

## Rewritten 14

### Chapter 14

Madelyn was dressed in her high school uniform, not the conventional baggy attire of most schools, but rather, a sophisticated, British-styled, black ensemble that screamed of authority. Even the shoes and backpack were not mere standard issue, but instead made of exclusive material to distinguish them from the common ones. Across the street from her prestigious Ventrocloud High School, was the public, but equally respected, Ventropolis High School. The students of Ventropolis were intellectual elites, the future leaders of the nation, whereas those at Ventrocloud often relied on family wealth and status. Two schools, two different social strata, and years of mutual disdain and rivalry.

In the sea of sleek black cars, Madelyn caught sight of a familiar Audi among the many vehicles. As it drew closer, it halted in front of Ventropolis High School. It was indeed Zach's car, and out stepped Zach himself, along with Jadie.

'Could it be that Zach is dropping Jadie off at Ventropolis?' Madelyn wondered.

Zach felt a gaze on him, and following his instinct, he turned around. His eyes met with the cool, poised figure of Madelyn, draped in her black school attire and donning a short skirt, a ponytail swinging behind her. Madelyn, not expecting him to turn around, managed a curt nod and a faint smile as a greeting.

"Madelyn!"

Her focus was broken as a plump girl in glasses, with pigtails and black knee socks, dashed toward her. Out of breath, Serena Smith clutched a pile of books.

"Madelyn, you're finally back. Heard you were sick. Are you feeling better now?"

Serena was the daughter of the director of the Department of Education. Both of them shared the same class, and in the circle of Ventrocloud High School, her status was no secret.

"I'm much better," Madelyn replied.

“Huh, aren’t you wearing makeup today? And, you seem so serene, not like before. You used to be so hostile. It’s like you’re a different person now.”

Madelyn used to put on makeup to draw Zach’s attention, and she had found it rather burdensome, costing her an hour each morning, time she could have used to catch a few more winks of sleep.

“Do I need to snap at you to seem normal?”

Madelyn’s former temperament had indeed been volatile. She had often been irritable, preferring solitude over company. She had not liked making friends, and in their eyes, Madelyn was an oddball, a loner. Only Serena had consistently tried to converse with her, but Madelyn had usually ignored her due to her soft, docile nature.

Serena quickly raised her hands defensively. “No, no, not at all! I think you’re nice this way. And... you look really pretty without makeup.”

Madelyn was not particularly popular in school. Her family’s history, once revealed, had been a stain on their reputation. No one wished to associate with the Jents, a family that had built their standing on blood and crime within Ventropolis. Everyone who knew about the Jents was aware of their past, their ascend to power being far from noble. Only after significant legal repercussions did they choose a less conspicuous path. Her grandfather was a mafia boss who ended up behind bars. Put plainly, the Jents did not have a ton of money or influence, but no one in Ventropolis dared to cross them. Regardless of their rank, everyone bowed their heads before Hayson, not daring to provoke him. The Jent legacy meant that none of them were left untainted.

Zach watched her receding silhouette, before pulling back his gaze and glancing at his wristwatch. “We still have time. I can walk you in.”

“Was that Madelyn just now? She goes to Ventrocloud High School?” Jadie asked. She wore the ordinary blue and white uniform, her long hair pulled back, but on her, the outfit seemed anything but ordinary. Her lively eyes, full of purity and spirit, enhanced her charm. Jadie was a natural model, looking good in anything she wore.

“Mmm, after school, if I can get off work early, I’ll text you and pick you up.”

“That’s okay, I can take the bus home. The stop is right at the school gates, very convenient. I know you’re busy, Zach. I don’t want to trouble you.”

“Jadie, you’re never a bother to me. You know that, right?” His voice was low and sincere. They were family, ready to give and protect unconditionally.

Jadie nodded, her lips curving into a slight smile. “I understand, Zach.”

“Let me take you to the principal’s office to get your enrollment done.”

“Okay.”

Madelyn cast a glance back. Zach was undeniably striking, his handsome face attracting a lot of attention. He was holding Jadie’s bag, escorting her into the school.

‘He truly treasures Jadie, going out of his way despite his busy schedule to personally accompany her.’

As their figures disappeared from sight, Madelyn retracted her gaze and continued toward her classroom.

‘Now that Jadie isn’t attending the same school as me, I should be veering away from my past life’s fate, right?’

“What are you looking at, Madelyn?” Serena asked, following her gaze toward the crowd of students. ‘Nothing special to look at, unless... maybe a handsome guy?’

“Nothing. Let’s head back to class.”