

Rewritten 15

Chapter 15

Each class stretched out to 45 minutes. When the bell finally signaled the end of the lesson, Madelyn, almost with a sense of doomed acceptance, walked to the back of the room. She quietly righted Forrest's knocked-over desk and gathered the scattered books from the floor, tidying them neatly into his drawer. Her actions elicited a flurry of astonished whispers from her classmates.

"No way! Madelyn, who's always acting high and mighty, is actually picking up books for Forrest? Did she hit her head or something?"

"Can't believe what I'm seeing. Madelyn, who couldn't be bothered to speak, is now serving her arch-nemesis Forrest? Holy cow, I must be hallucinating!"

Someone had discreetly snapped a photo of Madelyn's surprising act of humility and anonymously uploaded it to the school forum.

Madelyn ignored the buzz around her, focusing on straightening up Forrest's desk. Despite everything, she was just too good-natured to hold Forrest's temper against him.

Meanwhile, in the grimy alley behind the school, Timothy was debating about which bar to hit that night. Adrian was engrossed in his phone when a headline suddenly popped up.

[Shocker of the Century! Madelyn actually...]

Before he could finish reading, Adrian saw Madelyn's name and clicked on the link. A photo loaded, revealing Madelyn crouched down, books cradled in her arms. "Holy smokes! Look, Forry, look at the school forum, Madelyn is picking up your books again!"

"What the...?" Timothy doubted his hearing for a moment.

Forrest's eyebrows raised ever so slightly as he peered at the photo Adrian shoved his way. A girl crouched on the floor, her skirt pooling around her. The camera captured Madelyn's smooth, elegant

profile perfectly. Light streamed in from the window, illuminating her, her eyelashes cast in shadow like the feathers of a raven, one hand clutching books, the other picking up a textbook from the floor. The photo exuded an unexpectedly serene ambience.

‘Well, I’ll be damned.’

Madelyn skipped the cafeteria at noon. She usually brought her own lunch due to her selective palate and her aversion to cafeteria food. Now alone in the classroom, she quietly savored the caramelized pork that Rosario had prepared for her, while working on her incomplete test paper from the last exam.

An hour passed and the other students gradually returned from their lunch. Madelyn was still struggling with the final math problem. The noise of chatter and footfalls grew louder as it approached the classroom. Startled gasps echoed down the hallway.

“Oh my God, it’s Forrest. He isn’t coming back to settle the score with Madelyn, is he?”

“Most likely. Let’s head over and grab a front-row seat. I’ve had it with that lowlife girl. I can’t believe she got into this school.”

“People like her are a menace in this school. It was her dad who nearly cost my dad his life over a plot of land. People like them who can’t compete fairly always resort to dirty tricks. Those Jents are bound to meet a nasty end.”

“You better watch your mouth. My dad said the Jent family are big fishes in Ventropolis, getting on their bad side always spells trouble. Don’t let your anger lead you into trouble.”

Indeed, such words were only ever whispered behind Madelyn’s back. Many in their class had parents whose businesses had suffered at the hands of the Jent family, and those dealings were always

shrouded in shadow.

Madelyn had just begun writing a formula for the major math problem when a shadow loomed over her. In the next instant, a hand swept across the desk, scattering her books to the floor. She looked up into Forrest's face, a tumultuous storm of rage swirling within his eyes.

She asked calmly, "Can I help you?"

"Who gave you permission to touch my stuff? Looking for trouble?" His sneer was cruel, his gaze threatening to consume her alive.

'So, just because I picked up his books, he has come to settle the score?'

Madelyn had only done so because she had accidentally taken his seat and he had gotten upset. She thought cleaning up for him might serve as a sort of quiet apology. She had never imagined that simply tidying his things would provoke such a strong reaction from Forrest.

Onlookers from her class and even the neighboring one had gathered to witness the spectacle.

Madelyn turned back to her work, twirling her pen. She spoke with icy coolness. "You've just messed with my books, too. We're even. Besides, it's my turn for cleaning duty today. If you're unhappy with it, I won't touch your stuff next time."

Forrest jammed his hands into his pockets and kicked at Madelyn's desk. "What's your game, Madelyn? Who are you trying to impress?"

She gave him a puzzled look, quickly gathering her textbooks and stuffing them into her bag.

"Impress? There's no one here worth impressing. Since my good deeds are an eyesore to you, I'll make sure to stay out of your way. You can have the classroom; I'll go to the library. There's another

class reshuffle coming up in three weeks after the final exams. I'll do my best to stay out of your sight."

With that, she gathered the books from the floor and walked out of the classroom, just as the bell signaling the start of the next class rang out. Madelyn was exiting through the back door when she ran into the English teacher coming in.

“Madelyn Jent, where are you headed during class time?”

Madelyn remained silent.

“Whoa, Forry,” Timothy crowed, “Madelyn doesn’t seem to give a damn about you.”

Adrian chimed in. “It’s truly astonishing. She’s second from the bottom of the class and she’s thinking of changing classes? Why doesn’t she just drop out?”

Forrest’s fist slammed onto Madelyn’s desk with a thunderous crash.

‘She should count herself lucky that she fled so fast, or I might have broken my rule of not hitting a woman,’ he thought.