

Read Novel Task NO 1 How To Pursue Miss CEO

Chapter 631

Task NO 1 How To Pursue Miss CEO Chapter 631-Unlimited Credit Card

Linda thought the customer sounded familiar, and it was obvious she was an Astorian. Goaded by curiosity, she went to take a look, and surprise, surprise, it was an old acquaintance. After that, Linda went back to the room and continued her session. "Who's the screaming customer?"

"Oh, that one? She's an Astorian like you, but she has one bad temper. The lady registered for a temporary membership, since she's not staying here for long. She's one troublemaker though. One of the staff members was abused last time."

"She has always been this way." Linda smiled. "Oh, you know her?" "Well, she's an old friend, but we've been out of touch. Why don't you give me her number? I'll talk to her."

When the beautician heard that, she was in a dilemma. She needed to uphold her client's confidentiality, but she wanted to settle that troublemaker too. "Don't worry. I won't tell anyone. I just need her number."

The beautician was delighted to hear that. Since they lived on commissions, having a regular like Linda around would mean securing her livelihood. "I'll give you her number after we're done."

After she was done with the session, Linda got the number. I still need money to make this work. Oh, got it.

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On the other hand, Chloe was kneeling on the ground, while the butler was scolding her. A jewelry box was on the table in the living room. At that moment, Jerry came up to them.

"Sir, this one here has been stealing from you! These belong to Miss Murray," the butler reported.

"No! I didn't! I'm innocent, sir! I am!"

“Then why do you have these? And what were you going to do with them?” the butler barked.

“I...” Chloe looked down in silence.

Jerry disliked handling trivial matters like that, so he waved them down. “Do as you please. Don’t disturb me.”

“Grandpa!” Linda trotted up to him.

“What is it, Linda?” Jerry wasn’t really enthusiastic, since his wife was bedridden.

“I’m sorry, Grandpa. Chloe didn’t steal. I asked her to sell these off.” Linda stared down, appearing to be ashamed.

“You’re selling these off? But why?” Jerry was puzzled.

“Because I need something. Grandma got me everything I needed, but now that she’s sick, she can’t do it anymore. I’m sorry, Grandpa. Chloe isn’t a thief. In fact, she’s been a good servant. Please don’t blame her for this. I don’t want to disturb you over something as trivial as this, but I had to do it since Grandma’s sick. That’s why I wanted her to sell these off.”

Jerry felt embarrassed that his own granddaughter had to sell things off to make a living. “I’m sorry, sweetie. I’ve been too preoccupied with Lindsay, and I forgot about everything else. You’re an adult now. Of course you need money.”

“It’s alright, Grandpa.” She hugged him. “I just didn’t want to trouble you.”

“Get Danny to register a card for you. You can buy anything you want then.”

“Thank you, Grandpa.”

With that, Jerry handed the matter over to Danny and pulled out of it. A short while later, Danny registered a credit card for Linda. It was a black card, and the logo on it was all too familiar; she had seen one in Selena’s hands, and another in Jason’s.

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Chapter 632

Task NO 1 How To Pursue Miss CEO Chapter 632-Alright. Now I have one too. A black card that can be used anywhere in the world, and its credit is unlimited. I have money now! Linda held the card and kissed it. Then, Chloe came in, still holding the box. "Did I do well, miss?"

"Brilliant." Linda took a pearl necklace from the box. "This is yours." Chloe was overjoyed that she got a gift. "Thank you, miss." "There's more from where that came from. Work well, and you will be rewarded."

"Yes, miss!" Chloe pocketed the necklace. The next day, Linda asked the customer in the salon out, and she even looked into that woman's background. At that moment, the woman was in a restaurant's room. She was wearing everything yellow and was redoing her makeup. Even though she was obviously busy, Linda still went in.

"Long time no see." The woman turned around, only to feel shocked at the sight of Linda. "You?"

"In the flesh, Miss Yard. Oh, no. You're Mrs. Astley now, aren't you?"

Megan took a deep breath. She never expected Linda to be the one who asked her out. Before this, Selena upheld the end of her bargain and bailed her out, but she was banished from Digton. At the same time, Finneas was bankrupt, so she couldn't rely on him anymore. That didn't mean it was the end for her though. She managed to beguile Jimmy Astley, who was a real estate tycoon in Digton's neighboring city.

Jimmy was a lucky man. He used to be nothing but a poor peasant. His family had a twelve-acre land that was used for farming, but then the city wanted to build an airport on their field, so they received a few million in compensation.

Thanks to that money, Jimmy started investing in a small real estate, then he started finding success in it. At that time, he was just an uneducated upstart though. Eventually, Jimmy married someone and had a son, but his wife died. He was already forty, while Megan was little more than twenty years old. However, he liked her because she was also an undergraduate.

In that period of her life, Megan didn't have anything to look forward to after her incarceration. All she wanted was a quiet life, so she dated Jimmy. Luckily, Jimmy loved her and provided for her. This time, she came to the city with him since he had a business negotiation going on, but she never thought

she'd bump into Linda. God knew how panicked she was when she saw the text the night before.

"What do you want?" Megan was worried Linda might do something outrageous. After all, she used to be Selena's assistant, so she knew a lot about Megan.

"Don't worry. I'm here to talk about Selena. You hate her too, don't you? I heard prison hasn't been kind to you. Don't you want revenge?"

Megan stared at her in disbelief.

"Oh, sorry. Guess I should tell you this. It's over between me and Selena. She's a b*tch. I got kicked off after all I did for her. And she even..." Linda pulled her skirt up, revealing the bullet scar on her leg—the one made by Hades.

"Selena did this?"

"Who else? I almost died, so I have to get back at her." The enemy of my enemy is my friend. If Linda wanted Megan to be her ally, she had to prove that they had the same experience.

"I heard that Jimmy's son is a tough nut to crack. You've been suffering, haven't you? Jimmy's mother always trips you up, and their relatives wouldn't stop insulting you because you're a poor girl."

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Task NO 1 How To Pursue Miss CEO Chapter 633-Linda let out a sympathetic sigh. "You used to be a proper lady. You got married to Finneas and lived a good life, but now? Now you're a sorry sight."

Megan took a deep breath. "Stop. I'm living a good life now, and I've turned over a new leaf. I don't want to dwell on my past, and I'm not interested in getting back at Selena.

All I want is a quiet life." With that, she stood up. "I know you have everything about me. The good and the bad, but if you're going to back me into a corner with that, you can be sure I'll bite back." Megan emphasized the last part.

Her life was a nightmare, but she didn't want to get back at Selena. After all that had happened, she had let go of her grudge. Besides, even if she wanted to, she stood no chance against Selena.

Putting Pierre aside, Selena alone was already a formidable opponent. She bought out both the Yard Group and Lake Corporation, and she even had her own fashion brand. Last she checked, Selena started her casual clothing line and was a multimillionaire.

She couldn't hope to stand up against her. Even though marrying an upstart and becoming a stepmom was hard, at least she had a stable life. After going through the hell that was prison, she was content with her new life.

"Ah, please let me finish," Linda said. Megan stopped in her tracks. "Don't worry. I won't talk about your past. All I need now is an ally. I'm a new person now, you know. Literally. Have you ever heard of the Murrays?"

"I'm a part of them now. I could have sought anyone else out, but I thought you'd be perfect for the job." Linda drank some coffee. "Of course, you stand to gain a lot from helping me. How does your own business sound? I bet the Astleys will no longer insult you if you're a success story yourself."

Megan didn't refuse, for it was a tempting offer. At the moment, she was useless for the Astleys. She didn't bear any child, nor could she make money, so the Astleys looked down on her. But if she had her own business, she reckoned they wouldn't mock her anymore. "Sorry, but I'm not interested." Still, she refused the offer.

Then, Linda went up to her and put her name card in Megan's handbag. "Don't be in a hurry. Think long and hard about this. I can wait."

Without a word, Megan left.

When she was gone, Linda sighed. She's changed too much. It's going to be hard to persuade her. Before she could convince Megan, Linda found out that she left Yucaria with Jimmy the next day.

"She's a coward!" Linda cursed. She thought Megan could be a powerful ally, but it turned out that she was nothing but a fool.

Megan had gone back in a hurry out of fear from the meeting with Linda. She had worked hard to live a quiet life, so she didn't want anyone to ruin it.

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Some time later, Megan heard the sound of smashing glass outside, then someone yelled, "Don't touch me! Leave me alone!" She shook her head before going out. As expected, she saw the servants holding Meredith up as she tried to go around. Once again, she was drunk.

"Oh god, you reek of alcohol." Megan asked the servant to take Meredith back to her room.

"I told you, I am not drunk!" Meredith swatted the servants' hands away. "I'm fine!"

After her marriage, Megan retrieved Meredith from the brothel she was in. John wanted to kill her, but then he thought death was merciful after what she did to him, so he sold her to a brothel in the red light district. It wasn't until after John's death did Megan bail her out of the whorehouse.

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Task NO 1 How To Pursue Miss CEO Chapter 634-However, Meredith had lost a part of herself in the brothel. The gleam in her eyes was completely snuffed out. Since then, she had been a drunken mess. Megan shook her head, then she closed the door. "I know you're upset, Merry, but what's done is done. We have to accept our reality." Life in prison made Megan grow as a person.

"Reality?" Meredith sneered. "The reality is I used to be a big star who was adored by millions, but now? Now I'm just a dirty sl*t who's f*cked a million men. I feel disgusted about myself!" She started crying, and Megan hugged her.

She let Meredith cry for a while before pushing her sister's hair away from her face. "I know all about your dream, Merry. Don't worry. Once everything has settled down, I should already have enough money to send you to Hefalia for a cosmetic surgery. You can work in the entertainment industry again. With your acting skills, you might just become as popular as you were."

A little spark lit up in Meredith's eyes. "Really, Megan?"

"Of course. You're my sister, after all. It'll be good for me if you're popular."

They smiled at each other.

“Please don’t give up on yourself, Merry. There’s always light at the end of the tunnel.”

Meredith nodded, but Megan sighed, much to Meredith’s confusion. Megan’s a rich lady now. Jimmy’s nice to her. Yeah, his family’s a b*tch, but Megan’s living the high life now. She has caviar for breakfast. “You seem down, Megan.”

“Just thinking about how fickle life is. One moment you might be the richest person on the planet, but you might be dead the next.”

“What’s wrong? Did Jimmy do something?”

“No. But something happened. Know who I ran into in Yucaria?”

“Tell me.”

“Linda Dunn.”

Meredith knew who Linda was; she was Selena’s assistant. Wherever Selena went, she went, but she never saw her again after some time. Meredith always wondered what happened to her.

“She’s a part of the Murrays now. I don’t know what happened, but she wasn’t lying. I asked the locals.”

“But she was just an assistant! What gives? How did she even manage that?” Some people were an overnight success, while some, like them, fell from grace.

“That’s not important. The important thing is she has beef with Selena, and she wants my help in taking her down.”

Meredith was excited to hear that. “Really? Why didn’t you take her offer then? Selena turned our lives into a living hell. I’ve always wanted to get back at her.”

“Don’t even think about it, Merry!” Megan admonished her sister. “Do you have any idea how powerful she is? She’s the richest woman in the nation, and she’s Pierre’s wife. Do you think you stand a chance?”

At that, Meredith turned away. “Yeah, I do. A slim one, but still a chance.”

“You foolish girl. Did you forget how you got taken down? Do you want to experience that again? You were sold to a brothel the last time. If she catches you again, you could be killed.”

Meredith didn’t like what Megan was saying, but it was the truth—Selena did take her down, and completely so.

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Task NO 1 How To Pursue Miss CEO Chapter 635-Nonetheless, she wouldn’t admit it. She wouldn’t admit that she lost to Selena. In her eyes, Selena was nothing but scum. “And honestly, Selena didn’t turn our lives into living hell. We did. If you hadn’t taken her children away; if you hadn’t told Pierre you were their mother; if you hadn’t come up with that plan to approach him, you wouldn’t have gotten sold off to the brothel.

And as for me...” Megan teared up. “If I hadn’t hooked up with Finneas, I wouldn’t have gotten myself into this mess. Yes, Selena’s cruel, but we did this to ourselves.”

As Megan spoke, she stared downward, but she wasn’t going to let herself fall further into despair. “Forget about Selena, Merry. Forget about your grudge. Think of this as a lesson. Dust yourself off and keep moving on.” She patted Meredith’s head. “All we have to do is live our lives quietly. Let bygones be bygones, huh?”

“Yeah, sure...” Meredith drawled, but she scoffed silently. What a loser. She’s terrified of Selena. “Whatever you say. You saved me, after all.”

Of course, Megan knew Meredith was still angry, but she didn’t think much about it. She thought Meredith was still traumatized from her time at the brothel, so she’d leave Meredith to her own devices. She’ll get it one day. Then, Megan threw Linda’s name card away. “I hope she won’t contact me again.”

“I’m feeling tipsy, Megan. Can you go out, please? I want to sleep.”

“Of course. Sleep tight. I’ll be off now.” Megan left her alone after that, but the moment she did, Meredith scooped the card out of the trash can, and she saw that Linda’s number was written on it.

“You might be scared, Megan, but I’m not. I’ll get her for us.” She smirked.

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Meanwhile, Niall found an international kindergarten for the kids. Selena didn’t really want to send them to the kindergarten, but it was Pierre’s orders. She was already busy enough with the companies on her plate, so sending them to a kindergarten was a good idea. Juniper and Joaquin could hold their own anyway.

Once the kids were sent away, Selena began focusing on the companies’ management, then she realized it was still too hard on her, so she wanted to hire someone as president to help her out.

It wouldn’t be easy. She’d have to find someone from another company. If she handled it poorly, it might affect her business relation with that company. Hence, she started going through the candidates and finally set her eyes on Yvonne Carson, the vice-president of Auspicious Inc.

Yvonne was a veteran in Auspicious Inc. She could have become the president, but then the board of directors decided to instate a new guy as the president, much to her chagrin. By now, she was already thirty-eight and a mother of two. Her youngest kid was already attending kindergarten, which meant she was at the peak of her career.

But rumors had it that her temper’s bad. Selena sent someone to look into her case, then she found out Yvonne loved to hit the gym. Because of that, she signed up for a membership in the same gym and started working out too.

After changing her clothes out in the locker room, Selena went around the gym once before finally running into Yvonne. She was wearing all black, while her hair was tied up in a ponytail, and she was on a treadmill.

Selena waited somewhere else for a while, then she went to the treadmill beside Yvonne after the previous gym goer had left.

Even though Selena was beside her, Yvonne didn’t care about it, since there were a lot of people moving around in the gym.

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Chapter 636

Task NO 1 How To Pursue Miss CEO Chapter 636-After realizing Yvonne was ignoring her, Selena screamed. She quickly stopped the treadmill before plopping down on the ground. "My leg is cramping!"

Yvonne threw her a glance before hunkering down to help her out by pressing down on Selena's foot with her leg while holding down on her calf. "It's going to be a bit painful."

Selena looked at her painfully. "Thank you." A while later, Yvonne let her leg go. "There. Stand up and walk around." Selena hobbled around. "Loads better, but still throbbing though. Thank you so much."

"No problem." It was then that Selena went up to her. "You seem familiar. You're Auspicious Inc's Vice President, aren't you?" Yvonne snorted. "Yeah, and you're here for me, aren't you?"

Selena was shocked that Yvonne knew, but she couldn't say anything to that. The plan was to get close to her before telling her who she really was. If she finds out that I went through all this just to hire her, I bet she's going to feel a lot better about becoming president.

She didn't care if she would be called a schemer; every president was the same anyway. As long as they did a good job, nobody would care. "So tell me, Miss Yard. What do you want?"

Now that they had dropped all pretense, Selena stopped acting. "Just what I like, Miss Carson. Right, to be honest, I want you to be JNS Corporation's president."

Yvonne thought Selena wanted to work with her company, but she never expected Selena to offer her the position of president. I thought she's the president. When she heard that, she stopped the treadmill again. "Why? Sick of the position?"

"I'm a mother of three, so family matters are already taking a toll on me. My husband's not around, so I have to handle Fowler Corporation and Empire Group too. It's too much for one lady, so I need someone to help out with JNS. You're the best candidate, at least to me."

Yvonne gave it some thought. “But my job is stable, and the salary’s nice. I also have the shares, and I get a lot in dividends every year. So tell me, why do you think I’d work for you?”

To that, Selena answered, “Auspicious Inc. may be bigger than JNS, but JNS is still growing. Besides, Fowler Corporation and Empire Group are backing it up. I don’t think anyone would let this chance slip. Name your terms.”

Yvonne sipped some water. “Miss Yard, we’re both women, so I guess you know what working women are like. We don’t really switch jobs easily, especially women of our position.”

When Selena heard that, she froze up. Oh no. I know it’s the peak of her career, but I forgot that she’s also a woman, and she’s a mother too. The first thing a woman would consider in a job change would be their kids and family. A job change meant a change in environment and a process of relearning, as well as making profit for the company.

Different companies had different cultures and working styles. It was a great challenge to undertake, no matter who it was. If Yvonne were to change jobs, she might have to spend a year to establish herself. During that time, she’d have to sacrifice a lot for her job, including her family.

Selena’s hesitation was what she expected, so Yvonne smiled. “Find someone else, Miss Yard. Yes, I could have been president, but it is what it is. I can live with that. You’re a president, so you should know people like me are easily exploited, since I have a family to provide for.”

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Task NO 1 How To Pursue Miss CEO Chapter 637-Selena thought that was depressing. “I see. I look forward to our next collaboration, but how did you know I was here for you?” Selena thought she managed to blend in perfectly, but she never expected Yvonne to see through her so easily.

Yvonne shrugged. “This is the best gym in Digton. Everyone’s here for a better experience, so their gear’s the best. For example...” She pointed at her shirt. “We’d wear professional apparel.”

At that, Selena looked at her clothes. I see. She was only wearing some sports clothes, or to be exact, they were casual clothes, and her shoes weren't made for running; they were just normal sports shoes.

When she realized it, she looked up to smile awkwardly at Yvonne, but Yvonne had already left. There was nothing left for her to do, so she sighed and left as well. It's going to be hard hiring her. It was almost time for her to pick her children up, so she went to their kindergarten.

After getting exposed by Yvonne, she wasn't exactly in a good mood, and the kids knew it, so they kept quiet on the way back.

She didn't make dinner that night, so the servants did it. While they had dinner, Juniper sat on her lap. "I'm going training with Master Werner tomorrow, Mommy. Don't forget about it!"

"Of course I won't." Selena pinched her cheek. "But won't it be hard on you, honey?" Juniper had to go to the kindergarten on weekdays, and she had to travel for hours on Saturday to learn from Andy. Also, Andy set a high bar; he wanted Juniper to show up by nine, so she would have to wake up at four thirty in the morning. Selena thought that was hard.

"Nope. I like to train with him. He told me I will be starting acupuncture soon!"

Juniper brought back home a box of acupuncture needles a week ago. "That's great! You'll be my little doctor then, Juniper!"

"No problem!"

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On the other hand, Jerry asked everyone to meet up at the residence in Yucaria. Lindsay was still bedridden as usual, nor could she talk. Jerry, of course, looked grim when he announced, "I have something to tell you." A pregnant pause later, he said, "I've decided to euthanize Lindsay."

Everyone looked shocked, but Linda was delighted. Good. That old git finally did it. Looks like I don't have to do anything anymore. "But what if G-Grandma can get better?" Linda shed some crocodile tears.

At the side, Reuben and Jocelyn sighed, but they said nothing. Jason kept quiet the whole time.

“It’s fine. She’s not getting any younger, and the doctor said it’s almost impossible for her to recover. I’m not going to put her through hell just so she can stay alive.”

Jerry was smiling, but he was crying. Nobody would do that on their own accord. If Lindsay was alive, he could at least see her, hold her hands, look into her eyes, and guess what she needed. If she was dead, the only thing he could do was visit her grave.

“We made a promise. If the day would come where either of us would only live on in pain; if either of us would be bedridden, the other one would euthanize them. Don’t feel sad. Releasing her from her pain is the best way to go.”

Jerry was trying to calm everyone down, though that message was also for himself. He needed to steel himself, for it was a promise. Even so, he still felt reluctant when the time actually came.

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Task NO 1 How To Pursue Miss CEO Chapter 638-As Jerry spoke, he held his tears back. “Dad, it’s alright. If Mom can feel better that way, then go ahead. I can see it’s quite tortuous for her,” Reuben said. Jocelyn nodded. “Same here. I don’t want her to be in pain anymore.”

“Very well then. If it’s fine with you, then I’ll go through it with the doctor.” Then, he stood up. The moment he turned around, a teardrop fell down his cheek. He seemed to have aged a lot since Lindsay had the stroke. Before this, he used to be a strong old guy, but since then, his back started hunching, and he was starting to wobble.

After the meeting, Jerry came to her room. Lindsay was taken care of by two caretakers and two servants, but even so, the room still reeked of urine and feces.

Ever since she was paralyzed, Lindsay couldn’t even control her bowel movements. The servants worked hard to change the bedsheets and her clothes, but they were not fast enough. Eventually, the stench of the excrements lingered in the room.

That sight only served to reaffirm Jerry's resolve. Lindsay was someone who adored cleanliness and beauty above all else. Also, she was a proud woman, so she wouldn't want anyone to see her in such a sorry state.

Once the caretakers and servants were done, Jerry asked them to leave him and Lindsay alone. Lindsay was blushing in embarrassment, but Jerry didn't care as he held her hand, caressing it gently. Since she relied on the IV drip for her nutrients, her hand was bruising up.

"It's been hard on you, Linnie." Jerry used to call her Linnie when they were young, but he stopped doing that when they got older.

Lindsay smiled. She seemed to have gotten used to her condition, but even if she hadn't, there was nothing she could do anyway.

Suddenly, Jerry started crying. "I always thought I'd be the one to go first, but I never thought this would happen. Do you remember the promise we made, Linnie? The euthanizing promise? I'm going to go through with it, even if it kills me."

Lindsay looked horrified. No, I can't die yet! Not now! Not when my granddaughter is still out there! When she heard that, she started gurgling and gripped Jerry's hand as hard as she could. Jerry wondered what got her so agitated, then he realized she was crying.

"What's going on, Linnie? You look like you're in pain. Linnie, grab my hand as hard as you can if you want to get euthanized, but don't move if you refuse. Is that fine?"

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On Selena's end, the time was four thirty in the morning in Digton City, Astoria. It was a Saturday morning, but Selena had taken Juniper to the car even though the girl was still sleeping. She needed to take Juniper to Dr. Werner's place for her lessons, though Selena prepared a soft mattress in the backseat for Juniper to sleep on.

For some reason, Selena wanted to make an apple pie the night ago, but she failed on the first try, so her kids waited for her. Even though Selena told Juniper to go to sleep, Juniper refused. The kids pranced around in delight when the pie was done. It was only after that did Juniper go to sleep.

Thanks to that, Juniper couldn't wake up in time. Selena was about to get the day off for Juniper, but it was too early, so she thought Andy wasn't awake yet. Left with no choice, she drove her sleeping daughter to Andy's place. Eventually, the bumpy ride and the chilly breeze woke Juniper up.

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Task NO 1 How To Pursue Miss CEO Chapter 639-Fortunately, they managed to get there in time, but since Juniper was sleepy, she kept dozing off during class. Eventually, she fell asleep when Andy was lecturing. Andy noticed it, and he coughed. "Juniper, tell me about point DU-24, where it's located, and what it does."

Instantly, Juniper jolted awake. "DU-24... DU-24... I'm sorry, Master Werner. I fell asleep."

It was the first time she couldn't answer a question. She might not have a perfect memory like Jameson, but she was smart enough to memorize the acupoints. All it would take was for her to read up on them one or two times, and she would have memorized them.

"You seem listless today. Why?" Andy wasn't angry. Instead, he pinched his goatee while looking at the girl.

"Because Mommy wanted to make an apple pie last night. I waited for her because I wanted to eat it, then I messed around with my brothers before I went to sleep," Juniper answered honestly.

"You realize you have class today?"

"Yes." Juniper blinked innocently.

"And yet you didn't sleep early, all because you wanted to eat. You slept late despite knowing you have class today. You've wasted your time, and mine as well. Come here."

Juniper went up to him, then Andy brandished a ruler. He always had that with him, but since Juniper was smart and managed to answer every question, he never used it on her.

"Now, give me your hand."

Juniper pouted, hiding her hand behind her back, refusing to get punished.

“You’ll get off with three if you show me your hand now, but keep this up and you’re going to get ten hits. The choice is yours.”

Hence, Juniper slowly showed him her hand, then Andy held it in front of him. “Remember to stay steadfast and never give in to temptation. That’s the key to success. Get it?”

“Yes.”

Andy hit her palm three times, and that caused Juniper’s hand to swell. The pain made her cry, but Andy said, “Wipe your tears and read through what I taught you today. Crying solves nothing. You’d better start coming up with a way to compensate for our wasted time.”

Left with no other choice, Juniper went back to her seat and wiped her tears away.

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Meanwhile, Selena had been waiting since she was done making dinner. Juniper was supposed to come back at seven, but it was already eight, and she wasn’t back yet. Did something happen? “You two go ahead,” she told the boys.

The boys went to the dining room right away.

“Should we wait for her?” Joaquin was worried about Juniper.

“No. You two go ahead. I’ll wait for her myself.”

“Then we’ll wait too.”

Selena gave them a proud look. “It’s fine. You two go ahead. Don’t want you boys to starve now.” She noticed they were starting to get hungry. “Go ahead.”

After that, the boys dug in. Selena then called the driver, only to find out that Juniper was let off late that day. He told her she might have to wait for another half an hour, but then they ran into congested traffic. Because of that, Juniper only came back when it was almost nine.

“You’re back, Juniper. I bet you’re hungry. I’ll make some bento for you next time, alright? It’s dinner time now, so wash your hands and come eat.”

Juniper looked upset, but she followed her mother’s orders. Then, Selena asked the servant to heat the food up. Juniper went for the bread, but since it was hot, and her hand was swollen, the pain jolted her, making her lose her grip on the bread.

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“Alright.” Hence, Selena put the bread back. Realizing Juniper’s sour mood, she asked, “Did something happen, Juniper? Can you tell me about it?”

“It’s nothing,” she answered curtly. Obviously, Juniper didn’t want to tell her mother anything. “I see. Tell me when you’re ready, okay?”

Juniper said nothing as she wolfed her dinner down in silence. “Slow down, honey. Your stomach can’t take it. Take it slow,” Selena said.

Juniper went for the bread when it had cooled down. It was then that Selena realized she was holding it with her fingers, as if her palm had something on it. Curious, Selena pulled Juniper’s hand over, and she realized it was swollen. “What happened, Juniper?”

Juniper pulled her hand back and went back to her dinner. “Master Werner did it.”

“What? Why?”

“Because I slept in class,” Juniper answered calmly.

Oh, so that’s why she’s upset. “Does it hurt?”

Juniper grinned. “Nope.”

“Liar. It’s all swollen.” Selena felt like crying. She’s so young, but she already has to travel for hours on end every week for her class. And she’s punished

because of that. At that thought, Selena sniffled. "It's hard, isn't it? I know it's not good for a young girl like you to learn so many things at once. I'll talk to Dr. Werner and see if it's possible to wait until you're older. If it's not, maybe you should give up."

When Juniper first started learning, Selena told her to never give up if that was what she truly wanted, but then she was on the verge of breaking the creed she set up first.

"No." Juniper refused to give up. "You told me to never give up, remember? You can't break your own creed."

"I—" Selena was heartbroken to see her daughter getting punished like that. Her hand was swollen to abnormal proportions already.

"It's fine. I put my enjoyment first, so this happened. I wasted my master's time and my own time, so I have to catch up, Mommy. I have to study after this." With that, Juniper finished her soup and went to her room upstairs to study.

Selena knew her daughter was a smart one, though she wondered if that was really for the best. She didn't want Juniper to be too hard on herself.

...

Joaquin noticed Juniper was reciting something he didn't recognize when he went past her room, so he went up to her. "What are you doing?"

"Just memorizing the list of acupoints," she answered.

"I see you got punished in class today." Joaquin overheard the conversation when Juniper and Selena were having dinner, so he came to see if she was fine.

"Yeah."

"Let me take a look."

Juniper showed him her hand, which was swollen and scarlet.

"Does it hurt?"

Juniper nodded like a hurt puppy. "It does..."

