

Marrying 311

Chapter 311 Cozy Up with Me Instead

Rodney's message couldn't have been more straightforward.

Lucy frowned, gently pushed his arm off her, and was about to speak up, but when she locked eyes with Lennon at the other end of the couch, her refusal remained unsaid.

She took a deep breath and said. "Yeah, it's okay; Rodney and I can make do for one. night."

Anyway, Lucy figured either Rodney or her could take the bed, the other the floor. She was confident Rodney wouldn't dare try anything; even if he did, she could handle it.

Cherise hesitated and then suggested, "You know, you could let Jacob and Lennon share a room, and you can bunk with Mandy. There's no need..."

Lucy replied firmly, "Because he's my boyfriend," avoiding Lennon's gaze and flashing a sweet smile at Rodney.

Rodney chimed in smugly, "Exactly!"

He playfully pulled Lucy along and gestured toward a room. "Is this our room?"

His hand was on the doorknob, but a figure darted past before he could open it.

Lennon grabbed Lucy's arm, asking, "Are you in such a hurry to sleep with him?"

Lucy sneered, locking eyes with Lennon. "What has it got to do with you?"

Rodney wasn't happy either. He shoved Lennon aside, "Dude, do you have a problem?"

"Let me get this straight. You came by the river, knocked over my girlfriend's drink, and now you're saying we can't be in the same room together."

"Are you suggesting that if she can't stay with me, she should shack up with you!?"

Rodney gave a stronger shove, but Lennon held his ground.

A sinister grin crept onto Lennon's face as he locked eyes with Lucy. "In that case, you come and sleep with me instead!"

Lennon pulled Lucy along, his tone firm as he said, "Come on!"

Lucy struggled to break free from his grip, but her efforts were in vain. "Let go of me!"

"Not happening!" Lennon was resolute. "If you're so eager to cozy up with a guy, then

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up with me instead!"

The entire villa fell into a profound silence.

Cherise, Mandy, and Jacob stood in shock, mouths hanging open. Rodney was thoroughly bewildered.

Lucy furrowed her brow and forcefully pushed his hand away. "Have you lost your mind?"

"I'm only in a normal relationship, and somehow that makes me a lowlife, huh? You turned down my feelings for you, and now I'm.."

Her words trailed off as she looked at Lennon, grinding his teeth, his eyes blazing with intensity.

Lucy stared at him, her eyes moist with despair and sadness. "I'm so over this! I really don't know what you want anymore!"

"I've had plenty of guys try to win me over. I never paid them any mind."

"But I like you. I confessed my feelings, wanting to be with you..."

She sniffled but ultimately didn't bring up the kidney issue.

Tears welled up in her eyes as she ground her teeth. "You trampled my feelings for you, and it opened my eyes to appreciate what's right here."

She threw a glance at Rodney in the distance. "Now that I've moved on from you and cherished the one who genuinely cares for me. I've taken this relationship seriously, thinking maybe Rodney, like me, is a bit of a love fool... Just because you couldn't reciprocate my feelings doesn't mean I can't give him what he wants, right?"

"But... Why can't you just leave me alone? On what grounds..."

"But why... How come you always ruin my plans?"

During her initial date with Rodney, Lennon went as far as hanging up Rodney's call, cornered her against the wall, and made sure she wouldn't meet Rodney. He even warned her not to act rashly and later regretted it. Who did he think he was?!

On her second date with Rodney, they visited a bar to meet Rodney's friends. Lennon threw punches at Rodney and his friends and forcibly took her away.

On their third date, Rodney whisked her away to the remote countryside far from Lennon to prevent potential disruptions.

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Lucy had high hopes that this time, everything would go according to plan.

Chapter 312 Flaky Rodney

Yet, look what happened now?

As Rodney was pouring her a drink, Lennon deliberately knocked the glass over and engaged in a heated argument with Rodney, accusing him of spiking her drink!

So, what was his endgame? He wouldn't accept her but wouldn't let her date someone else. He consistently disrupted her interactions with her boyfriend.

"Lennon, are you nuts or what!?"

Rodney pursed his lips behind her, then approached and held Lucy's hand. "Lulu, don't let it bother you. Let's go and get some rest."

Lucy wiped away her tears and shot Lennon a stern look. "Didn't you claim you were compatible with your blind date partner?"

"Think about it. If I came to ruin your plan every time you went out with her, wouldn't you be irritated and uncomfortable?"

Lennon furrowed his brow, his voice dripping with lust as he gazed at Lucy. "I'd be over the moon."

Cherise's grip on the cup almost slipped.

Mandy acted fast, steadying the cup and gesturing for her to stay composed. This was a clash within the intricate love triangle involving Lennon, Lucy, and Rodney. As bystanders, they were expected to maintain their silence and composure.

Lucy locked eyes with Lennon and let out a raspy laugh. "Cut the crap."

After that, she spun on her heels and strolled away.

Lennon pulled Lucy close, their lips crashing together in a fiery, passionate kiss that silenced the entire world.

The onlookers gawked, caught completely off guard by Lennon's sudden move.

Rodney gritted his teeth and lunged forward, trying to pry Lucy away.

Mandy quickly stood in his way. "Why spoil the mood?"

At this point, Mandy still wore a somewhat tattered and burnt maxi dress. The knees of the dress and the area in front of her chest had several holes. Cherise thoughtfully applied a cartoon face patch on her chest during the cleanup.

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Faced with this captivating Mandy, Rodney's bravado waned, though he remained composed. "Come on, she's my girl, man!"

How could he bear witnessing another man kiss his girlfriend when he hadn't even had the chance to kiss her himself?

"Yeah, I get it, I get it..." Mandy playfully grinned. "But even if you go there, you can't top him."

She arched an eyebrow with a teasing smile. "How about this? Tomorrow, I'll let you plant one on me in front of everyone to save face. What do you think?"

Hmm... not a bad idea.

Rodney still had the haunting memory of the last time Lennon nearly beat him to a pulp.

He snorted disdainfully and kept his distance from the romantic display between the man and his girlfriend.

"All bark and no bite. A wimp but still wants to play the field." Jacob sneered, casting a sidelong glance at Rodney while lounging on the couch with his legs crossed.

He then raised an eyebrow and looked at Cherise. "Is this the kind of poor taste your friend has in men?"

Cherise was left speechless.

She suspected that Lucy might be dating Rodney to get back at Lennon, but she had no idea Rodney was so flaky.

It was astonishing how easily Mandy had managed to handle and send Rodney away with mere words.

"Okay, no need to be upset," Mandy said sweetly to Rodney. "Why don't you go rest for a while? I promise I won't let him get too cozy with Lulu, How about she keeps me company tonight?"

Over the years, S had trained her in the art of seduction, providing her with an arsenal of techniques to please men like Rodney.

Mandy's sensuous tone and alluring gaze had Rodney under her spell.

As attractive as she was, Lucy didn't hold a candle to Mandy in his eyes.

Rodney dutifully retreated to his room.

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Mandy shrugged, lowered her voice, and leaned in closer to Cherise. "Aren't I quite impressive?"

Chapter 313 Letting Damien Calm Down

Cherise gave Mandy a big thumbs-up.

'Smack!' The sharp sound of a slap rang out.

Lucy forcefully pulled herself free from Lennon's grip and delivered a resounding slap.

Lennon remained impassive, his eyes locked onto Lucy.

Lucy's heart raced, her face flushed. She glared at him, her anger palpable. "You're so sick!"

"Perhaps I am," Lennon replied, his gaze intense, as if it could pierce through her. "I can't stand if when you're so close to other guys."

His voice, typically characterized by clarity and grace, now held an added weight and seriousness. "Lulu, I don't like people who give up so easily."

"You told me you liked me and wanted to be with me, yet here you are, getting involved. with someone else."

He squinted. "What do you take me for?"

Lennon assumed that even if he rejected Lucy, she would persist like other women usually did. But he never expected her to be so stoic. She didn't even look back at him after his rejection!

Was she this unfeeling? What right did she have to claim she liked him in the first place?

Lucy clenched her teeth, her hands forming tight fists before she released them at her sides.

"You're out of your mind!"

With that, she shoved him aside and bolted out the door.

Lennon remained frozen in place, closing his eyes with a bitter smile.

Well, Lucy had probably casually confessed her feelings for him. He had been naive to take it seriously.

"Isn't it risky for a young woman to be out so late?" Jacob, pretending to be concerned, looked in the direction Lucy had gone.

Lennon stood there, unmoved.

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Mandy raised an eyebrow and asked Cherise, "Cherry, you know the countryside better than any of us. Do you think there are jackals, wolves, or leopards in the mountains around this village?"

Cherise was startled as she observed Mandy squinting and pulling faces. It struck a chord in her, "Of course! Deep in the mountains, you can find all sorts of creatures!"

After her remark, she instinctively looked outside. "Lulu wouldn't actually be going into the mountains, would she?"

The man standing in the living room dashed outside like a gust of wind as soon as she finished speaking.

"I

suppose that's that, for now," Mandy commented with a lazy stretch. "Geez, these guys can be so awkward."

Cherise nodded. "But..."

She mumbled to herself while turning to glance at Rodney's room. "I doubt that guy would let Lulu off that easily."

Mandy raised an eyebrow and replied, "Leave him to me. I've got him wrapped around. my finger."

While Cherise observed Jacob tending to Mandy's injury in the living room, she couldn't stifle a yawn.

It was well past one in the morning, and after sleeping a lot on the bus during the day, she felt a bit tired.

She wondered if Damien was already asleep at this hour.

Cherise pushed the door open with a hint of guilt. Unsure about how to comfort Damien. or help him feel better in her current state, she decided to follow Jacob's advice and let him calm down on his own.

As she closed the door behind her, her thoughts wandered. If one day she discovered that her uncle wasn't the person she believed him to be, she might feel even worse than

Damien did now.

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Chapter 314 Mandy, My Younger Sister?

Damien had always held his sister in the highest regard and had a deep respect for her; she was the closest family member he had.

But how Mandy had described Danielle made her seem like a completely different. person- a devil.

"Honey," she murmured softly, wrapping her arms around his waist and exhaling deeply. "I feel like a fool."

"I'm not sure how to console you or make things better," she confessed, her voice barely above a whisper.

"Will you blame me?" Her words were as delicate as a whisper.

Moments later, her hand was gently enveloped by his larger one, and his deep voice broke the silence. "Cherry."

The warmth of his hand in hers comforted Cherise, warming her heart. She bit her lip and replied, "I'm here."

"You know, I have my fears as well," he confessed in the darkness.

His voice, tinged with loneliness and sorrow, confessed in the darkness, "I'm scared that Mandy might be right."

Cherise squeezed his hand, offering silent understanding.

Damien sighed deeply, "I know what she said is true."

"Danielle... she can be ruthless."

Memories from thirteen years ago still haunted him.

However, Damien had always chosen to remember the positive aspects of Danielle, conveniently overlooking her manipulative side.

With his eyes gently shut, he could still recall Danielle's words as she held his hand, saying, "You know, the responsibility for our parents' deaths lies not just within our family but also with the associates who collaborated with the Lenoir Group."

"It's a world where only the strong survive; if you're not tough, you'll find yourself at the mercy of others."

"Our parents were too kind, which led to their tragic end. So, we have to be ruthless to

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survive."

Damien beamed a bitter smile.

Before Damien met Cherise, he approached dealings just like what Danielle had taught him cold, ruthless, and without a care.

Over the years, he cooked up a bunch of schemes that gradually tangled the Lenoir family

in a mess.

He didn't see himself as cruel, but Cherise changed that. Her warmth and light coaxed open the heart that the world had locked away.

Damien held Cherise's hand tight, "Letting go of old grudges isn't easy. But I hope she would stop implicating the innocent."

He turned to Cherise, hugged her, and kissed her forehead. "We owe Mandy big time.

So...

He took a deep breath and gently held Cherise's face. "What if I say that, in the future, I'll provide more support and care for Mandy? Would that upset you?"

Cherise hesitated. "When you talk about 'protection,' are you implying..."

"I want to treat her like a younger sister," Damien's deep, earnest gaze was unwavering on Cherise. "I believe it's the best way to make amends."

"So, I've been thinking, could she become a part of our family, and we could look after her and keep her safe until she finds someone to marry."

Cherise pursed her lips, unable to speak for a while. She comprehended Damien's perspective. It's just....

She couldn't forget how persistent Mandy had been about getting close to him before.

Mandy claimed she approached Damien intentionally to disrupt their marriage under Danielle's instructions. But Cherise had her reservations.

After a moment of hesitation, she closed her eyes and asked, "What kind of role as a 'younger sister' do you mean?"

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Chapter 315 Children

Damien chuckled, hugging her petite frame tightly. "In any case, she's not a biological sister."

"Of course, this is just a whim for now, but if it feels right..."

"Given her history, we should take it slowly. If every word she says is true and she has no ulterior motives, we can have her legally become a part of our family, you and me."

Cherise hesitated, a bit perplexed. "Can we really do that? I thought only our children would be..."

The man's hand gently shifted towards her lower abdomen as he spoke. "I remember generously donating my 'little swimmers' to the cause."

"If

pregnancy doesn't occur, how about we schedule another extensive round of lovemaking and planting seeds in a few days?"

The warmth from his palm nearly scorched her skin.

She hesitated for a moment, a sudden flashback to her bedridden days from a few days.

ago.

Cherise's complexion altered in an instant. "No... that's not happening..."

"Well, your say doesn't matter." Damien playfully chuckled and pulled her closer.

In the shadows of the night, the man's smile gradually turned bittersweet.

Damien had always wanted Mandy to open up and share information about her background, hoping it would provide a lead to find Danielle. However, she had always been elusive, skillfully avoiding his questions.

He initially thought Mandy was deliberately concealing information. But now he understood she might have been too frightened to speak up.

Tonight, to his surprise, Mandy revealed more than he had anticipated.

If it weren't for Cherise by his side, he wouldn't know how to handle this onslaught of information by himself.

In the early hours, Anissa started to call each person one by one, organizing them for a mountain photoshoot excursion.

When Cherise groggily descended the stairs, the entire group had gathered in the living

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room.

Lucy, her face concealed under a duckbill cap, sat somberly in one corner beside Lennon, both bearing visible injuries.

Jacob and Damien, on the other hand, were casually having their breakfast and engaged in conversation on the couch.

Across from them, Mandy was lounging comfortably, casting a tender gaze at Rodney. "I owe you big time for this; I would have been starving by now."

Rodney balanced a bowl of cereal soaked in creamy milk in one hand and a spoon in the other, playfully feeding Cherise. "What are you talking about? We're all classmates; helping out is just what we do."

Lucy's expression darkened even more while Lennon let out a chuckle.

Chérise came down the stairs, and Mandy greeted her with a mischievous smile. "Oops, that milk was boiling hot!"

"Really?" Rodney teased, blowing on the spoon before offering it. "How about now?"

Jacob, sipping his tea, interjected casually, "Hey, Lulu, your boyfriend's quite the charmer. Aren't you going to do something about it?"

Lucy shot Rodney a frustrated look without saying a word.

Lennon couldn't help but stifle a laugh as he glanced briefly at Mandy. "Mandy, can't you eat by yourself?"

Mandy, still looking frail, leaned against the couch. "I'm not feeling great. Remember the fire incident last night?"

Then, she cast a warm look at Rodney. "God knows how grateful I am for you, Rodney."

“These people like to make fun of me, but you’re the only one who genuinely cares for me.”

Cherise was left speechless.

Rodney blushed but shook his head. “No need for the praise; I’m just doing what’s right.”

With a frosty expression, Lucy abruptly got up, slammed the door, and left.

Mandy grinned with satisfaction and winked at Cherise.

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Cherise couldn’t help but shiver as she followed Lucy outside.

“How annoying! Urgh!” Lucy sat on a large rock outside the villa, angrily picking up stones.

from the ground and tossing them into the river.

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Chapter 316 A Tough One

Cherise pursed her lips, quietly comforting her. “Lucy, you’ve only been with Rodney for a month. It’s great you realized he’s a jerk this early into your relationship.”

“Don’t waste your emotional energy for a man like him.”

Lucy let out a long sigh, her frustrations building. "I'm not emotional because of him!"

"I'm angry at myself for being with a man like him!" Lucy slammed her fist onto her thighs.

"I made a bet with Lennon yesterday that Rodney was definitely into me!"

"I told Lennon that if Rodney didn't like me or wanted to break up with me, I'd be with him!"

Her face darkened as she thought about it. "He even burst out laughing just now!"

Cherise was rendered speechless by her friend's reaction.

Instead of comforting Lucy further, she felt the urge to congratulate her.

"Lucy! Cherry!"

Arisa was waving at them from afar. "Call your friends out. We're leaving soon!"

Cherise nodded and hurried to the villa to let the others know.

Damien, Lennon, and Jacob were chatting happily.

Over their shoulders....

Cherise saw Mandy and Rodney...

Her eyes bulged at the sight.

Mandy was a tough one.

Cherise couldn't believe any girl would like Rodney, even for his looks.

Mandy and Rodney had only known each other for two days.

She would only be willing to believe that Mandy was acting this way because she told her that Rodney wasn't ready to initiate the breakup with Lucy.

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But... isn't this going a little overboard?

Wouldn't she feel uncomfortable looking at Rodney?

"I have seen people who were much uglier when I was practicing my flirting skills."

Mandy yawned and leaned against the big tree, staring at Rodney in the distance, who was getting water for her. "I have had several experiences with this type of man before."

Mandy grinned and patted Cherise on the shoulder. "Don't worry. I'll take care of this jerk."

Cherise pressed her lips together. "Thank you she whispered.

If it weren't for Mandy, Rodney wouldn't have given up on Lucy. After all, he had chased after her for over a year before she agreed to be with him-he wouldn't have let her go easily.

"Why are you thanking me?" Mandy asked rhetorically.

Mandy's lips curled into a warm smile as she gave Cherise another pat on the shoulder. "You rescued me from the fire even though I intended to steal your husband."

"I'm just glad I could help you and your friend."

Her eyes crinkled in amusement as she looked at Cherise. "I never had any friends. because I was under someone else's control for the past thirteen years."

"I'm friends with Jessie because S told me she holds grudges and bullies those less powerful than her."

"I know she would be someone I can count on, so I kept her close."

"Cherise."

She stared at Cherise with a sincere gaze. "You're the first person I've wanted to truly be friends with."

Cherise's eyes widened in surprise. "I guess that's an honor."

She didn't care who she was saving from the fire.

She simply didn't want to give up on life.

After all, she was an aspiring doctor.

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If she could so easily give up a life, how can she save those in need in the future?

She never thought that Mandy would want to be her friend.

She pressed her lips together as she recalled Damien's words about having Mandy as her younger sister.

Chapter 317 Confession

"Would you like to be my younger sister?" Cherise blurted out unexpectedly.

"Sister..." Mandy's eyes shifted uncertainly.

Cherise realized that her words might have been inappropriate.

Damien had told her that they would need more time to observe the situation before deciding whether to help Mandy.

It would be a little out of the blue for Cherise to propose this so early on.

She realized she may have spoken too soon, but her words were already out there. She giggled nervously, "I... I was just joking."

Mandy pursed her lips and looked up at Cherise. "You can't back out on your words. Without pausing, she excitedly waved to Damien. "Brother-in-law!"

Cherise was stunned.

"Even though you're only two months older than me, I'll accept you as my older sister!"

Her eyes sparkled with childlike joy.

"What are you talking about? Who's the older sister?"

Rodney frowned as he carried the bottle of water.

Mandy made him pour the water for her to wash her hands as she explained with a playful glint in her eyes, "Cherise asked me to be her sister, so I agreed!"

She glanced at Cherise before uttering, "Sis, I'll be counting on you from now on!"

Cherise was speechless.

All of a sudden?

She hadn't prepared for this.

After Mandy washed her hands, Rodney only had half a bottle of water left.

Mandy's lips widened into a wide grin as she demanded, "Ask if my sister wants to wash her hands."

Rodney froze for a moment before making his way to Cherise. "Cherry, do you need

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some water to wash your hands?"

Cherise was rendered speechless by his sudden familiarity.

Who was he to act so friendly with her?

Mandy shot her a glance. "You don't have to hold a grudge against the water. You held onto the rocks the whole journey here. You should clean your hands with the water he brought."

Cherise's face twisted with contempt as Rodney helped her wash her hands.

After a short rest, the team continued their journey deeper into the forest.

The view stretched out before them like a hand-drawn painting, the trees sculpting their surroundings into a picturesque view of greens and yellows. Cherise and Lucy's camera shutters clicked continuously, capturing the scenes before them as Lennon, Damien, and Jacob towered behind them, separating the two of them from the other crowds.

The morning passed.

They took a break halfway through their hike.

"Everyone," Rodney announced, his face flushed red. "I would like to confess to someone dear to me in this beautiful place."

All eyes turned to Lucy.

Rodney walked up to Lucy, then past her. He knelt in front of Mandy. "Mandy," he said, "I like you. Will you be my girlfriend?"

A wave of silence hung heavy in the air, leaving everyone on the mountain frozen as they witnessed the scene unfold.

Lucy's jaw dropped as she struggled to comprehend the image of Rodney kneeling before Mandy. "Rodney, you..."

"Lucy, I'm sorry."

Rodney met her gaze, his brow furrowing with concern. "In the past, I thought I liked you. I imagined that I would always like and care for you."

"But that was before I met Mandy."

His eyes softened with affection as he gazed at Mandy. "It wasn't until I met Mandy that I realized there was someone in the world who was so captivating."

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"She's beautiful, adorable, and kind."

"Lucy, don't blame me for cheating on you. You really don't behave like a lady at all."

"It could be because you didn't

grow up

with your

your mother."

"What a jerk!"

Lucy lunged at him and grabbed his collar. "What the hell did you say?"

Chapter 318 No Different From Your Dad

Lucy had always been hurt by her mother's absence since she was young.

Rodney knew this well.

He was deliberately rubbing salt in her wound.

He didn't hesitate to reveal her deepest vulnerability in front of everyone to save face.

"You were a cruel *ss after all," Lucy said, her voice tight.

Rodney narrowed his eyes at her. "Lucy, I might reveal your family background to everyone if you push me."

Lucy clenched her jaw, her eyes flashing with anger. "Don't you dare!"

"Why wouldn't I dare?"

Rodney's lips curled into a menacing smile as he peeled Lucy's hand from his collar. He stood up, towering over her as he spoke.

"You must think I'm unloyal and shouldn't be confessing to Mandy before breaking up with you," he said. "But Lucy, I'm no different from your dad."

"If it weren't for your dad cheating on your mom, she wouldn't have jumped off the building the day after she gave birth to you. She's been in a coma ever since."

"Then your dad regretted his actions and wanted to commemorate your mother, so he named you after her middle name."

Lucy clenched her fists so hard that crescent marks were left on her palms.

Everyone's faces were clouded with discomfort by the tension in the air.

Mandy scrunched her brows into a tight knot and pulled on the hem of Rodney's shirt. "Rodney, that's enough! Our relationship has nothing to do with Lucy."

But Rodney refused to back down.

Through gritted teeth, he revealed the things Lucy had said when she was drunk.

Isn't she the cold and indifferent one?

The confident one?

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He wanted to expose all her secrets so she could never act so arrogant in front of everyone. again.

Her father was a playboy, so who was she to criticize him?

Taking a deep breath, he continued, "Your mom was in a vegetative state the day after you were born because your dad cheated on her."

"But that's not all."

"Twelve years ago," Rodney said, his lips curling into a cruel smirk, "after getting your mother's family's approval, your dad donated her organs after agreeing to euthanasia. But can you call it a donation if he sold them for..."

"Bam!"

Lucy slapped Rodney across the face with all her might.

"I'll kill you!" she seethed, lunging at him again.

Lucy had never told anyone about her family, not even Cherise.

Now, standing on the slope, her anger burned like wildfire, consuming her. She didn't care. where she was anymore.

With unrepentant rage, Lucy grabbed Rodney's collar and clenched her fists. She then gave him a powerful blow to the head.

Rodney staggered, and Lucy lost her footing, sending them both tumbling to the ground. She continued to throw punches at him as they rolled around, her anger fueling her strength.

"Be careful!" Cherise cried, reaching out to grab Lucy's elbow as they teetered on the edge. of the cliff.

Cherise pulled Lucy towards her while Lucy kept her grip tight on Rodney's collar. They hung perilously at the edge, a steep fall awaiting them if they let go.

Cherise didn't have the strength to hold both of them.

"Let me help you," a voice called out.

Lennon took over Lucy's hands and pulled her back up. Jacob and Mandy also helped. Rodney to his feet.

They were both injured, but one was worse off than the other.

The photography club had to end their expedition early due to the events that had transpired

It's been a rocky journey Anissa said under her breath, leaning against the window as they rode back to Adania

The fire on the first day had already destroyed the homes of the locals.

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Chapter 319 Escape the Pain

"We should pray before

any group

activities next time," Lucy remarked ruefully.

Cherise had fallen asleep behind Lucy, her head resting on Damien's chest. Lennon was treating Lucy's wounds.

"Be gentle!" Lucy cried.

Lennon deliberately applied more pressure to her wound with the cotton swab. "I'm going

to make sure it hurts."

"Or you'll never learn from this!"

“Pain won’t change me.”

Lucy rolled her eyes and turned to look out the window. Despite their playful banter, her eyes flashed with steely determination.

Even though his words were harsh, he was gentler when handling her wounds.

In the back row of the bus, Rodney pouted and said to Mandy, “I’m in pain...”

Mandy tried to compose herself before glancing at his wounds. “Do you want me to help. you put some ointment on it?”

“Yes, of course!”

Rodney’s eyes widened with excitement as he extended his hands towards her. “Remember to be gentle.”

Mandy’s lips widened into a wide grin. She patted Jacob on the shoulder, who was engrossed in a Korean drama.

Jacob took off his earphones. “Doctor, please hand me some treatment for his wounds.”

“Alright,” he replied.

Mandy gently spread the powdery substance onto Rodney’s wounds.

“Ouch!”

A loud scream echoed through the bus. “Jacob! What did you give Mandy?”

“Salt.”

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Jacob chuckled. “I brought some seasoning with me before the hike in case we had a barbecue on the mountain.”

He raised his eyebrows at Mandy. “I also have cumin. Do you want some?”

Mandy glanced at Rodney’s wound innocently and said, “Honey, do you want me to spread some cumin on your wounds?”

Rodney stared back at her in disbelief.

The car drove from Sequoia to Adania.

Mandy’s smile faded as her head began to throb with pain.

“I...”

Her face suddenly turned ashen. She clutched Jacob’s arms but couldn’t manage to say a

word.

Inside the villa, a man in black opened the door. “I received a signal from her but can not longer detect any voice signals.”

“She must have removed the chip.”

The woman in the wheelchair chuckled menacingly. “She’s become more arrogant.”

“Bring her here, no matter what.”

“Argh!”

“It hurts!”

Mandy clutched her head tightly and growled in pain inside the secret chamber hidden beneath Jacob’s clinic.

Despite the chamber’s metal door, Cherise could imagine how much desperation and pain Mandy was feeling from her screams.

Her face drained of color as she turned to Jacob. “Do you have another way?”

“No,” Jacob said solemnly, closing his eyes and scrunching his face with despair. “This place is already equipped to block off any signals.”

“But it’s not as helpful as being in the mountains.”

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He read through the information in the file. “The chip has been in her brain for too long. It could be attached to her arteries.”

“Removing it will be difficult.”

“The only way to help her escape this pain and stop being controlled by someone else is

to...”

The man closed the file. "Cut off the terminal."

Cherise's brows furrowed into a tight knot. Cut off the terminal...

It sounded like a difficult task.

Chapter 320 A Puppet

For over a decade, these people had maintained a firm grip on Mandy, biding their time until she reached adulthood so they could mold her into their puppet. There were not chances they would simply release her with ease.

Cherise, peering through the iron door, bore witness to the agonizing sight of Mandy. She was clutching her head, relentlessly slamming it against the wall, and a profound sense of unease welled up within Cherise.

Cherise couldn't help but reminisce about the past, back when she first encountered Mandy at Sequoia. She remembered how persistently Mandy had referred to her as 'Sister. Cherise herself was only a nineteen-year-old girl, engrossed in thoughts of studying and exams.

Mandy had confided that she had never known family or friends, living an isolated and lonesome life for all those years. This revelation left Cherise struggling to keep her emotions in check.

She bit her lip, her thoughts unexpectedly drifting towards Damien.

He, too, had been living a solitary life for many years. Damien was fortunate, though. He retained control over his life and had the support of friends like Jacob and Lennon. In contrast, Mandy had Cherise as her only ally, a Sister,' recognized less than twenty-four hours ago.

Before long, the room fell into a hushed silence. Jacob commented, "Seems like they have stopped sending signal commands for now."

“Do you think we should go in and check on her?” Cherise sought Jacob’s opinion.

With a heavy heart, Jacob retrieved a key and unlocked the thick iron door.

The basement was an oppressive, damp, and dim space despite Jacob’s efforts to illuminate it with intense, daylight-like lighting. Cherise could still feel the suffocating atmosphere.

Carefully, she proceeded to Mandy, and with a crouched posture, she observed her.

Mandy was in a pitiable state-her hair in disarray, and her entire body was on the ground, limp and still trembling from the ordeal. She was hardly recognizable, concealed under blood and grime.

Cherise’s heart ached deeply. Reaching out, she took Mandy’s hand, which was covered in chipped nails and stains of blood. The warmth of Cherise’s touch caused Mandy to raise

her head from the ground.

1/2

Beneath the tangled locks of hair, Mandy gazed at Cherise through eyes filled with tears. Finally, her tears began to flow.

“Sister...,” Mandy’s fragmented voice was like a knife to Cherise’s heart.

“I don’t want to live... It’s too painful...” Mandy cried out, her voice hoarse and fractured. “Ever since I was seven, every time I defied them, it was like this...”

Jacob remained at the door, his brows furrowed as he observed the scene. “You could have returned to them, and we would have rescued you once we were more certain.”

"I don't want to go back," the young girl declared between her tears. "I don't want to return, not even for one more day. S only wants me to be her puppet, and my father obeys. everything S says. My brother... He wants S to train me so I can earn money for him. No one cares about my life. No one cares if I'm happy or not. They believe it's my destiny because I resemble Maeve, that I'm destined to be her replacement..."

"I don't want to go back!" With her head raised, she gazed at Cherise with those reddened. eyes. "I'm so happy you're willing to treat me like family. Even if we are not sisters, it makes me very happy."

"I have a sister now." Tears streamed down her cheeks uncontrollably. "Promise me. If you can't find a way to save me, end my life."

Cherise held Mandy tightly, profoundly shaken by the heart-wrenching scene that had unfolded before her. She clenched her teeth, realizing that such a tragic life was not merely a trope from TV dramas or novels! It was a harrowing reality. Cherise couldn't help but recall her first encounter with Mandy. The time when she had been haughty, exquisitely beautiful, and dazzlingly gorgeous.