

Rewritten 81

Chapter 81

Zach was contemplating where she might be hiding. However, before long, Jadie's voice broke the silence, directing Zach's attention to a figure standing near a large truck. "Zach, look! It's Madelyn," Jadie exclaimed, her voice tinged with both surprise and concern.

Slowing down the vehicle, Zach saw Madelyn getting into the vehicle.

"Goodness gracious, why is Madelyn leaving with strangers? Has something happened to her? Should we contact the police?" Jadie's words tumbled out in a rush, her concern palpable.

Zach averted his eyes, a contemplative silence enveloping him as he focused on the task of driving. "No need," he finally replied, his voice subdued.

"Are you saying we should we just leave her be like that?"

Zach remained silent, his attention steadfastly fixed on the road ahead.

As the truck accelerated, its tires kicking up a cloud of dust, the distance between them and Madelyn swiftly expanded. Jadie could sense the car picking up speed, and a part of her longed for Zach to slow down, if only for a moment. Yet, she understood that he was determined to pursue the truck, leaving her no choice but to endure the increasingly intense ride.

As their car approached the traffic light, it abruptly switched from green to red, signaling them to stop. Zach, however, made a bold decision to run the red light, racing through the intersection. Yet, as he skillfully maneuvered around the corner, they were met with a disheartening sight-the truck they had been chasing had vanished without a trace.

"Zach, we've lost them. What do we do now?" Jadie's voice quivered with uncertainty. She looked at Zach in a panic only to see his eyes were gloomy and sent a chill down her spine.

Zach's mind swirled with a blend of frustration and suspicion. 'Madelyn Jent, what kind of games are you playing this time!?'

Meanwhile, inside the truck, Madelyn stole a quick glance at the rearview mirror, her heart pounding with a sense of relief. They had successfully evaded Zach's pursuit.

How she wished she could let Zach realize that she had not been lying from the very beginning when she had said she wanted to leave. She had learned a lesson on the matter of Jadie. So, she hoped that in view of their friendship, Zach would stop thinking about her.

It had hurt to be beaten once again.

Madelyn was fortunate to encounter a kind-hearted couple, a long-distance delivery driver and his wife, who were more than willing to offer her a ride. Explaining her situation to them, Madelyn lied to them that she had engaged in a heated argument with her father and was now determined to search for her long-lost mother. Sympathetic to her plight, the couple readily agreed to let her join them on their journey.

1/2

After a forty-minute drive, Madelyn found herself standing in front of the decrepit old

building. Expressing her gratitude and bidding the couple farewell, Madelyn embarked on her solitary path. Relying on her memory, she navigated through the desolate streets, which emitted a noxious odor emanating from the nearby sewers.

Soon, she found a very familiar sign and stopped in front of that building.

There were no elevators in this building, and she had to take the stairs to get to the sixth floor.

Along the way, Madelyn had lost a slipper and so she limped as she walked, and her knees still

hurt a little.

Finally, she found the house number she was looking for.

She then found the key under the flowerpot on the balcony facing the door.

“Hello, who are you? Why have I never seen you before?” A forty-odd year-old woman suddenly walked out from one of the other units, with a basin of clothes in hand.

“My

mother is living here. I’m here to look for her,” Madelyn replied.

“You’re Rosario’s daughter? Oh, what a good girl. To think that she has such a pretty daughter. Why haven’t I heard her speak of you before? What’s your name, little girl?”

“I’m Madelyn Jent, ma’am.”

“Oh, oh, a good name. Have you eaten yet? How about you join me?”

“Thank you, but I’ll have to decline. I’m a bit tired and want to rest a little. I’m waiting for my mother to come back.”

“Oh, okay. Remember to come over my place and play some time.”

“Okay.”

Madelyn walked into the apartment and found it well organized, although somewhat rudimentary. There was no living room, only a bed and a bathroom. The nicer part of the apartment unit was that it had a balcony.

Chapter 82

This was a house that Rosario was renting on her own. It was super cheap, with rent only costing about fifty bucks a month.

The location faced south and had good natural lighting. If Rosario had not rented this place, Madelyn would have ended up without a roof above her head.

This was the second time Madelyn had come here. The first time was because Zach had bought Jadie a pretty dress in secret, but he had never bought anything for her before. After she had found out and confronted him about it, Zach had simply just hissed at her.

There was no way a princess like Madelyn could handle being treated like that. As a result, she had left home angrily.

That was the first time she left home, and at the time, Zach had not tried to coax her back, as she had cut Jadie's dress, which made him furious.

So, Rosario had brought Madelyn, who had been throwing a temper tantrum, here while on the way back.

However, because she could not stand the environment here and thought it too dirty, she had finally given up and went back home in the end, because she was too used to being pampered

back then.

But, as long as Rosario had not said a word about this place, they would never find her here, and that would be fine for her. Even without a degree, she could still go out to work and do some odd part-time jobs. She would still be able to live decently enough.

There was dust on the table, so Madelyn took a bucket of water and cleaned up the house. She changed the sheets and watered the plants outside.

After doing that, she took a set of Rosario's clothes and went to the bathroom to take a shower.

When the water touched the wounds, Madelyn hissed in pain and tried to avoid the wounds. touching water as much as she could.

Without a hot water supply, she could only bathe with cold water.

After that, she used a yellowed but still clean towel to wipe her hair dry.

After leaving the Jent residence, Madelyn felt an unprecedented amount of freedom.

She then lay on the bed for a while.

As time passed, she felt asleep, and by the time she woke up, it was already dark outside.

In a daze, her stomach started to growl at the most inopportune of times.

So she got up and made herself a cup of instant noodles. As there was nothing else, she had to

1/2

eat it just like that.

Yet, even when she was in such a state, Madelyn did not feel that her life was difficult.

As long as she had something to eat, it was fine.

In her previous life, she had been chased out of Ventropolis by Zach, and not too long later, she had been diagnosed with advanced cancer. To afford treatment, she had sold all of her

assets from the divorce.

Forget cup noodles, the only things she ate back then were simply just scraps, or in the worst- case scenario, she would just starve...

So, she was much, much more appreciative of what she had now than in the past. She knew that everything she had was not always so easy to come by

She turned on the TV and started watching some brain-dead soap opera. Before she even realized it, it was already eight o'clock in the evening.

In those days, they were still using black-and-white TVs...

At eight o'clock in the evening, still in a daze, Madelyn could hear the sound of the door lock being turning from the outside.

"That must be Rosario."

Madelyn hurried over and opened the door. "Rosario!"

Sure enough, it was her.

Rosaria pulled out the key and said angrily. "Silly girl, I knew you'd be here. I bet you haven't eaten for the entire day, right? I brought you your favorite dishes, come and eat them."

Chapter 83

"I'm glad you understand!" Madelyn happily went up to her and hugged her.

She eagerly took the thermos from Rosario and sat down beside a small table.

“Why’d you come out here all of a sudden? Do you know how worried Mr. Jent and Mr. Jardin are? Go back tomorrow!”

“There’s no need for you to try and persuade me; I won’t go back. Besides, it won’t make a difference whether I’m there or not. They won’t worry about me.”

Rosario looked at the used pot and Worcestershire sauce on the kitchen counter on the balcony.

“This is what she’s been eating when I’m not around. How could she go through such a thing? She’s Ms. Jent!” she thought.

Rosario was a little heartbroken. After all, she had watched Madelyn grow up, so she was like her own child.

“Madelyn, is this all you’re having for lunch?”

Madelyn took a big bite of carne frita and nodded, “I don’t have ingredients at home, so I just made some noodles. But I think I added too much Worcestershire sauce. It’s a little too salty. Also... I think the Worcestershire sauce has gone bad. It tasted a little funny when I ate it!”

Rosario walked over and poked Madelyn’s head with her finger, “Why didn’t you check its expiration date? What if you get a stomachache from it? Don’t eat it anymore. I’ll send

you home tomorrow, and you should apologize properly to Mr. Jent. Then this whole matter will be considered over.” ”

Madelyn’s hand, which was holding her cutlery, froze momentarily, “I already said I wouldn’t be going back. If you really insist on making me, I’ll leave right now.”

She set down the cutlery and stopped eating. Then, she walked toward the door.

Rosario immediately stopped her, “Madelyn, if you’re not going back, do you plan on staying at a shabby place like this for the rest of your life?”

“Why not?”

“This place is shabby and dilapidated. What’s so good about it? Madelyn, be good... Let’s go home, okay?”

“What about it? If you’re going to throw me out, too, then I truly won’t have anywhere to go. I don’t want to go home. I lost my home after my mother’s death. Rosario...can you not throw me out?” Madelyn lowered her head as tears streamed down.

“You silly girl! Why are you crying? Look around, Madelyn. There’s nothing here, and it’s tiny. It’s nothing compared to your house.”

Madelyn wiped her tears with the back of her hand.

“It’s alright. I’ll go find part-time jobs. I know how to cook, paint, and play the piano. Even if none of those work out, I can work as a waitress to support myself.

“You’re the daughter of a wealthy family! How could you even think of doing such things?” Rosario continued helplessly, “Stop crying now... Stay here if you want to! Tomorrow, I’ll buy you some groceries. I won’t be able to stay home and take care of you tomorrow; I need to go to Mr. Jardin’s

place and take care of Jadie for a few days. Stay put here, and don’t leave the house if you don’t need to. It isn’t safe here at night.”

Madelyn nodded, “What’s happened to Jadie?”

“She got injured and hasn’t recovered. Mr. Jardin can’t take care of her,” said Rosario.

“He can hire a caretaker. Why’d he have to take you away? What ‘ll happen to me if you leave? You’re mine.”

Madelyn sniffled and hugged Rosario tightly.

Rosario stroked Madelyn’s long, soft hair, “I’ll only be gone for a few days. Once you’re back home, I’ll make all sorts of delicious dishes for you every day.”

Madelyn did not want to go back.

It was late at night. The curtains were thin, so the moonlight outside shone in.

Madelyn and Rosario slept on the same bed.

Madelyn knew she moved a lot when she slept and often kicked away the covers, so the two tucked themselves in separate blankets.

Madelyn had slept the entire day, so she could not fall asleep. She laid under the covers and stared at the ceiling as she counted her fingers absentmindedly.

‘Why’d Zach ask Rosario to take care of Jadie? Wasn’t she doing fine today? He’s surely doing this on purpose. Rosario can take care of Jadie for a few days, but she can’t keep on taking care of her. Rosario’s mine,’ she thought.

That night, Madelyn heard Rosario leaving the house when she was half asleep.

It was starting to get bright out.

However, after what seemed like less than half an hour, Rosario returned home again.

Madelyn smelled the aroma of delicious food.

Chapter 84

Rosario was cooking. Madelyn narrowed her eyes and glanced at the time. It was only six in the morning, and the sun was just starting to rise outside.

“What are you doing up this early? Go back to sleep for a little longer. The food will be ready in a bit.”

Madelyn hugged Rosario’s waist from behind and placed her chin on Rosario’s shoulder. Her narrowed eyes resembled a sleepy and cute kitten that had just opened its eyes. There was even a strand of hair sticky up on her forehead.

“What delicious food are you making?”

Rosario said, “It’s greasy in here. Quick, go back outside, and don’t get yourself dirty. I’ve already bought you toiletries. My place isn’t like your house, so you need to make do and use some generic brands for now. I’ll bring you your things tonight.”

“What’s wrong with generic brands? I like anything as long as you’re the one buying it.”

“Stop blabbering and go wash up. After I’m done with this dish, breakfast will be ready.”

“Alright.”

The pair of pajamas Madelyn wore used to belong to Rosario. Its design unmistakably outdated and tailored for the elderly. Yet, despite their antiquated style, the pajamas possessed a certain charm when worn by Madelyn.

Heading to the bathroom, Madelyn slipped her feet into transparent slides. After finishing her morning routine, she emerged from the bathroom to find that Rosario had already left without even having breakfast. Alone in the room, Madelyn settled down to eat.

Before Rosario left, she had reminded Madelyn to go to school and not to be late. However, Madelyn had no intention of going to school that day. The thought of being expelled held little significance for her now.

Madelyn did not eat much, and just chucked the leftovers into the fridge. Her plan for the day involved exploring the surrounding area, hoping to discover anything else she might be able to purchase.

When Rosario left, she gave Madelyn few hundred bucks and told her to buy something with the money. Madelyn was not planning to just spend the money carelessly.

Madelyn wore Rosaria's old clothes and grabbed a canvas tote bag when she left the house. She had a cucumber in her hand, and her long hair was up in a claw clip. She did not look like a lady from a wealthy family at all.

"Oh?! Where are you headed, Madelyn?"

Madelyn locked the door, "I plan on taking a look around the area. How about you, Shelley?"

"Me? I'm about to do some laundry. Madelyn... Your mother's been living here for over ten years now. How come I've never seen you in the past?"

Madelyn chuckled, "I didn't go to school here, so I've barely had any time to visit. I have some free time now, so I came back to visit my mom."

"I see! How old are you? Do you have a boyfriend yet?"

"I'm eighteen this year. I'm sitting for my college entrance exams soon, so I don't want to date for now. It's not the time yet."

"Oh, but you're so pretty! You must have many boys chasing after you. It's okay for youngsters to date. It's better to date when you're still young... It's not much use for girls to go to college since they need to

get married and stay home to raise their children. You might as well get married early,” said Shelley.

Then, she walked over, acting as if she knew Madelyn really well.

“Coincidentally, I’ve got a son who’s around your age. His looks and yours are somewhat of a good match...”

The smile on Madelyn’s face gradually fell, “Thank you for your kind intentions, Shelly. However, I don’t have any plans regarding these matters for now. I’ll be leaving now.”

“Eh? I think you’re quite the looker, so your future children will surely look beautiful. Why don’t you reconsider? We can offer you a hundred thousand dollars of dowry.”

Madelyn went downstairs and disappeared into the corner.

Shelley looked in Madelyn’s direction and rolled her eyes.

“Hmph! She’s so arrogant. She must think she’s a goddess... She’s like the other girls out there, so what’s there to pretend?”

Madelyn’s originally bright mood had been ruined.

‘I’m only 18, and she’s introducing marriage suitors to me?’ she thought.

Chapter 85

Madelyn had to admit it genuinely was a little disorderly around these parts. Well, not exactly disorderly; it was just the cleanliness here was not as good as in the urban area of Ventropolis.

The buildings here seemed run-down. The place was filled with dilapidated residential areas and many street food stalls.

Madelyn wandered around and found that the food at these stalls was pretty cheap.

After she walked through the alley, there was even a large sea ahead.

This was the outskirts of Ventropolis. It was an hour's drive to get to the neighboring city, Marisburg.

Madelyn ran to the beach in excitement. She closed her eyes and breathed in the crisp sea air.

She took off her flip-flops and stepped onto the sand. The seawater was a little chilly, but the sunlight above her head felt warm and refreshing.

Madelyn strolled barefoot along the sandy shoreline, her eyes fixated on the myriad seashells that adorned the beach. Their intricate patterns and vibrant colors enticed her, urging her to collect them one by one.

Just then, a voice, sharp and commanding, pierced the air above her.

"Hey! Who the hell do you think you are? Don't you know this is my turf?"

Startled, Madelyn rose to her feet, her gaze drawn to a woman with braided hair and striking smokey eye makeup. The woman exuded an aura of strength, her arm tattoo accentuating her formidable presence. Her name was Alex York.

Still in a daze, Madelyn struggled to find her voice as Alex approached, swiftly snatching the seashells from her hand.

“Where do you come from, you country bumpkin? Why haven’t I seen you around? What’s in your bag? Hand it over!”

“I...” Madelyn began, her words trailing off.

“Don’t you dare ‘I’ me!” Alex interjected.

With a swift motion, Alex seized Madelyn’s canvas tote and emptied its contents.

“All useless things. As expected of a country bumpkin.”

Alex had lost a card game. The group of men had the audacity to ask her-a woman-to come here and collect seafood for them as punishment for losing.

Alex was already filled with rage, and now she had the perfect outlet to release her anger.

Madelyn calmly picked up her canvas tote from the ground. She had no intentions of arguing with Alex and prepared to leave.

However, Alex did not plan on letting her go.

“Did I fucking say you could leave?”

‘Why does her tone sound so much like Forrest’s?’ wondered Madelyn.

“What do you want?” she asked.

Alex threw a shovel and bucket in front of Madelyn.

“Just your luck running into me. Dig up some seafood for me. Don’t even think of going home if the bucket isn’t full!”

Madelyn asked, “And why should I do that?”

“Because I don’t like how you look, got it?”

“Sorry, but I don’t have the time for that,” replied Madelyn.

“Hey, country bumpkin, don’t you know everyone here listens to what I say? Do you know what the consequences are if you don’t listen to me?”

‘Is she from some kind of local gang? Why do I keep encountering strange people like this wherever I go?’ thought Madelyn.

“Hey, Alex. Don’t tell me you haven’t even caught a single crab after this long.”

“Yeah! What’re we gonna eat tonight?!”

Madelyn saw a group of six to seven topless men walking shoulder to shoulder. They were covered in tattoos and clearly ignorant street thugs. Madelyn seemed particularly small and helpless when faced with the group of thugs.

“Oh! Where’d this little lady come from? She’s pretty good-looking. What’s your name? Got a boyfriend? Wanna go out with me?” a blonde-haired man who barely looked twenty said while giving Madelyn a sleazy look.

The group of men laughed.

‘How lewd. If I had known this would happen, I never would’ve come here in the first place,’ thought Madelyn.

Chapter 86

“Alex, Ajax, are you lot stirring up trouble again?”

Suddenly, a slightly chubby middle-aged man walked over from a distance. He wore flip-flops and had a stick in his hand.

He quickly walked to Madelyn’s side and gave her a once-over. Then, he asked with concern, Kid... Did they do anything to you?”

Madelyn shook her head, “Nope.”

Meanwhile, Alex stood at the side with a look of disdain.

The man seemed to know Madelyn. He asked again, “Are you the girl Rosario brought back from the city? Mad... Mad something?”

“Madelyn Jent.”

”

The man gasped and said, “Yes, yes, yes, Madelyn. When Rosario left earlier, she told me to look after you, but I was too busy and lost track of time. Don’t worry. With me around, these hooligans won’t dare to do anything to you.”

He continued, “I’m telling you, Alex. You’re a girl, can you act a bit more reserved? Why are you dressed up like this every day? And you guys! All you guys do is play truant! Hurry up and leave, or I’ll whoop your asses.”

Alex started smoking impatiently, “Hey, fatso. Why are you butting in when I’m talking to her? Mind your own business. You’re already this old, yet you’re still all hung up about some old hag. Tsk!”

“What did you say? Say that again, and I’ll be sure your father teaches you a lesson when get home.”

“Whatever I do is none of your damn business, you damn bastard. Just my darn luck,” Alex

lifted her gaze and glared at Madelyn.

“Hey! You little rascal.”

“Darn it. Ajax, pack up the stuff. We’ll find a different location.”

you

Ajax picked up the items that had been thrown onto the ground. Then, the seven to eight men

left with their leader.

Madelyn said, “Thank you, mister! If it weren’t for you, I might’ve gotten in trouble.”

“Ah, it was nothing. No need to thank me. Rosario and I go way back. Remember, kid, don’t come here again in the future. This is their little gang’s haunt, so it’s not safe. If you want to explore the area, I can take you to other places.”

Madelyn nodded.

“Alright,” she said.

Madelyn picked up the seashells on the ground and placed them into her canvas tote. Then, she left with Ajax.

During their journey, Madelyn learned that the house Rosario rented belonged to him.

Since the area was along the coast, Jeff Massey opened a restaurant and a supper place nearby.

The population here was small, so he did not make much money. He mainly relied on his rental income to make ends meet.

Jeff's wife had passed away when he was in his 30s, and he had remained single till now.

The group from earlier were locals. Due to the location's remoteness, people rarely visited, and the government did not care about them at all. Consequently, the locals had low incomes, and most of them were poor, working-class foreigners. A majority of them were illiterate and had not received much formal education. That was why the area was rather disorderly and lawless.

The two went to Happy Seafood Grill.

Madelyn did not go back and went to Jeff's restaurant for lunch instead. There were six to seven dishes, and the table was full of seafood. There were also many customers in the restaurant.

"Go ahead and start eating first. There's no need to wait for me. I just got some customers, so I'll go cook up a few dishes."

Madelyn stood up, "Mr. Massey, let me help you. I know how to chop up vegetables and wash them."

Jeff laughed, "You're a guest. How could I let my guests work? Hurry up and try these

escargots I made. No one here can make them better than me. If you can't get the meat out, we have toothpicks for you."

Madelyn sat in a small private room. The room was not exactly crowded and had a floor-to-ceiling window at its side. One could see the sea here, and the view was impressive.

Madelyn noticed the carne frita placed in front of her, which even had scallions on top of it.

Madelyn picked up her cutlery and took a bite of the carne frita.

'It actually tastes exactly like Rosario's cooking. It's so good,' she thought.

Madelyn was absolutely famished. She ate her fill of the food.

After she finished eating, she grabbed a tissue to wipe her mouth. Soon after, she saw a group of people walking past from the corner of her eye. She looked over, and it was no other than

Alex and the gang.

'I wonder if they saw me,' she thought.

Chapter 87

'But it seems like they're also coming to this restaurant,' she thought.

As expected, the door to her room was opened in less than a minute, and a group of people walked in.

"Oh?! You're eating good! How come we never get such special treatment? You're so biased, you old fart!"

"I'm starving. Dustin, get me a set of cutlery and a bowl."

"Don't you have hands? Why can't you take them yourself?"

"Girlie, scooch over, girlie. I can't get inside."

Madelyn was speechless. She pulled her chair and made way for him.

Alex sat across from her, but her sitting posture was a little unsightly. She propped her foot onto the chair and promptly spun the carne frita on Madelyn's plate toward herself. Then, she started munching on it.

"The drinks are here," a skinny guy walked in and closed the door with his leg while carrying a carton of beer.

The once spacious room had quickly become cramped.

"That bastard. He never makes this for me when I ask him to, but now he's actually made it for you! You're really something!"

Suddenly, Alex turned to her.

She continued, "Hey, country bumpkin, you still haven't told me where you're from. Are you from out of town?"

One of the men with blonde hair said, "Alex, she's obviously a goody-two-shoes. Don't scare her."

"What, are you feeling bad for her? She's good-looking and isn't interested in you, so what's the use of speaking up for her? Shut your mouth."

Madelyn took the water jug and poured herself a glass of water. Then, she took a sip of water and set down the glass.

"I'm done eating. You all have a good meal."

Just as she was about to get up, a hand pushed her back down.

“What’s with the rush? We haven’t even started eating. Let’s chat for a little longer.”

Madelyn was not exactly afraid of these people.

‘Are they bad people? They just look like a bunch of hooligans. Real dangerous bad guys don’t act like them,’ she thought.

They did not scare her. Instead, they made her feel some way that she did not know how to describe; it was a feeling she had never once experienced.

“What do you guys want to talk about?” she asked.

The two men sitting beside her openly scrutinized her; one was blonde-haired, while the other was green-haired. One of them even laughed and said, “Alex, she isn’t even the least bit scared of you. You suck!”

“Shut up!” Alex had just finished the entire plate of carne frita. She licked her lips in dissatisfaction, “I won’t argue with you, on account of this good meal today. How does calling me boss and paying a 50-dollar membership fee to gain my protection on this turf sound? No one will dare to do anything to you if you shout my name out on the streets.”

Madelyn lifted the glass and smiled slightly, “I don’t have any money.”

“You could write up an ‘IOU’ if you don’t have the money. Call her boss, and you’ll be a part of our gang,” the blonde-haired man said as he placed his hand on Madelyn’s shoulder.

Madelyn looked at the hand on her shoulder, as she was lost in thought.

‘What would my father say if he saw me hanging out with these hooligans? He’d most likely break this guy’s hand first and then break all their legs one by one. He’s always been strict and has never allowed me to hang out with shady people.

I remember the poor dirty stray dog I picked up from the roadside, he beat it to death himself with a golf club. Then, he even made me learn golf with that very same golf club. He told me it was alright to have a dog, but the dog had to be of a decent breed. Ever since that dog's brutal death, I've never had any pets ever again. I know that in his eyes, people are categorized into different classes. I just never expected it to be the same when it comes to dogs...'

Chapter 88

"Sorry. Please eat. I still have work to do, so excuse me."

Madelyn was used to being alone and did not believe in so-called friends.

This time when she left, the group of hooligans did not try to stop her anymore.

Madelyn left the room and Mr. Massey walked out wearing an apron as he held a dish in hand." Lassie, you're done eating already? Did they bully you?"

No."

"They may act like that, but those kids aren't so bad really. They just want to play with you."

"I know, Mr. Massey. I still have something to do, so I'll take my leave first."

"Okay. Remember to come and eat tomorrow, on the house. Just eat as much as you want."

Madelyn smiled and nodded. "Alright."

After she left, Madelyn went and bought some personal clothes and a few spare clothes and a few pairs of shoes as well. She got all of those items at cheap prices.

She was planning to stay here long-term.

In a blink of an eye, Madelyn had already lived here for almost three months. These days, she was working at Mr. Massey's restaurant as a waitress. The salary was fifty a day, which was not bad, and meals were provided as well.

There was little business during the day, and it would be a little busier during supper hours.

It was very tiring at first as her legs protested in soreness. But as time went on, she got

1.

used to

She had never done such a thing before, but it was just cleaning up the tables, so it was not particularly difficult.

Those days were a rare taste of freedom and peace for her.

There was no supervision, no comfort, no soft bed, no beautiful clothes...

Madelyn had gradually gotten used to the life of an ordinary person.

Her once fair and tender hands began to develop calluses, and since her hands would be soaked in water for long periods of time while washing dishes, her skin had also begun to peel

and looked rather hideous.

Rosario did not know that she was working in this restaurant.

That was also because Rosario had not come back for many days now. Madelyn assumed she

must have been busy taking care of Jadie.

That was fine too, Rosario would never have allowed her to do this, so she had to try to save up more money to plan for the future.

One night, at half past eight in the evening, a batch of diners had already left, and Madelyn cleaned up the table and carried a tub of bowls to be washed as she walked to the door.

There were a group of shirtless men still seated by the door. All of them looked like they were in their thirties and drunk, probably having drank three or four crates of beer.

One of them looked at Madelyn with a lustful gaze as he mumbled in a drunken drawl, "Hey, look. That girl lives right beside me. I heard my mom say that she's only eighteen, and she got expelled from school because she tried to sleep with someone. She starts washing clothes at around seven every morning, and it's so noisy that I can't even sleep. But damn, she sure is hot!"

"There's no way, right? She doesn't even look like the talkative type, and you're saying she tried to sleep with someone?"

Those words were so loud as if they were afraid Madelyn would miss them, but there was no one else around. She heard every word.

Madelyn, however, had no intention of provoking a bunch of drunks.

"Yeah, Rogan, how do you even know about all this?"

"What's there not to know? If she really was a good student, why would she be working here instead of studying?"

"Eh, just blabbering about it is pointless. How about we get her here and ask her ourselves?"

Chapter 89

Rogan immediately called out to her, his voice booming. "Hey, you! Madelyn! Come over here.

and take our order."

Madelyn held the tub of plates and pretended to not hear him as she looked at a person about the same age as her.

Her name was Wonda, and she was also working here part-time.

Madelyn looked at her gloating face and then turned around to leave.

"Oi, I'm calling for you! Do you hear me?!"

Madelyn put down the tub and washed her hands cleaned before walking over with a menu.

"What would you like to order?" she asked, as she took out a notebook to jot the order down.

Five pairs of eyes all stared at her like hungry wolves staring at their prey. Those ill- intentioned gazes exuded a revolting malevolence.

One of them then said, "Babe, are you short on cash? If you are, just let me know. I have money."

11

As he said that, he pulled out three hundred dollars from his wallet and put in on the table. "If you go out and play with me today, this money's yours."

A shrill laugh suddenly rang out.

It was from Wonda.

"I'm sorry. I'm just here to work a part-time job. I don't provide such services. Would you like to order something? If not, I have work to do."

"What work? There's only us in the shop right now. Come on, sit and chat with us. Have a few glasses." Another fat man said as he dragged a chair over and placed it by his side.

Madelyn turned around and left.

At this moment, someone slammed the table. "Hey bitch, what the hell are you being so pretentious for? If you really are a student, why would you even need to come here to work?"

Madelyn walked a few steps before stopping as she took out a pink diamond-lined purse out and flashed her student card before them. "Have a good look. This is my student ID, and that's me on the ID. I'm a senior-year student of Ventrocloud High School. Get it? Please refrain from spreading rumors after this. Defamation is against the law."

"Who the heck would believe you? You? Studying at Ventrocloud High School? That's tens of thousands a year, and three years would've cost you a hundred thousand!"

Madelyn put away her purse. She really shouldn't have tried to argue with this bunch.

"It's none of my business whether you believe me or not."

"Hey, watch your tone! You've been to school. Did your teachers teach you to speak to your elders like this?"

"If you don't drink this glass and apologize to us, you can forget about leaving today."

Madelyn put her purse into the pocket under her apron and turned around to leave, as she did not plan to pay them any more attention.

Suddenly, a powerful grasp grabbed her hand and pulled her over, Madelyn tumbled over and ended up sitting on the man's leg. "What are you doing! Let me go!"

"Girl, don't be afraid. We just want to talk to you, nothing else."

Everyone else looked at Madelyn and laughed.

Wonda quietly shuffled into the kitchen and pretended not to see what was happening.

Mr. Massey was out delivering goods, and it would take a while before he returned.

She took the glass of beer and splashed it on the man's face as she pushed him away with force. "You damn bitch!"

The man instantly grabbed and tugged Madelyn's hair.

She immediately yelled in pain.

"How dare you splash that on me!?"

Chapter 90

That man tore Madelyn's clothes off her chest and her buttons came apart, revealing a white bra inside.

Everyone's eyes lit up in that instant.

Madelyn covered herself up and bit the back of the hand hard.

The person immediately recoiled in pain and let her free.

Madelyn quickly turned around and fled outside. Under the dim road light, she saw, much to her shock, Forrest, who was clad in a black T-shirt, with silver chains on his neck and his hands in his jacket pocket as he walked over with a cigarette in hand.

Jadie and Alex were walking with him.

She did not know why Jadie would be here, but she could not let Jadie see her or know that she was here.

Forrest was speaking to Jadie with his head down and should not have seen her. So, Madelyn quickly turned around and fled toward her home.

“Bloody hell, that bitch sure ran away fast.”

Madelyn did not dare stop at all as she hurried home. Leaning against the door, she felt as if her heart was about to pop out of her chest. She was soaked in sweat and perhaps due to fear, her legs felt weak, and her entire body trembled.

She slid limp onto the ground, and it took a good while before she eventually calmed down, got up, and took a bath.

It was midnight, and Madelyn laid in her bed as she woke up in a daze.

She had been dreaming of the time ruffians had bullied her.

Those memories she wanted to forget had come surging back into her mind like a vicious tide. The images that flashed across her mind were extremely vivid.

The lights in the room were turned off and Madelyn curled up in her bed as she hugged her blanket tight and breathed heavily.

The incident from before seemed to have reared its head again....

She then turned on her phone which Rosario had smuggled in for her from home.

This was the first time she had turned it on.

Messages after messages soon popped up, all of them from Ethan.

From the past thirteen days, there were at least a hundred messages from him.

1/2

Most of them were him asking her what she was doing, where she was, and why she was not replying.

He also shared with her what he was doing on the daily.

Until the last message. [Madelyn, where are you? I'm worried about you...]

[I'm worried...]

Tears suddenly fell from her eyes. She never thought anyone would be worried about her.

To Madelyn, Ethan was just a familiar stranger. Yet, he was worried about her. That made her feel a trace of warmth she had never felt before.

Madelyn then responded, [I'm tired. Good night.]

Just as she was about to turn off her phone, a string of familiar numbers suddenly popped out. It was a call from Zach.

Yet, Madelyn did not want to pick up the call.

In Ventropolis, located at the heart of the city, a soft glow emanated from an open study door within a modest single-story building spanning three hundred square meters.

Seated at the desk, Zach held a stack of printed photographs depicting Madelyn's recent circumstances. Each image revealed a different facet of her life. A mixture of surprise and concern clouded his eyes. Never had he expected Madelyn would manage to survive in a remote fishing village for so long-

The photographs captured her diligently working at a restaurant, one image showing her serving dishes while another captured her squatting near the door, engaged in dishwashing duties.

'Is this really the Madelyn I once knew?' Zach wondered silently.

A notification popped up on his computer screen, indicating a message received at 12:43 a.m. When the phone hung up automatically, Zach smiled as he put down the phone. The time was

12:44 a.m.

'Oh, Madelyn, it seems you have yet to suffer enough,' he mused to himself. 'A disobedient child shan't have dinner. Why can't you understand this simple truth? For what are you making yourself go through

all these hardships?'

Lost in contemplation, Zach tapped his finger lightly on the desk's surface. His attention shifted to the final photograph in the stack-an image capturing the lewd laughter of men as one of them tore at Madelyn's clothes.