

Marrying 861

Chapter 861 The Aftermath

Cherise remained silent.

This man had become so skilled at sweet-talking!

In the presidential suite of a five-star hotel in Adania.

A loud “bang” echoed as the expensive, diamond-studded phone was violently thrown to the ground.

Yolanda clenched her fists in anger, her eyes flashing with ruthlessness.

Cherise returned home without remembering how she got there or when she fell asleep.

It felt like she was a small boat in the sea, carried along by Damien’s tumultuous waves.

The following day, she luxuriously slept until noon.

At noon, Cherise was abruptly awakened by the sunlight streaming into her room.

As she glanced outside at the bright sunshine, a wave of chaos swept over her heart.

The next moment, she retrieved her phone and glanced at the screen.

Immediately, the entire manor resonated with the enraged voice of a woman, “Late for work again!!!”

Yesterday marked Cherise’s first day at her new job, yet she slept until noon.

Now, facing the same scenario on her second day, she felt a growing dread.

How would she continue to request time off and explain her tardiness to her colleagues, especially the gossiping Heather?

The mere thought of facing her coworkers and providing excuses caused her head to ache.

Just as she grappled with this dilemma, Heather's voice came through the phone, "Cherise, are you not feeling well today?"

"Mr. Whitlock mentioned you took half a day of sick leave and asked if you could come in for the afternoon," Heather relayed over the phone.

"He also said if you're not up to it, he can grant another day off."

Cherise was at a loss for words.

"This sick leave..."

She couldn't fathom how Damien managed to sway the people at the research institute.

But as she was about to respond, a more pressing concern crossed her mind. "Heather, did you go to work today?"

She was burned yesterday, and the doctor advised her to rest for a few days. How could she have

sustained such an injury and show up for work today?

Can her body even handle it?

“It’s nothing.”

Heather chirped, seemingly catching on to Cherise’s unease. “Just a minor injury. Work comes first!”

Cherise grimaced. “Nonsense!”

Without further ado, she sprang from the bed, quickly freshening up while cautioning Heather, “Stay put, don’t move an inch. I’ll be over in an instant.”

Heather hesitated on the other end, her tone wary. “Cherise, forget it.”

“It’s nothing. I might even be more active than you now.”

“Forget what?”

Cherise’s brows knitted. “Heather, you know a fair bit about medicine.”

“How could your burn heal so quickly?”

“Others might not care, but you can’t be reckless!”

“Wait! I’ll be right there!”

Heather interjected, abruptly cutting off the conversation upon hearing Mr. Whitlock’s call in the

background.

“Okay, Cherise, let’s table this discussion for now.”

“If you’re feeling unwell, staying home and rest is best. You do not need to come all the way here for my sake.”

With that, she ended the call.

Cherise was left with a furrowed brow. She pocketed her phone and hastened downstairs.

“Mrs. Lenoir, I’ve prepared some porridge for you,”

Frances greeted from the kitchen, sensing Cherise’s awakening. “Would you like to have it before you go?”

“No time,”

Cherise exclaimed, darting to the entrance as she slipped on her shoes. “My friend has an urgent matter at the research institute, and I must go immediately.”

She quickly glanced at the table and noticed the tempting aroma of the steaming hot lunch, causing her stomach to growl involuntarily.

Chapter 862 A Sudden Revelation

In truth, a pang of hunger gnawed at Cherise's stomach.

The ordeal of last night's car ride had sapped much of her energy.

She pressed her lips together and instructed, "Pop it in the fridge for me; I'll eat it when I return."

With a concerned glance, Frances slipped two packets of hot milk into Cherise's bag, fearing she might grow famished on her way.

Cherise sipped on the warm milk, exiting the manor while settling into Mr. Kolson's car.

Thirty minutes later, the vehicle pulled up at the research institute.

Just as before, upon stepping out of the car at the institute's entrance, Cherise noticed her colleagues' furtive glances and hushed murmurs.

The unresolved plagiarism issue cast a pall over her interactions.

These silent judgments weighed heavily on Cherise's spirits.

She hastened towards Heather's usual workspace, milk in hand.

Heather had mentioned earlier that Mr. Whitlock sought to speak with her, prompting Cherise to head straight for his office.

As she approached within twenty meters of the door, Cherise caught the sound of a woman sobbing

from within.

She barely registered the first cry.

But the second one jolted her to action.

It was Heather's voice!

Hastily, she rushed forward, flinging open the director's door!

The sight that greeted her shook Cherise to her core.

Heather lay on the bed, stripped to her shirt, while Yolanda, clad in white, sat nearby, delicately

puncturing Heather's blisters with a needle and holding disinfectant.

Mr. Whitlock stood at Yolanda's side, offering ointment with a respectful smile.

The shrieks that had echoed earlier had been Heather's cries as her blisters were lanced!

"What on earth are you doing?"

Even Cherise's usually composed demeanor cracked at the sight.

Only then did Yolanda deign to acknowledge her presence, her tone icy, "I'm attending to her wounds."

Gritting her teeth, Cherise watched Heather's distress, unable to suppress her anguish, "Attending to

her?”

“Indeed,”

Mr. Whitlock interjected eagerly, brandishing the ointment, “This is the special balm Ms. Weiss

procured. It promises to heal wounds within a day!”

“Precisely,”

Yolanda affirmed, accepting the ointment from Mr. Whitlock and dabbing it onto Heather’s punctured

blisters with a cotton swab. “It’s better to endure brief discomfort now than prolonged agony later.”

“These blisters will rupture eventually; it’s best to lance them now for quicker healing.”

As she tended to Heather’s injuries, Yolanda turned her gaze towards Cherise, a hint of mockery and

challenge dancing in her ink-colored eyes. “As a doctor yourself, you understand, don’t you?”

“And it’s not just about physical ailments...”

She elegantly lifted her head as she spoke, her ink-colored eyes carrying a hint of mockery and

provocation as she looked at Cherise. “The inevitable breakdown of a marriage is also like this.”

“Mrs. Lenoir, am I right?”

Cherise’s fists clenched at her sides.

She comprehended Yolanda's implications all too well.

Rowena might have concealed her intentions beneath a facade of vulnerability.

Yolanda was different.

She wore her desires and confidence openly.

Her resolute demeanor seemed to assert that Cherise and Damien's marriage would inevitably crumble under her influence.

Cherise scoffed, "It seems Ms. Weiss is rather skilled at dismantling families."

Chapter 863 Unexpected Encounter

"It's not due to my experience,"

Yolanda calmly asserted, "but rather, the inevitable decay that awaits anything left unattended."

"Even if it's not me, there will be someone else."

With these words, she lowered her head and tenderly patted Heather's face, feigning compassion.

"Don't you agree?"

Heather was in such agony that she could barely speak.

The pain clouded her comprehension of Yolanda's conversation with Cherise.

So when Yolanda sought confirmation, and Heather emitted a low, hoarse “Mm,” it was more a reflex than a conscious response.

“You see, even your friend acknowledges it.”

Yolanda chuckled softly, squeezing the cotton swab as she applied the medicine to Heather’s wounds.

“Ah-!”

Heather cried out in agony.

“But one must exercise caution in choosing companions.”

Yolanda glanced at Mr. Whitlock, who promptly moved to restrain Heather’s flailing arm.

“Better treatment options are available, yet Mrs. Lenoir recommended futile remedies for your friend.”

“It’s regrettable to be associated with you.”

She emphasized the word “regrettable,” imbuing her statement with a double entendre.

Cherise clenched her jaw. She understood that Yolanda’s “regrettable” referred to Heather’s plight.

It was because of her friendship with Cherise that Heather found herself in this predicament...

“Yolanda.”

Cherise tightened her lips. “Let’s settle our affairs without involving my friend.”

“Is that so?”

Yolanda raised her gaze to Cherise. “How does Mrs. Lenoir intend to address this with me?”

“My intentions are clear. I desire only Damien.” Yolanda responded bluntly,

Such candor left no room for misinterpretation.

Heather struggled once more, accusing, “So you aspire to be a mistress!”

“How audacious!” she admonished.

Unmoved by the criticism, Yolanda maintained her composure. “Kenny, slap her for me.”

Kenny was Mr. Whitlock’s name.

As soon as Yolanda gave the command, Mr. Whitlock’s hand rose, delivering three resounding slaps to

Heather’s face.

The force of the blows left Heather dizzy and momentarily speechless.

Cherise’s heart ached, prompting her to rush forward and attempt to restrain Mr. Whitlock.

But what match was she, a woman, for Mr. Whitlock?

He pushed Cherise aside, causing her to lose her footing and stumble backward-

Just as Cherise braced herself for impact with the ground, a pair of gentle hands caught her.

“Are you alright?”

A soothing male voice reached her ears as the stranger lifted her.

His movements were gentle and respectful, showing no hint of impropriety.

“I’m fine.”

Once steady on her feet, Cherise tightened her lips and expressed gratitude.

Standing behind her was a man in a white suit.

He was slender and refined, with an air of sophistication unfamiliar to her.

Cherise realized she had never met this man before.

Grateful for the assistance of a stranger, she offered her thanks, “Thank you.”

The man smiled. “Cherry, why thank me?”

Cherise was taken aback.

“Do you know me?”

Besides Lucy, the nickname “Cherry” hadn’t been used in ages.

“Of course.”

The man's smile was faint. "I'm Sebastian."

Cherise furrowed her brow, wracking her brain until she finally recalled a boy named Sebastian.

He had been her desk mate in junior high school in Shawbury for a year before he was transferred to

another school.

Chapter 864 Strategic Engagement

But... in my recollection, Sebastian was a chubby and cheerful lad!

The svelte and elegant figure standing before me... could this indeed be the Sebastian back then?

"That's correct, it's me."

Perhaps sensing Cherise's incredulity, Sebastian's lips curved into a faint smile, and he made the

familiar gesture of tapping his temple with his hand.

It was a trademark of the chubby Sebastian of old.

Cherise was taken aback, her mouth agape for a moment.

He... He has genuinely undergone a remarkable transformation!

Yet...

"Why have you come here?"

“I’ve come to find my sister.”

The man’s smile softened as he turned towards Yolanda. “Sis, cease your return home with me.”

Yolanda rolled her eyes. “Mischief? Me?”

“What mischief have I caused?”

“Did you not witness my act of assistance?”

“Assistance?”

“It appeared more like an outburst of frustration.”

With measured steps, the man approached, extending his slender hand to drag Yolanda to her feet,

then guiding her towards the door.

Upon reaching the threshold, he handed Cherise a business card. “It’s been quite a day. Let’s

reconnect when time allows.”

“And do convey my apologies to your companion. My sister was somewhat unruly. I shall attend to her

promptly!”

With that said, without awaiting Cherise’s response, Sebastian swiftly departed with Yolanda in tow.

Cherise remained rooted in place, clutching the business card bearing Sebastian’s contact details, her

thoughts in disarray.

Could such serendipity genuinely exist in this world?

“Cherise, lend a hand here!”

Sebastian ushered Yolanda away, and Mr. Whitlock’s demeanor promptly shifted.

Turning, Cherise witnessed Mr. Whitlock, who had just harshly reprimanded Heather, now assisting her with gentleness?

She could scarcely tolerate Mr. Whitlock’s duplicitous facade. Hastening forward, Cherise aided

Heather, smoothing her disheveled attire, and cast a disdainful glance at Mr. Whitlock. “Mr. Whitlock,

you collude with Yolanda, yet now feign concern for Heather?”

“I do genuinely care for Heather!”

Mr. Whitlock feigned innocence. “Yolanda coerced me!”

“She threatened to jeopardize my son’s chances of studying abroad...”

Having voiced his excuse, he turned to Heather with a semblance of kindness. “Heather, I understand your plight.”

“Therefore, I took the initiative and will compensate you with double the salary this month! What say you to that?”

Heather lifted her head abruptly. “Thank you, Director!”

With that, fearing Mr. Whitlock might backtrack, Heather rose forcefully, grasped Cherise’s arm, and headed towards the door. “Cherry, let’s adjourn to the adjacent room and converse...”

Reluctantly, Cherise acquiesced.

She had no desire to waste her breath on the likes of Mr. Whitlock.

“Your classmate is remarkably handsome.”

Propped up on the adjacent bed, Heather rested her chin on her palms, regarding Cherise. “I envy you.

Your husband is handsome, and your former classmate was equally dashing!”

Cherise pursed, “Initially, he wasn’t handsome at all...”

However...

She lowered her gaze to the business card in her hand.

President of the Weiss Group, Sebastian.

Yesterday, Lennon had apprised her of the formidable influence wielded by the Weiss. Group, with the

president, Yolanda's brother, posing the most significant challenge.

Cherise's hand trembled ever so slightly as she held the card.

It seemed prudent to engage in a candid dialogue with Sebastian, both publicly and privately.

"Tsk, pretending to be virtuous."

Yolanda huffed as Sebastian pulled her into the car, casting him a reproachful glance. "Wasn't it your

idea to involve me in Cherise's friend's predicament?"

Chapter 865 Sibling Strategies

"Why the charade of being virtuous?"

"A hypocrite!"

Sebastian lounged on the car's leather seat, a sardonic smile on his lips. "I merely suggested to afford

myself a suitable pretext to encounter her once more."

Yolanda arched an eyebrow. "So, you used me?"

"You're my sister; who else would I employ?"

Sebastian's smile remained light as he gave a black card to Yolanda nonchalantly. "Five hundred

thousand, and this affair concludes."

“Fair enough.”

Yolanda pursed her lips, stashing the black card away before fixing Sebastian with a direct gaze. “Do you genuinely fancy that Cherise?”

Sebastian raised a discerning brow. “Indeed.”

“I hold no fondness for her.”

Yolanda’s lips formed a thin line. “Even if she parts ways with Damien in the future and aligns with you, I shan’t coexist with her harmoniously.”

“I’ve no need for your concord with her.”

Sebastian chuckled softly, his gaze drifting into the distance with a profound air. “You’ve yet to elucidate your motive for pilfering her manuscript.”

“Why steal her work and level plagiarism accusations in a field foreign to you, medicine?”

“I had no alternative.”

Yolanda sighed, casting him a resentful glance. “It was Gwenn’s demand.”

“If I spurn her request, do you think she’d acquiesce to Tristan, of the Lenoir lineage, hastily selling Lenoir Group shares to us at a discount?”

“You’re aware since Lenoir Group usurped Damien, it’s been the most rapidly burgeoning entity in

Adania. Many vie for control of the Lenoir Group. Will we be next in line?”

“But I must acknowledge Damien’s acumen is genuinely commendable. I never fathomed his

handsomeness...”

Observing Yolanda’s enamored countenance, Sebastian narrowed his eyes slightly. “Besides his

appearance, is your eagerness to lay claim to Damien rooted in his business acumen?”

Yolanda faltered, realizing her misstep.

Swiftly, she averted her gaze. “Primarily due to his allure!”

“Well, I’m not averse to a contest.”

Sebastian’s smile softened as he gazed out the car window. “I’m cognizant of my sister’s desire to find

a business rival, ensuring the Weiss dynasty isn’t solely within my purview henceforth.”

Yolanda’s complexion drained of color. “I never contemplated such matters.”

“It’s inconsequential.”

“Now that you’ve targeted Damien, I’m content to await his ascent to becoming my brother-in-law,

thereafter engaging in competition.”

“May the superior man prevail. If I falter, it simply signifies my sister’s discerning taste.”

With that, Sebastian lowered his gaze, toying with the strawberry hairpin in his grasp, a relic from

Cherise’s schooldays.

Examining the hairpin, he could vividly recall their time in Shawbury; Cherise’s unwavering

encouragement, her words resonating deeply. “Sebastian, you’re astute and handsome! Pay no heed

to others’ perceptions!”

“Persevere, for there’s always someone who values and admires your virtues!”

Reminiscing on the Cherise of yore, a wistful smile graced Sebastian’s lips.

Those days in Shawbury marked the nadir of his existence.

Fortune smiled upon him indeed for in those days, Cherise’s warmest smile thawed his troubled soul.

Without her, how could he have shed weight and smoothly reintegrated into the Weiss fold?

Seated in the car’s rear, Yolanda regarded Sebastian’s enigmatic expression, an inexplicable shiver

coursing down her spine.

Her brother... invariably evoked a sense of unease.

Chapter 866 The Journalistic Bombshell: Gwenn's Expose

The incident surrounding Cherise's alleged plagiarism reached a critical juncture.

It was catalyzed by a fresh-faced journalist named Gwenn from Enigma Insight Magazine. In a

damning exposé, Gwenn not only unveiled Cherise's purported act of plagiarism but also shed light on

her purported abandonment of medical practice while still engaging in medical research.

Before long, luminaries from talent agencies affiliated with the Weiss Group began disseminating the

news across cyberspace.

These celebrities' considerable sway and devoted followings ensured the scandal remained a burning

topic online.

It had ignited fervent debates across the internet.

Cherise found her phone inundated with messages.

Laced with concern and urgency, Dr. Penn's voice pierced through the turmoil. "Cherise, what's the

situation? I've spoken with Mr. Whitlock, and it appears the allegations of plagiarism are substantiated.

I require an explanation from you."

Heather's distress resonated through the phone as she reached out to Cherise. "Cherise, I'm at a loss.

My coworkers are casting aspersions due to our association. I'm contemplating resignation..."

Lucy's message flashed on Cherise's screen. "I'm en route to Adania. Expect me tonight."

However, amidst this deluge of communication, an unfamiliar message caught Cherise off guard. "Shall

I handle my sister for you?" the sender queried, anonymously shrouded.

After a pause, Cherise realized the sender was none other than Yolanda's younger brother, Sebastian.

After a moment of contemplation, Cherise composed her response. "There's no need, and my husband will address it."

"If you're truly inclined to aid, perhaps you could persuade your sister. I possess ample evidence to substantiate my authorship of the paper."

She simply wished to avoid dredging up the past...

Gwenn was keenly aware of the evidence at her disposal.

She was merely relishing in Cherise's torment.

Cherise's actions might be understandable from a medical standpoint.

But as a daughter, Cherise had committed an unforgivable act against her deceased mother.

Gwenn sought to lay bare all of Cherise's vulnerabilities in front of the public eye, to brand her as an

ungrateful daughter, rendering her incapable of facing Beckham and Charisa's relatives..

Undoubtedly, this maneuver was malicious in nature.

With the call concluded, Cherise sought solace beneath her covers, besieged by a tumult of emotions.

Ever since Ursula's revelation of her paper's theft, she had braced for the worst.

Gwenn's expose didn't disappoint.

"Cherise."

Damien's voice pierced the silence as he barged into the room, drawing Cherise from her cocoon of

distress. "I know everything,"

"Zachary told me."

He uttered softly, enfolding her in his embrace. "This isn't your fault."

"No, it is,"

Cherise countered, tears welling in her eyes. "If only I hadn't acquiesced to my mother's wish...

Perhaps she wouldn't have departed so soon."

Memories of Charisa's encouraging smile flooded Cherise's mind.

“Silly girl, Mom is more than willing to be your patient. Even if it doesn’t yield the desired outcome, it’s still valuable experience, right?”

“Considering you’ve already succeeded in your experiments on animals, let Mom be first human patient.”

“After all, who could be more suitable than Mom, right?”

“It’s indirectly my fault Mom’s gone...”

Cherise lay cradled in Damien’s embrace, her voice heavy with sorrow. “Throughout these years, I’ve borne an immense burden...”

“Zachary continually attempts to reassure me, insisting it was Mom’s decision and not mine...”

“Yet, I cannot shake this gnawing guilt within me...”

Chapter 867 Unspoken Guilt

Cherise’s eyes shut tightly, her features etched with pain. “Your sister’s ordeal mirrors my mother’s in many ways. When I operated on her, I took an extra step... and that’s why she survived.”

“Five years ago, when my mother passed, she urged me not to shoulder blame. She insisted it was her choice.”

“But I couldn’t forgive myself... Because at the time, I entertained the notion of taking that extra step,

but... I faltered. I was gripped by fear... Fear that one additional step might jeopardize my mother's life."

"But it was that one step... and my mother couldn't hold on..."

Cherise locked these memories away, never daring to share them with anyone

In the years following, each midnight reverie would stir her from slumber, tears staining her pillow in remembrance of her mother.

Subsequently, Cherise crossed paths with Dr. Keeples, Lermille Hospital's director.

His sage advice resonated deeply with her: the gravest mistake a doctor could make was to operate on a loved one without absolute conviction.

Such a decision, he cautioned, would yield a lifetime of remorse.

Inspired by his counsel, Cherise made the pivotal choice to join Lermille Hospital's ranks.

But her mother's surgery remained a festering wound, a relentless source of guilt.

Cherise included this narrative in her paper because of Maeve's successful surgery.

As a medical practitioner, Cherise yearned for guidance on navigating such delicate scenarios.

Little did she anticipate that her paper would become Gwenn's weapon of choice against her.

Gwenn's relentless actions against Cherise stemmed from a clear understanding of the situation.

From the onset, she derided Cherise for her reluctance to perform surgery, and now, she mercilessly exposed Cherise's vulnerabilities.

With each calculated move, Gwenn systematically dismantled Cherise's aspirations and livelihood, shattering her dreams and undermining her existence.

Damien enfolded Cherise in his arms, his gentle touch a balm to her tormented soul. "It's all in the past, my love. There's no need to fret."

"If I were your mother, I would have made the same decision."

Cherise's quivering frame stilled momentarily as she wept.

Gazing up at Damien through tear-blurred eyes, she asked, "Why?"

"Because she, like me, knows the goodness within your heart."

Cherise locked eyes with Damien, her lips trembling in silence.

Taking a deep breath, Damien tenderly brushed her lips with a kiss. "Zachary informed me that when you operated on your mother, it wasn't a rash decision."

“He recounted how you reached out to numerous experts worldwide, seeking counsel on the feasibility of your plan. You tirelessly tended to your mother by day and burned the midnight oil alone, sleeping a mere few hours a night. It took you over a month to finalize your strategy...”

“Your intent was solely to grant your loved ones more time, to vanquish their illness.”

“Before your intervention, this ailment had never been conquered.”

Damien cupped Cherise’s face. “Truth be told, even without your intervention, your mother would have had at most a month left.”

“If I were her, I would entrust you with the surgery.”

“Taking a chance outweighs enduring the agony.”

“Even though you lacked practical experience as a doctor, you’re my daughter. I’d sooner place my faith in you than in seasoned professionals.”

Cherise’s lips quivered, tears pooling as she beheld Damien. “I know, I understand the rationale...”

Yet, she found herself unable to surmount this inner barrier.

The notion that her mother’s plight stemmed from her actions...

It overwhelmed her, evoking an overwhelming wave of self-blame and sorrow.

Witnessing her tears unabated, Damien could only offer a gentle pat on her back. "If you need to cry,

my dear, let the tears flow."

Chapter 868 Moral Support

"Mmm..."

Her tears flowed unabated, cascading onto his sleeves like a torrent.

Damien enveloped her slender form, his heart heavy with empathy.

Reflecting on the events of years past, her anguish and distress were palpable.

How fragile and lost must Cherise have been when Charisa departed five years ago?

And he, the man who professed to love her above all else, had not been there to console her...

Clutching Cherise tightly to his chest, Damien made a solemn vow. "I swear."

"In every significant moment of your life from this day onwards, I will stand beside you."

Cherise, her eyes sealed shut, nodded through her tears. "Mmm."

As evening descended,

Lucy arrived at Lenoir Manor to find Cherise's eyes swollen like ripe peaches.

"Damien!"

Lucy, in a state of disarray, grabbed a cushion from the sofa and hurled it at Damien upon witnessing

Cherise's distress. "Is this how you promised to take care of her!?"

Damien caught the cushion calmly, his large hand setting it back on the sofa. "You've returned sooner than expected."

"Of course!"

Lucy rolled her eyes. "What's going on? The news has been inundating my feed, even in Europe!"

"If it weren't for some lingering matters at the company, Mandy would've accompanied me!"

Cherise, having spent the afternoon in tears, now appeared somewhat calmer. She looked at Lucy and inquired, "Did you go to meet Mandy?"

"Of course!"

Lucy pouted as she sat down, accepting a teacup from Frances. "When Damien mentioned Yolanda, I went in search of Mandy!"

Cherise furrowed her brow, puzzled as she glanced at them. "It's related to Yolanda?"

Why look for Mandy after learning about Yolanda?

What's the connection between the two?

Damien furrowed his brows, fixing Lucy with a reproachful gaze.

Lucy paused, then laughed off the query. "It's nothing. I saw Yolanda's social media post claiming

Damien as her boyfriend, so I went to vent to Mandy."

Cherise fell silent.

Was it necessary?

But...

"Yolanda claimed Damien as her boyfriend on social media?"

"How do you know Yolanda?"

Lucy hesitated.

She scratched her head awkwardly. "Um, I don't know her. I saw it on Lennon's phone."

Cherise furrowed her brow once more. "You used Lennon's phone... Did you two reconcile?"

Lucy pursed her lips, uncertain how to respond. In an attempt to change the subject, she reached for

her backpack. "I met your father while in Europe. He asked me to bring back many gifts for you!"

Pulling out a USB flash drive, she continued, "He said to watch it alone when it's quiet. Inside are his

words for you!”

Cherise accepted it eagerly. “Did Dad mention what it’s about?”

“It’s regarding... your paper.

Taking a deep breath, Lucy conveyed, “Your father has read your paper and knows about the patient mentioned in the case study.”

“He wants you to know that you’ll always be a pride for him and your mother.”

Cherise’s grip tightened around the USB.

“Did dad really say that?” she looked at Lucy.

Lucy rolled her eyes. “Why would I lie?”

With a gentle sigh, she added, “Cherise, I understand the challenges you face as a daughter in this situation. But morally and logically, you are not to blame.”

Chapter 869 Unwarranted Accusations: The Kindergarten Incident

“The original intention of performing surgery on Aunt Charisa was also to hope that she could get better, right?”

“You’re not wrong. Those who think you’re wrong are the ones who don’t understand the situation at all.

You don't need to pay attention to them."

Cherise pursed her lips. In fact, she comprehended the rationale behind Lucy's words. Damien had reiterated it to her numerous times before.

She had used these words over the past five years to admonish herself.

Yet, the prospect of unveiling her scars before a multitude filled her with dread.

Words wield immense power.

She dreaded being pointed at and whispered about wherever she went, and she recoiled at the thought of enduring the gossip that would follow every job change.

Nevertheless, it seemed there was no alternative but to confront it.

"Alright, where there's a will, there's a way."

Lucy, seated beside Cherise, added, "Besides, you still have Damien by your side!"

Cherise remained silent, her lips tightly pressed together.

Initially, Cherise believed that by staying home, she could shield herself from the repercussions echoing outside.

Yet, on the second day of the ordeal, she received an alarming call from her son's kindergarten teacher at noon. "Mrs. Lenoir, you may need to come to the kindergarten."

"Your son, Soren, hit two children today, and now the parents are demanding compensation..."

At that moment, Cherise was at home meticulously organizing the evidence to refute the plagiarism accusations. When the phone call shattered the silence of her concentration, she leaped from her chair in a sudden jolt of panic. "How could this happen!?"

Soren, typically known for his prudence and thoughtfulness, did not resort to physical confrontation.

How could he possibly have struck another child?

"Teacher, is there a misunderstanding? How could Soren hit someone?"

"I assure you, there's no mistake. Soren indeed struck the child."

The teacher's tone grew impatient. "Mrs. Lenoir, don't presume others lack professional integrity as you do."

"If you can plagiarize papers, who's to say your son's moral fiber isn't tainted?"

Before Cherise could respond, the teacher abruptly ended the call.

Cherise was trembling with the phone in her hand.

Raising her gaze, she found herself momentarily blinded by the brilliance of the midday sun, its

radiance too intense for her eyes to bear.

After steadying her breath deeply, she regained her composure, swiftly changed her attire, and stepped

out of the house.

As Cherise made her way from the hospital entrance to Soren's location, she wore a hat and mask to

conceal her identity. Despite her disguise, she couldn't escape the whispers of passersby along the

corridors.

"Hey, I used to admire her, but I didn't expect her to be a thief!"

"Well, you have no taste. I knew from when she openly admitted that she had no medical ethics over a

month ago that this woman could do anything without moral boundaries!"

"What a shame... I used to envy the president of Lenoir Group for finding such a good woman as his

wife. But now it seems..."

"Hahaha, do you think Damien intended to divorce her after this scandal broke out?"

Cherise maintained her silence.

As she overheard the cruel remarks echoing around her, each comment felt like a blade piercing

Cherise's heart.

She clenched her fists as she hastened toward the designated floor.

"Why isn't she here yet!?"

Upon reaching the floor, Cherise overheard a woman scolding her son. "You brat, is your mom too

scared to come?"

Defiantly, Soren retorted, "My mom will definitely come if she says so!"

Chapter 870 Dreaded Confrontation

"Don't you dare speak ill of my mother. If you repeat anything bad about her, I won't let it slide!"

"Hehe, you little brat, you think you can intimidate me? Who do you think you are? You're not even as

tall as a scallion, yet you act like a big shot..."

"Ah—!!! Let go, let go!"

The woman's screams pierced the air.

Cherise sprinted towards the source of the commotion.

Her heart pounded with fear as she witnessed her son, Soren, sinking his teeth into the woman's arm,

eliciting cries of agony.

As the pain overwhelmed her, the woman's rationality vanished, and she raised her hand to strike

Soren's head.

Cherise's eyes widened in alarm, and she dashed forward with frantic urgency.

However, she was still too distant to intervene.

In the nick of time, a man's hand, with elegant and elongated fingers, intercepted the woman's arm just

before it could contact Soren's head.

"I—!"

Despite her efforts, the woman found herself unable to reach Soren. Frustrated, she glared at the man

confronting her. "You—!"

"A responsible adult wouldn't resort to violence against a child,"

The man's deep voice resonated. Simultaneously, his other hand expertly cradled Soren in his arms.

"Are you alright?"

"I'm fine..."

Soren's tearful voice trembled as he nestled into Damien's embrace. "Daddy, I didn't mean to bite

her..."

"She kept saying bad things about Mom!"

Furrowing his brow, Damien cradled Soren tenderly. "I know, Soren. You're not at fault."

"Yeah."

Soren's eyes welled up with tears. "I don't want to go to this kindergarten anymore! The parents there are all mean!"

"The kindergarten teachers talk bad about Mommy too!"

Damien's heart ached at Soren's distress. "Alright."

"Mr. Lenoir..."

Hearing what Soren said, the kindergarten teacher beside paled.

While she had engaged in discussions with her colleagues and privately ridiculed Cherise for the plagiarism scandal, she hadn't intended to upset Damien.

After all, the Lenoir Group was the silent investor behind the kindergarten!

"Tomorrow, the Lenoir Group will withdraw its investment."

Damien's stern gaze swept the room, settling on the teacher and the angry mother. "Since my son finds

this kindergarten unsatisfactory, there's no reason for it to continue."

After lifting Soren into his arms, the man turned towards the elevator.

Upon pivoting, he noticed Cherise standing nearby, tears glistening in her eyes.

Furrowing his brows slightly, he questioned, "What brings you here?"

The kindergarten teacher interjected nervously, "Mr. Lenoir, I only called Mrs. Lenoir..."

Damien's brows knitted in frustration. "You called me first, then my wife?"

"Do you presume that I am incapable of handling my son's affairs or that I lack the means to settle the compensation demanded by this aggrieved parent?"

The teacher faltered under Damien's gaze, rendered speechless by his imposing presence.

The mother sneered, addressing Cherise, "Tsk tsk, hiding under a hat and mask? Let's see the face of the shameless plagiarist!"

With a swift motion, she ripped off Cherise's disguise.

Simultaneously, Damien attempted to rush forward but was hindered by carrying Soren, and he couldn't match the woman's speed.

With a resounding “smack,” the woman forcefully threw Cherise’s hat and mask.

“So this is the face of Cherise, the plagiarist!”

The woman shouted indignantly, “I never expected someone who appears so respectable to lack any

sense of propriety!”