

Marrying 951

Chapter 951 Unable to Reciprocate

“And.”

The woman took a deep breath, “Because without past memories, I actually... find it hard to accept the fact that I am the mother of two children.”

“Every day, I receive Soren and Serafina’s affections, but I know in my heart that I can’t return the same love they have for me... I feel a deep shame whenever they affectionately call for me, and then I start to blame myself for feeling that way.”

“And... you.”

Cherise lowered her head, not daring to look in

Damien’s eyes. “I know you are good to me.”

“Everything you have done for me these past few days, I see it all. I know you must really cherish me.”

“But I don’t love you as much as you love me.”

“This makes me feel despicable.

“Clearly accepting so much goodness and love from the people around me, but I can’t give the same response.”

“If I regain my memory, I will definitely not be like this.”

The woman’s words were spoken very softly.

But each word, like a heavy hammer, struck Damien's heart.

He admitted that he had come to like the serene disposition Cherise now bore as a result of her memories being wiped clean.

Without the five years of separation, without the five years of vicissitudes.

Just like five years ago, she reminded him that she was still so lovable and full of life.

But, he had overlooked... her feelings.

In the end, the Cherise who lost her memory, and the Cherise from before are the same person.

Her boundaries, her sense of right and wrong, her perspectives and values were all exactly the same as before.

She accepted the kindness and love of others but was unable to reciprocate in the same way, which was very painful and tormenting for her.

The man took a deep breath and held her tightly in his arms. "I promise you."

"After I'm done with this busy period... I will take you back to the Shaw's village to retrieve your memories, okay?"

Cherise blinked her eyes. "What is The Shaw's village?"

"It's where you grew up."

"But isn't the Tanner family in Europe?"

She looked at him seriously. "Didn't you say my dad was from the Tanner family?"

Cherise caught him by surprise.

"You even looked up the location of the Tanner family?" he asked, raising an eyebrow at her.

Cherise pursed her lips and shyly lowered her head. "Yes."

"I want to know who my dad is and what my identity is, so I looked it up..."

"About your background..." Damien said hesitantly, then added, with a smile on his face, "I will slowly tell you in the future."

Cherise nodded. "Okay."

"However."

The man lowered his head and planted a kiss on her forehead. "If you really want to participate in tomorrow's art performance... there are some things I need to tell you."

Cherise looked at him seriously, her eyes widening. "What things?"

"About the rumors about you outside now and... your amnesia."

The man took a deep breath.

Since she wanted to go out, he had to clarify everything with her before L

unexpected events tomorrow.

“What I’m about to tell you next may seem unbelievable...”

“But these are all facts.”

Cherise fixed on him with steely eyes. “Yes, I believe everything you said.”

Her obedient appearance was cute and peaceful.

left in order to avoid any

Looking into the woman’s pure and transparent eyes, Damien suddenly felt a bit reluctant to tell her about what had happened in the past.

But...

Then, Damien clenched his fist with a determined appearance and said, “I know who the man you saw in your mind before is.”

Cherise was taken aback. “You know?”

Damien nodded, holding her in his arms with one hand and picking up the mouse with the other. He hovered the mouse over a file and then opened a file inside, the photo enlarging to fit the entire screen. “It’s him.”

Chapter 952 Fragmented Memories

Cherise followed his gaze and looked up-

When she saw the man's photo on the computer screen, countless fragments of memories that would've made anyone collapse from the shock rushed out of her mind!

She helplessly grabbed Damien's sleeve, her knuckles turning white.

Although she couldn't inspect each of them closely, the fragmented memories in her mind caused a suffocating sadness in her heart to clench tightly.

"Cherise, since I can't have you, no one else can have you."

"If I can't have you, I will destroy you. This is the lesson my mother taught me when I was young."

"If you don't let me have you, you are forcing me to destroy you..."

The man's crazy words echoed in Cherise's mind word by word.

Damien could clearly feel the tension of the woman in his arms.

"Do you want me to continue?"

The man hugged her tightly, kissing her cheek tenderly. "The reason I didn't want you to remember so early is because of... these reasons."

"I still want to know."

Cherise's voice trembled slightly.

But her tone was still firm.

"Even if it's unbearable and sad, it's still my past."

“I want to know.”

The determination in the woman’s voice made Damien shake his head helplessly.

He took a deep breath and continued, “This person is your middle school classmate. His name is Sebastian Weiss...”

The next morning at ten o’clock.

Wearing a plaid skirt with a uniform blouse, Cherise appeared on time at the entrance of the small auditorium behind the orphanage.

Mrs. Lydia was already waiting there.

She had to do a double-take when she saw Cherise in the plaid skirt and uniform blouse; she almost

didn’t recognize her.

After all, the last time she saw Cherise, she wore a very formal suit, exuding maturity and confidence in her eyes.

But now...

It almost felt like she was a completely different person.

With her hair tied up in a high ponytail and wearing a uniform, she looked just like a high school student.

Cherise’s new fashion choices not only fooled Mrs. Lydia, but even the onlookers by the side had no idea who she was.

A few wealthy ladies even started discussing next to Cherise. "I heard that Mrs. Lenoir from the Lenoir Group has been locked up at home since the incident never leaving the house!"

"Yes, but I heard she will come today... tsk tsk, really finding an excuse for herself, coming out when the orphans at the orphanage are having an art performance. Does she think that being at a charity event will clear her name from mockery?"

"So naive; I really want to see how this woman, who earns money for her husband with her own body, will present herself!"

her eyebrows lightly and smile sweetly. The gossiping voices of the women around made Cherise raise "Well, this is how she's presenting herself!" she whispered to herself as she skipped happily.

One of the wealthy ladies turned around and saw a young woman standing behind her, looking as innocent as a high school student. She couldn't help but snort, "What is this child doing here!"

"I'm not a child; I'm Cherise."

The woman smiled sweetly, her eyes clear as she looked at the group of wealthy women. "You've gossiping about me for so long. Don't tell me you don't even know what I look like?"

"Isn't it beneath you to gossip?"

Cherise's words had provoked the arrogant women.

Several women turned around, glaring fiercely at Cherise. "What did you say? You're Cherise?"

"Young girl, do you even know who Cherise is?"

One of the wealthy women walked over coldly, her eyes haughtily regarding Cherise and her outfit. "Let me enlighten you, this woman called Cherise is ****"

Chapter 953 Hilda the Troublemaker

“Pleasing her husband while entertaining other men simultaneously.”

“The most crucial aspect is that her husband, a man of high reputation who is known to be a green flag yet, remains silent because his mistress is willing to compensate!”

“How can a woman with no moral boundaries and full of charm be someone who looks as spineless as you?”

After the woman finished speaking, a low voice came through the invisible earpiece in Cherise’s ear.

“Mr. Hampson has conducted an investigation.”

“This woman is named Hilda Parkson, the wife of Mr. Parkson, the chairman of the Parkson Group.”

“Forty-one years old, childless, and fond of gossiping about others.”

“Her husband has five or six mistresses, a well-known fact that Hilda is aware of, but she pretends not to know in order to maintain the facade of being the respectable Mrs. Parkson.”

“What she despises the most is when others mention in front of her that she hasn’t had children.”

After speaking, the man paused for a moment. “Do you want me to guide you on how to confront her?”

“No need.”

Cherise chuckled softly, “I can handle it.

Although her voice was subdued, Hilda managed to hear a whisper of Cherise’s voice.

Hilda raised an eyebrow. "What did you say?"

"I said," Cherise enunciated each word clearly for Hilda to listen.

Then, a polite, faint smile formed on her lips. "Mrs. Parkson, you are also a person of status and reputation. I'm shocked you don't remember me!"

"But it's alright, I understand Mrs. Parkson. You must be too preoccupied with your affairs outside to remember anything, right?"

"Thinking about it this way, it's understandable that you don't recall who I am, isn't it?"

Cherise said innocently, her face reflecting not an ounce of malice or mischief beneath her smile.

But her words were sharp and incisive.

How could Hilda tolerate being ridiculed by this young girl in front of her?

The veins on her forehead bulged as she strode forward to raise her hand, ready to slap Cherise.

At a critical moment, Mrs. Lydia rushed over to intervene. "Mrs. Parkson, please calm down."

"Mrs. Lenoir is just upset that you didn't recognize her which is why she spoke harshly. Please don't take it to heart!"

Mrs. Lydia's words caused Hilda to furrow her brows once again.

"What do you mean?"/

"Is this woman... truly Mrs. Lenoir?"

Mrs. Lydia nodded and gestured with his eyes. "You see Mrs. Lenoir changed her appearance. It's true you did not recognize her, didn't you?"

"This simply proves that Mrs. Lenoir is youthful and bant

After saying that, she turned her head with a flattering nitel arad blooked at Cherise. "Mrs. Lenoir, don't you agree?"

Initially, Cherise had a favorable opinion of Mrs. Lydia

Bu But...

Observing Mrs. Lydia's carefully constructed and ingratiating smile ahhamoment, Cherise's opinion

of this orphanage director plummeted instantly.

UnUnperturbed, however, Cherise simply smiled faintly.

Scorrect. Despite being married with two

hichildren, I refrain from indulging in gossip and rumors, hence why I may appear younger."

Aftefter Cherise finished speaking, silence enveloped the surroundings.

Eeveryone gazed quietly at Cherise and Hilda.

Those who have mingled in the socialite circle of Adania were aware that Hilda detecasted hearing others boast ahobout their children in her presence.

Their group of friends had always refrained from discussing anything about children departed.

And yet, Cherise boldly and openly mocked Hilda for her infertility and penchant for being in front of her!

Hilda's complexion paled, and she narrowed her eyes and glared coldly at Cherise. "I didn't Mrs. Lenoir, although I have two children, yet I dress like a high school student, adorned with a high school student's ponytail. Are you attempting to appear youthful?"

Chapter 954 Capable to Handle

"Not really."

Cherise tilted her head in an innocent manner. "Aren't you here today to watch the children perform?"

"I dressed like this today to appear younger so that the children may find me more approachable."

After speaking, she looked up and down at Hilda, "But Mrs. Parkson, with all this fur and leather boots..."

"To us adults, it may symbolize wealth and nobility, but to the children, fur and leather boots are just pieces of dead animals—they'd be terrified."

Hilda's mouth clamped as she fixed her eyes on Cherise, her face turning red from anger.

She snorted coldly, "I've heard that Mrs. Lenoir is charming and elegant, but I didn't expect her mouth to be so vile and unladylike."

"That's because you're out of touch."

Cherise's smile deepened, but it didn't reach her eyes. "Perhaps Mrs. Parkson's energy is all spent on scheming and dealing with mistresses, so she can't be bothered to listen to someone like me."

“I understand; I share my sympathies for your loss.”

With that, she turned to smile at Mrs. Lydia. “Isn’t it time? I can’t wait to see the children’s performance!”

She pointed to the camera equipment on her back, “I brought my camera equipment to capture the children’s performance and show it to Sera at home so that she can learn from it!”

“Then let’s all go in, let’s go in!”

Mrs. Lydia smiled and led a group of women into the building.

At the entrance of the small auditorium, Hilda stomped her foot fiercely after being pushed by the crowd, cursing viciously at everyone.

“Sir, should I let Blake deal with her?” Mr. Hampson asked quietly from the car not far from the auditorium.

“No need,” replied Damien calmly. “You have to believe that the current Mrs. Lenoir does have the ability to deal with these women.”

“There’s no need to intervene.”

With that, he shifted into a more comfortable position, leaning back on the leather seat, the voice of Cherise from yesterday echoing in his ears after learning the truth.

“Why? Just because Sebastian said something, it must be true?”

“Just because it hasn’t happened, doesn’t mean it has. It was his own foolish mistake that he gave you the ten billion. How can that be proof that I slept with him?”

“So if I donate money to an orphanage tomorrow, does that mean I slept with the orphanage director?”

“If I give money to those in need, does that mean I’ve slept with everyone on the streets? What kind of logic is this?”

“I’ve decided, honey, don’t go tomorrow.”

“I want to see how wicked these people’s hearts can be!”

Remembering her indignant appearance yesterday, Damien raised a corner of his lips and smiled faintly, softly chuckling to himself.

The current Cherise is just like the one who, in the garden of the Lenoir Residence, vowed to him that she would protect him for a lifetime.

She has always been so energetic, silly, and naive in front of acquaintances, smart and protective in front of strangers.

Time has smoothed her edges, and amnesia has brought back everything she lost.

Cherise followed behind Mrs. Lydia and entered the auditorium.

Inside the auditorium, there were rows of small chairs.

Perhaps because the orphanage had limited funds, it looked a bit shabby here.

But even though some of the furniture had worn out, there was a touch of life and love within everything, proof that they had been used with care.

Everything here was clean and tidy; they probably just cleaned in the morning.

The wealthy ladies around her whispered and remarked condescendingly upon the furniture. Not giving a second thought, Cherise walked past them and casually found a seat.

“Please be patient. The children are still getting ready and the performance will start soon!”

Standing on top of the stage with a microphone, Mrs. Lydia smiled and explained, “Apologies, not all the guests have arrived yet.”

After saying that, her phone rang.

Chapter 955 Her Decision

She answered the phone gracefully, “Miss Weiss, have you arrived?”

“Alright, I’ll be waiting right outside the auditorium to escort you in!”

“Miss Weiss?”

Hearing the echo of Mrs. Lydia’s voice, Mr. Hampson’s frown deepened in the car parked outside the auditorium.

He looked at the woman in a white dress waiting at the entrance of the auditorium, and his voice instinctively lowered, “Sir, it’s Miss Yolanda.”

“If I recall correctly, Miss Yolanda is not on Mrs. Lydia’s guest list. What is she doing here?”

“She must have a reason for being here,” Damien said, narrowing his eyes slightly.

“Should we go out now?”

Mr. Hampson suggested quietly.

However, Damien simply waved his hand, "Wait a moment."

As he said the words, he fixed his gaze on the door.

Speaking softly into his earpiece, he notified, "The Miss Weiss that Mrs. Lydia went to greet is here for you."

"Do you want to handle it yourself, or should I go over?"

Cherise smirked, lowering her voice. "You know she's a lady."

"When it comes to women's matters, let us women deal with it ourselves."

Her eyes twinkled as if preparing for mischief. "Darling, I may have lost my memory, but I haven't lost my mind."

"I appreciate you being honest with me before today."

"Now that I know, I won't back down."

She took a deep breath and declared, "I will show you that I, Cherise, am just as strong as I was before losing my memory."

Sitting in the car, Damien closed his eyes and let out a silent breath, a touch of bitterness appearing on his lips.

The current Cherise does not realize that the Cherise from before... couldn't do the things she's capable of now.

In the past five years, she has become more detached and has softened her sharp edges.

1/2

She preferred to let go of many things and go with the flow.

She rarely confronted things straight on.

Yesterday, before Cherise entered the study room, Jacob informed him via video call, "The truth is—Cherise's amnesia was mostly her own decision."

"She didn't want to face the truth, so she chose to escape, to forget."

"Otherwise, she wouldn't have forgotten everything so quickly."

"It was her own mind that wanted to escape from it all!"

Jacob's voice lowered as he continued, "Damon."

"I think perhaps something happened between Cherise and Sebastian."

"Blake said that when he arrived, she was barely dressed, with blood on her body..."

"If it was just a near-death experience, she wouldn't have such a strong urge to escape reality..."

"In any case, be prepared."

Contrary to Jacob's expectations, Damien responded by smiling faintly. "Firstly, I don't believe she will give up."

"Secondly, if she was truly coerced by Sebastian, then she is the victim. I should blame myself for not protecting my woman rather than assuming, like others, that she is damaging my reputation."

"A real man never doubts or suspects his woman, regardless of the circumstances."

"Miss Weiss!"

Mrs. Lydia's voice broke Damien away from his thoughts. She extended a hand to Yolanda and invited her in. "I am delighted that you could come here to support the children!"

"I am not here to show support."

Yolanda glanced at Mrs. Lydia, "I am here to adopt a child on behalf of my brother."

With that, she took out her phone and checked it, "This child's name is Alexis Smith."

"Alexis Smith?" Mrs. Lydia was surprised.

Chapter 956 The Little Boy

"Yes."

Yolanda yawned, then she added, "My brother mentioned that this child is quite intelligent, so he specifically requested him."

"But..."

Mrs. Lydia pursed his lips, her eyebrows scrunching up. "Alexis is a bit unique... He doesn't follow the rules at the orphanage, and he doesn't interact with the other children..."

"He shows signs of autism, so..."

"I understand."

Yolanda rolled her eyes and took out a check for ten million from her handbag. "Will this suffice?"

Mrs. Lydia's eyes lit up instantly upon seeing the amount on the check. "Absolutely! It's more than enough!"

"After today's performance, I will promptly initiate the adoption process for Alexis on behalf of your brother!"

"Alright."

Yolanda muttered, looking at her polished fingernails "Has Cherise arrived?"

"Yes, she's here!"

"Great."

Yolanda walked briskly towards the auditorium. "I would like to sit next to Cherise; please arrange it for me."

"Of course, of course!"

Mrs. Lydia gestured her hands to the auditorium, eagerly leading Yolanda straight to Cherise's side.

"Oh," Yolanda said in a deep, creaky voice.

When Yolanda saw Cherise in her high ponytail and plaid dress, she couldn't help but chuckle. "Mrs. Lenoir looks so youthful in this attire."

"I don't think I've dressed like that since high school; there are very few people around me who still dress like that."

"Mrs. Lenoir, as a mother of two, you sure are dressing 'young' for your age. It's quite surprising."

Cherise gave her a side-way glance. "Don't make a big deal out of it."

"That's Miss Yolanda."

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Damien whispered through his earpiece, "She is Sebastian's older sister; I don't have much of an opinion on her. She most likely came today because she's following Sebastian's orders and intentionally sought you out."

"Oh."

Cherise pursed her lips, then she looked up at Yolanda and inquired, "Miss Weiss, how old are you?"

Yolanda narrowed her eyes. "I'm twenty-six."

"That's only one year older than me."

The corners of Cherise's eyes crinkled as she remarked with a melodic voice, "I thought you were ten years older than me, given your old-fashioned attire."

Yolanda stood in front of Cherise and glared at her sharply. "You!"

"What's the matter?"

Cherise blinked at her, feigning innocence. "Miss Weiss, you're blocking the light with your size."

Yolanda's nostrils flared, and her cheeks started to grow scarlet from rage. She almost wanted to lunge at Cherise to bring her down and mess her up.

How dare she call me fat!

So what if I'm slightly larger!

"Ladies and gentlemen, please take your seats."

Mrs. Lydia smiled and intervened in the argument between Cherise and Yolanda. "Our children are prepared. The performance is about to commence!"

Cherise nodded calmly and sat down.

Scoffing haughtily, Yolanda then proceeded to sit down.

The performance commenced.

A group of children rushed onto the stage, and Cherise recognized the little boy she had seen in a video previously.

The little boy appeared unhappy at the moment.

Mrs. Lydia smiled and teased him, "Alexis, cheer up!"

"Someone is here to adopt you! After the performance, you will go home with this lady in white!"

Alexis looked towards the lady Mrs. Lydia had pointed, mistakenly thinking that Cherise was the one. He then asked, "Who is taking me home?"

Yolanda quickly smiled at him, "It's me."

"I don't want to go with you."

Alexis pursed his lips and turned away coldly.

Yolanda's face turned grim as she clenched her fist tightly.

Smiling awkwardly with a few drops of sweat plastered on her temples, Mrs. Lydia said, "Miss Weiss, don't take it personally. Alexis has been in kindergarten for a while and lacks manners."

"Don't worry! He will surely turn out to be a fine gentleman under Miss and Mr. Weiss' guidance!"

Chapter 957 Sense of Familiarity

Mrs. Lydia's statement caused Cherise to furrow her brow deeply. "Mrs. Lydia, are you implying that Alexis is the child Sebastian wants to adopt?"

"Yes."

Yolanda raised an eyebrow, giving Cherise a cold look. "Mrs. Lenoir, do you have an issue with this?"

“My brother has been feeling lonely lately and could use a child to brighten his spirits. Do you object?”

Cherise narrowed her eyes, but she decided to turn away, ignoring Yolanda.

The show began.

From the moment Alexis stepped onto the stage, Cherise kept a close eye on him, studying him.

This child was truly unique.

He exuded a sense of calmness, aloofness, and maturity that were far beyond his years.

The familiarity she felt... it reminded her of her own eldest son.

Cherise even had a strong belief that there was a connection between her and this child before she lost her memory.

Otherwise, the gut feeling that poked on her stomach wouldn't feel as intense.

But... her memory was gone, leaving her with nothing to recall.

Despite the memory loss, she was certain that Sebastian and Yolanda were not trustworthy individuals.

If this child were to be adopted by Sebastian...

Taking a deep breath, she adjusted the microphone on her collar. “May I adopt this child?”

On the other end of the line, Damien's eyebrows knitted with puzzlement. “Why?”

"I don't want this child to be taken in by Sebastian."

"I feel like I know him."

"Even though I can't remember anything right now."

Sitting in the car, Damien sighed softly. After a second, he spoke gently, "Cherry, I don't mind if you want to adopt a child."

"But..."

The man took a deep breath and added, "You have to consider that we already have two children in our family."

"If you bring in another child, have you thought about the potential issue that might arise among the siblings?"

"There won't be any," Cherise reassured confidently.

She continued to assert her beliefs, "The kids won't mistreat their younger brother."

Damien's soft chuckle echoed through the phone. "Quite confident, aren't you?"

"Yes," she said, her eyes glinting with determination as she fixed her gaze on Alexis.

"Then let's proceed with the adoption."

The man rubbed his chin. "However, given that Yolanda has expressed interest in adopting this child, it might be challenging for you to take him away."

"I'm not afraid."

Cherise took a deep breath and continued, "As long as you're okay with it, I will definitely bring this child home."

Damien fell silent for a moment.

"Are you certain... you know this child?"

"Yes."

Cherise pursed her lips. "I'm absolutely sure."

The performance concluded swiftly.

Mrs. Lydia rose to her feet, smiling at the affluent ladies seated behind her. "All of you have generously supported our orphanage in the past, and today's performance was a testament to the resilience of our children."

"However, the number of children in our care is growing, so we rely on your continued generosity."

After Mrs. Lydia's remarks, the wealthy ladies wrote out checks and handed them to Mrs. Lydia. After which, they all departed one by one.

Cherise remained in her seat, observing.

Their footsteps echoed throughout the auditorium hall until all that was left was silence.

Yolanda cast a fleeting glance at Cherise. "Aren't you leaving?"

Cherise's lips perked up on each end. "If Miss Weiss is still here, why should I go?"

Yolanda rolled her eyes. "I'm leaving with my nephew

With that, she stood up and turned to Mrs. Lydia. "Since Mrs. Lenoir is staying, shall we move on?"

"I need to take my brother's adopted child home."

Chapter 958 The Bid

Mrs. Lydia hesitated, glancing at Cherise. "But... Mrs. Lenoir hasn't donated yet..."

Cherise squinted her eyes, realizing once again that Mrs. Lydia was no simple woman; she was keenly observing her all along, which explained her hesitation.

Her impression of Mrs. Lydia had already soured with the matter outside of the auditorium.

Now, she was convinced that Mrs. Lydia was benefiting from these children.

This only fueled her determination to adopt Alexis..

So, Cherise stood up with a smile. "Mrs. Lydia, if you are asking for a donation, I am willing to contribute.

"You see, I have my eye on a child named Alexis."

"I would like to know, if I donate one million to the orphanage, would I be able to adopt this child?"

Cherise believed that one million was a substantial amount in Mrs. Lydia's eyes.

Yolanda laughed in a mocking manner, sending her fiery gaze at Cherise.

“One million?”

“Cherise, aren’t you being stingy?”

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She took out a check for ten million from her pocket and handed it to Mrs. Lydia. “The previous ten million I gave you was for the welfare of the children in the orphanage.”

“This additional ten million is a token of appreciation for taking care of Alexis.”

After that, she looked at Cherise with satisfaction. “Mrs. Lenoir, do you really think you can compete with me?”

“I acknowledge that I may not be as wealthy as your husband.”

“But I am willing to spend money.”

Yolanda sneered, “Would Mrs. Lenoir be willing to spend thirty million to adopt a little boy without any relatives?”

“Don’t claim you cannot afford it.”

“Even if you can afford it... I will always offer a price that is one million higher than yours.”

Cherise narrowed her eyes at her. “Is that so?”

“Absolutely!”

Cherise took a deep breath, then she announced, “Thirty million.”

When Cherise mentioned the figure thirty million, she distinctly heard Mr. Hampson gasp in shock on the other end of the earpiece.

The woman’s nails dug into her palms.

She knew that her décision was impulsive.

After all, thirty million is a significant sum.

“Forty million.”

Yolanda produced another twenty million in check.

It was evident that she had come prepared.

Cherise breathed out through her nose; she was about to raise the bid but was interrupted by Damien’s cold and indifferent voice coming through the earpiece. “That’s enough, Cherry.”

“There’s no need to engage in a monetary competition with her.”

Cherise bit down her lower lip in frustration, but she also understood that forty million was truly a substantial amount.

Reluctant as she was, she coldly snorted and turned away helplessly.

Behind her, Yolanda's triumphant laughter echoed. "I knew it. People who come from doubtful origins just can't bear to part with money..."

Cherise left the hall disheartened, her head lowered and her face bearing a forlorn disposition.

The moment she stepped out, Mr. Hampson brought out the car to the entrance.

The window rolled down, and Mr. Hampson smiled at Cherise. "Madam, please get in the car."

Cherise took a deep breath to compose herself before entering the car.

Upon getting in, she met the gaze of a child with clear eyes.

"Hey!"

Her eyes widened in alarm at the figure in front of her. The little boy from earlier, Alexis, then rolled his eyes and complained, "Didn't you guys promise to release me once she got in the car? Why haven't you let me go yet?"

It took her a few seconds to realize that Alexis was actually tied up with a rope.

"Oops, I forgot!"

Sitting beside Alexis, Blake slapped his forehead and then swiftly untied him.

The boy puffed out his cheeks and massaged his sore wrists, then he glanced casually at Cherise. "Are you going to adopt me?"

Chapter 959 Alexis Smith

Cherise was still stunned by the strange turn of events, which left her befuddled. After a couple of seconds, she finally nodded eagerly. "Yes, yes, yes."

"But... how did you..."

"I asked Blake to bring him here," a low voice rang out.

Damien sat in the passenger seat, his voice composed as he added, "Since you want to adopt him, I will definitely help you."

"Yolanda deliberately inflated the price, not only to intentionally make things difficult for you but also because Sebastian truly desires this child."

The man's deep voice remained steady. "Sebastian never acts without purpose; this child may not be as simple as he seems."

"Hey hey hey."

Alexis rolled his eyes, giving a cold glance at Damien. "Isn't it disrespectful to discuss me as if I'm not here?"

"Too late for that."

Damien chuckled softly. "If you are so concerned about respect, then you should have been quite upset when we initially tied you up."

After speaking, he glanced at Alexis through the rearview mirror. "Kid, you don't actually mind being tied up by us, do you?"

Alexis' lips tightened into a thin line, then he turned his head and snorted, "Although I am unwilling to admit it..."

“But a week ago, I enjoyed the drumsticks you offered.”

“And that Miss Yolanda who wishes to adopt me... I don’t like her.”

Cherise raised an eyebrow. “So you played along, not crying or causing a scene when you were tied up?”

Alexis nodded in response. “Hmm.”

Cherise tilted her head, blinking several times as if she still couldn’t believe him. “How old are you, and why are you so... so mature?”

“I’m four and a half years old.”

The little boy then fiddled with his fingers. “Don’t underestimate me because of my age. I’ve seen a lot.”

“Since I was old enough to understand, I’ve either been kidnapped or was nearly kidnapped. I’ve witnessed a lot of the good and bad in the world!”

Cherise’s mouth parted in silence, surprised, and a slightly grim expression was displayed on her face.

This isn’t what a four-and-a-half-year-old child would typically say.

However...

“Have you been kidnapped before?”

“Yes.”

Alexis redirected his gaze outside, pursing his lips as he elaborated, “My very first memories are when I was in Lermille.”

“Later, I was taken back and forth by people. When the individuals who took me were involved in a car accident in Adania, I was sent to an orphanage.”

After the little one finished speaking, he glanced at Cherise indifferently. “You guys are so wealthy. You’re not planning to kidnap me again, are you?”

Cherise pursed her lips, unsure how to respond to the child yet, but Damien furrowed his brow coldly. “You mentioned you were in Lermille initially?”

Alexis nodded. “Yes.”

“I recall the trees there being more beautiful than the ones here!” he exclaimed.

Damien narrowed his eyes slightly and subtly signaled Mr. Hampson with his fingers.

Mr. Hampson understood immediately, then he smiled and pulled over the car to the side of the road. Swiftly typing down two text messages, he then resumed driving.

By the time Mr. Hampson parked the car at Lenoir Residence, Alexis’ key information had already been forwarded to Damien’s phone.

Cherise’s intuition was correct; she had indeed known this little boy from before.

According to the information, Alexis Smith was born in Lermille Hospital. His name was also chosen by Cherise.

What’s peculiar is... the sections for this child’s father and mother are actually blank.

Damien squinted slightly and continued reading.

It's quite a coincidence that this child went missing in Lermille Hospital three years ago during an accident. The information indicated that Cherise had been discreetly searching for this child.

Only the director of Lermille Hospital was aware of this; not even Cherise's closest friend, Lucy, knew.

Cherise had been searching for three years, but there had been no trace of this child, so she started to feel disheartened.

Chapter 960 Newfound Parents

Just before leaving Lermille, Cherise asked the director of Lermille Hospital to keep helping find this kid she was looking for. Little did she know, when she got back to Adania, someone had already brought the boy there.

As they drove, Damien glanced at the kid sitting next to Cherise in the back seat through the mirror, his face showing all sorts of emotions. To figure out who this kid was, they had to wait for Cherise to remember. Otherwise, they were stuck.

"Now that you adopt me, should I call you Mom and Dad?" Alexis piped up as the car stopped, furrowing his brows.

Before Cherise could answer, Damien jumped in with a grin. "We already have kids, and you have your own parents. Maybe calling us Mr. and Mrs. Lenoir or perhaps our first names."

"Okay, Damien and Cherise it is," the kid decided. "Mr. and Mrs. Lenoir sound too formal. People might not get how close we are."

"You're quite sharp," Cherise admitted; stunned by the kid's maturity.

As they got out of the car, Cherise offered her hand to Alexis. "Let's go."

“Sure thing, thanks, Cherise!” Alexis replied cheerfully. He seemed used to calling them that. Walking behind Cherise and Damien, he remarked, “Your family seems really rich. So, how old are your kids?”

Cherise chuckled and answered his questions as they entered the Lenoir Residence. Frances greeted them, mentioning that Mr. Lennon had been waiting in the living room.

Damien nodded, a bit tensely. “Got it.”

Curious, Cherise asked, “Is he here for business?”

Though she didn’t remember Lennon well, she knew he was connected to Damien somehow. Rumor had it he was vice president of Damien’s company, with loads of talent and good looks.

“Take Alexis upstairs, and Frances will fix him up with a room,” Damien instructed.

“Okay!” Cherise agreed, leading Alexis upstairs.

In the living room, a handsome man was deep in a serious phone call. Cherise waved at him before taking Alexis upstairs. Being new to the Lenoir family, Alexis didn’t know anyone yet. So, when Cherise greeted Lennon, he copied her and waved at him too.

Initially annoyed at a phone call, Lennon calmed down when Cherise greeted him. But when he noticed the kid, his eyes widened in surprise.

“Lenn?” Damien called out.

Seeing Lennon’s focus on Cherise’s direction, Damien raised an eyebrow, crossing his legs elegantly. “What’s up? Think Cherry’s changed?”

“She does seem different,” Lennon admitted, snapping out of it. “Who’s the kid with her?”

“A recent adoption from an orphanage,” Damien explained with a smile. “Cherry took a liking to him.”

“You spoil her too much,” Lennon sighed, shaking his head before getting back to business with Damien.