

Chapter 4 You Have No Idea

As the crowd grew, more and more people gathered around, all having heard the voice coming from the telephone receiver.

Everyone present was stunned.

The Bennett family wasn't the richest in Hoverdale, but it was still a prominent aristocratic household.

For children of wealthy families, having a monthly allowance of 14,000 dollars was perfectly normal.

They had never heard of a wealthy heiress who didn't even get a single cent in allowance.

The Bennett family was the first.

No wonder Lauren dressed so poorly, without even a decent gown to wear to a banquet.

Even if she hadn't been raised by their side, she was still the real daughter of the Bennett family. Yet they gave her nothing while showering their adopted daughter with 140,000 dollars a month.

For the Bennett family to allow such an outrageous situation to happen, they must have been utterly blind.

The guests whispered among themselves. Elliot felt a chill down his spine, his face flushing with shame and anger.

He refused to believe something so humiliating could happen to the Bennett family.

Their family was wealthy and powerful. There was no way they would be too stingy to give their own flesh and blood a mere allowance.

Elliot immediately questioned Lauren in a cold voice, "Even if the finance department didn't transfer the money, Mom and Dad must have given you an allowance, right?"

Lauren's lips curled in mockery. She glanced at David Bennett and Alice Pierce in the crowd and said lightly, "Why don't you ask Mr. David and Madam Alice whether they gave me an allowance or not, Mr. Elliot? After all, you don't believe me, but you'd believe your parents, wouldn't you?"

David and Alice stiffened instantly, too ashamed to meet her eyes.

"Dad, Mom, you must have given her an allowance, right?" Elliot looked at them seriously.

David avoided his gaze. "I thought you guys would give it to her, so I..."

Alice's face was filled with guilt, tears welling in her eyes. She said painfully, "I thought you guys would... Laurie, why didn't you say something sooner? If you had told me earlier, I would have given you money. It's my fault. I didn't realize it in time, and you suffered for it. But you have to believe that I treat you and Willow the same."

Lauren looked at her with a half-smile, her gaze indifferent. Under her cold stare, Alice lowered her eyes awkwardly.

Only today did Lauren find out that it was her own birth mother who had ordered the finance department not to send her money. Not only that, but she had also raised Willow's allowance to 140,000 dollars, afraid that her precious adopted daughter might feel slighted.

With such blatant favoritism, Alice still had the audacity to claim she treated them equally.

As the esteemed wife of a wealthy family, Alice wore only the finest clothes, with even her socks costing dozens of dollars. There was no way she couldn't tell that her own daughter was wearing an outfit that cost less than 14 bucks in total.

Of course, she knew. She just didn't care.

This apology was nothing more than an act for the public.

Fortunately, Lauren had long seen through the ugliness of this family. Her heart had been hardened, immune to their poison. Without expectations, she remained unshaken.

Seeing Lauren ignore her mother's apology, humiliating the Bennett family in front of everyone, Elliot's fleeting guilt instantly vanished.

He scolded coldly, "You have a mouth, don't you? Why didn't you just say something? We're not mind readers; how were we supposed to know what you were thinking? If you had spoken up earlier, do you think we wouldn't have given you money?"

"I did." Lauren's voice was soft but laced with coldness. "You just didn't take it seriously."

Elliot frowned, about to deny it, when a memory suddenly surfaced in his mind.

It was an afternoon long ago. Their family of four sat on the couch, chatting and laughing.

Lauren walked over hesitantly, clutching the hem of her school uniform. Before she even spoke, her face flushed bright red.

She struggled for a long time before finally whispering, "Dad, Mom, can you give me the tuition fee of 700..."

*Bang!*

Elliot slammed his newspaper onto the coffee table, glaring at Lauren. "Money, money, money! Is that all you care about? Did you come back to this family just to ask for money? If the Bennett family had no money, would you have even bothered to return? I don't know why Mom and Dad insisted on bringing you back. If you have nothing better to do, go study. Willow ranked tenth in the whole school in her first monthly exam. What about you?"

"I... I got first place...."

"Enough. You mean dead last, right? And you still have the nerve to bring it up?"

He had already arranged for the finance department to deposit 70,000 dollars into her card every month, yet she dared to open her mouth and ask for money.

Even Willow didn't receive that much, so she had no reason to think she deserved it.

Lauren's tears fell instantly, as if she had suffered a great injustice.

Elliot only felt irritated, even losing the mood to read his financial newspaper.

Luckily, Willow was understanding. She tugged on his arm and pouted. "Elliot, I ranked tenth this time. Do I get a reward?"

He couldn't resist his sweet little sister acting cute. Instantly, all his annoyance from Lauren disappeared. Pinching Willow's cheek, he doted on her. "Willow, what do you want?"

"I saw a handbag worth 14,000 dollars. Elliot, will you buy it for me?"

"Of course. If you like it, I'd even buy one for 140,000 dollars."

After spoiling Willow, he turned back to Lauren with a scowl. "Why are you still standing here? Go back to your room and study."

Lauren bit back her grievances and ran away.

David and Alice sighed at the same time. "If only Laurie were half as sensible as Willow."

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"Mr. Elliot, have you remembered?"

Lauren's voice pulled him back to the present. His heart twisted painfully at the way she addressed him—Mr. Elliot.

He was her biological brother, not some stranger.

But ever since she was released from prison, she hadn't called him by his name even once.

His expression darkened, his voice laced with frustration. "It was because you were terrible at studying. Coming in dead last, how did you have the nerve to ask for money? Even I was embarrassed for you."

Hearing this, Lauren's gaze turned even colder. Being stared at with such icy indifference, Elliot felt an inexplicable sense of guilt. He clenched his jaw and snapped, "You don't accept criticism?"

"For all three years of high school, I ranked first in my grade every year. How did I suddenly become in last place in your version of the story?"

Seeing Elliot's expression of utter disbelief, Lauren smirked coldly. A sense of vindictive satisfaction rose within her.

"Then again, it's understandable. Mr. Elliot, you don't even know which school I attended. Naturally, you wouldn't know my grades."

Elliot felt like he had been struck by lightning, frozen in place.

It was as if he had just heard something absurd. His voice trembled slightly, betraying a hint of hoarseness. "You weren't attending Brightvale High School?"

Brightvale High School was the most prestigious school in Hoverdale. Willow had graduated from there, and all the wealthy and powerful families in the city sent their children there.

Elliot had simply assumed Lauren was studying there as well.

His gaze snapped to David and Alice, his voice shaking uncontrollably. "Dad, Mom, when Lauren came back, did you transfer her school records over?"

Silence.

David's face turned red, his lips moving soundlessly like a man who had lost his backbone. All his past authority vanished.

Alice's lips quivered. Panic and guilt filled her eyes, her perfectly applied makeup unable to conceal her embarrassment.

The two stood there, frozen, as if the air around them had solidified.

Elliot's face turned pale, inch by inch. His previous perception of Lauren crumbled like a collapsing tower. All the disdain and condescension he had once felt now twisted into sharp blades, cutting into his own heart.

His throat tightened painfully, his voice barely audible. "Laurie, where did you go to school for those three years?"