lea is so meek and well-behaved in front of i this man. She must love him very much, he thought.

Lea’s cell phone rang in the car. She saw that Jeffrey had called and answered the phone.

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“Jeffrey, you don’t have to come to pick me up. Mr. Alfred will send me back,” she said.

There was a brief silence on the phone. “Okay, I’ll tell Mr. Berry:

“Okay”Les hung up the phone.

Then, Alfred asked, “Wanna take a look at the hospital?”

## Chapter 32

The Maybach cruised downtown and pulled up in front of a building after an hour. This place used to be a hospital, but now the sign was gone, the hospital was closed and empty, and a curtain had been put up around it for redecoration.

Lea followed Alfred into the building and took the elevator upstairs.

Alfred told her, “This private hospital has been crowded out by Fraley Medical for the past few years. It has been losing money and is filing for bankruptcy and liquidation. I bought it over

Lea nodded:

Nixon ran Fraley Medical aggressively. i had gained so much strength after it had the technical support of the artificial brain that it had opened a chain of hospitals across the country, expanding its scale to dozens or hundreds of times. In Vaporleon, in crowded out all the other hospitals and monopolized the market. Even Andrews Medical, with its powerful background, could not survive

The elevator came to the eighth floor.

The building had been cleared out and was waiting to be redecorated. The door to one of the offices was open, and a young woman in a professional suit with a pretty face greeted them. “Mr. Andrews, Miss Berry”

“Chris Foster, she works for me. Alfred introduced her to Lea.

“Miss Berry, this is my resume,” she said, handing over her resume.

Lea took it and looked at it. Chris Foster, twenty-four, graduated from Wharton Business School with a master’s degree a year ago. However, she worked for Alfred at the age of twenty, had worked in several foreign companies ranked in the world’s top 100, and was a professional manager. The resume Lea received was simplified, showing only the information Chris was willing to share and hiding many career achievements.

“She used to work with me and is very capable. I’m going to let her help you, provided you agree,” Alfred said

“Of course, I agree. I’ll even beg you for her!” said Lea. She trusted his people and was willing to use them. Talents like Chris could not be found everywhere, and she needed her badly.

Thank you, Miss Berry You’ll be my boss from now on!” said Chris

“You’re welcome. It’ll be hard on you,” said Lea.

Chris had an excellent impression of her new boss because Lea had the common touch and trusted her for Alfred’s sake.

“Miss Berry, please take a look at the company’s information first Chris said. She walked to the table, pulled out chairs for them to sit, opened the vault, and took out the things inside. There were the company’s license, constitution, official seal, and other important documents and objects. After doing so, she went about her business.

Lea sat in front of the desk and checked them one by one.

The company was called Riverview SmartMed, with a registered capital of 2 billion dollars. In addition to this hospital, it also included Andrews Medical and Vaporleon Hospital, two of this continent’s biggest pharmaceutical manufacturing companies

Lea looked at Alfred in surprise. “You invested so much money!”

He had an excuse prepared long ago. “Dr. Wessen has done an assessment. The value created by just those few medicines you’re offering now is incalculable once they enter the market.”

Alfred leaned in closer to Lea, his breath tickling her neck as he spoke teasingly. “Yours will be mine in the future. I may not have much to offer, but money is never an issue for me. How much investment do you want from me in the future? Feel free to let me know.

Lea turned her head to look at him, and her clear eyes had inquiry and admiration in them.

“He hasn’t joined the Andrews Group yet, and the money could not have come from the Andrews family. In fact, after two lifetimes, I still don’t know what his business is, only that he’s mighty and loaded. But wealth is our bargaining chip and weapon and is also all hard-won. I will never wave a single dime, she thought.

She gave him a confident look. “Don’t worry, I’ll make you a fortune!”

ne the world’s richest man. In this life, she was only nineteen years old and

Those scientific achievements in her previous life helped Milton become i had better prospects for doing better.

A short while later, Chris came back and explained to her again, “Miss Berry, you take fly—one percent of the shares in the company. Mr. Andrews takes forty-nine percent, and your part of the investment includes two billion dollars in cash and the patents of several medicines. Mr. Andrews doesn’t show up much in the outside world, so the portion of the equity he holds is held in trust for a foreign company, and the information that

the outside world can find out can’t be traced back to him. Considering that you are still a student, your shareholder information has also been kept confidential for now.”

This was what Alfred asked for, mainly because of her current s  
situation in the Berry family

Lea turned to Alfred and asked, “You did not sell all my shares!” |||

“The shares of Berry Group are useful to you. I’ve kept half of them for you,”  
answered Alfred, “But just now, I’ve asked Eddie to sell them all and  
repurchase them when the price drops to its lowest.”

He artificially inflated the stock price before. After he sold his shares, the stock price would gradually return to its original level. Meanwhile, news of Helen’s arrest for a school murder had already spread on the internet. As a result, the stock price was expected to plummet.

Lea didn’t care much about any of this, but she knew that by selling high and buying low, this little bit of her shares would soon be doubled, and she would still make a profit

She left the company to Chris to run.

This building served as their headquarters in Vaporicon City, and Chris was responsible for the re-planning, renovation, and re-opening,

Lea recommended Lorrard to Chris and asked her to arrange for him to work at the hospital.

Lorrard was an excellent doctor and was able to utilize his talents here and help her even more fully

“Let’s celebrate the establishment of the company. Let me treat you to dinner! Lea said happily.

This was her foundation, her starting point, with which she was going to slowly grow stronger and fulfill her great cause of revenge.

Alfred nodded.

“I can’t go. Emergency, sorry. Miss Berry. Enjoy your dinner with Mr. Andrews,” said Chris

He’s worked for Alfred for ages and never seen him look at any woman like that. Now, he’s suddenly dropping a ton of cash on this woman and even transferred me back to help. It’s obvious she’s a big deal to him, thought Chris. As a clever woman, she didn’t want to be the extra one at dinner.

Lea was a bit disappointed. Then I’ll treat you some other day”

“Okay, Miss Berry,” said Chris.

Lea went downstairs with Alfred and asked, “What do you want to eat?”

Alfred paused. “Let’s have Nastalian cuisine”

“Perfect. There just happens to be a Chili Village nearby Chili Village was Vaporleon City’s top- ranked Nastalian restaurant

When the two arrived at the restaurant, there were already a lot of people lined up. They booked the most expensive private room and entered the store first.

The two of them came to the private room on the second floor, which was luxuriously decorated in solid wood.

Soon, the waiter served their dishes. The lights shone, and a pleasant smell filled the air, creating a great atmosphere.

Lea sat across from Alfred, just holding her fork and watching him eat. Memories from her past came flooding back, and her eyes started to well

She and Milton got married in the winter in Iverton. It was snowy in Iverton then. The day after the wedding, Milton went abroad on a business trip, and Lea didn’t see him for a month. She called, but he only spoke a few cold words and never called her back. She sensed that he had changed.

At that time, she was sensitive and fragile inside, lonely and scared, and Alfred came to her. She said she wanted to eat Nastalian food, in he took her to the best Nastalian restaurant in Iverton, much like now. After the Nastalian cuisine, she threw up like crazy, and he took her to the hospital. It turned out she was pregnant.

On the third day after that, Alfred met her, saying that he was optimistic about the intelligent limbs she was working on at the time and that he wanted to transfer the shares of Andrews Group that he held to her. He said that holding them in her hands would increase their value.

Lea didn't understand the reason for this at the time, but when she saw him insist, she accepted, stating that she was holding it for him and would

ir to hum

It was also because of those shares that she regained her importance in the Andrews Group, Milton's attitude towards her changed for t and Mihon became a gentle and considerate husband.

At the time, she didn't know what was going on. Looking back on it now, a lot of things had been figured out.

the letter,

The had failed him. She couldn't even protected their child.

Chapter 33

Tears brushed down Lea's cheeks uncontrollably and fell on the table.

Alfred looked up, stunned. "What's wrong"

"Nothing, it's too spicy." She rubbed her eyes, not wanting him to see

"Don't use your hands. The chilis might get into your eyes, Alfred said and handed her a wet towel.

Lea immediately took it and covered her eyes with the towel.

Alfred looked at her for a moment and then kept piling her plate with all her favorite foods.

Lea swallowed her emotions, dried her eyes, and began to eat. After getting things done at the company, she was in a good mood and had a good appetite, and the freshly spiced Nastalian cuisine made her feel even better.

The chilis made Alfred's face all red, and he looked kinda cute.

Lea was confused. "Are you okay?"

"Yeah." Alfred nodded stiffly and took a bite of the Fajitas, Sweat rolled down his face. He suggested Nastalian cuisine, so he had to stick to the end.

Lea frowned, thinking, Why does he look like he can't eat spicy food!

"Eat up. Everything's turning cold." He looked at the dishes.

"Okay" She lowered her head and continued to eat

Lea had a great time eating.

During these years in the Berry family, she had been abused by Matilda and had never had enough food, and for the first time, she had the satisfaction of being full it turned out that satisfying your mouth and stomach can be pleasurable.



However, Alfred had a tough time. After the meal, he let Craig send Lea home. He got into Eddie's car, covering his stomach, and said, "Go to the hospital"

Eddie was stunned, looked at the Nastalian restaurant, drove his car, and rushed to the hospital at a rapid pace.

"Mr. Andrews, why don't you tell Miss Lea that you can't eat spicy food?" asked Eddie. The Chili Village was known for its spiciness.

"I suggested it," said Alfred.

Eddie was stunned. "Mr. Andrews, you know you can't eat spicy food, right?"

"Cut the crap!" snapped Alfred.

Eddie pursed his lips and felt worried. Does Mr. Andrews love Miss Lea so much that he's actually out of his mind? he wondered.

Matilda was making the final handoff in the president's office in the Berry Group

"Mrs. Berry!" Max rushed in

"Why are you still here!"

Didn't i

I send you on other stuff?" She was burnt out and grimpy.

"It's about Miss Berry," Max answered.

Once Matilda heard it was about Helen, her anger lessened considerably. "What is it?"

Max handed over his cell phone.

Matilda's brows wrinkled as she clicked on the video. After watching it, she staggered back, holding onto the boardwalk to stabilize herself and prevent her from fainting.

The video showed how Helen was arrested by the police at the school. The sound was clear, and the picture was complete. The police accused Helen of killing someone, and the evidence was clear. The students threw garbage at her, abused her, and cursed the Herry family.

Her spoiled daughter was covered in garliage and, with her face smashed and bleeding, woeful and ugly.

"Lea! It must

st be her. She set up my daughter!" Matilda snarled as her face twisted..

She saw Lea in the video, and Lea calmly watched Helen being arrested with dark eyes and a famt smile. I know my daughter. She cares about her reputation very much. She would never do such a self-destroying thing if Lea did not set her up, thought Marilda

“What now, ma’am? Max’s voice was shaking. The Berry family and Matilda could handle most troubles for Helen, but this was a murder, and the police arrested Helen on the spot. “The news has

already spread on the internet, the group’s share price has dropped by more than ten percentage points, and Mr. Berry is furious at the headquarters,” he continued.

Matilda looked horrified her face turning paler. “Call the Lawyers and head to the police station now!” With that, she took off on her own, her body trembling and her heels wobbling on the ground.

As she got to the door, she held onto the handle with both hands, took a moment to readjust, and then carried on her way.

“Mrs. Berry, what about the headquarters?” Max asked.

“Go to the police station first. Didn’t you hear me?” Matilda growled.

My daughter needs me at the police station. Nothing’s more important than her. This is murder, and if Helen is convicted, she’s gonna either die or spend the rest of her life in prison. I can’t let that happen!’ thought Matikda.

Max could only call the lawyer team and followed Matilda to the police station.

Helen cowered in the corner of the holding cell at the police station, shivering. After she was locked in here, she calmed down, realized what she had done, and got scared

“Helen” Matilda saw Helen cowering in the corner and smelled the putrid odor of her body from afar, tears almost falling out of her eyes.

“Quick, open the door!” She urged the officer.

Helen heard Matilda’s voice and looked up. She saw Matilda and struggled to her feet. The door was open. Matilda rushed in, and Helen ran into her arms, Matilda had to hold her up so she could stand still

“Mom, you’re finally here,” Helen whimpered.

Matilda had bribed the officers to give her enough time.

Ten minutes Later, Helen set in front of her again. She had changed into clean clothes, and the wounds on her forehead and cheeks had been treated. She still looked weak, but her energy had returned, and there was no longer any fear in her eyes.

Helen was dependent on Matilda. There was nothing Matilda couldn’t solve since Helen was a child, so Helen sabonssciously believed that Matilda was omnipotent. It was not the first time that they caused someone to dic, and they had never been punished for it

“Like before, this time, too, Mom would take care of everything, and I would return home unharmed and continue to be Miss Berry, thought

Helen.

They were alone in the holding cell, and the conversation would not be overheard

“Helen, tell me what happened” asked Matilda.

“Mom, it’s not me! It’s Lear” said Helen. When she thought of Alfred coming to the school to pick up Lea and them standing together in front of so many students, her heart burned with jealousy.

“Helen,” Matilda got serious, “Did you push Lily off the building?”

A girl died in this case. It was serious, and there couldn’t be a single mistake. Matilda needed to know the truth.

Helen’s face went pale as she nodded. “Mom, I thought it was Lea. That’s why I pushed her. How could I ever know that was Lily? Lea is like a ghost.”

When she said that, she was a little unsteady and subconsciously wiped her long hair back and pinned it to her ears. Just like last time, she was supposed to be in the car, fell into the river, and drowned. I remembered I pushed her off the building, but it turned out to be Lily. Mom. Alfred even went to school to pick her up” Helen’s eyes reddened, and she looked lience.

“Helen, you are too gullible!” Matilda said in a regretful tone, “I’ve told you many times that Lea isn’t as simple as she used to be and that you should not start a conflict with her! I suspect that she has been pretending all the time. She’s a formidable enemy”

Matikla’s tone turned harsh to Helen for the first time. She was annoyed at Helen’s disobedience for putting herself in this desperate situation.

“Mom said Helen, tears in her eyes, “I just want to get rid of Lea. She’s like a ghost haunting us. With her, none of us can live a good life”

\*I told you

u I would handle her,” said Matilda.

Helen pursed her lips, grumbling but not daring to say anything. Matilda had messed up a few times, so she decided to do it herself and said that

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“Tell me in detail how it happened and why the video was posted online?  
Matilda had calmed down.

“I wrote a note and asked Lea to go to the top of the building after school. Then Shannon and I went up there and saw her, no. Lily, standing on the roof of the building” said Helen.

She was going to ask Lily to come with them, but she couldn't find her after class. "I thought it was Lea, so I asked Shannon to push her off the edge. Shannon was too scared to do so, but the opportunity didn't come every day. So I went on my own and pushed her off the building. Who would have thought it was Lily standing there!"

"Lea would always be there every time I wrote her a note." Helen didn't even think about it and didn't look carefully, so she assumed that person was Lea.

Matilda inhaled heavily as she listened, Helen did not put Lea in the eyes, so she carelessly walked into Lea's trap. "Where's the note?" Matilda asked.

"The note fell to the ground, and I picked it up and swallowed it in case it gave me away," answered Helen.

"Helen actually wanted to kill Lea with such a simple plan. That's so naive and reckless, thought Matilda.

"You know all about the video surveillance at school. Why would you do it on your own?" Matilda couldn't figure it out,

"Shannon is a hacker. I told her to get rid of the surveillance, just like usual, so there wouldn't be any surveillance that caught us going up to much less me pushing someone!" said Helen. But she also couldn't figure out what went wrong, and it scared her, "Mom, do you think Shannon betrayed me? She asked with a ferocious light in her eyes. I would definitely kill her if she dares to do so she thought.

Matilda shook her head. "She was with you at the top of the building. Betraying you did no good to herself. She wouldn't do something so stupid."

"Then, what's going on with those videos on the Internet? Was it Lea! Just like last time, at Grandpa's birthday party Helen panicked again. way! It can't be her Helen said incredulously

Matilda shook her head again. "Nothing is impossible. She's capable, and I suspect that Alfred helped her Matilda didn't think Lea could do all this alone. No matter how capable she was, she was still on her own

Both of them had their hands on the table. Helen was still holding Matilda's hand, and when she heard her say that, she slowly loosened her hand.

"Mom's right. Lea is really something. Lea excelled in every test and was a genius at school. She even worked on artificial brains. Looking back, I used to take credit for her work and look down on her. Now, I can't do anything

on my own and have lost to her many times. As I face the possibility of losing everything, I can see the huge gap between us. And now, she's even managed to get close to someone as amazing as Alfred and won his heart. It's a rough truth to swallow, but it's real, Helen thought. She suffered an unprecedented blow inside and was disheveled.

Matilda looked at Helen and held her hand in pain. "Don't worry, Helen. You have met For decades, no one could defeat her. No matter how capable Lea was, she was just a girl

"That's right. I have you, Mom. Lea does not have a mother!" Helen instantly regained confidence, and her eyes were lit up. "Mom, thank you. I love you!" She had a mother who set things right for her so that she would always stand at the top and shine brightly.

Matika nodded with a soft face. "What about Shannon? What did she say?"

She

he knew H

Helen had a couple.

ouple of goons at school, and she vaguely remembered Shannon's name.

"She didn't say anything. Mom. Let her take the fall for me!" Helen said with a firm face,

When the police arrested her at the school, she was in a hurry to get out of trouble, and when she saw Shannon, who was also arrested, she just

identified her.

Maulda was pondering the situation. On her way here, she had her crew double-check all the info, and in the video, Helen did ID the person. She had thought about it, too, but it was up to Shannon to pull it off. Ants freaked out when stepped on, and Shannon wouldn't play along so easily.

When Helen saw her lost in thought, she chimed in. "T've still got her mom's fate in my hands. She'll plead guilty without a fuse"

Matilda's eyes lit up, and she nodded. "Stay here with patience, Just insist that you didn't push anyone, and I will take care of it as soon as I can and come to get you home."

Twill!" Helen clutched Matilda's hand and rodded vigorously.

Leaving the Nastalian restaurant, Lea asked Craig to send her directly to the Berry

Berry Group's headquarters building.

With the group's stock dropping like this, Christian must be working late, so she came to check on Itim.

When the car was almost at the building, her cell phone rang. It was a message from Eddie. [Miss Lea, Mr. Andrews can't eat spicy food. He's already in the hospital now.]

Lea panicked and was about to tell Craig to turn the car around when another text message came in. [Don't worry. He will be fine. I just want to tell you not to take him to any spicy food in the future.]

She clutched her cell phone, stared at it for a moment, and decided not to go to the hospital,

Obviously, Eddie sent her this message behind Alfred's back, and she would nail his lie if she went

She could tell that Alfred looked out of sorts when they were at Chili Village. When she asked him about it, he said he was fine, but he kept rating to prove it. And now, he was in the hospital.

Why did he suggest Nastalian cuisine if he can't eat spicy food? Is it because he knows I like it? So, he cares about me that much? Helen thought. Her heart ached with pain when she thought of what he had done for her in her last life.

**“Miss Lea, we're here: Craig had already parked the car, I'll send you upstairs.”**

Her thoughts were pulled back, and she shook her head. “No, I'll go up myself. You can go now” Lea put on her backpack, took her luggage, and pushed the door to get off.

Craig watched her enter the building before driving away.

Lea took the elevator to the eighth floor and went to the president's office.

It was getting dark, long past the end of the work hour. Most employees had already left, and the unoccupied floors were dark and cold. The eighth floor was illuminated, including the president's office, other executives offices, and the conference room. Everyone was working overtime for a meeting. The sounds of the argument echoed into the hallway, creating a tense atmosphere.

Only when she reached the door she heard Christian's voice.

There's no way to stabilize the stock price?” he asked.

**“Sorry, Mr. Berry, we've tried everything”**

**“What's the worst that can happen if the fall continues?”**

Those shareholders on the board of directors are already sitting on their hands. It will trigger panic selling by the stockholders. The company doesn't have enough cash flow to operate, the partners will falter, and in the worst case scenario, the company will go bankrupt]”

Christian's body swayed, and if it wasn't for the iron bones and steel will he had developed in the military in his youth, he would have already been unable to stand

The conference room was in a sullen atmosphere. A storm was coming.

Chapter 35

Lea knocked on the door, interrupting them, and walked in. ‘Grandpa, I brought you dinner,’ She placed the bag on the table and took out the food

box.

She went to Christian's favorite restaurant on the way here and grabbed a steak to go.

"Lea, go home," Christian said. He was not in a mood to eat now..

"Even if you don't want to eat, they need to eat She turned to look at the people in the conference room. "I ordered food for you guys. It should have been delivered already, so you guys go ahead and eat

Several people looked at her in bewilderment.

They had met her once at Christian's birthday party, but they had little impression of her. It was only after she moved into the mansion and lived with Christian that they noticed her and knew her only by name.

They knew she was Lea Berry only because she looked stunning, called Christian Grandpa, and talked to him casually.

Lea was calm and collected. She had ordered food for everybody, and people in the conference room had a good impression of her.

Since 3:30 pm, the company's stock price had been dropping like crazy, just like a river bursting out of its banks. Everyone had been so busy that they couldn't even grab a drink of water, let alone have dinner.

Most of them, who were already old, had some health problems. And after hours of starvingness and high pressure, several of them were already dizzy and unable to think. They were in great need of rest to refuel.

With this reminder from her Christian looked at everyone and waved his hand feebly. "Go to eat, everyone."

Victor Fisher, Christian's secretary, glanced at Lea. "Thank you, Miss Lea? She helped a lot by ordering food for so many people.

"No problem. Mr. Fisher. Ell take care of Grandpa here. You guys go ahead and eat" said Helen

The executives and assistants all gave her sine more look and went out of the office, leaving only h

Christian sat in his chair and swallowed as he looked at the delicious food on the table. "You ordered food for all of them?" he asked.

her, Christian, and Jeffrey in the room.

"Yeah," answered Lea

"Do you know how many people there are?" Christian still didn't get

I ordered a hundred servings and asked the restaurant to deliver them first, and they'll send more if that's not enough," said Lea,

Christian listened in awe. Nearly a hundred people had stayed to work, and lea made a perfect order.

“It must cost you a lot,” said Christian

“Bulk price, 30 dollars each serving Those who had stayed were mostly executives and even the shareholders, and cheap fast food would only be unappetizing to them.

Christian paused. “I didn’t give you that much pocket money”

“Mom gave me compensation,” Lea explained. Nominally, Matilda was still her mother, and in front of Christian, she couldn’t call her by her name, lest he thought that she was purposely putting the family at odds.

He frowned angrily. You sold your shares?”

“I sold a little bit the other day when the price was high, and I didn’t know it was going to drop today, but I’ve got all my money, and I buy some of the shares back at the lowest poitu.” Lea rubbed her chin for an estimate. “I can only buy seven or eight percent at the most. Les shrugged. That was the most she could do.

Christian was too angry to say anything

The money from the sale of the shares was spent on opening the hospital, and Lorand transferred her pocket money from the surgical fees she earned. She only let him transfer a fraction of the money, and the other 4 million went to the hospital.

“Grandpa, your dinner’s getting cold. Don’t stress about the stock price. It goes up and down every day. Your health is what we should really worry about,” Les said, shaking her head in concern.

Christian glared at her. He knew she was trying to comfort him and get him to eat, but her words were hard on the ears.

Jeffrey, here, this one’s yours.” Lea handed Jeffrey’s dinner to him.

She had thought about everything when she ordered the meal. When she came to deliver the dinner to Christian, she made sure everyone who stayed could have a good dinner.

Christian looked at her, then at the steak. He took a bite, and it tasted fine. Nothing was more important than eating. He sat by the table and ate with Jeffrey, “What about you, Lea Have you had dinner? he asked. He was glad Lea had brought food for him at this hour.

“Oh, don’t wo

worry about me. I had dinner with Alfred,” said Lea,

At the mention of Alfred, Lea’s face softened, looking gentle.



Christian found it annoying. “Why are you with him again?” he asked unhappily. “We’re no match for the Andrews family. And that boy Alfred has a pretty face. He looks like he’s good at hooking up with girls, thought Christian. He was unhappier at this thought. What did you and he

Lea explained, “Nothing, Grandpa. I had a medical checkup in their hospital last time. He sent me some medicine.” This reason would dispel Grandpa’s pursuing questions and remind him once again what Maulda and Helen were like.

Christian paused, and his face dropped, and he lost his appetite.

He had the company’s technicians analyze the video online. They had also hacked into the school’s surveillance system and came up with the same results as the police.

Two years ago, he had made Helen the heir of the Berry family, and he was really proud of her. He couldn’t believe that Helen was actual murderer.

After contemplating for a moment, he looked at Lea and said, “He must be up to something to be so nice to you. Stay away from that kid from the Andrews family”

Lea paused. “That’s not gonna happen, I can give up anything but him, she thought,

But it was not the right time to talk about the two of them, and she faintly nodded, Christian was then relieved and continued to eat

He was only halfway through his meal when Matilda arrived with Max and some others. As soon as she entered, she was shocked to see Christian eating at the table. The situation was not what she had expected.

She had expected that the company was in a mess, and the old man was furious, so she even thought of what to say, but to her surprise, he was eating, and he looked like he had a pretty good appetite.

Of course, what she expected was true, but Lea was here earlier and changed the situation

“Christian, how are things going on your side?” she asked. Matilda wore a white suit dress, pulled up a gentle hair bun, and her eyes were red from crying. She looked like a perfect mother and daughter-in-law.

Christian slammed his fork on the table. He was 100% angry and slammed it too hard, and the table let out a loud sound. He stood up and snarled. “Matilda, you’ve come just in time. Explain to me properly. Why would Helen kill someone at school?”

Matilda’s body shook, and her legs bent over, hardly able to withstand Christian’s anger.

It was different from the last time. Christian was really furious now. He had no mercy for Helen this time.

“Very well” Christian’s anger was replaced by disappointment and desperation. “Our family won’t raise a monster. Today, I’ll expel her from the family. From now on. Helen does not belong to the Berry family anymore “

anger was again

Matilda fell to the ground as if her strength had been drained. “Christian, no! Please don’t she cried and begged, and Christian’s anger triggered.

“She murdered her classmate, Matilda! We don’t raise murderers in our family! If the law doesn’t punish her enough, I’ll make sure the justice be done, Christian growled.

Matilda fell limp to the ground again, looking at him with horrified eyes, almost choking

Matilda

What did he say? Justice? Is he going to kill Berry! she thought in horror.

Chapter 36

Lea was totally caught off guard, giving Christian a look of disbelief. She hadn’t figured he’d come on so strong

But when it came to his principles and boundaries, Christian didn’t mess around, earning him major respect in Vaporleon City

“Dad, no way. Helen’s innocent” Matilda jumped in, not hesitating to defend Helen at any cost

Christian was shocked, studying Matilda’s face. She was dead set, just as innocent-looking as Helen.

“Innocent?” He wasn’t buying it, not one bit.

“Yes, Helen is innocent Matilda affirmed, her determination rock-solid. She was ready to bend the truth if it meant

keeping her girl safe.

I saw her this afternoon went through every last detail,” she added, tears welling up as frustration and sadness crept into her voice. “Someone’s trying to frame her. There’s no way she’s guilty”

“Who’d pull a stunt like that! And for what? Christian scratched his head, trying to make sense of it all.

“I wish I knew, but it’s clear as day both Helen and the company are getting played.” Matilda’s voice cracked with emotion

Christian went silent, memories of his past flooding back.

From his time in the forces right through to his decades in the cutthroat world of business, he’d racked up enemies left, right, and center. Payback wasn’t just on the cards it was pretty much nailed on.

Matilda capitalized on Christian’s hesitation and reassured him, “Christian, don’t sweat it. Helen’s innocent. She’ll walk out of this with her name cleared, I promise. She’ll be back home without a stain on her record”

Her acting was flawless, coupled with the family dynamic, leaving Christian to simply swallow it all

“Alright!” Christian nodded decisively. “You can leave this to me, just tell me what you need. I can hook you up with connections, p manpower you require.”

Believing his granddaughter wasn’t a criminal, he wasn’t about to let anyone mess with the Berry family.

power, whatever

Matilda felt a surge of confidence; with his support, they’d weather this storm. She thought even if Helen were guilty, she’d get out of jail unscathed. That was why Matilda had gone straight to Christian from the police station.

Getting Christian on board was top priority. And now, with his hacking firmly in place, the outlook was even more promising than Matilda had. dared to hope.

“But with the company’s stock tanking like this, we need to get it back on track, Christian said, frowning his brow,

“Grandpa, the stock thing’s a piece of cake, Lea chimed in, rising from her seat and approaching. “We just need to buy back enough shares. Easy peasy.

Matilda suddenly noticed Lea and slowly got up and looked at her.

Lea was decked out in her full school uniform—a crisp blue blazer, short pleated skirt, and long brown hair cascading down. She had this totally innocent, pure look about her, with those smart, sparkling eyes.

A sense of unease pricked Matilda’s gut as she felt something wasn’t right

And it was confirmed when Lea said. “Mom, the Berry and Fraley families are practically one and the same, right? The Fraleys were pulling in over 4 billion in profit last year. So, borrowing a bit from them to buy back our shares should be no big deal, don’t you think?”

Matilda felt like she’d just taken a gut punch, the wind getting knocked right out of her.

But Lea appeared genuine, like a dutiful daughter keen on helping the family out of a jam, her focus squarely on the family’s interests.

Christian was taken aback. Lea might just be onto something here,

He’d been contemplating a press conference where the Berry family would swear up and down on Helen’s innocence, a move to steady the company’s stock price. Matilda was on the same page.

Lea didn’t waste any time diving into analysis. “And We can also hit up a press conference, shout from the rooftops about Helen being not guilty and will be getting out without any charges.”

Lea continued, “Look, the evidence is stacking up against her, and we’re running out of time to find something new. If we can’t swing public opinion, the stock’s gonna tank

“Unless Mom’s got a rabbit to pull out of her hat, sticking our necks out for Helen’s just gonna make things worse for the Berry Group. People are already losing it online, and our stocks are hanging by a thread”

Matilda’s expression shifted again. She knew that if she had some new evidence, things might not be so dire. And Lea’s words were basically pushing the Fraley family to cough up some cash.

Christian nodded in agreement, silently acknowledging Lea’s point.

Without her nudge, he might not have even thought of it. The whole Helen situation had stirred up a social media storm, and without solid proof of her innocence, anything the Berry family said would just fan the flames,

“What’s with the long face, Mom?” Lea asked, noticing Matilda’s expression. “You worried the Fraleys won’t lend us the money?”

“But I guess you shouldn’t. Remember that big hospital project Fraley Medical started a couple of years back! We pitched in some cash for that. They owed us one. Lea added and turned to Christian.

“Oh yeah, we loaned them over 2 billion dollars, and they still owe us over 600 million, Christian said.

Two years back, the Fraleys were riding high, and Henry promised Christian that everything in the Fraley family would eventually belong to Matikka, which meant also to Helen. Being the stand-up guy he was, Christian didn’t hesitate to lend them a hand when Matilda asked.

Matilda had managed to tum over 2 billion dollars herself.

Matilda’s lips trembled, torn between anger and fear. In her mind, asking the Fraley family for money felt like bleeding her whole family dry

Though the Fraley family appeared to be on top of the world, boasting a massive 4 billion in net profit on last year’s financial reports, it was all a facade aimed at inflating their stock prices.

In reality, the Berry Group’s growth was fueled by hefty borrowing in its early days.

There wasn’t any real profit to speak of

Gening the company’s stock hack on track wasn’t going to be a cakewalk.

Lea could almost read Matilda’s mind now. “Hey, come on, Helen’s innocent, right? Once the cops cut her loose, the stock’s gonna bounce back, and we can quickly pay back the Fraleys Lea argued.

Christian nodded. “Exactly. Let the Fraleys know we need a bit more money, then we’ll buy back the shares.

In business, it was all about give and take. The Berry family had lent a hand to the Fraleys before, so it was only fair to expect the same in return.

Matilda felt a knot form in her stomach as she looked at Lea, feeling trapped. All her escape routes seemed blocked, leaving her with no choice but to ask the Fraleys for a hefty sum—no longer just millions, but billions

Locked in a silent standoff with Lea, Matilda struggled to find her voice.

Finally, Christian broke the silence, looking concerned. “Matilda, what’s the holdup? You’ve been quiet for a minute.”

Taking a deep breath, Matilda forced out a response. “Alright, I’ll shoot the Fraleys a message for the cash. Inside, she was fuming, but on the surface, she kept her cool.

Christian’s expression softened with relief. Thanks, Matilda. I’ll do everything I can to sort this out for you.” He reassured her.

Christian knew it would be tough for her to stabilize the stock price using money from the Fraley family. Her willingness to go to these lengths for the Berry family not only showed her dedication but also solidified Helen’s inner net-

I’ll have Mr. Fisher bring a lawyer to help with the police, and I’ll call the police leaders now, Christian said.

Thanks, Christian, Matilda replied, her eyes showing renewed determination. “But No need for Mr. Fisher; you’ve got enough on your plate. I’d feel better if he stayed by your side.

Christian was in the dark about the full extent of the situation and Matilda couldn’t risk involving Victor

Christian replied, “I don’t need more people, I just need a lawyer for the company. But I’m swamped and time’s tight. I still need you to talk to the police and buy us enough time”

Christian nodded and started making phone calls right there. “Mr. Brown, about my granddaughter Helen, she’s been wrongly accused. The Berry family will provide evidence, but it will take some time. Please look after her while she’s there,”

“Captain Knox, my granddaughter has been wrongly accused. Can you help look after her for now?

Christian said into the phone. “Mr. Yoel, about my granddaughter Helen.....

Matilda listened and glanced at Lea with a smirk. ‘Christian has pulled strings with the higher-ups, she thought confidently. With their backing, my next steps should be a breeze.

She then mused. And what about Helen framed for murder? Does Lea really think that would destroy her! How naive! I’ll make damn sure Helen walks free. And forget about the Fraley fortune— I’ll own everything the Berrys have soon enough!”

Meanwhile, Lea was also glaring at Matilda coldly. They locked eyes for a few seconds before Lea looked over at Christian, still on the phone. Judging by his demeanor, he completely believed Helen was innocent.

With the so-called evidence in front of him and Matilda's words, he had no more doubts. It all came down to his favoritism towards them. Lea felt a chill in her heart, seeing how easily he was swayed

## Chapter 37

Christian hung up the phone and looked at Matilda. "It's all sorted out. You can go ahead and handle it. If you need anything, just come to me

Thanks, Christian." Matilda replied.

"Go on, get

get busy"

Christian waved his hand.

"You should head home early and rest. Take care of yourself, she added respectfully before leaving.

She then gave Lea a meaningful glance on her way out, thinking. With Christian protecting Helen, how the hell could Lea even think of plotting against her? Now, the only way is to get Christian off Lea's side!

The stock price issue had been resolved, and Christian was back

Lea went home with him. It was late, and she headed straight to her room, feeling down.

In her previous life, Helen had killed her child in the most brutal of ways. Even if Helen died ten thousand times, it wouldn't be enough to quench Lea's seething hatred.

This time. Helen had killed someone else, and by all rights, she should be rotting in jail for life, living in the abyss. The thought brought a smirk to Lea's face.

But with Christian throwing his weight around and Marika pulling strings, there was still a slim chance Helen could walk free.

Meanwhile, Matilda probably wouldn't keep Lea around and would try to get rid of her, making things even more dangerous.

The silver lining was that Matilda had to pull a lot of money from the Fraley family to invest in the Berry Group, weakening the Fraley Group and making them easier to deal with later.

Suddenly, Lea's phone vibrated. She snatched it

It up—it was a message from Lorrard [Miss Lea, we have the results of the paternity test.]

Her heart raced as she opened the file, her hands trembling as she read through.

Just as she suspected, Helen and Nixon were confirmed as father and daughter. But there was no blood link between her and Ewan or Christian.

In an instant, Lea was overwhelmed by this truth. No fucking blood link at all? I am not a Berry. So, who the hell am I? Why was I passed off as Ewan's bastard and dumped back with the Berrys? Who are my real parents? Why did they ditch me, letting me fall into Matikla's clutches and setting me up for such a fucked-up past life?"

Lately, she'd been piecing together her own backstory. Christian had brought her to the Berry family when she was just over a month old, waving around a paternity test that claimed she was Ewan's. Christian then handed her over to Matilda to raise

But where the hell did that paternity test come from! Did he know it was a sham! Did his ignorance of my abuse, his coldness towards me, and his preference for Helen have something to do with this lie? The more she mulled it over, the more it twisted her gut. None of this shit made any sense. She sighed.

In the Berry family villa, when Matilda got home, it was already pitch dark outside. But inside, the place was lit up like high noon, decked out in all its opulence.

As soon as Matilda walked in, she spotted Ewan lounging on the sofa, lazily flipping through magazines—a rare sight since he was actually at home, and she had an urgent issue to discuss.

“Christian said we need to raise funds to buy back stocks and stabilize the company's share prices. We gotta come up with 200 million dollars, and fast” she instructed.

\*200 million dollars Ewan nearly jumped off the sofa. “What the hell do you think I am! Where am I supposed to get that kind of cash?”

Despite being the CEO of the Berry Group, Ewan only raked in a few million bucks a year, and the company's dividends didn't exactly shower him with cash. Plus, Matilda managed the household finances, so he had little to play with...

Matilda was pissed off. Is 200 million a lot? Ewan, our company needs billions right now! I just asked for 200 million, and this is your reaction! What kind of man are you?”

Matilda's words struck Ewan hard which got him thinking that ever since he married her, she'd been on his case constantly, both at work and at home.

Despite his silver-spoon background, he lived like a pauper. He might not be the sharpest tool in the shed, but he had his pride. Matilda's relentless and now this insult almost pushed him to the edge.

‘Matilda, you think you're so fucking great?’ His voice was shaking with anger, his eyes burning with resentment. You raised Helen all by yourself. Remember what you said? You didn't want me anywhere near her, afraid she'd turn out like me—a total fuck-up, and now she's a murderer! What does that make you, huh? Ewan taunted her, his face twisted with scorn.

Matilda's hand cracked across his cheek, leaving a well that turned his face to the side, her fingers leaving angry red marks.

Evan was stunned by the blow.

"You really just called our daughter a murderer?" Matilda was seething, barely able to contain her fury "People can talk all they want, but you're her father. How could she possibly deserve a dad like you? You're fucking pathetic!" She hissed.

Shen paused then, added, "Let me tell you, Helen's innocent and she's going to walk free. And then..

"And then what?" Ewan retorted, his voice cold as he touched his cheek.

"You gonna divorce me?"

He then smirked coldly. "Think you can handle that? Matilda, you married me just for my family's clout and wealth, didn't your Drop the act and the pity party--no one's buying it."

In a rage, Matilda raised her hand to slap him again, but Ewan caught her wrist, his voice icy. "Calm down. You want to keep living off the Berry family's money, right? You still need me for that" He then wrenched his arm away and stormed towards the door.

Matilda steadied herself against the sofa and caught his sleeve. "I need to get moving on raising some cash

"Tm broke!" he fired back.

Her anger exploded anew. "You have money to waste on mistresses but none to save your own company?"

His temper flared, and he forcefully shook her off, striding out without a glance back.

Matilda's head thudded against the sofa as she stared after Ewan in disbelief. After twenty years of marriage, he was always the docile one, never daring to defy her no matter how much she provoked or demeaned him--he just took it all in stride.

Matilda couldn't believe that Ewan was so changed. With my influence in the Berry family fading, my status with Christian crumbling, and Helen following suit, is he finally gonna turn on me? she wondered.

After a moment's hesitation, she chased after him. "Where the hell do you think you're going? You're just gonna ignore Helen's mess like this?" she shouted. But all she got was the sound of his car speeding away.

Her voice was shrill and furious as she yelled, "Ewan, if you can't get that fucking money, you're not off the hook! You're no Helen's father at all

Inside the car, Ewan listened to her yelling and pressed down harder on the gas.

He hadn't even wanted to come back at night. But with the Herry Group's stocks tanking and investors breathing down his neck, he had no choice. But facing Matilda's immediate demand for 200 million dollars was more suffocating than any creditor outside.



Forget about 200 million, of 1 could even muster 20 million, i wouldn't have spent years living under her thumb like this, he thought bitterly. As for Helen—if she really did kill someone, there's not much I can do to change that

Watching the car out of sight, Matilda felt her legs go weak, so she leaned against the wall for support, tears streaming down her face.

As a golden girl, she bitterly regretted ending up with a deadbeat like Ewan,

by her tears, her expression hardened. She whipped out her phone and made a call “Max, keep an eye on Ewan and

As she quickly wiping away! update me on everything“

After hanging up, she glanced at her phone and dialed another number. While waiting for an answer, she strolled into the living room and shut the door.

me know your availability. Her tone softened instantly.

“Can we set up a meeting!

## Chapter 38

After finishing up her calls, Matilda went upstairs to change. Slipping into a chic purple dress, she added a matching shawl, earrings, and necklace, and spritzed on some perfume. Her makeup was flawless, giving her a radiant glow,

Grabbing her pearl-studded handbag, she headed downstairs and casually informed the servant. Im heading over to the Fraley's

Everyone assumed she was going there to drum up some cash, so no one questioned her motives

Meanwhile, back at the old Berry mansion. Lea sat at her desk with a test paper in front of her, a laptop buzzing away, and several tabs open on the

screen..

After digging into Helen's background, she wanted to see what Matilda would do next. So, she used some hacking skills to track her movements. She steered clear of hacking directly into Matilda's home or car, opting instead to tap into the surveillance systems around the Berry estate. After all, Matilda was no ordinary woman, and neither were her associates—teaming up with tech wizards had clearly paid off in her r Group Technology and Fraley Medical.

From a highway camera feed, Lea saw Ewan and Matilda leaving home one after another.

In the car, Matilda was decked out to the nines. Lea's intuition screamed that Matilda was off to meet her lover.

Lea's eyes darted as

she kept inputting the code to track Matilda's car

Matilda headed straight to Fraley Hospital,

roles at Berry

The hospital was blanketed with cameras, making it easy for Lea to keep tabs on her. She watched Matilda ride the elevator straight to the top floor of the main building.

Nixon was the head of Fraley Medical, and with Matilda's backing, he practically owned the place. The top floor was like his private domain. Running the hospital together, Matilda and Nixon had plenty of reasons for their frequent private meetings.

As Matilda reached the door, she scanned her fingerprint and it opened automatically

Inside, Nixon awaited her, clad in a sleek dark gold robe, loosely tied. He was holding a wine bottle in one hand and a glass in the other.

Two years Matilda's junior, Nixon was a powerhouse in the healthcare industry—wealthy, influential, and always well-groomed. Next to him, Ewan hardly compared.

As Matilda stepped in, the door closed behind her, shutting out the world.

She gave him a frosty glance and snapped. "Put that crap away. I'm not in the mood"

Undeterred, he followed, saying. Tin clued in about Helen."

Running the hospital kept Nixon pretty occupied, so he didn't usually have time to keep tabs on Helen's drama. But today, with the Berry Group stocks tanking and everyone buzzing about Helen's school incident, it was hard to miss..

"You're just losing it. Let me help you chill, he murmured, pressing her gently against the sofa, his lips finding hers as his hands began to undress her.

"I've got some serious shit to discuss, uh... Matilda muttered, pulling away slightly. "Christian has roped me into using Fraley funds to scoop up Berry shares... to prop up the stock price. I need your help to pull together the money: she said, groaning.

He tugged at her dress, looking up at her. "How much are we talking?"

"At least 1.6 billion, she stated firmly.

"That's no chump change, given our financials, he replied.

"I know. But once Helen is cleared, the stock price will soar. We buy low, sell high—classic play," Matilda argued confidently.

His eyes sparkled. "Damn, that's a slick strategy." In one fluid motion, he stripped off her dress, flinging it aside.

Soon, their heavy breathing filled the room, punctuated by fragmented conversations,

Matilda plotted, "We need to lock down that cash. Once Helen's out, Christian will repay the funds, and I can grab more shares to tighten our control over Berry Group. That little shit Lea stole three

percent of my stock: I need to strengthen my holdings. And if Christian kicks the bucket, the Berry fortune is basically ours. Marker's shaky, but we'll ride it out!"

Nixon was hyped as he knew Matilda pretty much had the Berry clan in her grip, and he was set to benefit big time.

"Don't sweat it. I've got bank connections. Saved a CEO once, getting a loan is gonna be easy. Just make sure we pay it back timely." He reassured her.

Nixon then patted her bottom. "Hey, turn around and hike it up a bit."

"Ab-hold up. Got a patient, Donna Yancey, in the hospital. Can you make her daughter

TOP

the

e line!" Matilda said.

"Piece of cake. Once she's in my hospital, she'll follow orders, no questions asked." he boasted confidently.

Over at the Berry Mansion, Lea yanked off her headphones. The rest of the conversation had taken a sour turn, and she needed a break.

She closed all the active tabs on her laptop and took a deep breath.

After a

a moment to clear her head, she grabbed her phone and shot a text to Chris, listing several top-notch medical researchers and doctors she had crossed paths with before—folks who were brilliant but currently flying under the radar and possibly struggling. Perfect recruits for Riverview SmartMed, which was desperate for top-tier talent.

She didn't stop there, she also fired off a list of critical medical equipment he needed to purchase.

"Chris texted back quickly, (Got it, Miss Lea. I'm on it

Meanwhile, anxiety about Alfred nagged at her. She quickly sent a message to Eddie. (How's the Crown Prince doing Still at the hospital?)

Eddie's response came promptly. He's back at the lakeside villa, meds sorted. Nothing major

Relieved, Lea dove back into her work, firing up her laptop to work on the 3D model With the medical startup gaining momentum, her plate was overflowing with tasks.

Over at the lakeside villa, Alfred kept his eyes glued to the Berry Group's stock performance.

Despite the turmoil surrounding Helen, the company's stocks continued their nosedive, teetering dangerously close to hinting rock bottom

Alfred still held 400 million worth of Lea's earlier offloaded shares and contemplated injecting more money to stabilize the stock

Suddenly, his phone buzzed—an alert from Chris, passing along a message from Lea. Chris's requests weren't usually this direct or significant, hinting at the urgency and importance of the situation.

Chris didn't usually need to run things by him, but Lea's requests were a bit out of the ordinary  
Alfred stared at his phone, deep in thought, weighing his next move

Eddie brought in a cup of water and said, "Sir, Mr. Andrews is asking when you'll be returning. Should I book a flight for tomorrow morning?"

Their stay in Vaporleon City had lasted longer than anticipated, all due to sorting out hospital matters. But now that everything was squared away, it seemed they could finally head back.

Alfred tossed his phone onto the table and shrugged. "Nah, I'll hang around a few more days.

Helen was locked up, and Lea and Matilda were going at it tooth and nail. Matilda, in particular, seemed to have the Berry family and the whole city of Vaporleon under her thumb. So, Alfred wasn't quite ready to leave just yet.

Eddie looked startled. Is he staying because of Lea? he wondered

"And how am I supposed to head back without you?" Eddie asked.

"Just handle it like you always do" Alfred replied.

Eddie scratched his head hard, didn't know what to do.

The next day, Lea went to school as usual. As she walked down the hallway, she bumped into Zed, who looked like he'd been waiting for her.

"Hey Lea, I noticed the license plate yesterday. It's from Iverton. Is that guy from there?" he asked curiously.

Her eyebrows furrowed, a hint of suspicion creeping into her eyes.

Zed quickly added. "No offense, just looking out for you since we're classmates and all."

"How well do you know him? Can you trust him?" he probed further. "Those Iverton elites aren't like us Vaporleon folks, they wouldn't normally go for someone like us. Be careful you don't get conned and left heartbroken, he warned, his tone sincere but cautionary.

Zed knew Lea's routine three years of just her, the Berry family, and school. At school, she was always the quiet one with her long hair shielding her face, never really mingling. So he figured she wasn't close to Alfred

“Done” Lea glanced up at him, her eyes cold. She had already told him once; stay out of her affairs. So his reminder was redundant to her.

Zed felt a lump in his throat, speechless while Lea simply walked past him and entered her classroom.

Zed watched her go, frustration painted all over his face, his eyes tinged red with emotion. He cared deeply, offering what he thought was helpful advice, yet it went unappreciated.

Frustrated by Zed’s comments, Lea decided to leave school early to visit the police station.

## Chapter 39

In the holding cell at the police station, Shannon sat against the wall, eyes red from a sleepless night.

“Shannon!” a voice called out.

Hearing her name, Shannon suddenly looked up and saw her mother, Donna, standing there.

The guard opened the iron door a crack. “You’ve got ten minutes, he said, then stepped back to

“Thanks,”

“Donna said, nodding to the guard as she pushed the door open and stepped inside,

Shannon pushed herself up from the floor, her movements

unsteady, as she moved toward Donna

to get some privacy.

Donna’s face was pale, her eyes sunken, her cheeks gaunt, and she trembled in her oversized hospital gown—a mix of regret and sorrow filling Shannon’s eyes.

“Mom, I’m so sorry. I’ve been such a disappointment, causing you so much pain and shame,” Shannon sobbed, her voice breaking

Tears welled up in Donna’s eyes,

“How are you feeling? You look really bad Shannon asked, her voice laced with worry as

she tried to

hide her frail appearance

from Donna.

Donna wiped her eyes, her face etched with panic. “Last night, they diagnosed me with kidney cancer, and I had surgery to remove it right away.” Donna’s voice faltered as she clutched her waist in pain and eased down onto the nearby wooden bench

“Somebody from the hospital brought me here. They didn’t come in, just waiting outside, Donna explained, her voice weak..

Shannon’s jaw dropped, and she hurriedly squatted down to help her. “But I thought it was your liver that was the problem? How did it turn out to be kidney cancer!” Shannon’s confusion was evident.

Donna had struggled with alcohol for as long as Shannon could remember. Three years ago, in Shannon’s freshman year of high school, Donna had collapsed due to liver cirrhosis and was treated at Fraley Hospital. Despite recovering, Donna had fallen back into her drinking habits, and her health continued to deteriorate.

Donna had been a frequent patient at Fraley Hospital over the years. Just a week ago, Shannon had visited her, and the doctors were optimistic about her recovery, saying she would be discharged soon. ‘Now, a sudden surgery for kidney removal? Shannon mused.

Donna saad with deep regret and pain. “Slunnon, I’ve brought this all on myself. I’m so sorry for everything”

Shannon bit her lip hard, trying to suppress the desp  
despair and pain welling up nude her.

“What do we do now? Will your health be okay?” Shannon asked, her voice  
thick with

worry

“You know my condition. With only one kidney left, I can’t hold on“ Dorina  
said, her voice filled with fear. “But the doctors have found a suitable donor.  
I can have a transplant and hopefully recover”

She paused, then suddenly grabbed Shannon’s hands Lightly. “Shannon, you need to confess! Turn  
yourself in and say you pushed Lily downstairs.”

Shannon felt as if she’d been struck by lightning, and she sank to her knees. “Mom, did you come  
here just to make me confess?” she asked, her voice filled with disbelief

Shannon had grown up in a single–parent family. Donna, burdened by alcohol addiction, often  
neglected her. Sometimes, Donna would disappear for months, leaving Shannon in the care of kind  
neighbors.

Despite these challenges, Shannon was resilient. As a child, she managed on her own, and by the  
time she was in middle school, she was taking care of Donna. She excelled in school, earning a full  
scholarship to Vaporleon High School, and even managed to secure treatment for Donna during her  
serious illness. But now, Donna was here, demanding a confession.

“Mom, do you know what will happen if I confess!” Shannon said  
desperately.

Donna’s expression grew cold. “The Berry family promised you won’t get the death penalty”

Shannon collapsed to the ground, overwhelmed by despair and disappointment. In her heart, Donna had never truly been a nurturing mother, and over the years, Shannon's resentment had grown. Now, it was mixed with deep despair and disillusionment.

"Not the death penalty?" Shannon scoffed bitterly, her face twisting with anger and pain. "That's still a life sentence in prison!"

"I'll be branded a murderer, doomed to spend the rest of my life in a cell, hated and despised by everyone, living in darkness, wishing for death." Shannon cried out in despair.

Donna, suddenly furious, rriorted. "What's wrong with your  
yout I raised you, and you can't even make this sacrifice to save me? In Donna's eyes, there

was no maternal bond, only self-preservation

"You call that raising me?" s Shannon shot back, her voice trembling with years of pent-up hurt.

She looked at Donna with a sarcastic smile, her tears drying up, feeling a deep, aching void inside. "Mom, do you even remember my fifth birthday! You left me alone at the train station and just disappeared. In the dead of winter, during a snowstorm, I waited at that station for three days and nights, hungry and freezing"

"You disappeared for ten months. If you hadn't come back, I would have been fin

been fine on my own, Shannon declared desperately

"Do you even know why you could stay at Fraley Hospital? Do you know where the money for your medical bills came from?" Shannon's turned red with anger, "I borrowed it from Helen!"

She then s

ispat out the words. "I borrowed money for your treatments, and in return, I had to be her puppet. For the last three years. I've done everything she asked. Bullied my classmates, tormented Lea, and committed all those desparable acts."

Shannon pointed to her chest, her voice shaking with self-loathing. Thate myself for it. I've become the very person I despise. I could've lived my life openly, the way I wanted. You're getting better, ready to leave the hospital, and I'm getting ready for the SAT. I thought I just had to endure it until now, but it's all fallen apart

With her grades, Shannon knew she could am for top universities, not just settle for Conrad University. She could take control of her life, choose her path, and have a bright future.

“But now, you want me to confess?” she b

burst out, her frustration boiling over. “You’ve ruined everything! You’ve ruined my life!”

“Shut up!” Donna snapped harshly. “I’m your mother! Without me, you wouldn’t even be here to see this world”

Shannon fell silent instantly, Is my life merely a pawn that Donna could just manipulate and sacrifice just because she is my mother?” she thought bitterly.

Donna noticed Shannon’s reaction and suddenly softened her approach. “Shannon, stop overthinking it. Is Lea even worth all this fuss?”

She clasped Shannon’s hand again, her voice desperate. “Shannon, we’re talking about my life here! I’m only thirty-eight; I’ve got a lot of life left Are you really going to let me die?”

As Shannon assessed Donna, each of Donna’s arguments seemed to increase her agitation, and blood began seeping through her hospital gown at her surgical wound reopened

e terrified of dying,” she explained, her knees buckling as

Donna winced from the pain, bending over and sweating profusely. “The pain n makes me she fell to the ground and clutched Shannon’s arm. “Please, Shannon, save my life.”

Tears rolled down Donna’s cheeks, her plea filled with a raw, desperate sincerity. “You’re not even eighteen yet. If you confess, the worst they could do is sentence you to life. Just keep your head down, and you might have a chance later. The Berry family can hire the best lawyers money can buy. With Christian’s influence, all the top officials in Vaporleon City owe him favors. Once things calm down, they’ll work to get your sentence reduced

She then added. “Imagine, you might be out in twenty years, ten, or maybe even five. You’d still be so young, with your whole life ahead of you”

“Morn, you’re being way too naive!” Shannon retorted, the supposed reassurance only heightening her anxiety,

“I’m not,” Donna snapped back defiantly, her eyes intense with a twisted spark of resolve. “You don’t understand how the world of the rich and powerful works. Anything is possible. Even life and death, sickness, you can manipulate everything”

Chapter 40

“You know, every day in that hospital, I see people on death’s doorstep come

ne in and walk out miraculously healthy. Just a few days ago, there was this guy who had brain surgery and a heart transplant, and he made it out alive. Those doctors, they’re like fucking miracle workers!” Donna exclaimed. “And about your situation...



Shannon glanced at Donna, a mix of exhaustion and desperation clouding her face. It seemed decided Shannon was guilty, and was forcing a confession, regardless of how Shannon felt.

Donna's sudden movement aggravated her wound, eliciting a sharp cry of pain as she looked down to see her hands covered in blood.

Donna

had taken this whole mess upon herself,

[ young, I don't want to die... You're all I've got. Please, Shannon, help

“Shannon!” She trembled, clutching at Shannon's leg in fear. “Help

me...”

Watchin Donu krieel and beg. Shannon felt her own resolve soften, her body weakening, her gaze growing distant. Her hope for the future was nearly shattered

Suddenly, Donna collapsed.

“Mom! Stay with me... Shannon pleaded as she supported her mother, whose wound was still bleeding. Donna, barely conscious, gripped Shannon's hand tightly. “Save me...

“Someone! Help! We need help” Shannon screamed. The chaos soon brought the cops and the doctor who had initially brought Donna.

The doctor, Peter Dunlap, shot Shannon a meaningful glance before uying, “Miss Yancey, we'll take your mother back to the hospital now. Don't worry, she'll be well taken care of

Shannon hesitated, watching Donna's fragile state, then turned to the doctor, pleading, “Please do everything you can.”

a was carried away. Shannon stood frozen by the iron gate, torn Just as she was about to leave, Helen appeared

As Donna was

“Shannon, are you alright?” Helen asked.

Shannon smirked. ‘How could she has the audacity to ask that after everything she have caused! Is it even possible for me to be alright now?’”

Yet Helens looked surprisingly composed, dressed in a luxurious dark dress, perfectly made up, radiant as ever. In stark contrast, Shannon was still in yesterday's school uniform smeared with garbage thrown by classmates, a complete mess

After that appalling things happened, Helen was a wreck, completely freaked out by everything. But once Matilda reassured her she wouldn't be blamed and everything would be fine, she seemed to relax a bit

Here she was, responsible for Lily's horrific death, yet she seemed to be chilling like nothing happened. It was then n that Shannon realized just how heartless and cruel Helen really was

“Lily” was left a bloody mess, unrecognizable. Didn’t you have nightmares about her last night?” Shannon challenged her

Helen faltered for a second. The mention of Lily clearly shook her, but Shannon’s confrontational tone, that blatant disrespect, that was new for

Despite the turmoil. Helen had slept like a rock last night, not a single dream to disturb her beauty sleep.

Then, suddenly, Helen’s face crumbled, tears streaming down as she fell to her knees in front of Shannon, clutching at her legs. “Shannon, I screwed up. I’m so sorry for what I did to Lily, what I did to you. This guilt, this regret—it’s killing me

Shannon was caught off guard by Helen’s raw display of emotion. For three years, Helen had hovered above everyone else, shielded by the Berry family’s immense wealth and influence, unreachable. Shannon never thought she would see the day Helen would grovel before her.

She continued. “Shannon, you’re my best friend. Please, help me. I can’t face being charged. I just can’t handle prison. The Berry family’s stocks have already crashed twice. If this keeps up, the Berry Group is going down. And it’s not just about them. All the partners and companies connected to us will suffer too. We’re talking about impacting hundreds of thousands of lives. People will lose their jobs, families will drown in debt, and some might even end their own lives”

Helen’s tone turned desperate, almost pleading. “Shannon, I’m begging you. It’s not just for me but for all these people, for families, children, and the elderly

Shannon

I just saw your mom. She isn’t doing well, but I’ve spoken to Dr. Dunlaps. He’s gonna take good care of her, ensure nothing happens to her,” Helen

The mention of Donna first shocked Shannon, then a mix of embarrassment and rage flooded her. For years, Helen had manipulated Iser using Donna’s health as leverage

It had always been their unspoken agreement. Helen used Donna’s illness to manipulate Shannon, and Shannon felt powerless to fight back, knowing Donna’s well-being hung in the balance

“If you help me out I promise I take care of your mom like she’s my own. After her kidney transplant, when she’s back on her feet, I’ll personally make sure she’s looked after at our place, Helen stated calmly. “My mom’s already got a top-notch legal team working, and my grandpa has been pulling some serious strings. Once this all blows over, we’ll work on slashing your sentence. You’ll be out in no time, free as a bird”

Helen kept laying it on thick, alternating between threats and sweet talk. “Shannon, come on, help me out here, please.”

Shannon locked eyes with her. She hadn't expected that the Berry family was actually mapping out her entire future like she was just some afterthought. It felt like she had no control over her own destiny, just a puppet in their game.

Tuck of Shannon snapped.

"Shannon." Helen paused, taken aback by Shannon's cold rebutt, then choked up. "Just... take some rest. I gotta go too!"

Helen struggled to her feet, giving Shannon one last tearful look before she left

Once she was gone, Shannon's legs gave out, and she slumped against the wall. She felt like a caged animal, anger bristling but powerless to lash out.

"Your mom is really surprised me. If the Berry family demanded your life, she'd hand you over without batting an eye" Lea's unexpected voice shattered the silence, causing Shannon to jerk her head up.

When Donna had entered, Lea had been observing everything from the next room, watching intently like a hawk

"Being convicted of murder could get you at least thirty years locked up. Your life hasn't even started, and it's already being thrown away. It's even crueller than a death sentence, Lea said coldly. She knew the feeling all too well from her own past

Shocked. Shannon scrambled to her feet and stumbled toward Lea "Lea? What are you doing here?" Shannon blurted out, bewildered by her appearance.

While she expected her mom and Helen, Lea's presence caught her off guard.

Lea gazed back at her, her cold eyes softening slightly with an undercurrent of sympathy that Shannon couldn't quite discern.