

The Unwanted Daughter: When Love Comes Too Late

Chapter 10 It's Tracy, Not That Name

Erin, sitting quietly next to Daphne, suddenly started to cry. "Tracy, this was all on me. I never should've told people you pushed me down the stairs. I know you didn't really mean to hurt me.

"Mom sent you to that etiquette school because she was worried about me. If you're mad, be mad at me. Just... don't blame Mom."

She grabbed Daphne's hand, looking upset but kind of defiant. "Mom, Tracy had everything for 18 years- everyone spoiled her. Now that she's had to live by herself for a while, it makes sense she'd be bitter. Just don't be mad at her, okay?"

She sounded like she was trying to smooth things over, but her words had the opposite effect. They made Daphne feel annoyed at Tracy without even realizing why.

I honestly thought Tracy had changed after two years. But it seems like she still can't let go of the past.

Back then, it was all Tracy's fault anyway. Why is she still blaming Erin?

Daphne narrowed her eyes at her, her tone cold. "Tracy, why are you always so immature?"

Tracy looked at Erin, who now had tears welling up.

She almost laughed. Almost.

She had watched this exact act so many times since she turned 18.

Erin didn't need to cry for real. She just needed to look a little sad, and everyone would turn against Tracy. Suddenly, she was the villain, and Erin was the poor little angel.

"Tracy Jackman, say sorry to Erin. Right now," Daphne demanded, her voice sharper than before.

Tracy glanced back at her, eyes calm, too calm. "Mrs. Jackman, my name is Tracy Yarwood."

They were the ones who had forced a new name on her in front of reporters. And now she had to remind them who she really was.

Something about her tone or expression made Daphne pause for a second.

Tracy then looked over at Erin, voice soft and polite. "Ms. Jackman, when did I ever say I hated you? Or Mrs. Jackman?"

She had always done what they asked-kept her distance, stayed quiet, didn't cause problems.

Erin clearly hadn't expected that response. She blinked, clearly thrown off, and glanced over at Daphne, who looked just as unsure.

"I ... I didn't mean it like that. I misunderstood. You didn't mean anything bad. I just overthought it. It's on

me."

Tears started falling from her eyes, making her look even more innocent and pitiful. Daphne felt her heart twist again. Any second thoughts she'd had disappeared.

"Don't cry, Erin. It's okay. Tracy just doesn't know how to act. I know you were only trying to help."

She hugged Erin close and spoke gently, but her heart was getting colder toward Tracy by the second.

Why can't Tracy be more like Erin? So forgiving, so sweet?

As the two hugged, Tracy felt that old, painful squeeze in her chest. Suddenly, the car felt like it was closing in.

Thankfully, they reached the shopping area pretty quickly. Tracy got out first.

She figured the trip would be called off after all that drama.

But Erin hopped out right behind her, smiling like nothing had happened, and looped her arm through Tracy's.

"Tracy! I know this amazing boutique. It's super exclusive, but I'll take you there! Come on!"

Before Tracy could respond, Erin was already dragging her along, as if she hadn't just been crying minutes earlier.

Daphne followed them and said sweetly, "See how caring Erin is? She never holds anything against you. You really should start being more like a big sister."

Tracy felt a wave of exhaustion hit her.

No matter what she said, they'd twist it. They already had their minds made up.

She was tired of explaining herself.

She didn't want to shop with them. She had no idea why Erin brought her.

But she knew if she tried to walk away, Erin would flip the story again, and the Jackmans would once again call her ungrateful.

So she let Erin drag her into Cloudville's top high-end mall.

Before she turned 18, Tracy used to come here all the time. Most of the shops had VIP accounts under her

name.

Now, every single one of those was under Erin's.

As soon as they stepped inside, the staff-people who used to greet Tracy like royalty-rushed to Erin instead, showing her all the new arrivals with bright, excited faces.

Tracy was pushed to the side. She almost tripped, but no one even noticed.

No one looked twice at the girl in a baggy hoodie-the same girl who used to be Cloudville's most admired daughter.

They all surrounded Erin, inviting her to their stores.

But Erin simply glanced at Tracy, who had been pushed out, and walked into one of the clothing stores.

Tracy wasn't sure what that look meant, but it gave her a bad feeling.

While Tracy stood there unsure, Erin had already picked out a pile of dresses and asked the manager to bring them out.

"Ms. Jackman, this dress looks amazing on you."

"Your skin is glowing, Ms. Jackman. Every color suits you so well."

"You look like a dream in this one. It's perfect for you."

Those kinds of compliments used to be meant for Tracy. Now they were all for Erin. But Tracy felt absolutely nothing.

Once, she had been the girl everyone admired. Now, after everything she'd been through, she barely felt like that person anymore.

She thought about sneaking away while they were all focused on Erin. No one ever noticed her when Erin was around anyway.

But Erin wasn't about to let her leave. "Tracy! What do you think of this dress?" Erin shouted, holding it up.

Her voice cut through the chatter, pulling every gaze toward Tracy.

She froze, automatically shrinking into herself.

She hated being the center of attention. It never ended well for her.

Tracy clenched her hands behind her back, trying not to show how anxious she was.

“It ... looks good,” she said softly, just hoping they’d look away.

But Erin wasn’t done.

She came over with more dresses, eager for Tracy’s opinions.

Tracy stood there, pale and stiff, forcing answers while trying not to flinch under everyone’s eyes.

Even if Erin saw how uncomfortable she was, she didn’t care. Or maybe that was the whole point. Erin even let out a playful sigh. “There are too many nice ones. I can’t decide!”

The boutique manager jumped in right away, grinning. “Ms. Jackman, if you like them all, then take them. all! Our boss, Mr. Norris Gill, said you can have anything you want. No need to pay.”

The moment she heard his name, it hit Tracy like a punch to the chest. Her heart, numb for so long, suddenly ached like it had been cracked wide open.