

A Spoonful of Sugar: Don't Beg for Love By Oopsie Daisy

Chapter 311

The atmosphere in the living room was getting extremely intense, but noises came from the other room at that moment.

Renfrew pushed open the door and looked a little panicked. "Gabriel seems to be feeling ill..."

Although Hesper did not study medicine, she had become somewhat of an amateur doctor after suffering from a long list of illnesses over the years. When she had nothing much to do in the past, she had learned a thing or two about Halwanese medicine from her doctors. One could say that she knew things, but she was nowhere near proficient.

As soon as she saw Gabriel, Hesper felt that the child might be suffering from a stomach ache.

"See? What did I just say? Gabriel has fallen sick, hasn't he?" Eloise came into the room, yelling loudly. "It's not that I want to reprimand you, Yohanna, but you're indeed way too soft as a person. From what I see, this kid and your neighbor are not well-meaning people, so you can't just get close to anyone that you like!"

She had shown some restraint before this, but now she slandered Hesper and Renfrew directly

now.

Feeling that this was not the right thing to do, Yohanna frowned and defended the mother and son softly, "Hesper and Renfrew are not..."

"What? Then are you saying that I'm the one who's at fault here?" Eloise raised her voice. "Just open your eyes and look. Yohanna, it's your son who's sick now; it's Gabriel. You can't just be this ignorant all the time."

Hesper walked up to Gabriel, inspected him, turned her head around, and gave off a cold expression. "It's definitely your problem."

Before Yohanna could react, Hesper continued to question Eloise solemnly, "What food did you feed Gabriel earlier today?"

"What could I have possibly fed him?!" Eloise accused Hesper with an exasperated expression. "It was obviously you! Can this get even more coincidental? After playing with your son for a short. while, Gabriel starts to have a stomach ache!"

Hesper did not have the patience to argue with her. She only gave Eloise a cold glare and stopped arguing with her. She then took out a pen and a piece of paper, quickly jotted down a prescription, and went home to grab some traditional Halwanese medicinal herbs.

“Fortunately, I have an elder brother who’s a medical student. He often sends me some medicinal herbs just in case of emergencies,” Hesper said to Yohanna. “Gabriel is suffering from a stomach ache due to the accumulation of gas in his stomach. It’s wintertime, and this is a common illness that kids get when they eat too much raw or chilly food. You wouldn’t give Gabriel something of that nature to eat at this time, would you?”

“I didn’t...” Yohanna shook her head and thought of something after a short while. “If that’s the case, are you saying that Aunt Chapelain did it?”

Yohanna turned to look at Eloise, and Eloise became infuriated instantly. “You just believe in what

this woman says? You should know best about how I normally treat Gabriel! I regard him as my own grandson, so why would I harm him?!”

Hesper sneered. “You’re not trying to harm Gabriel. You’re just ignorant.”

The kitchen was located on the second floor, and Eloise had offered to boil the medicine. Hesper was a little suspicious at first, but she still allowed her to take on the task anyway.

“Aunt Chapelain has been taking care of Gabriel not long after he was born...” Yohanna sighed. Although I sometimes feel that she’s... a little difficult to get along with, she has always been very kind to Gabriel. That’s why I haven’t fired her after so long.”

‘Yohanna is only trying to look after the household, but hiring a full-time babysitter isn’t a small expense for an ordinary family. Eloise has clearly failed to uphold her responsibility, so why should Yohanna tolerate her any further?’

Gabriel’s stomach hurt really badly. His face had already turned pale while lying on his bed, and he looked completely different from the boy who was holding Renfrew’s hands and enthusiastically explaining a game half an hour ago.

Renfrew was frightened by what he saw and stood beside Hesper helplessly. “Did I make Gabriel

sick?”

Renfrew had heard what Eloise said.

Hesper suppressed the surging flame of anger in her chest cavity and comforted her son. "This has nothing to do with you, so don't blame yourself for what happened."

Yohanna also felt a little sorry. "I'm sorry, I'll apologize on Aunt Chapelain's behalf..."

"No, it's not your fault, so you shouldn't be the one apologizing."

After saying so, Hesper sniffed the air.

'It stands to reason that the medicine has been boiling for a quite a while. Even if the kitchen is on the second floor, I should be able to smell it from here

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'Needless to think, that woman must be up to something again.'

Hesper was a little speechless. It was her first time paying her neighbor a visit, so she really didn't want to showcase her unfriendly and prickly side, but Eloise had been challenging her limits over. and over again.

"Why isn't there a smell yet?"

"...There's no smell?" Yohanna realized it slightly later than Hesper did. "Yeah... I don't seem to smell any Halwanese medicine boiling."

The two went upstairs, and Yohanna led Hesper into the kitchen, only to see Eloise's hectic silhouette. However, instead of boiling the medicinal herbs, she was busy chopping them up and then flushing them down the sink.

Without any doubts, Hesper pushed the door open.

Eloise turned her head immediately and stared at the two of them in a panic, still hiding a large handful of herbs in her hands.

Hesper walked up to her, grabbed her arm, and lifted it. Feeling excruciating pain, Eloise dropped all the medicinal herbs in her hand and they fell to the floor.

"What do you think you're doing?" Yohanna rarely sounded this infuriated.

When she approached her, it was Eloise's first time seeing her employer this furious, so she pulled her hand back timidly and whispered, "I'm only worried that there's some issue with her medicinal herbs! Is she even a doctor? Who gave her the qualifications to go around diagnosing people? Gabriel was already born with stomach issues...'

"You..." Yohanna clearly knew that Eloise was trying to change the notion. Her trust and tolerance toward her throughout all these years had almost become a joke.

She then turned her head and looked at Hesper apologetically. "Hesper, I'm really sorry. Please take a look at these herbs... Can they still be used?"

Hesper shook her head but comforted her at the same time. "I still have some herbs at home. Just give me some time. I'll go back and grab some more, so don't worry."

While they were busy talking, Yohanna's husband, Jean Yates, came back home.

Hesper began to go back to get more medicinal herbs. As she walked across the room, the smell coming off of the man felt somewhat familiar to her, but she could not figure out where she had

smelled it, so she brushed it off her mind.

After all, the other party was Yohanna's husband, so it was not good for her to probe too much.

"Do we have a guest over?" Jean walked past Hesper, went up to his wife, and held her hand. After a while, he turned his head, took a glance at the woman who he had just strode past, and then finally noticed Yohanna's cold fingers.

He sighed with a frown. "What happened? Your hands are so cold..."

After getting the medicine ready, Hesper did not want anyone else to take over the boiling of the herbs this time around, so she sat in the kitchen throughout the whole process, while Renfrew sat obediently beside her.

Eloise had been ordered to stay in the guest room by Yohanna on the grounds of taking advantage of her seniority and creating a scene. Jean did not say anything after hearing what happened, but he still frowned secretly and watched as Hesper boiled the medicine.

Jean truly had a very strange, inexplicably familiar smell. Hesper was still trying to recall it, and after a while of trying to walk down memory lane, the medicine was finally done.

Although she did not know if Hesper was actually proficient in medicine, Yohanna decided to trust Hesper and asked her to give the medicine to Gabriel immediately. They then waited for Gabriel to wake up.

Fortunately, after taking a bowl of medicine, Gabriel's stomach ache did get better, and the recovery was much faster compared to when he took the medicine that he normally took in Yohanna's impression.

This was within Hesper's expectation. After all, if she was not fully sure, she would not have spoken up at all.

Fortunately, Yohanna installed a surveillance camera at home. She was so anxious earlier on that she almost forgot about it.

After going through the surveillance footage, the result was similar to what Hesper said. It was indeed because of the food that Eloise had given to Gabriel earlier that day. It showed that Gabriel was acting up, asking for some cold food, and Eloise could not do anything to resist him, so she bought him a whole bowl of shaved ice and even put watermelon cubes on it.

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Seeing this, the sparks of anger at the bottom of Yohanna's heart lit up completely.

'If the person who came over today weren't Hesper, but another unlucky neighbor of ours who, like me, would take the fall only to resolve the dispute, Aunt Chapelain might've gotten away with today's matter. I'd never know why Gabriel had fallen ill in the first place! And perhaps this kind of issue has happened countless times before this, and I've been so naïve, thinking that Aunt Chapelain has been taking good care of Gabriel,'

He had only come back for a short while, so Jean, who had not figured out the ins and outs of the whole ruckus, had been listening quietly by the side without uttering a single word. At this time, all he could do was silently pat his wife on the back lightly as if comforting her.

Seeing that Gabriel's condition was getting better over time, and it was already getting late, Hesper picked up the drowsy Renfrew and got ready to head home.

The man who had been silent all this time suddenly spoke. "Ms. Rivera."

Hesper was a little surprised, while Yohanna gazed at her from within her husband's arms.

"Thank you for everything tonight. I thank you on behalf of our family," the man said, standing right in front of her—

'He doesn't look like a manager who works in a tiny company from 9 to 5 every day for a moderate salary like Yohanna told me before. He looks more like a trader who's used to dealing with the big shots out there in this ferocious world.'

The sudden perception and realization stunned Hesper for a moment, but it could be seen that Jean loved his wife and son very much, so perhaps what she felt was just an illusion....

"Don't worry about it. If Eloise hadn't pointed her fingers at Renfrew, I wouldn't even have cared to get into a fight with her." Hesper picked Renfrew up and said softly, "It's already rather late, I have to bring Renfrew back and tuck him into bed."

“I’m sorry to have bothered you tonight.”

The netizen’s enthusiasm about Lane Holdings’ fashion competition had reached an unprecedented peak. The things that needed to be dealt with had almost all been dealt with, and

all there was left to do was wait for the heat to bring in revenue.

Taking advantage of her free time, Hesper just so happened to have to make a trip back to college.

Not long after entering the campus, she ran into Jessie. Just as she was about to wave, Jessie trotted over, ignoring the paint on her hand, and karate-chopped her.

Hesper was caught off guard.

“Holy sh*t, Hesper Rivera! You’re the long-lost daughter of the Lanes! This is such a huge piece of news and you didn’t even tell me?!”

Jessie clamped Hesper’s neck in her arms. “Do you know how embarrassed I was when I saw the news? It feels like I’m friends with the richest woman in the world. It feels as if someone who

never buys lottery tickets had a hunch on a random day, bought a ticket for himself and ended up winning \$10 million.”

‘Such a vivid metaphor could only come out of the legendary Jessie Jenkins.’

“I’m sorry.” Hesper felt a little helpless. “I didn’t think too much about it before. I only wanted to study at Genecity University peacefully and not attract any trouble, but I didn’t expect the news to be exposed in advance in the end.”

“Is this what you’ve been worried about all this while?” Jessie patted Hesper on the shoulder.” Then I shall congratulate you. From today onwards, you can leave your thoughts of having a peaceful life at school behind for good. In the past two days, countless juniors have come to me. with cakes and coffee, asking me for your contact number. It’s taken me all the willpower I’ve accumulated over 25 years of being single to resist those temptations.”

Hesper smiled, turned around, and looked into Jessie’s eyes. “So, would you like to have a cup of coffee with me first, Gorgeous Ms. Jessie Jenkins?”

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Jessie did not hesitate and ordered a cup of coffee that she thought would be exceptionally. delicious but was too expensive for her before.

“Although it looks delicious, it’s just a cup of coffee. This is so not necessary!”

Recalling Jessie's righteous statement from the past, Hesper could not help but feel helpless. She queued right behind Jessie, paid for the coffee, and then sat down in a corner with Jessie.

Jessie thought she was a little dumb and naïve when she gave the whole thing a deeper thought.

'Hesper was able to get married to Rickard Duval, so how could she just be a girl from an ordinary family? Now that I think about it, although Hesper was very low-key when she was studying with us four years ago, she was never short of money.

'Four years ago, none of our purchasing power was as good as it is now. My monthly living expenses were not low at that time either, and I wasn't at the standard where I could buy whatever I wanted—'

"That's because I used to work part-time secretly." Hesper, seeing Jessie's confused expression, knew what was on her mind and explained helplessly, "The Lanes only found me three years ago... I was indeed an orphan back then. It was Rickard's grandfather who adopted me from the orphanage when I was still a kid, took me into the Duvals, and raised me all these years."

"Oh yeah..." In the past few days, the public's attention had been so focused on the fact that Hesper was the long-lost daughter of the Lanes that even Jessie had forgotten that Hesper once told her that she was an orphan.

"But isn't this fate? I heard that the Lanes are currently in a business war with the Duvals. Is that

true?"

Hesper's iced coffee was served sooner. She then took a sip and nodded. "I'm now in charge of some of Lane Holdings' business activities in Genecity. Apart from being at school, I'm also

working in the company too, which is why I'm so busy."

Jessie's eyes widened.

'So when Hesper told everyone about her "tiny business" during our class reunion, she was referring to the enormous Lane Holdings? Can the deviation be even more colossal than that?!

'It's no wonder no one ever thought that Hesper's family background would be this prominent. In all fairness, Hesper has never shown up on any occasion, acting like the daughter of a wealthy family. She also doesn't show off what she owns. She's managing a multinational company like Lane Holdings in Genecity, but it got turned into "a small business" when she explained it to us the other day.'

Jessie knocked her own forehead with her knuckle and said after a while, "How can you be so magical and mysterious all the time? Hesper Rivera, it seems I really lack imagination when I'm by your side..."

"Oh really?" Hesper put down the cup in her hand, sighed, and looked outside the window of the cafe. The cafe was a building made out of glass, and sunlight could easily shine through the window, and into the open space right beside Hesper. She lowered her head and murmured, "I wish that everything could have stayed ordinary and as it was back then, and nothing ever happened."

Hesper then went to see Professor Jenkins. He sorted out the deficiencies that she had shown throughout the tournament and explained them to her. Hesper listened to everything he said and thanked him gratefully. "Thank you, Professor Jenkins, I would have made those mistakes again in the next round if it weren't for you."

"Alright, just do your best." Xavier waved his hand. "The only issue with you is you don't have any intention to fight for things in life. I was most afraid that you'd act like this during the competition. Thank God that you've performed well in the recent few rounds."

Hesper was relieved when she heard what Xavier had to say. "I was worried that I was not doing well enough."

"You've been doing good enough. Please don't tell me that you plan to use what you've learned in these two and a half days to go against people who have done years of research and studies," Xavier responded bluntly. "You might be a talented seed in the fashion design field, but you're not the only one. So remember to always stay humble and learn as you move on. That's the only secret that'll help you go further in this career."

"Yes." Hesper agreed.

The two of them then went on to discuss the possible routines that the organizer might take in the next round of the competition. Xavier had gone through Hesper's latest manuscripts and was just amazed at the speed of the progression that she had been making.

In fact, when Hesper came back to resume her studies in college, Xavier had not thought very highly of her.

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Hesper used to be a very talented and smart student. Her ideas were very vivid and followed the romanticism movement. These were unique qualities that could only be possessed by designers when they were still students.

Although Xavier felt that Hesper could still be a designer, as one's talent could only be wasted but would never disappear, he thought the touch that she had for fashion design in the past might not necessarily return to her mind after all those years of staying away from the field.

But contrary to his expectations, Hesper only showed a little rustiness at the very beginning, and her talent came back to her very quickly after she resumed her studies in college.

While Xavier was thinking in a daze, Hesper called him twice before he finally came back to his

senses.

"Professor Jenkins, can I design this part in this way? I've considered the connection between the two parts, and it just doesn't feel very reasonable.

Xavier's gaze landed back on the draft and then he sighed inwardly.

"Some people are just born to be a designer, no matter if they're three years or 30 years late to the

game."

After leaving school, Hesper returned home.

Because Renfrew was at home now, Hesper would never go out to deal with things that could be

handled at home.

Renfrew had always been very obedient and could now accomplish many things by himself, so others could really be at ease when they were looking after him.

Even so, Hesper still wanted to stay by Renfrew's side for a little longer, always wishing that time could just freeze at such moments for longer, just a little longer.

'An opportunity like this, where Rickard leaves Renfrew with me so that I can take care of my precious son, doesn't present itself too often and for too long. Since Renfrew's custody is still with Rickard, there's nothing much that I can do even if I'm currently staying here in Genecity. But, success shouldn't be too far away....

'Rickard's affection for me will continue to grow, and the Lanes will surely prosper under my management. It'll then overthrow Duvals Group sooner or later, and Lane Holdings will truly monopolize the whole of Genecity. That's when I'll snatch my son back.'

"Mommy!" Renfrew ran over and showed Hesper the drawing that he drew in his spare time.

Hesper retracted the random thoughts that were flashing across her mind, and the corners of her lips curled up subconsciously.

“Let me take a closer look at it...”

“Okay!” Renfrew climbed onto Hesper’s thighs, placed his drawing right in front of her, and pointed

to the little figures on the drawing. “I drew myself, Mommy, and... Daddy.”

Hesper was stunned for a moment, then nodded. “It looks pretty.”

In fact, Renfrew did not seem to have inherited her talent in drawing and designing. Hesper had tried very carefully to identify who the three figures were but could not figure it out.

“Mommy, don’t you feel angry?” Renfrew nestled in Hesper’s arms a little nervously, raised his head, and asked softly, “You don’t seem to like Daddy very much, but I still drew him in my drawing.”

In fact, children could be very sensitive at times, and Hesper never thought that Renfrew would ignore the rivalry between Rickard and her. But she still sighed when she heard this.

“Renfrew... I mean, if you were to not be able to see Daddy ever again someday, would you feel

sad?”

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Renfrew was a little astonished and stared at Hesper for a while.

“Mommy, would it be like what you did before... I can only stay by your side and never see Daddy again?”

Hesper was a little surprised by Renfrew’s capability to understand the underlying message.

hidden under her vague question. She had tried to put the cruel reality into very obscure words, but Renfrew still understood what she wanted to express in an instant.

She nodded. “Yes, it’s just how you understand it.”

Such a decision might be too harsh for Renfrew. Although he loved his mommy very much, he had been living with his daddy since he was born.

Even though Rickard was very strict with him most of the time... He was certain that he loved him a lot.

“Don’t you want to...”

Hesper sounded a little disappointed, but Renfrew’s response seemed to be within her expectation. After all, Renfrew grew up right next to Rickard, and although Rickard treated everyone else very badly, Renfrew was never one of them, so this little kid would definitely not hate Rickard.

“I’ll go with you, Mommy,” Renfrew responded just when Hesper was thinking about how to change the subject. His gaze was filled with solemnity. “Daddy has kept me in Genecity and away from you all this while without your permission, and you’re only doing the same thing, so I support you.”

Renfrew was so obedient and sensible, Hesper rubbed his head distressfully and said in a low voice after a short while, “It’s not that I want to do this, but that I have to.”

There was no other reason. Everything in this world would disappear someday in the future, whether it was love or commitment. Those things were too unstable for Hesper, and they had crushed her trust too many times. Renfrew was the one most important person that she had left in this world. He was the “truth” that would never betray her and leave her.

Renfrew was her baby, her heart and soul, her flesh and blood.

Seeing Hesper’s frail look, Renfrew patted her back lightly as if he was trying to comfort her, just

like what the actors in dramas did.

Meanwhile, across the ocean.

According to the address that he had obtained beforehand, Rickard found the hotel where the

mysterious doctor often made an appearance and checked in secretly.

The locals claimed that there were countless people who would come here to ask the doctor to treat their illnesses or save lives every year, so there were quite a number of people who would go around town and ask every local about this doctor,

However, this old man was famous for his strange temper and quirk. He might not even take up orders from the richest of the rich, and he said that he only saved others out of fate.

Although Rickard did not know what “fate” meant, he had already made up his mind to bring this mysterious doctor back with him to treat Hesper’s leg injury.

“The old man hasn’t come back for a while. Now that you’ve brought him up, he’s never gone away for such a long time before this. Some say that he offended too many people earlier in his life, so I think his enemies must’ve come and made his life difficult,” the person who led Rickard into the town explained. The news dragged Rickard deep into his thoughts.

“Is there any way for me to contact him directly? I’ll do whatever it takes.”

As soon as Rickard said so, the man laughed instantly. “If he doesn’t want to come out, none of us will be able to locate him. However, this old man does have a precious apprentice. In the past, all you needed to do was to get into contact with this apprentice of his, and there might be a glimmer of hope for you. But his apprentice has gone off the grid for a long time too.”

The internal atmosphere of the hotel was excellent. Although Rickard had been keeping a rather low profile when he traveled here this time around, his regal aura naturally attracted the attention of the crowd around him, making it very difficult for others to ignore his existence. Everyone looked at him as if they had seen a gold ingot.

They had arrived at a place where no law applied.

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Rickard locked the door from the inside and checked the room for hidden cameras and recording equipment. He also examined places where memory and storage devices could be stashed away. scrutinizing every corner of the room carefully, and found quite a few pieces of equipment.

It was rather inconvenient for him to bring detection tools along, so Rickard could only make sure that there was no camera in the room. As for other monitoring devices, he could not be sure, so the room had been very quiet throughout the whole afternoon as Rickard barely made a sound. He spent the whole time communicating with Benji through typing on his phone.

“He’s so sharp.”

At the same time, Myriade was sitting in front of her computer monitor with the lollipop that Riley promised to buy for her the other day in her mouth. The screen in front of her had been completely blacked out, and the data showed that there were only three recording devices left. undiscovered in the entire room.

Rickard was able to get to where he currently was because he had always been an all-round and calm person, so Myriade never thought that the monitoring equipment that she had planted in the room would all escape Rickard’s inspection.

‘Only three left huh...? They’ll still be able to capture at least a few words. Rickard Duval appeared within our surveillance range all of a sudden.’

Myriade should have sent this news to Big T and let him handle it, but she still could not help but hesitate a little when she thought of Renfrew.

At the end of the day, Rickard was Renfrew's father.

'If something were to happen to Rickard today, Renfrew would eventually know that the organization and I were the ones behind the scheme that harmed his father.'

Myriade recalled Renfrew's trustworthy and righteous words....

She cracked her fingers and felt that the lollipop sitting in her mouth was too sweet, so she only licked it twice before putting it down. In the end, Myriade did not inform anyone about Rickard's sudden appearance but only monitored Rickard's movement from the shadows by herself..

I'm keeping the news to myself and not reporting it-

'I might even be able to use this opportunity to get my hands on more valuable intel. I'm not letting Rickard go just because of Renfrew.'

Benji: I've looked into the background of the mysterious doctor's apprentice, but nothing valuable has been found so far.

Benji: Because the doctor has been extremely enigmatic and keeps his true identity a well-guarded secret, those who have been treated by him will also keep his identity and that of those who worked for him strictly confidential.

Rickard frowned and looked out the window.

We can't find any news or clues about the doctor, and we can't even find him where he often appears... How can I get in touch with him and get him to go back to Genecity to treat Hesper's leg injury?"

Rickard: Okay, I see.

Senji: I also found something else, but it hasn't been confirmed just yet. It's said that the apprentice of the doctor was kidnapped a while back, and the doctor left this place in order to save his apprentice. If this rumor is true, the party that's the most capable of accomplishing something like this would be a mysterious local organization known as Daybreak.

Before coming here, Rickard had already looked into Daybreak and knew a thing or two about this organization. It specialized in taking in all kinds of pitiful people. Anyone who had been treated unfairly in life and had a miserable life experience was eligible to sign up as a member of Daybreak.

Because the environment here was not as friendly and peaceful as in Halwanest, their members were mostly armed. It could be seen that the people who funded this organization from behind the curtains were definitely not to be trifled with.

Benji: The authenticity of this information still can't be confirmed. In addition to that, Daybreak has always been very neutral in all aspects, so provoking them isn't a wise thing to do. Rickard knew this. In the past, he would never do anything that he was not sure about.

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But things were different now, he had to take the risk for Hesper.

Meanwhile, during the fifth round of the competition, the originally boisterous hotel had become much quieter.

Most of the competitors had been eliminated, and almost all the remaining participants were staying in single rooms now. Room 345 was the only room that was still housing two people,

which were Hesper and Celine.

As usual, Hesper arrived earlier than anyone else.

The temperature in Genecity was very low that day, and perhaps because of this year's weather, Hesper only got to know that it might snow again that day after reading the weather forecast.

Genecity had not had snow in several years.

After staying alone in room 345 for a while, someone knocked on the door abruptly.

Hesper got up to open the door and raised her eyebrows when she saw Michelle standing in front of the room, looking a little hesitant.

Hesper wore a coat that day, and underneath the coat was a very ordinary-looking knitted

sweater, but it still looked extravagant on her.

Michelle had already thought about what to say, but when she saw Hesper's face, her mind went blank and she instantly lost her tongue.

"Do you want to come in?"

Hesper had already guessed the purpose of Michelle's visit. Frankly speaking, she did not despise Michelle; in fact, she only found her actions incomprehensible, so she could be a little impatient when it came to dealing with her.

The entanglements and disputes from four years ago... She had almost forgotten what actually happened during that period of time, and she had never paid special attention to which classmate boycotted her or made her college life harder than it had to be. Back then, Rickard was the only person that she saw; he was literally her life.

Everything would have been fine if Michelle only provoked her and only her, but she slandered Professor Jenkins in front of the media. It had affected Professor Jenkins's work and life.

Hearing Hesper's words, Michelle followed her into the room awkwardly.

Hesper turned off the camera in the room, as there was no need for other people to see this scene. Seeing this, the broadcaster also turned off the recording system in room 345.

"Uh..." Michelle watched nervously as Hesper poured herself a glass of water, sat on the couch, and looked up at her. She then could not help but swallow a few gulps of saliva before she bit the bullet, opened her mouth, and said, "Ms Lane, I didn't know who you are before this and painted a target on your back. I'm sorry about that."

In fact, Michelle did not manage to influence Hesper at all, not even a tiny bit, because those petty and dumb tricks that she had been pulling were not worth her attention.

But Hesper gave off a smile and responded jokingly, "If an apology were useful in such situations, what would we need the police for?"

Hearing Hesper's words, Michelle's face instantly turned pale.

'Does she know that I'm the one who provided the photo to the media? But I did everything very covertly back then... Although, Hesper is one of the Lanes, so maybe she found out about me after some investigations...'

Michelle looked at Hesper and knelt right in front of her. "I'm sorry, Ms. Lane, I shouldn't have taken those photos, and I shouldn't have sold them to the media!"

'Photos? What photos?'

Hesper was stunned for a moment.

'Oh, no wonder someone managed to take a picture of Isaac picking me up after school. So it was Michelle who did it.'

The blogger who spread the rumors had already received a letter of demand from Hesper's lawyer, and Hesper had asked him about the person who sent him the photos, but the blogger claimed that he did not know the person who gave him the information and that he only wrote the article to attract some attention online.

But nobody knew if he was speaking the truth or not....

Hesper was still thinking that she was not able to track down the person who provided the blogger with the photos, but Michelle was so terrified that she actually blew her own cover.

“What about the information that you disclosed to the media? You told them about my marriage. and divorce from years ago.” Hesper looked expressionless, which made it difficult for Michelle to figure out her emotion. However, Michelle was astonished after hearing her question, and her expression changed slightly.

“It’s Juniper Wight! Juniper is the person who told me that!”

Michelle had been busy worrying about so many things and had forgotten about the person who told her the half-truth.

‘It was Juniper! She’s the one who told me about Hesper’s past, where she dropped out of school to get married and got divorced later on in life. If it weren’t for this, I’d never have been able to get

to know these secrets of hers.

Juniper must know Hesper’s true identity, but she actually didn’t tell me about it and chose to use me to spread rumors about Hesper and go against her.”

Thinking of this, Michelle arrived at a lightbulb moment. Anger and annoyance flashed across her face instantly.

‘I trusted Juniper so much before this and told her everything. And Hesper actually tried to warn me not to be used by Juniper, but I got convinced again with only a few lines of sweet-talking from Juniper.”

“Just as I thought.” Hesper sneered.

‘There’s only a handful of people who know about what happened to me in the past, and no matter how much the Duvals and Rickard dislike me, they, at the very least, understand that they shouldn’t be publicizing this truth about their family’s past, as it would only ruin the family’s reputation in Genecity, so not many people in this city know about my life experiences.

Zikmund has quite a close relationship with Rickard, so he should know about me, and a though he’s a playboy who does nothing all day long apart from fooling around, he’d never spread rumors about Rickard so casually. So, it’s not that difficult to link everything to Juniper.

‘However, even though Michelle got used by Juniper, it’s obvious that whatever was going on in this pea brain of hers isn’t anything righteous. At that time, after such news

broke out, if I weren't the long-lost daughter of the Lanes, I would've been crucified by the public, boycotted, and lost all opportunity in the design industry.

'It's not that Michelle doesn't know anything. She knows everything better than anyone else because all she has wanted all this while has been to ruin me. It's just that she's failed to do so, and now she can only act pitifully in front of me.'

Seeing that Hesper did not utter a single word, Michelle wanted to say something anxiously, but she did not know what to say.

'I've done so many bad things to Hesper, so which one should I start with...?'

At this moment, the door of the room opened all of a sudden, and Celine stood in the doorway with her luggage, staring at Hesper and Michelle in bewilderment.

"What are you guys doing?"

Michelle was foredoomed to return without achieving anything this time around since Hesper had

no intention of forgiving her at all. After all, she was not the only one who got affected by the news; Professor Jenkins suffered too. And she was not in any position to forgive Michelle on Professor Jenkins' behalf.

At the end of the day, Michelle was still someone who would target the weak and fear the strong. If Hesper had not had a higher status than she did, it would be impossible for her to get an apology from Michelle in this life.

Celine came very late again today. Her arrival time had been rather inconsistent, and Hesper had already gotten used to it.

"I'm sorry. My mother is home alone, so I sometimes have to settle her down and coax her for a bit first, or else she just won't let me come out." Celine felt helpless while she unpacked her personal belongings and put them away. "It just happened again this morning. I already told her last night that I have to go out for work in the morning and that she can't disturb me for a few days, but she'd forgotten about it when we got up this morning."

Celine seldom talked so much, and as she listened to Celine's explanation, Hesper recalled the emotions that she poured into the dress that she designed for the competition surrounding the theme "Mother". She said thoughtfully, "You do love your mother very much."

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Celine wanted to say that one's love for her mother was a given and that no one in the world would not love her mother, but she remembered that Hesper was an orphan, so she remained

silent.

The recording and video cameras in the room had been turned off, so Celine had no worries, and continued. "When I was very young, my father died in a work-related accident, and my mother had to take over our household to raise us. I used to have a younger sister too, but she went missing.

later on in life."

Speaking of the past, Celine became a little taciturn. "Sometimes I can't help but wonder if I should hate the world for what happened. Our family has encountered so many misfortunes throughout life, and even though my father passed away very early on, we still worked extremely hard and tried to live life to the fullest, but my family received another huge blow when my sister went missing years later.

"Since then, my mother's mental state has been rather under the weather. She might sometimes recognize me as my younger sister, but she can still go out of the house and hold conversations normally. It's just that she can get a little confused at times." Celine lowered her head. "But she's been struggling and deteriorating these past few years, she might not even recognize me from time to time.

"She might still smile at me and refer to me as Cece when she's on the clearheaded side of things. That's already a blessing for me."

Hesper did not expect Celine's life to be so rough and bumpy. "Then your sister... She hasn't been found yet?"

Celine nodded. "Actually, my memory of my sister is already a little fuzzy. We were still very young when we were separated. I don't have the ability and financial power to search for her all over the world, so I can only hope that she grew up safely somewhere in the world. That's already more than what I can ask for."

The fifth round did not go on for a long time as it was not a competition that required the participants to design something over a long period of time; instead, it only took one morning.

Hesper's ranking had been rather steady as she once again landed in the top three, and Celine was not doing too bad as well. The thing that surprised the audience and spectators the most was that Shawn was still overachieving and landed in one of the top spots. He had since become the biggest dark horse of this tournament, instantly making him one of the most popular participants.

After returning to Genecity, Hesper did not go home straight away but drove directly to Seth's

restaurant.

It was already the weekend, and it was time to meet with Seth. The last call came and ended in a hurry. And when Hesper wanted to contact Seth again, all the calls and messages just went nowhere.

Seth gave Hesper a very enigmatic and dangerous feeling. Hesper kept feeling that their meeting that day would not be a simple and direct one.

When she arrived at the restaurant, the doors were indeed open. She had traveled there by herself a few times before this, but the restaurant was always closed as if the fact that she had eaten there was a complete illusion.

The wind chime hanging on the door frame rang, and Hesper subconsciously took a glance

outside.

It had started snowing.

#

Daybreak could be heard everywhere, yet it was still very mysterious. Rickard had been staying in the hotel for a few days, but he still did not get any useful news.

Many people claimed that the leader of Daybreak knew everything because he was a walking computer. There were no passwords that he could not crack or computers that he could not hack in the world. Hence, walking into Daybreak's surveillance scope meant that everything one did would be closely monitored by the organization.

If Daybreak did not send someone over to you, it meant that they were not interested in you.

Logically speaking, with Rickard's identity and financial resources, he should not be disregarded in any way. So even Benji could not figure it out, but the facts were placed right under his nose.

Through a Bluetooth headset, Benji's voice sounded. "Sir, I've scanned your room and discovered that there are still three monitoring spots left. I've sent the specific locations to your cell phone."

“This monitoring system probably doesn’t belong to the hotel itself. If I’m not mistaken, they were planted there by Daybreak’s IT genius. All your actions have indeed been monitored by Daybreak. since the very beginning.”

‘We’re only here looking for a doctor and still managed to bring up so many other issues.’

Following the illustration sent by Benji, Rickard destroyed the remaining three devices, sat down, and went through the materials of unknown authenticity laying on the coffee table that they had obtained through intensive investigations in the past few days.