

The Unwanted Daughter: When Love Comes Too Late

Chapter 1 Out of Hell

“Number Ten, your two years are up. Your family’s here to take you home.” Finally... In the dim room, one flickering bulb swung overhead. Tracy Yarwood was curled up in a corner. She lifted her head at the sound. It was the first time in a long while that her dirty face showed any emotion. Angelic Etiquette Academy. That was what they call this place, though there was nothing angelic inside. It was like hell. Here, her “teachers” scolded and hit her. Her “classmates” bullied and tortured her. Every single day felt as long as a century. She never let her guard down for a second. One slip and someone could set her up. Can’t believe it’s been just two years. Tracy was dragged out of the room like a lifeless doll and led down a long hallway. She didn’t really feel it until the iron door slammed shut behind her and the sun burned her eyes. After two years of trying to escape and nearly dying more times than she could count, Tracy was finally free. “Tracy?” A voice suddenly pulled her back to reality. She saw a guy standing next to a luxury sports car. He was wearing a brown leather jacket, cargo pants, and Martin boots. With sunglasses in hand, he looked at her in disbelief. It took her a second to recognize him. That familiar-but-distant face belonged to Liam Jackman—the guy who’d been by her side as her younger brother for 18 years. Before she hit 18, Tracy had been Cloudville’s golden girl. Everyone in the city knew her and admired her. Her parents loved her, her elder brother doted on her, and her younger brother had always had her back. She even had a fiancé she’d known since she was a kid. But everything fell apart on her 18th birthday. A girl named Erin showed up at her party with a DNA test, claiming to be the real daughter of the Jackmans. She said the nurses had mistakenly switched them at birth. So, Tracy’s party turned into their dramatic reunion. Her parents, who’d loved her for 18 years, cried over Erin and promised to make it up to her. Tracy stood frozen in the corner, and nobody even noticed her. She’d been looking forward to this party for a long time, but now, she wasn’t the star she was supposed to be. Her father, Benjamin Jackman, told her, “Since your real parents have passed away, you can stay with us. Raising one more daughter is nothing to us.” Her mother, Daphne Jackman, also said, “From now on, you and Erin are both our daughters. Now you have a younger sister. Isn’t that nice?” Even her protective brothers chimed in, “Don’t be afraid. Even if we’re not related by blood, we’re still family.” But one day, Erin set her up, making everyone think Tracy had knocked her down the stairs. Then, the whole family turned against Tracy and sent her to the Angelic Etiquette Academy, a place meant to discipline wealthy families’ problem kids. Benjamin said, “Not just anyone can be part of us. From now on, go by your real father’s surname—Yarwood.” Daphne added, “Tracy, your sister suffered so much growing up. You’ve been loved for 18 years. Why can’t you ease up on her?” Her brothers also said, “We don’t want such a bad sister!” They got rid of their trouble. No one even cared what kind of place they were dumping her in. ... “Are you really Tracy?” Liam asked, eyes filled with doubt. The sister he remembered used to walk with her head held high. She always wore brand-name outfits, and her nails were always clean and polished. But now, she wore a loose, old white dress from two years ago, with an old gray hoodie over it. Her hands were rough, nails uneven. Her face, once so bright, was blank and dull. If he didn’t recognize her face, he’d probably think she was a stranger. Liam frowned, feeling something uncomfortable rise in his chest. That wasn’t the Tracy he used to know. Tracy snapped back to her senses and looked up briefly. When she caught Liam’s eyes, she dropped her gaze. She tensed up as she instinctively stepped back. In the Angelic Etiquette Academy, meeting someone’s eyes was seen as provocation. They would curse her with the vilest words and punch her fiercely. The rules had trained her not to look anyone in the eye. But Liam just laughed. “Looks like this etiquette school

did its job. They finally make you obedient. We should've sent you sooner—maybe Erin wouldn't have had to suffer so much." Tracy kept her head down and said nothing. She didn't snap back in anger like she used to, like she was admitting it all. Annoyed, Liam slipped on his sunglasses. "Hurry up and get in. I've got a race to catch. Don't waste my time. "Erin is too kind. If she hadn't asked me to come, I wouldn't even be here." Tracy quietly opened the car door and sat down. Before she could buckle her seatbelt, Liam slammed on the gas. The engine roared, and the car launched forward like a rocket. Liam looked excited. He glanced over from behind his sunglasses, waiting for her to scream or beg him to stop. Or maybe she would pull the big-sister card like before, warning him not to drive like a maniac off the racetrack. If she did, he could go back and tell their parents and elder brother that she hadn't learned a thing at the etiquette school. She was still arrogant, out of line, and didn't know her place. Unless she begged him to stop and promised to stay out of his business, he wasn't going to let her go. But Tracy didn't say a word. She gripped the overhead handle with all her strength. Even though her face had gone pale from fear, she stayed silent. She'd spent two years learning how to hide fear. Her face showed nothing. The only way she could keep the bullies off her back was by acting like she wasn't scared. But her silence made Liam's face darken. Like it was some kind of challenge, he slammed on the accelerator, making the car go even faster. No matter how much he went on, Tracy just clenched her teeth so hard that her temples bulged, refusing to say a word. When his phone rang, Liam finally slammed on the brakes. The tires screeched across the empty mountain road. Thud! Tracy's head hit the dashboard. A wave of pain and dizziness hit her hard. Liam didn't even blink. He unlocked his phone and picked up the call. He had done it on purpose. That was his twisted way of paying her back for pushing Erin down the stairs two years ago. The call connected. "Mr. Liam, the race got moved up. When are you getting here?" He looked over at Tracy. "On my way." After hanging up, he coldly said, "Get out!" Before she could react, he opened the door and shoved her outside. "Call a cab yourself." Then, he drove off, leaving her on the roadside.