

Rewritten 11

Chapter 11

Retreating to her room, Madelyn stripped off her soiled clothes and stood in front of her wardrobe, contemplating her attire. Through the thin wall dividing her from the outside world, Zach's voice carried in.

"I've got urgent business at the company this time. If I can wrap it up early, I'll rush back to you!" he said.

Understandingly, Jadie replied, "I'm fine, Zach. Go do what you have to. I'll be here waiting for you."

"Alright. If you get tired, you can sleep in my room. I just changed the sheets and blankets."

"Alright, I'll remember that."

As the footsteps faded away, Madelyn thought he had left. She was about to breathe a sigh of relief when the door to her room suddenly swung open. Startled, Madelyn's hand froze mid-air, holding her dress, her face flushed a fiery red. Her hands fumbled, clutching her clothes tightly around her. Zach, standing by the door, glanced at her bare silhouette. His hand, resting on the door handle, tensed, and his gaze quickly averted. For an eighteen-year-old, Madelyn's figure was truly on par with anyone her age.

Madelyn's eyes flickered with uncertainty. They had been married for years, shared countless intimate moments, bared their souls and bodies to each other; there was no part of her that Zach had not seen. But for some inexplicable reason, in that very moment, Madelyn's heart fluttered in disarray. It was as if she was meeting Zach for the first time, her composure slipping away. She was left wondering if he had caught a glimpse of her just now.

Without daring to turn around, she hastily slipped into her skirt, forcing herself to regain her composure.

"Bro, do you need something?"

From his pocket, Zach pulled out a card and placed it on the table near her. His lips parted slightly, voice low and gravelly. "Here's a shopping card, a gift from our business partners. If you need clothes, jewelry or anything at all, you can use it. You and Jadie each have one."

"Thanks, bro."

Zach lowered his gaze and closed the door. He stood still for a moment, swallowing hard. A primal urge, animalistic and restless, stirred within him. After a few seconds, he finally stepped away, gathered his meeting documents, and got into his car. As he turned the ignition, his hands tightening around the steering wheel, the brief vision of Madelyn's tantalizing waist flashed across his mind and then disappeared as quickly as it came.

'Madelyn? Only if I were out of my mind!'

Zach suppressed the turmoil within him, pressed the accelerator, and sped away from the Jent residence.

Madelyn had just completed her homework in the solitude of her room and was about to descend the stairs for a relaxing break when she swung open her door to find Jadie about to ascend. Their eyes met, two worlds colliding with no common language. Even though she carried a guilt over Jadie's demise in their past life, making friends was a bridge too far for Madelyn. She decided on a path of courteous indifference, to simply coexist for a few years and then part ways forever.

In the face of the lingering awkwardness, Madelyn found her voice first. "Sis Jadie, you're..."

Jadie offered a soft, fleeting smile, quickly saying, "I'm tidying up Zach's room, clearing out things he doesn't need."

Madelyn nodded. "Okay, you carry on. I'll head downstairs for a drink." With that, she started her descent, the soft thud of her slippers on the staircase marked her retreat. As she was about to step onto the third stair, Jadie's voice, as light as a drifting leaf, found its way into her ear.

"Madelyn, I know you fancy Zach. But don't worry, I won't compete with you for him."

'Even if you don't, you're still the girl Zach truly loves. Otherwise, why would he have rushed into the room, wanting to kill me right after your death? Why would he choose to divorce me and marry someone who bears a resemblance to you?'

Cecilia's prolonged stay by Zach's side could be attributed to her facial similarities with Jadie.

Without turning around, Madelyn nonchalantly replied, "I don't like Zach anymore. He'll always be just my brother. If the two of you can be together, I'd be happy." She meant every word; this life, facilitating their union, could be a path toward making amends for her past wrongs.

Madelyn continued her descent without further delay, reaching the kitchen and pouring herself a glass of ice-cold water. Her gaze inadvertently landed on a pile of discarded trash near the door. Among the refuse was the pink teddy bear she had gifted Zach for his birthday, a symbolic representation of herself. She had told Zach that the bear would forever accompany him when she could not. Her hand, holding the glass, trembled slightly.

'In my past life, it was Cecilia who discarded this bear. Now, it's Jadie. Maybe it's just fate," she mused.