

Rewritten 25

Chapter 25

“Madelyn.”

Madelyn stirred, eyes blinking open to meet Zach’s piercing gaze, a shadow of intensity hiding beneath his indifferent stare. Still groggy from her slumber, she was motionless for a

moment, then startled backward. “Bro... what... what’s wrong?”

“We’re home.” Zach’s cool voice told her. “Get out of the car.”

“Ah... okay.”

“1

As Zach straightened up and exited the vehicle, Madelyn unfastened her seatbelt. She glanced at the sticker in the car and promptly ripped it off. Every item that adorned the car, including the fragrance she had been using to mask the scent, was swiftly tidied away. As Madelyn stepped out of the car, Zach observed the items she held, both of them tacitly silent, understanding that certain words, if spoken, would only widen the chasm between them.

As Madelyn entered the foyer, Rosario approached her. “We have a guest today. Wash your hands and come to dinner.”

“A guest? Who?” Madelyn asked, her brow furrowed in confusion.

“Your homeroom teacher.”

‘Jasmine?’ Madelyn’s heart skipped a beat. ‘Why would Jasmine come here? Is she trying to get close to Hayson? Has she moved up her plan with Zach?’

Madelyn's hands trembled slightly, a shadow of apprehension flashing briefly in her eyes. It was there and gone so quickly, almost impossible to catch. "Where's Miss Manning?"

"She's discussing something with Mr. Jent in the study. Something about that incident at your school."

In her past life, nothing of this sort had occurred. Perhaps, with her return to this life, she had altered the course of her fate, and some events changed along with it.

Bypassing Madelyn, Zach moved to sit on the couch next to Jadie, who was engrossed in a television program.

A voice drifted down from the upper floor. "Mr. Jent, rest assured, there will be no repetition of what happened with Madelyn. I deeply regret my oversight as a teacher."

"It was a minor squabble between students, nothing to worry about. Miss Manning, why don't you stay for dinner? I'll have a driver take you home afterward."

Flipping her hair from her face with a laugh, Jasmine replied, "Are you sure I wouldn't be intruding?"

"Not at all. Rosario, set one more place at the table."

"Yes, sir." Rosario dutifully responded.

Madelyn remained rooted to the spot, watching as the pair descended the stairs, jesting and laughing, Hayson's arm casually draped around Jasmine's waist, an intimate gesture. Jasmine looked stunning today in her white body-hugging maxi skirt, adorned with delicate pink lace short sleeves. Underneath, she wore a fitted camisole as a base layer, accentuating her graceful curves. Her every move, every smile, seemed to captivate the hearts of men, exuding a captivating charm that was both alluring and gentle. The exchange of glances between the two emanated an undeniably passionate air.

Jasmine's gaze then turned to Madelyn. "Madelyn? Are you feeling better?"

As Jasmine approached, Madelyn took note of the wrinkles in the hem of Jasmine's dress, and one missing button at the top of her bodice, faint traces and subtle blemishes confirming Madelyn's suspicions. Suddenly, she felt a wave of nausea washing over her. Clapping a hand over her mouth, she ran off, unable to bear the discomfort any longer. All eyes followed her abrupt departure, but they merely assumed she was unwell and thought nothing more of it.

There was a restroom on the first floor. Leaning over the sink, Madelyn spat out the bile that had risen in her throat, a cramp gripping her stomach. She turned on the faucet and stared at her reflection, her eyes reddened and moistened by saline. 'How much longer can this family hold together?'

The bathroom door was knocked. "Madelyn, are you feeling ill again? Should I call the doctor to come and check on you?"

Wiping away her tears, Madelyn quickly exited the bathroom. As she opened the door, she saw Rosario standing there and instinctively flung her arms around her, hoping to draw some comfort from the familiar presence.

Rosario gently stroked her back. "What's wrong?"

Madelyn did not say a word.