

## Rewritten 51

### Chapter 51

Jasmine continued, "Don't you suspect that Madelyn has known all along? Zach, you're always cautious. You don't want Madelyn to find out about us. Or is it that you can't bring yourself to confront her? Do you want me to help you?"

She curled her red lips, interlaced her fingers propped her chin, and gave him a seductive gaze. "Darling, you know I never go easy on my rivals. If she ties knot with Ethan Arnold... Dealing with the Jent family alone is already challenging for you. With the addition of the Arnold family, do you think you can handle it?"

Zach

put down his silverware, grabbed a piece of tissue, and wiped his mouth. "My affairs. don't require your meddling... Put on your shoes."

Jasmine laughed as she moved her foot away from his calf.

Zach stood up, turned around, and left. Soon, his Audi drove out of the garage at the Jent residence.

That night, Madelyn retired to bed before ten o'clock.

Ethan had not responded to her text, but she didn't dwell on it. She interpreted it as an indication that the teenager she had encountered earlier couldn't be Ethan. If he were truly the same person, he would not have disregarded her messages.

Rosario had already washed the black coat borrowed from that teenager and hung it outside. Madelyn's room on the balcony. Rosario had also fixed the buttons on Madelyn's school uniform and neatly placed it by her bedside.

Madelyn awoke early in the morning. She had a restless night, tormented by nightmare. In her dream, Zach had imprisoned her in a room for his pleasure. She had her legs chained and was fastened to the

bed's head position. With aggressive lust in his eyes, he said, "Madelyn, you're my wife, how dare you like another man..."

Glancing at the time, she realized it was only six o'clock. She decided to take a shower and indulge in some reading. It wasn't until seven-thirty that she departed for school.

For the next four or five days, Madelyn's life remained relatively peaceful. There were no major incidents, and she rarely encountered Zach.

However, she couldn't help but notice a distinct change in her classmates' behavior. They noticeably kept their distance from her. When the subject representatives went around to collect assignments, they would purposefully skip over her. During exams, the person seated in front of her would deliberately drop the answer sheets on the floor while passing them, only to feign an apology, saying, "I did give it to you, you just didn't catch it."

Such incidents occurred repeatedly, but Madelyn chose not to let them affect her.

12

Throughout that week, Madelyn consistently performed well in every exam, securing a place in the middle to upper ranks of her class. However, she made sure not to achieve exceptionally high grades to avoid drawing unnecessary attention and speculation.

In the final class of the day, as school came to an end, Madelyn caught sight of Timothy and Adrian hurrying from the outside. She called out to them, curiosity in her voice. "Hey, wait! I'm just wondering, how's Forrest doing?"

Timothy retorted, his tone sharp, "Mind your own damn business! What's it to you? You're not seriously into Forrest, are you? You? Give me a break... Even if he had a crush on a dog, he still wouldn't be interested in you."

Adrian patted Timothy on the shoulder. "Let's go, just ignore her. Otherwise, she'll keep bothering you."

Madelyn watched as they grabbed their backpacks and walked away. 'My concern for Forrest stems solely from guilt. Why did they jump to the conclusion that I have feelings for him?' she pondered.

Madelyn carefully packed her review materials and class notes into her backpack, ensuring everything was neatly organized. Since it was her turn for cleaning duty that day, she knew she had to stay behind and tidy up. Placing her backpack down quietly, she glanced over at the cluttered corner at the back of the room, letting out a sigh. 'Our school charges such high fees, yet they still make us clean classrooms like in some other countries.'

Her innate obsession with cleanliness kicked in once more. As she finished cleaning, the daylight was fading, and darkness began to settle outside. She had even meticulously used a ruler to scrape off the gum stuck to the floor, diligently wiping away any residue. With sweat on her brow, she surveyed the now spotless classroom, feeling an indescribable sense of satisfaction.

Madelyn happened to be the last student to leave the school that day. Her chauffeur had been waiting patiently outside for some time. As she got in the car, something caught her eye-an unmistakable slender figure across the street, accompanied by three or four other individuals...

'Jadie?!' she exclaimed in her mind, recognizing the familiar silhouette.

## Chapter 52

Madelyn couldn't help but notice that Jadie had a group of guys by her side-Adrian, Timothy, and Forrest. She stood next to her family car, watching them approach from across the street. It caught her off guard, and she thought to herself, 'When did Jadie start hanging out with Forrest? They seem really close.'

'Hmm... Jadie and Forrest?' Madelyn couldn't even begin to imagine what kind of relationship they had. 'Wasn't Jadie interested in Zach? Does Zach know about Jadie and Forrest being together?' But then she realized that Jadie's love life was none of her business. She wanted no part in anything involving Jadie or Zach.

As Madelyn shifted her gaze away, she noticed a blue tattoo on Forrest's arm. It felt strangely familiar. She had a fleeting sense of having seen it on someone in a past life. 'It looks familiar,' she thought, but the memory slipped away for a moment. She couldn't recall when or where she had seen it before.

Meanwhile, Timothy glanced at the black sedan across the street and the person standing there in a daze. "Forrest, isn't that Madelyn Jent? Is she looking at you? I told you; Madelyn definitely has a thing for you. Just look at her face, all jealous again!"

Forrest remained indifferent, his gaze shifting to the side as Madelyn got into the car. Jadie noticed too- it was the black sedan from the Jent family, the one that picked up and dropped off Madelyn.

Two schools, separated only by a single street, yet worlds apart in every conceivable aspect.

"Madelyn? You know Madelyn?" Jadie had an elegant demeanor, dressed in a white dress, standing beside Forrest like an ethereal being untouched by the mundane world. Her long hair was braided and draped to one side, radiating innocence.

Timothy raised an eyebrow, looking at Jadie. "You know Madelyn too?"

Jadie nodded gently and said in a soft voice, "I grew up with Madelyn since we were kids. But I went abroad for treatment due to illness a long time ago and haven't come back for years. Are you two classmates with Madelyn? If you get to know her more, you'll see she's actually a good person."

Timothy cleared his throat, his face showing a mix of uncertainty.

The atmosphere became momentarily awkward, taking on an unusual tone.

None of them had expected Jadie to have any connection to Madelyn. And she had just spoken positively about her.

Timothy couldn't help but think about the stark differences between Jadie and Madelyn. Jadie was the kind of woman that every man would consider a dream lover, someone unattainable. Yet, her past was filled with tragedy, having grown up as an orphan with only a non-blood-

related brother as her companion. In comparison, Timothy couldn't help but sympathize with Jadie's circumstances. He couldn't help but believe that someone like Jadie, rather than Madelyn, deserved the privileges of a privileged upbringing, indulging in a life of effortless opulence.

Forrest flicked away the cigarette butt from his hand, coming to a stop at the entrance of Ventropolis High School. His defiant voice echoed, "We're here."

A gentle breeze brushed against them, carrying the pleasant scent of camellias that lingered around Jadie. She tousled her wind-blown hair, tucking it behind her ear, and smiled softly. "Thank you for bringing me back. I appreciate it."

"Forry, your jacket. Thank you again!" Jadie was about to take off her coat, but Forrest stopped her, placing his hand on her shoulder. "No need to rush."

Timothy observed them with a look of amusement, saying, "Jadie, let's hang out more when you have free time."

Jadie paused for a moment, then a faint smile curved her lips. "Sure." That smile was like the pristine moon shining in the sky.

The three of them watched as Jadie entered the school before finally turning around to leave.

Adrian remained silent throughout the journey, then suddenly spoke up, "If I guess correctly, Jadie's gentle and elegant demeanor is your type, isn't it, Forry? When do you plan on making a move?"

Forrest clicked his tongue against his back teeth. "She's a good girl, so keep your ideas to yourself."

Timothy persistently continued the topic, "She's not your type? You're not into someone as innocent as Jadie? Are you saying you prefer someone like Madelyn Jent, a 'Stacy'? With her bold personality, Forry... be careful, or you'll end up becoming a cuckold!"

Forrest retorted, "Me, into Madelyn Jent? Are you out of your mind?"

At that moment, inside the car, Madelyn's mind suddenly sparked with a revelation. She exclaimed inwardly, 'Ah! I remember now!'

## Chapter 53

Madelyn finally recognized the tattoo on Forrest's hand. 'He was that guy... the guy who jumped off the building because of Zach... That guy was actually Forrest Arnold!'

A car accident had sent Forrest plunging off a cliff during his tenure as the head of Arnold Corporation. His body was never found, so everyone believed he had died in that crash. As a result, the Arnold family appointed a new person, a woman, to take over the company. But their good fortune was short-lived.

Two years after Forrest's incident, there was a massive explosion at the Arnold residence, and not a single member of the Arnold family survived. Arnold Corporation was then acquired by an unknown individual.

Madelyn couldn't quite recall the name of that man. He remained an enigmatic figure, concealing his real identity from the world. Zach had mentioned his facial burns, which led him to constantly wear a mask. However, what stood out in Madelyn's memory was the unmistakable blue tattoo adorning his hand. She also remembered his explosive temper, wreaking havoc on any woman who caught his attention, subjecting them to a night of terror and danger. The resemblance between that tattoo and the one now on Forrest Arnold's hand was uncanny.

'If Forrest didn't die in that car accident years ago, where did he get the billions of dollars to acquire Arnold Corporation?' The question lingered in Madelyn's mind, casting doubt on the events that unfolded.

As she delved deeper into her memories, another doubt emerged. 'The Arnold family held the economic power over Ventropolis. How did Zach manage to completely consume Arnold Corporation without leaving a trace?'

Madelyn carefully pieced together the fragmented memories from her past life, attempting to make sense of the puzzle before her.

She remembered that after Zach took control of Jent Corporation, it took only six months before he reached a collaboration agreement with the newly appointed CEO of Arnold Corporation, who was none

other than Forrest, the person who disappeared after the car accident and returned under a new identity.

At that time, Zach did indeed take a significant amount of funds from Jent Corporation. Shareholders were on the verge of outrage, as the company's contracts were riddled with financial loopholes. One wrong move, and Jent Corporation could have collapsed and gone bankrupt. However, Zach remained calm and composed, mingling with ease at business events.

It was likely during that time that Zach gave all of Jent Corporation's funds to Forrest to acquire Arnold Corporation. Once Forrest gained control of the company, he signed a collaboration agreement with Zach. So, Madelyn figured Zach and Forrest had known each other long before she was aware of it.

Madelyn thought to herself, 'If Zach had the money to acquire Arnold Corporation, why didn't he do it himself instead of using Forrest? Unless there's something more to this that I don't know!!

At that time, Forrest never anticipated Zach's grand ambitions. Within a span of just six months, Zach meticulously infiltrated every aspect of Arnold Corporation. Employing the same manipulative tactics he had employed against the Jent family, Zach targeted Forrest. Overnight, Arnold Corporation underwent a name change. Before Forrest could comprehend the situation, he found himself burdened with overwhelming debts amounting to billions.

Madelyn vividly recalled the sight of Forrest standing on the rooftop. The despair radiated from him. He grasped Madelyn by the neck, his voice laden with threat as he addressed Zach, Zach Jardin, I acknowledge my defeat to you! But... your wife shall perish alongside me!"

The rooftop had indeed been surrounded by police, and a crowd of onlookers gathered, and Cecilia Samford was one of them. Madelyn, trembling with fear and tears streaming down her face, pleaded desperately with Zach to save her. But the memory of Zach's heartless words. remained etched in her mind. He callously remarked, "Well, she's pregnant! If she dies, it's a two-for-one deal. Not a bad outcome for you!"

Upon hearing those chilling words, Madelyn resigned herself to an inevitable fate, believing she was about to face her demise. However, in a sudden turn of events, Forrest pushed her away, propelling himself off the towering skyscraper.

The memory of Forrest's eyes, filled with a profound yearning, haunted Madelyn to this day. She remained plagued by uncertainty, unable to fully grasp the true intent behind his gaze. And in the midst of the chaos, she faintly heard a whispered "I'm sorry," lingering in the air.

Since then, Zach had gradually acquired the scattered fragments of Arnold Corporation, ultimately becoming its majority shareholder.

The repercussions of this shift were profound, transforming Ventropolis in ways unimaginable. In a mere blink of an eye, Zach Jardin had risen to an unprecedented level of influence, dominating the city from his elevated position. Overnight, he had evolved into a figure both feared and revered, assuming the role of Ventropolis's ruler. With unwavering authority, he dictated the course of the city's destiny, effortlessly pulling the strings of power.

Yet, Madelyn couldn't shake off the unsettling truth that this ascent was built upon the foundation of countless lives, each sacrificed to elevate Zach to his throne of control.

## Chapter 54

After finishing her extracurricular dance class, Madelyn arrived home at nine o'clock in the evening. As she stepped out of the car, she felt like her legs were about to give out. She

hobbled along, and Rosario immediately came over to her.

"Oh dear, what happened to you?" Rosario asked, concerned. "Come, sit on the couch. Let me massage you."

Rosario and the chauffeur Jordan guided Madelyn to the couch and placed her backpack on the side.

"You've definitely pulled a muscle. Let me get some muscle rub for you," Rosario said.

There was a well-stocked medicine cabinet at home, and Rosario quickly retrieved the muscle rub and approached Madelyn. "Didn't your teacher know you got injured? You silly child, let me take a look."



Rosario held onto Madelyn's leg and gently placed it on her lap. "Where does it hurt?"

As Madelyn sat down, she already felt much better. "It's not the teacher's fault. I asked for more intense training, and I accidentally slipped, resulting in the strain."

Rosario shook her head in exasperation and lightly tapped Madelyn's head with her finger. You, always either forgetful or clumsy. Be more careful in the future and don't injure yourself."

Madelyn took off her black thigh-high stockings, and Rosario applied muscle rub to her palms, gently massaging Madelyn's calves. "Feeling any better?"

Madelyn nodded. "Yes, I feel better." She glanced around the living room. "Where's Jasmine? And is Father not home either?"

"Ms. Manning and Mr. Jardin are home. Mr. Jardin just returned not long ago. He's probably asleep by now."

Madelyn's expression turned oddly perplexed. She contemplated whether or not to mention to Hayson that she also wanted to move to the school dormitory. However, she quickly dismissed the thought because she knew it was nearly impossible for Hayson to allow her to live on campus.

Lately, Zach had been staying frequently at the Jent residence, and Madelyn could easily guess why.

After applying the muscle rub to her inner thighs as well, Madelyn let her skirt fall back down. "Thank you, Rosario. You should go rest."

"I still need to wait for your father to come back. The creamy potato soup is simmering in the kitchen pot. Can you manage? If not, I'll help you up the stairs," Rosario said.

Madelyn put on her socks. "I'm much better now. I can go up on my own. Oh, by the way, Rosario, is your back injury getting better?"

Rosario smiled and replied, "With the medicine your father gave me, it's much improved... Alright, don't worry about me. Go wash up and get some rest. You have classes tomorrow."

"Okay, I'm going upstairs," Madelyn said, carrying her backpack and still holding the muscle rub. She made her way to the hallway. Only now did she truly understand the meaning of excruciating pain, as every step felt incredibly difficult.

Standing at the bottom of the staircase on the second floor, Madelyn stretched her neck to glance upstairs. The corridor lights were off, indicating that no one was there.

Madelyn decided to sprint directly to the fourth floor. Her plan was, when she reached the steps leading to the third floor, she would deliberately make some noises with her footsteps. It was a warning to

Jasmine and Zach. After all, they were having an affair, so Madelyn would rather

gouge out her own eyes than witness even a glimpse of it. Even if they deliberately wanted to tell her about it, she would prefer to puncture her eardrums right away.

Just as Madelyn stepped onto the first step of the third floor, there was a sudden loud noise.

BANG!

The door behind her swung open.

"N-No... don't stop me... I still need a drink..." Jasmine, clearly intoxicated and disheveled, stumbled out of Zach's room. Her blue satin nightgown had slipped off, revealing her fair skin. The blue ribbons dangled loosely on her arm.

Zach, with a chilling and imposing gaze, supported Jasmine's arm in a seemingly gentlemanly manner. He glanced at Jasmine and then turned his attention to the person in the hallway. Madelyn, why are you coming back so late today?"

Madelyn didn't dare to turn around, fearing that her eyes would witness what they shouldn't. She had already glimpsed Jasmine emerging from Zach's room, and it was more than enough. for her. Determined to avoid further confrontation, she refused to look back and hastily replied, "I had an extracurricular class today, so I came back late, Bro-Brother... I-I'm heading. to bed now."

## Chapter 55

After uttering those words, Madelyn dashed up the stairs in a hurry.

However, within just half a minute, a piercing scream erupted from upstairs, "Ah!"

Zach glanced upward, instantly surmising that Madelyn had likely taken quite a nasty fall, given the intensity of the scream.

Clad in his black striped pajamas, Zach exuded an even icier and more ominous aura than before. His hand shot out, gripping Jasmine's hair tightly. "You're so desperate for male attention, huh? Well, next time, I won't mind bringing a few more men to keep you entertained."

Jasmine winced in pain, feeling the tingling sensation in her scalp. Her eyes betrayed no signs of intoxication; they were clear and alert. "Zach Jardin, are you serious? Let go of me! It hurts! "She clutched onto Zach's hand, carefully observing his expression. It was evident that he was genuinely enraged.

Zach whispered fiercely in her ear, "Jasmine Manning, if you dare to use your filthy body to do that again, I'll let you experience the taste of getting fucked by multiple guys again."

Fear began to show in Jasmine's eyes, her pupils dilating. But in the next second, she let out a desolate laugh. "Alright... But before that, Zach, can you let me have you once? Spend a night with me, and then I'll give you my life, okay?"

"You're insane!" Zach flung her aside, his eyes filled with impatience. "Seems like you really need to sober up." Zach twisted his neck, his gaze icy and predatory. He grabbed the still disoriented Jasmine from the floor and carried her toward the bedroom, closing the door with his foot. Then he turned on the faucet in the bathroom, pressing her head down into the sink, repeatedly, again and again...

Meanwhile, Madelyn felt like she was having an awful day. Just moments ago, she had stumbled on the stairs on the fourth floor, leaving her in excruciating pain that made her question her life choices.

Seeking relief, Madelyn made her way to the bathroom and rinsed her throbbing ankle with cold water, finding a brief respite under the refreshing stream. Taking advantage of the opportunity, she decided to take a quick shower. Limping slightly, she emerged from the bathroom, clad in a nightgown adorned with a cute strawberry print. Using a hair clip, she pinned up her damp strands, which clung softly to her neck, a few droplets of water glistening delicately. The cold, white light in the room accentuated her delicate yet pained expression, as tears welled up in her eyes, giving her a vulnerable and captivating allure.

Taking a seat on the edge of her bed, Madelyn gently applied some muscle rub to her aching ankle. She was grateful that she had brought it upstairs earlier, the room now carrying the scent of the soothing balm. After setting the bottle down on the bedside table, she casually

grabbed a few tissues to wipe her hands clean.

Glancing at the clock, she realized it was already close to eleven o'clock. It was rare for her to stay up past that time. Moreover, the few hours of intensive dance practice had left her exhausted. Hence, she nestled into her pillow and succumbed to the embrace of slumber.

The evening breeze continued to whisper gently, accompanied by the melodic chirping of cicadas. In the early hours of the morning, the distinct sound of a key turning in the lock resonated, followed by the familiar creaking of the door. A shadowy figure entered the room, his presence unnoticed by Madelyn, who lay peacefully in bed.

In her dreamlike state, Madelyn felt the dull pain in her ankle was melting away, replaced by a comforting sensation akin to resting on a cloud of cotton. A soft, contented moan escaped her lips,

revealing her blissful state. In her dazed condition, she caught a glimpse of the visage she knew so well. In a coquettish tone, she called out, "Darling, keep massaging-"

When Zach heard those words, his hands froze in mid-air, and his dark eyes fixated on her with a myriad of emotions. A thin blanket draped across Madelyn's waist. The sweltering heat must have prompted

her to keep it raised, as the blanket only covered her hips, discreetly. concealing the bottom of her dress while leaving her enticing thighs exposed.

Her fair and impeccably toned thighs captured his gaze. Wisps of her lightly curled tresses tumbled over her face, cascading down between the open collar of her nightgown. Her very presence exuded an irresistible allure.

## Chapter 56

Ten seconds later, Madelyn blinked her eyes open. The bright lights flooded her vision, instantly rousing her from her drowsiness. Reacting instinctively, she hurriedly pulled her foot back and sat upright. "Zach Jar... uh, I mean, Brother... What are you doing in my room?" She mentally scolded herself, 'Damn it, what did I just say?' Clutching the blanket tightly, she resembled a startled rabbit, her eyes filled with wariness and fear.

Zach watched as Madelyn hastily wrapped herself up.

Madelyn continued, her voice trembling, "Um, when did you come in?"

Zach's rough palm still had traces of muscle rub on it as he said, "Bring your foot over here, and I'll give your ankle a little massage."

His deep, intense gaze locked onto Madelyn, making her feel uneasy all over. She shook her head and replied, "You don't have to do that. Rosario already massaged it earlier. They'll be

fine by tomorrow."

Zach furrowed his brows in response to Madelyn's resistance, urging her, "Madelyn, just do as I say. I don't want to repeat myself."

Madelyn's thoughts raced as she considered Zach's words. If she refused again, she knew he might resort to something unexpected, maybe even more audacious.

In her past life, this had been their dynamic. Whatever Zach commanded, Madelyn had to comply absolutely, no matter how arrogant, stubborn, or willful she was. She had always been under his control, enduring his manipulation with no other choice.

Biting her lip, Madelyn summoned her courage and cautiously extended her foot from under the blanket. Zach's gaze lingered on her fair and alluring foot, adorned with perfectly rounded toenails painted in a light pink shade. He couldn't help but note how delicate she appeared, nurtured with luxury from head to toe, even down to each strand of hair.

Zach grasped her swollen and elevated ankle, his palm still coated with muscle rub, gently massaging her ankle.

Madelyn couldn't help but exclaim, "H-H-Hiss, it hurts-"

Zach remained silent.

Madelyn quickly pleaded, "Brother, please be gentle."

Zach replied nonchalantly, "Who said it would be fine by tomorrow?"

"I fell asleep thinking it was alright. I even applied some muscle rub before going to bed. Thank you!"

"Hmm."

Madelyn rested her foot on Zach's leg, and he lowered his head, his expression serious as he diligently applied medication to her swollen ankle. This was something Zach had never done for her before.

As she observed him, Madelyn couldn't help but think that when this man was serious, he exuded a captivating sense of restraint. Her features were such that both men and women, young and old, could appreciate them. She had seen Zach wearing gold-rimmed glasses while working, and she had also witnessed his wild and untamed side. She had experienced almost every version of Zach. The Zach who thrived at lively and elegant banquets, the Zach with impeccable manners and conversational skills. However, the Zach before her, caring for her in this way, was an entirely new sight to behold...

“This muscle rub hasn’t fully absorbed yet. Be more careful next time. If you hurt yourself while I’m not home because you weren’t paying attention while walking, who will take care of you?” Zach remarked.

Madelyn shifted her body and settled back onto the bed. Initially in pain, Zach’s soothing massage had made her forget about it. She even felt a slight drowsiness taking over as she lay there. After a while, she noticed a warmth spreading from her ankle, a clear sign that the medicine was taking effect. She exclaimed, “I feel much better now! You should go back and rest.” Indeed, her swollen ankle had visibly subsided.

When Zach checked on Madelyn again, she was already fast asleep, defenseless with her eyes closed. He gently placed her foot under the blanket, his hands still carrying the lingering scent of the muscle rub. Standing up, he left the remaining unused rub on her desk and took one last glance at her lying peacefully on the bed..

Zach thought to himself, ‘You’ve lost your composure over such a small matter, Madelyn... What should I do with you in the future?’ Before leaving, he turned off the bedroom light and quietly exited the room.

As the early morning light streamed in through the window, Madelyn slowly stretched her body, her eyes still closed. The sound of her phone alarm pierced the silence, prompting her to swiftly silence it. Being someone who didn’t like to linger in bed, she promptly rose, feeling energized and ready to embrace the day ahead.

## Chapter 57

When Madelyn slipped her feet into her slippers and hopped out of bed, she discovered her ankle had fully healed. She hadn’t even noticed when Zach had left the previous night, as she had been fast asleep. By the time she woke up, it was already the next day.

The memory of Jasmine stumbling out of Zach’s room, clearly drunk, gnawed at Madelyn’s nerves. Grabbing her backpack, she deliberately took her time descending the stairs.

Stepping lightly, Madelyn scanned the vacant living room. Surprisingly, there wasn’t a soul in sight today. She quickly snatched a few slices of toast from the dining table, planning to make a quick escape.

Just then, Rosario emerged from the kitchen, declaring, "Silly child, you're in your own home. Why are you sneaking around? Sit down and have breakfast. I'll go upstairs to call Mr. Jardin."

Madelyn hastily responded, "I'll just have something light for breakfast today. I have an unfinished practice test, and I need to go to school to complete it. Rosario... I'll eat this and then be on my way!"

"Madelyn, that won't give you proper nutrition," Rosario protested.

Madelyn remained silent.

Anticipating Madelyn's stubbornness, Rosario added, "Don't forget to take the milk with you. In a rush, she fetched a fresh carton of milk from the refrigerator. However, upon returning, she realized that Madelyn had already vanished.

Just then, a voice came from upstairs. "What's going on?" Zach was fastening his tie, his arm draped in a black suit as he descended the staircase.

Rosario replied, "Madelyn had only a couple of toast slices for breakfast and left. She even forgot to take the milk. She's growing up, and such meager meals won't keep her healthy."

Zach's gaze deepened as he caught a glimpse of the departing car through the floor-to-ceiling windows.

After having a light breakfast, Zach quickly returned to the office.

By nine o'clock, Rosario grew concerned when Jasmine hadn't appeared for breakfast. Worried that something might be wrong, she headed upstairs with a breakfast tray in hand, making her way to Jasmine's room on the third floor. Pushing open the door, she was startled by the scene before her.

Jasmine lay unconscious on the floor, her nightgown and hair soaked. Gently touching Jasmine's forehead, Rosario realized it was burning with fever. It was evident that Jasmine was suffering from a high temperature. Acting swiftly, she dialed the family doctor and urgently requested his presence.



After Rosario changed Jasmine's clothes, she lay in bed as the family doctor, who arrived in haste, conducted an examination. Removing the stethoscope, the doctor reassured, "It's nothing serious, just a common cold accompanied by a fever. I'll prescribe some medication for her to take over the next few days, and she'll be back to normal soon."

Jasmine regained consciousness after some time, cradling her forehead and experiencing body aches. Fragments of memories from the previous night began to assemble, and she inwardly cursed, 'Zach nearly did me in. He's really crazy!' Throughout the years she had spent with Zach, she had always held the belief that, even if she couldn't surpass Jadie in his heart, she still held some significance to him. That's why she had recklessly tested Zach's limits, wanting to uncover the depths of his boundaries.

However, yesterday, Jasmine appeared to have stumbled upon something entirely unexpected.

Gurgle...

During the last class of the morning, Madelyn's stomach rumbled, drawing unwanted attention. The meager breakfast she had eaten was no longer enough, and her hunger was catching up with her rapidly.

Seated in front of her, Serena discreetly pulled out a small snack from her drawer and swiftly placed it on Madelyn's desk. Shielding her face with a book to avoid attracting the teacher's notice, Serena whispered, "Take some, at least to satisfy your hunger for now! Later... would you like to go to the cafeteria together?"

Madelyn wondered, 'Is she talking to me?' Uncertainty filled her, as she had been ostracized in this class, with no one willing to engage with her.

Just as Serena finished speaking, the recess bell rang.

Ventrocloud High School had a two-and-a-half-hour lunch break, during which students were free to pursue their own activities, even leaving the school premises without objection.

It was only today that Serena had been assigned the seat in front of Madelyn. Many classmates had already trickled out of the classroom, one by one, and Serena turned around, asking, " Madelyn, let's go to the cafeteria together!"

Madelyn retrieved her lunchbox from her backpack and responded, "Sorry, I bring my own lunch every day."

## Chapter 58

"Madelyn," A tall and sweet-looking girl approached, "if I'm not mistaken, didn't this bag keep a dead mouse not long ago? How can you still use it? Aren't you afraid of falling ill?" The girl looked at Madelyn's lunchbox with disgust.

Another girl chimed in, "Madelyn, you're the lone student at Ventrocloud High who brings. your own lunch. Are you strapped for cash or something? If you're facing financial constraints, just be honest! We've got money, we can lend you a couple hundred thousand."

Then, another girl decided to stir up trouble. "Serena, Madelyn couldn't care less about you. You're wasting your time. Quit hanging around this filthy girl, or you'll end up getting soiled yourself."

With determination, Madelyn sealed her backpack and rose from her seat, her hand colliding forcefully with the table. "Who do you think you're calling a filthy girl? Say it again, I dare you. "Anger wasn't a frequent visitor for her, yet just because she didn't display it openly didn't mean she lacked a fiery temperament.

She scrutinized the trio and continued, her gaze unwavering. "So, why the silence? What do you mean by 'filthy'? Michelle, if I recall correctly, your family is involved in the construction. industry, right? And Lorrie, Jenny... your families have partnerships with them. Two years ago, the Blossom Haven Tower project was a joint endeavor between your three companies. Due to your negligence and the use of substandard materials, the building turned out to be al haphazard construction. Let's not forget it cost three lives. And who was it that smoothed. things over at the time?"

Madelyn locked eyes with the trio, her expression shifting, before she pressed on. "You want. me to go into more detail, huh?"

Michelle Linney, unwilling to back down, retorted with determination, “Stop hurling baseless accusations. Those individuals clearly perished due to their own recklessness. Why should our

be held accountable? Madelyn, if you dare to spew nonsense again, I’ll have company terminate the partnership between our families!”

my

dad

Madelyn couldn’t help but chuckle, deriding Michelle’s foolishness. “Beauty alone won’t take you far. Remember to delve into the pages of books!”

Lorrie Lamprey intervened, stopping Michelle who wanted to confront Madelyn.

There were numerous individuals who exuded glamor on the surface but harbored dark secrets concealed behind closed doors. And who was the one to handle those dirty secrets? It was Hayson Jent. Why did so many people fear him? Because he was unafraid to go to any lengths. to achieve his goals, and he possessed leverage over others.

If Hayson Jent were to fall, the majority of the corporations in Ventropolis would be paralyzed, causing half of the city’s economic cycle to crumble, with many potentially ending

up behind bars.

When individuals held positions of power and found themselves in trouble, there was always someone to clean up their mess. In the realm of politics, officials would shield one another. In the world of business, it was even more pronounced. At the pinnacle of the pyramid, there wasn’t a single person whose hands remained untainted by blood.

Once, Madelyn harbored skepticism toward this cruel reality. However, thanks to Zach, she had been thrust into a realm of undeniable clarity, where the truth could no longer be ignored.

Madelyn no longer saw the need to engage in a futile argument with the trio. With her backpack firmly in place, she calmly walked away, leaving the confrontation behind. Serena wanted to chase after Madelyn. However, Jenny Lupert firmly held her back, her voice laced with caution. "Think it through, Serena. Aligning yourself with her means going against our entire class. You know it won't end well."

Serena forcefully shrugged off Jenny's grip, her resolve unwavering. "What does it matter if I go against them? Madelyn hasn't committed any wrongdoing. Why should she endure your insults when it was you who initiated this whole ordeal?" Determined, Serena hurried outside, only to find that Madelyn's figure had already disappeared without a trace, leaving her clueless about Madelyn's whereabouts.

Behind the school, there lay an artificial swan lake, a hidden gem rarely frequented during lunch breaks. However, it was at the onset of evening that the place truly came alive. As the clock struck eight, a captivating fountain performance would enchant onlookers, painting the air with a touch of magic. Madelyn had only ever caught glimpses of this mesmerizing spectacle through photographs, but her vivid imagination rendered it a scene from a fairytale. In her mind's eye, the illuminated fountains mirrored the pages of a storybook, where a Prince Charming met his beloved amidst a symphony of fluttering birds, their love unfolding in a realm of whimsy and wonder.

Amidst the tranquil waters of the swan lake, several black swans glided gracefully, their movements an elegant dance. The willow trees lining the lake's edge dipped their long branches into the water, creating gentle ripples that mirrored the caress of the breeze.

"Is that... Ms. Jent?" George Gibbon whispered to Ethan as they ventured behind Ventrocloud High School, their visit shrouded in secrecy, hoping to avoid unnecessary attention.

Ethan asked, "Why is she here all by herself?"

George replied, "Ms. Jent doesn't have many friends at school, and she's used to being alone. It's lunch break now, so I suppose she's sought solace here, a moment of respite to clear her mind."

As George accompanied Ethan on their visit to Ventrocloud High School, he was acutely aware of Ethan's true purpose-to see Madelyn Jent.

Ethan had previously undergone examinations at SereneCare Hospital, and the scheduled.

surgery was meant to proceed as planned. However, the test results had revealed changes in the tissues within his leg bones, attributed to prolonged inactivity. Consequently, the surgery had to be postponed.

## Chapter 59

Ethan wanted to see Madelyn at school. Regardless of whether his upcoming surgery would be successful or not, he wouldn't be discouraged because the girl sitting not far ahead was the reason he found the strength to stand up.

His eyes remained fixed on Madelyn as he observed the gentle sway of her long hair, tousled, by the wind, and found himself captivated by her alluring silhouette.

Ethan turned to George and spoke, "Wait here for me..."

"Yes, sir," George replied.

Madelyn sat comfortably on a bench, her attention drawn to the picturesque view of the lake. She relished the delectable treats packed in her lunchbox, never tiring of Rosario's exquisite culinary creations.

Suddenly, a figure caught Madelyn's eye. She turned her gaze and recognized the handsome teenager she had encountered at the hospital the other day 'But... his legs...' Her eyes followed the subtle lines of a mysterious blue tattoo peeking out from beneath the fabric of his long sleeves. A hint of another tattoo beneath the collar of his shirt on his neck caught her attention as well.

The teenager's wheelchair came to a halt beside her, as the breeze by the lakeside playfully tousled his unruly strands of hair. Turning toward her, a gentle smile graced his lips. "What a coincidence running into you again," he remarked.

Madelyn was taken aback, her mouth slightly agape as she stared at the person before her. She hastily swallowed the food in her mouth and exclaimed, "It's you! Oh, by the way, I washed your clothes and

hung them up at home! Are you a student at Ventrocloud High too? How come I've never seen you before?"

Ethan chuckled as he looked at her, his lips tinged with a rosy hue. "You're bombarding me with questions. Which one should I answer first?" After a brief moment of contemplation, he continued, "Let's start with your first question. You don't have to rush to return my clothes. You can personally hand them over to me the next time we meet..."

He paused, then added, "Secondly, I used to be a student at Ventrocloud High, but not anymore. And third... we haven't met before because I graduated two years ahead of you. I came back today just to..." He wanted to say, 'just to see you... that's all!'

Madelyn nodded thoughtfully, "So, you're my senior. I had assumed we were in the same grade." She wasn't accustomed to engaging with strangers, so his presence made her a tad nervous, unsure of how to carry on the conversation.

Sensing her unease, Ethan kept his focus on the serene surface of the lake, attempting to find a topic that would alleviate her apprehension. "This place is stunning, isn't it?"

"Absolutely," Madelyn agreed. "Whenever I sit here, it's like all my worries vanish, and I find a sense of peace."

Ethan asked, "Have you ever wondered about the story behind the one-armed angel statue in the middle of the lake?"

Perplexed, Madelyn couldn't help but ask, "What's the story behind it?"

Ethan's reply caught her off guard, "I actually broke off the arm of that statue."

Madelyn's mind was grappling with the revelation. 'Is he serious or just teasing?'

Noticing her skepticism, Ethan pressed on, "I remember it vividly, and I even left a message on the statue."

Intrigued, Madelyn couldn't resist inquiring, "What did you write?"

A playful smile played on Ethan's lips as he teased, "Ah, that's a secret."

## Chapter 60

On the other side of the lake, a small group of people approached, and Timothy was among them. From a distance, he spotted Madelyn sitting there, engaged in conversation with a guy in a wheelchair. However, due to the distance, he couldn't make out their words. He only observed the occasional smiles on Madelyn's face, radiating pure joy.

Jadie walked alongside the group, accompanied by her roommate, Claire Yelton. The two girls strolled together, while Forrest and others followed behind. Claire marveled at the surroundings, exclaiming, "Wow, this is Vetrocloud High School! It's absolutely beautiful! The swan lake is even bigger than our school's football field, right, Jadie?"

"It's definitely big. If I didn't know the way, I might have gotten lost," Jadie replied with a hint of humor.

Timothy nudged Adrian with his elbow, signaling him to look in that direction. Adrian followed Timothy's gaze and also spotted Madelyn. He felt curious about the man beside her. He wondered, 'Who is that guy? How come I've never seen him before? Could it be that Madelyn knows Forrest isn't interested in her, so she found a replacement? But even if she found a replacement, why choose someone who isn't fully abled? She seems a bit silly, doesn't she?!

"I really appreciate you taking the time to talk with me," Madelyn said gratefully.

At that moment, George approached and leaned down, whispering something in Ethan's ear. Ethan glanced in a particular direction and furrowed his brows slightly before saying, "Alright."

Following that, he cast a warm and gentle gaze at Madelyn, resembling a sunny spring breeze. "I'm sorry, something urgent has come up, so I won't be able to accompany you."

Madelyn waved her hand dismissively. "It's okay, really... I should be the one thanking you."

"Well, then... I'll take my leave," Ethan said, his eyes brimming with affection, and a playful smile tugging at the corners of his lips.

"Alright, take care," Madelyn replied, standing up and watching Ethan depart. As she saw him. vanish from sight, she found herself thinking, 'I never expected to meet him here at Vetrocloud High. I thought he was the same age as me, but it turns out he's three years older. But talking to him feels so comfortable..."

Madelyn shifted her gaze away and began gathering her belongings, preparing to leave.

Serena somehow managed to find her and approached, holding a bottle of milk in her hand. Madelyn looked at Serena, who was drenched in sweat, and realized Serena must have gone out of her way to the store to buy it for her.

"Madelyn... I genuinely want to be friends with you... I'm not like them. Can we be good friends? I can apologize for what happened today. I'm sorry," Serena pleaded.

Serena herself couldn't be considered conventionally attractive. She had an average appearance, with chubby cheeks adorned with freckles. However, due to her family's influential presence within the school, no one would dare to bully her. Despite this, her presence often went unnoticed, and she seemed to fade into the background.

Madelyn, on the other hand, was different. She inherited her beauty from her mother.

Standing beside Madelyn, Serena appeared meek and submissive, while Madelyn seemed like the one bullying her. When Madelyn wore an expressionless face, she emitted an aura that made people cautious about approaching her.

However, when Madelyn smiled, it was as if she could enchant others. Consequently, she often. chose to maintain a cold demeanor.



Holding the bottle of milk, Madelyn pursed her lips and spoke, "Serena, I'm accustomed to being alone, and... I don't plan to remain in Ventropolis after graduation. It's possible that I'll relocate to Lorville. True friendship requires time and effort to maintain, and if we don't have that time, we may end up as strangers in the end."