

Chapter 36 Kristine's Distress

Josie and her friends felt a deep discomfort from Madisyn's words, their unease clearly showing.

Kristine interjected swiftly, "Madisyn, it seems there was a misunderstanding. Please, don't be upset. Thankfully, the ring has been found."

"A misunderstanding? You were so sure a moment ago that my friend was a thief. And now, finding the ring with your friend, you call it a misunderstanding?" Madisyn said with a smirk. "Sounds rather hypocritical, doesn't it?"

Kristine found herself at a loss for words.

Who could have predicted this outcome?

The ring was meant to be found in Susan's pocket, yet here it was with the woman with red hair.

"Okay, I admit my mistake. Let's just move past this," Josie said, trying to minimize the issue.

However, Madisyn was not ready to let it go so quickly. "You all were quick to accuse my friend when the ring was lost, smearing her name. Now that she's cleared, do you think a simple sentence like that will do? I want to know why you targeted us when we've done nothing to offend you."

Guilt flickered in the eyes of Josie's group.

Anyone with a bit of insight at the event could see what was unfolding now.

Both Josie and the woman with red hair were close to Kristine. Madisyn's reappearance likely felt threatening to Kristine, leading her friends to defend her.

Kristine might have even given her friends subtle cues behind the scenes.

Who would have guessed that Kristine, always so poised and understanding, could be capable of such manipulation?

The guests started to look at Kristine with newfound doubt.

Never before had Kristine been seen with such disdainful eyes, as though all her dark secrets were now exposed.

She felt awful; it was the first time her flawless image had taken such a hit.

"Madisyn, I'm sorry. My friends were just trying to protect me because they didn't want me to be unfairly treated. I apologize on their behalf; this is our fault."

Tears welled up in Kristine's eyes as she apologized.

Seeing Kristine so openly remorseful made Josie and their friends feel even more awful.

In a firm tone, Susan said, "I might not come from a rich family, but I don't see why they felt the need to defend you, after Madisyn returned to her own family. Do you feel threatened by her return?"

Who would have thought that this ordinary girl could utter such sharp words!

Kristine quickly shook her head. "No, no, everything's fine at home. It was just a misunderstanding by my friends."

Disappointment filled Glenn's eyes as he said, "Kristine, if you're upset about something, you should tell us directly. Madisyn has had a tough time in the past, and now that she's back, I hope you two can get along."

His tone wasn't harsh, but the disappointment in his eyes was enough to make Kristine very uncomfortable.

She had always been a source of pride for the Johns family!

Furthermore, Elaine remained silent throughout, not even giving Kristine a single look, clearly showing her disappointment.

Kristine felt like crying.

What had she done to deserve this?

Was it just because she wasn't born into the family?

It wasn't her fault, yet everyone seemed to blame her!

"Understood," Kristine muttered, biting her lip to hold back her tears and frustration. "I have no hard feelings. I'm fond of Madisyn and I'm sure we'll get along."

Glenn didn't say anything else to her. He just invited everyone to have dinner.

As the group dispersed, they left the awkward situation behind them.

Josie observed Kristine's downcast face with a sense of sorrow.

She then looked over at Andrew and approached him, saying, "Mr. Klein."

Andrew's gaze was cold, and under his stern look, Josie felt an overwhelming tension but continued, "Kristine is your fiancée. She isn't Mr. and Mrs. Johns's real daughter, and with Madisyn's return, she might be overlooked and unfairly treated. Please, take good care of her."

Kristine, overhearing this, turned her eyes towards Andrew, filled with hope.

Given her current distress, Andrew would surely show some concern, wouldn't he?

After all, they practically grew up together.

"Fiancée?" Andrew's response was chilling. "Since when was she ever my fiancée?"