

Chapter 15 She Is Innocent

Despair etched itself deeply across Fiona's features as she faced the accusation.

Having devoted years of service to the Johns family, whom she deeply cared for, she never imagined she might one day be cast aside as a thief.

The world seemed to darken before her eyes.

Madisyn spoke up, her voice resonant with conviction. "Fiona is innocent. I saw her walking out of the living room yesterday."

Before Madisyn could continue, Kristine cut in sharply, "Madisyn, she might have taken it earlier. People like her will do anything for money. You shouldn't defend her."

Lynda, her face tight with displeasure, was resolute. "Just take her away!"

Tears streaming, Fiona grasped at Madisyn's leg, her plea punctuated by sobs. "Miss, I swear on my life—I didn't take anything!"

Madisyn turned her gaze sharply towards Kristine. "You claim she stole from you. Where's your proof?"

Kristine was taken aback by Madisyn's defense of a servant, her discomfort apparent. "The necklace was found in her room—what more proof do you need? Madisyn... Are you implying that I am falsely accusing her of stealing?"

As Kristine spoke, her eyes dropped, a show of wounded innocence that tugged at Lynda's sympathies.

Kristine's recent dance performance had endeared her further to Lynda.

Lynda's eyes narrowed as she addressed Madisyn. "Kristine is your sister. It's unbecoming to challenge her over a maid!"

"Oh? So, we ignore potential wrongs because of family ties?" Madisyn countered sharply.

"Your sister is a kind person," Lynda said, her frown deepening. "We've known each other for years. She wouldn't harm even an animal, much less falsely accuse someone."

Kristine's voice softened, tinged with regret. "Auntie, please, let's not argue over this. Madisyn has endured enough already. No matter what she says about me, I won't mind."

Lynda's heart ached with empathy for her.

"She has endured hardships, true, but not at your hand," Lynda consoled her before turning a stern gaze on Madisyn. "Our family creed champions unity and love. Your tone with Kristine was inappropriate. Apologize to her now!"

Elaine interjected, her brow furrowed, "Lynda, Madisyn is simply being meticulous. She meant no harm."

"But all the evidence points one way, yet she challenged Kristine!" Lynda countered, visibly annoyed by Elaine's spoiling. As she reflected on Kristine's visible upset the previous night, her voice grew more emphatic. "Elaine, Kristine is your daughter too. You mustn't show partiality just because Madisyn has returned. Didn't you promise to treat Kristine well when you adopted her?"

Lynda, aware of Elaine's usually gentle demeanor,

wondered if Madisyn had manipulated her somehow.

Her gaze turned icy as she looked at Madisyn.

Elaine, clearly irritated, responded, "Lynda, that's unfair. Kristine and Madisyn are both my children. How could I favor one over the other?"

"Then remove Fiona from the house," Lynda declared with conviction, adamant about securing justice for Kristine.

Elaine's frown deepened.

"If Fiona is truly innocent, doesn't this amount to defamation?" Madisyn posed the question indifferently, her gaze fixed on Kristine.

With lips pursed, Kristine responded firmly, "The proof against Fiona seems irrefutable. If Fiona is innocent, I will relinquish all my jewelry to her and offer a personal apology. However, what if she did steal from me?"

"In that case, I'll apologize to you and give you all the clothes I purchased yesterday," Madisyn declared plainly.

Kristine's eyes briefly betrayed her joy before she sighed. "I wish it hadn't come to this, Madisyn. But if you insist, we'll proceed."

She appeared genuinely torn, struggling with the situation.

Madisyn, dismissing the performance, turned her attention to Fiona. "You had no idea how the necklace got into your room, right?"

Through tears, Fiona said, "I swear, I've never laid eyes on it."

"Where is the necklace now?" Madisyn continued, her tone steady.

The butler stepped forward, offering the necklace wrapped in a handkerchief. After a close examination, Madisyn inquired, "And where exactly was this found?"

"In the cabinet in her room," replied the butler.

Watching quietly, Kristine was intrigued by how Madisyn planned to navigate this delicate situation.

"Alright, call the police," Madisyn said.

The room fell into a shocked silence, and Madisyn added, "Let's involve the police and check for fingerprints. If Fiona never touched the necklace, it won't bear her fingerprints."

Fiona's face brightened with hope. "Yes, yes, I've never touched it!"

Lynda frowned at the suggestion, skeptical, and Kristine countered, "That doesn't necessarily mean she didn't steal it. She could have worn gloves."

The possibility hung heavy in the air.

"When did you notice the necklace was missing?" Madisyn queried further.

"I saw it yesterday. I realized it was gone this morning," Kristine answered.

Madisyn directed a maid to get the surveillance footage.

The records showed Fiona had been to the second floor yesterday to clean Madisyn's room and had spent the remainder of her time in the living room.

There seemed to be no opportunity for her to have committed the theft.

Yet, Kristine interjected softly, "She didn't use the main

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 +120 Points at most

stairs, but there's another seldom-used staircase she knows about. She could have used that to access the upper floors undetected. And with the living room camera broken, she could have used that staircase to carry out the theft."

"I did no such thing! You have to believe me!" Fiona protested, tears streaming down her face. "Miss Kristine Johns, why are you accusing me of this?"