

The Unwanted Daughter: When Love Comes Too Late

#Left Behind 181 - Read The Unwanted Daughter: When Love Comes Too Late Left Behind 181

A Good Show

Chapter 181 A Good Show

A sharp glint flashed through Ronald's eyes, but he hid it well.

No one noticed.

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Ronald tilted his head toward the girl beside him. He bent slightly, his smile easy and warm. "Didn't think you'd trust me this much, CeeCee. You didn't let Erin sway you at all?"

Tracy looked up and met his steady gaze.

Her heart gave a sudden jolt, and she quickly turned away uneasily.

"Not completely," she admitted, coughing lightly. "It did feel like Erin could ... I don't know, mess with people's heads. Like you couldn't help but follow along with what she said."

Ronald understood exactly what she meant. He smiled. "But in the end, you still chose to believe me."

He was never shy about showing what he really felt. His voice was low and serious. "CeeCee, you just made my day."

His smile had a warmth to it, almost like magic, and it smoothed away the unease Erin had planted in her chest.

Tracy's lips curved faintly upward. She was about to say something when the sound of the host's voice rang out from the stage in the hotel's grand hall.

The main event of the conference-the part Tracy had been waiting for-was about to begin.

The two of them fell silent in perfect sync, turning their eyes to the platform and the massive screen behind the host.

Every big event began with a long-winded introduction and a few pointless formalities.

But the real highlight was always the reveal-the moment when the main project appeared on the largest screen in the hall.

Tracy stood quietly in the crowd, her eyes never leaving Winona, who waited near the stage, ready to step into the spotlight.

Maybe her stare was too intense, because Winona suddenly turned her head.

Their eyes locked. Tracy's lips curved into a small, deliberate smile.

Though they were far apart, Winona saw her smile.

It made her chest tighten with an unexplainable unease.

Before she could dwell on it, the host's voice rang out, "Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Ms. Miller to present the details of this year's Investor Conference!"

The spotlight hit Winona, catching the flicker of panic she hadn't managed to hide.

2:06 pm MO

Chapter 181 A Good Show

She quickly composed herself, forcing a stiff smile as she walked up the steps.

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Her family had been preparing for months. Tony had made sure Winona would be the one delivering the presentation.

She had rehearsed her lines so many times-even in her sleep-that she stepped onto the stage full of confidence.

But now her head was full of Tracy's smile.

What did it mean?

Did she do something?

Is she setting me up?

Those thoughts kept crashing into her mind, making Winona stumble over her words and forget her lines again and again.

From the audience, the Renaults weren't happy about this. Even Tony, still wearing his polite smile, looked strained.

Winona noticed, and her panic only grew worse. The more she tried, the more mistakes piled up.

After fumbling for several minutes, she finally managed to shift the focus. “And now, please take a look at the video presentation I’ve prepared.”

She stepped back, pointing at the massive screen behind her, letting out a heavy breath of relief. She had already decided—once she stepped off this stage, the first thing she’d do was have someone drag Tracy in to answer for that smile.

But before she could exhale fully, a strange voice echoed through the speakers.

“Look at the camera-smile.”

“Haha! I’ve never seen anyone drink mop water before. How does it taste? Sweet?”

“Come on, let’s get a group photo. A memory worth keeping.”

The screen showed a group of girls forcing another drenched and shaking girl to the ground. They scooped filthy mop water into cups and shoved it into her mouth as she cried and begged them to stop.

The girl on the floor was pinned down, powerless to fight back. She kept apologizing through tears, begging them to stop, but her cries only drew louder, bolder laughter from the others.

One voice stood out above the rest—the girl behind the camera, laughing the hardest. That voice sounded all too familiar.

By the end of the video, the camerawoman finally stepped into view. Her smug, triumphant grin filled the

screen.

It was Winona. Every other face in the video had been blurred, but hers was perfectly clear, standing front

and center.

2:06 pm M

Chapter 181 A Good Show

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“N-no! That’s not me! It’s not me!” Winona’s face drained of color as she stumbled backward, nearly losing her balance.

Her first instinct was to throw herself in front of the screen to block the evidence. But they had chosen the largest display for the conference. No matter how hard she tried, there was no way she could cover it.

Like a clown in the spotlight, Winona clawed at the screen, her voice raw and breaking as she screamed at the staff below, “Turn it off! Shut it down! Shut it off right now!”

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Chapter 182 Doom Day

Chapter 182 Doom Day

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The staff finally snapped out of their shock and rushed to shut off the screen, only to realize that no matter what they did, the screen wouldn’t turn off.

As soon as the first video ended, another began to play.

One clip after another rolled on, each showing the same group of girls in different places, using different ways to bully and humiliate another girl.

Every video ended the same way-with a smug group photo. And in every single one, the girl holding the phone and orchestrating everything was Winona.

Winona, clearly nervous, tried to stop the video from playing, but in her panic, she stepped on the hem of her gown and fell hard onto the stage. The fabric tore wide open, but she barely noticed.

Her eyes quickly shifted toward the audience.

scorn.

The looks aimed at her were filled with shock, disgust, and sec

Her body shook in fear. “N-no, that’s not me. It’s not me!” she cried.

“These videos are fake! Someone edited them. I’m being framed-this isn’t real!”

Before she could continue, another voice came from the screen, cutting off her denial.

“It was Winona. She was the one behind everything. I know because I was part of her gang back then. Every clip you’re watching really happened. Winona filmed it herself—she called them her trophies.”

The confession rolled on.

“Winona was arrogant and cruel. Back in high school, she ruled the campus like a thug. She used her family’s money and influence to bully whoever she wanted. Everyone, including the teachers, knew it,

“There were plenty of times that bullying wasn’t caught on video. She even forced a classmate to cheat on the SAT and was purposely caught by the proctor.

“That girl with nowhere else to turn jumped off the school roof the day before the SAT. Afterward, Winona used her family’s money and power-together with the principal-to bury the truth. They even altered the girl’s school records to make it look like she had simply transferred away.

“The girl’s grandmother fought back, storming into the school demanding justice. But the very day she buried her granddaughter, she died in a car accident.

“To keep the rest of us quiet, the Millers went after our families. They ruined us with bankruptcy and debt. We had no choice but to leave Cloudville.

“We were all forced into it. If we hadn’t done what Winona said, she would have treated us the same way. We had no way out.

After the bullying clips ended, one testimony after another followed.

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Chapter 182 Doom Day

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Each testimony came from the girl who had once followed Winona, part of her little clique. With Jasmin’s help. Tracy had hunted them down one by one, pressuring, bargaining, and convincing until they finally agreed to record statements exposing Winona.

The evidence-the videos themselves-came from Jasmin.

Winona had always been arrogant, used to ordering people around and letting others do the work for her.

Back then, after she filmed her bullying of Patricia, she didn't even be bothered to sort the videos herself and dumped the job on Jasmin.

But Jasmin had been cautious. She secretly copied every single file, just in case she ever needed them. Winona never knew.

When Jasmin was later forced to leave Clouldville, she considered using the recordings to blackmail Winona. But then news broke that Patricia's grandmother had died, and Jasmin knew it couldn't be at coincidence.

Scared, she left the city in a hurry.

Still, she never deleted the videos. Her hate was too strong, and she held onto them until the day Tracy showed up.

Jasmin's family hadn't been the only ones forced out of Clouldville. Every girl from Winona's little clique carried the same hate towards Winona. In the end, they all agreed to help Tracy to record testimony exposing Winona.

Their only condition was that their faces were blurred in the videos.

Tracy agreed. But she had one demand of her own-that Patricia's name, the clips of her, and her diary never be mentioned.

Patricia was gone, and Tracy refused to let her memory be tied to something so dark.

She believed David wouldn't want that either.

With both witnesses and compelling evidence exposed, the case against Winona was impossible to deny

Winona collapsed, her body crumpling like a balloon losing air.

She couldn't understand.

Everything had been destroyed. She had burned the diary and erased the evidence. So why were these videos still here?

Her head turned stiffly. She saw the Renaults' cold, unforgiving faces. She saw Tony's twisted expression. And she felt everyone around her staring and whispering about her.

It was as if she had been stripped naked and thrown into the middle of a crowded street.

Game over!

I'm doomed!

2:06 pm M

Chapter 182 Doom Day

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Her eyes moved wildly across the room until they locked onto Tracy, standing calmly near a table.

She remembered that tiny smile on Tracy's lips before all this had begun.

It's her!

It had to be her.

With a sudden burst of desperate strength, Winona jumped to her feet. Stumbling and tripping, then leapt off the stage.

2:06 pm MO

Chapter 183 Sinking Ship

Chapter 183 Sinking Ship

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The platform was about a foot and a half high. In her high heels, Winona jumped down, only to stumble and fell onto the ground.

Pain shot through her ankle, but she didn't care. She kept moving, panic driving her in one direction.

The crowd didn't know why she suddenly looked so frantic. Instinctively, they stepped aside, making way for her.

Winona ran straight at Tracy and grabbed her hand. "Was it you? Was it you who did this? You're trying to set me up!"

Her hands trembled uncontrollably. Her grip tightened, nails digging into Tracy's skin.

Tracy frowned slightly, about to shake her off, when Ronald stepped forward and caught Winona's wrist.

The sharp pain made Winona's fingers loosen. A second later, Ronald flung her off so hard she hit the ground with a heavy thud.

Already shaken, Winona collapsed on the ground and looked pale and shaken.

Ronald's looked down at Tracy's reddened wrist, his hand instinctively curling into a tight fist.

"Winona!" he snapped.

Tracy, sensing his anger, whispered softly, "I'm fine."

She pulled her hand back, then turned her eyes on Winona.

Walking closer, she stood over Winona and said coldly, "Whether this was a setup or not, the police will find out soon enough. Everyone else has already faced their consequences. Winona, I'll make sure you do too for her."

She didn't mention Patricia's name. Victims shouldn't be remembered by what was done to them.

But Winona instantly knew who Tracy meant.

Her lips trembled as she shook her head, her face ghostly pale. "Why?"

Tracy and Patricia had barely known each other, and the incident had happened years ago. So why bring it

up now?

Her only reply came from the murmurs around them and the flashes of countless cameras.

The Millers had poured money into advertising this conference for weeks.

The Millers had spent a fortune online, pushing ads to make the Investor Conference look as grand as possible. They invited reporters, and to boost their national reputation, Tony even hired several top influencers to livestream the event.

So before the Millers even realized what was happening, everything had already spread across the

internet.

2:06 pm M

Chapter 183 Sinking Ship

+10 Free Coins

By the time the staff's managed to shut down the giant screen and clear away the livestream equipment, the police had arrived-called in by concerned viewers. They carried Winona out as she collapsed on the floor, still screaming at the top of her lungs.

"It wasn't me! I'm being framed! Somebody set me up-I swear it's not me!"

What should have been a polished, flawless conference had turned into an embarrassing mess. And while the Millers' reputation was ruined, the ones humiliated even more were the Renaults, who hosted the

event.

Matthew's father, Avery Renault, had been in business for decades. He had never endured anything this shameful. Before the reporters could catch him, he and his wife had left the venue in anger.

Before leaving, Avery shot Matthew a furious glare. "This is the flawless conference you promised me? Look at the mess you made! You stay here and clean it up. If you can't handle it ..."

He didn't finish. Avery just gave a cold snort and stormed off, leaving Matthew's forced smile stiff and frozen.

Matthew had been the one who pushed hard to let the Millers handle the event. Avery hadn't liked the idea but went along because Matthew's past performance had been reliable.

Now the Millers had thrown him into a full-blown disaster.

And just when Matthew was barely keeping his cool, Tony rushed up in a panic, clinging to him like someone drowning. He grabbed Matthew's hand. "Mr. Renault, you have to help us! You're the only one who can fix this!"

This sudden outburst drew eyes from every direction, and soon a crowd was watching them closely.

Already burning with anger, Matthew ripped his hand free. "Help you? Mr. Miller, let me remind you—my family signed a contract with your family to hold this conference. Now, because of your scandal, we've taken huge losses. And you still have the nerve to ask me for help?"

If not for all the eyes on him, Matthew would've gladly kicked the useless fool right then and there.

Tony froze, stunned at how openly he said it. But he realized quickly that Matthew's words weren't only meant for him-they were spoken loudly on purpose so everyone around would hear. He was dumping all the blame on the Millers.

Tony had always known Matthew looked like a polished gentleman on the surface, but underneath he was more cunning-and more ruthless-than anyone.

Therefore, years ago, Tony had been careful enough to keep a backup plan in case things went wrong.

And right now, he was more grateful than ever for that choice.

Tony stepped closer, lowering his voice, teeth clenched, and face tense. "Mr. Renault, whether you like it or not, you will help me."

2:07 pm

Chapter 184 Silent Plans

Chapter 184 Silent Plans

The threat in his voice was so obvious that even a fool would recognize it.

+10 Free Coins

Matthew knew exactly what Tony was using against him, and for a brief moment, a shadow crossed his usually cold expression.

Did the Millers really think they could control him forever because of that one thing?

Lowering his eyes, Matthew hid the storm of emotions building inside him.

When he finally looked up again, his lips curved into a tiny smile-polite, yet cold.

"Fine," he said smoothly. "I'll do my best."

It wasn't agreement from the heart, but it was enough to make Tony a bit more relaxed.

He only had one daughter, and this scandal threatened the entire family. Even if it meant offending Matthew completely, he had no choice but to push forward.

No one knew what the two men whispered about, but plenty of people saw them together. Among them was Tracy.

At an event as important as this, her attention was never only on Winona. She was also watching Tony- the man who backed Winona from the shadows.

And the moment she saw his first reaction was to run to Matthew, and she understood the Renaults had been helping the Millers all along.

To be exact, they had been helping Matthew.

Everything Tracy knew about him came from David. Though David had only mentioned him a few times, it was enough to get an idea of who he was.

A man like Matthew wouldn't risk his own interests unless he had a reason so strong he couldn't refuse.

"CeeCee, let's go," Ronald murmured close to her ear.

The job was done and all the drama was over. There was no need to stay.

Tracy gave a small nod, looked away, and slipped out of the hotel with Ronald at her side.

Almost no one noticed them leave. Almost.

Matthew did.

From the moment Winona had stormed up and grabbed Tracy's hand, accusing her, Matthew knew Tracy was behind the whole mess.

He didn't care about the fight between the two women-but if their grudge dragged his family and him into it, then he couldn't just watch.

His eyes followed Tracy as she's walking away. Then the reporters and gossip-hungry guests rushed in,

2:07 pm MA

Chapter 184 Silent Plans

surrounding him and Tony.

"Mr. Miller, are those videos real? Do you admit to bribing the principal?"

"Mr. Renault, as Winona's boyfriend, do you know the kind of person she really is?"

"Did you know about her bullying classmates?"

+10 Free Coins

Matthew's response was flawless. Almost instinctively, he slipped on the mask of the perfect gentleman, his smile polished and calm.

Even though he was angry inside, he kept his face calm. "Thank you for your concern," he said warmly. "First, Winona and I are not a couple. We've worked on few projects together, and I don't involve myself in her personal life."

The uproar of the hotel crowd didn't follow Tracy outside.

As soon as she stepped outside, she let out a long breath, like a heavy stone had been lifted off her chest.

The memory of Patricia-throwing herself from the rooftop in front of Tracy's eyes—had haunted her all these years.

It was a secret she had never shared, something she had buried deep.

Now, after finally avenging Patricia, the deep hatred in Patricia's eyes that day seemed to fade a little in her mind.

But it was far from over.

The truth about Winona's bullying was out, but Winona herself had faced no real punishment.

From the way Tony and Matthew carried themselves, Tracy knew they wouldn't just sit back.

She had made her choice. If she was going to avenge Patricia, she couldn't allow this to end with just empty noise and no real justice.

That very day, she arranged to have people watch everything Tony and Matthew did.

As she expected, by nightfall the scandal from the Investor Conference was all over the internet. Livestreams, video clips, analysis, insider leaks-one after another, filling every trending feed. With the online storm amplified by the people Tracy had hired to spread the news, the story was everywhere.

For the Millers, pulling Winona out of this mess would be almost impossible.

Their only hope now was Matthew.

But to everyone's surprise-including Tony's and Tracy's-a week went by and Matthew did nothing.

Not only did he make no effort to save Winona, but he even seemed to be putting distance between himself and the Millers.

2:07 pm M

Chapter 184 Silent Plans

+10 Free Coins

Given the shame they had brought on themselves, it wasn't unreasonable. Still, Tracy couldn't shake the feeling something was off.

She thought back to that hotel confrontation, to the way Winona had spoken to Matthew.

The Millers clearly had leverage over him. If they had dirt on him, why wouldn't they use it now?

If Matthew stayed quiet, it meant one of two things, either he had a grand plan already in motion to save Winona, or he never intended to save her.

The Millers' leverage was real, but the price of saving Winona would be far too high for the Renaults.

And with Matthew's position in the family, his father would never allow it.

So what was Matthew really planning?

2:07 pm M-

Chapter 185 Ridiculous Fate

Chapter 185 Ridiculous Fate

Tracy didn't know Matthew well enough to understand what he might be thinking.

+10 Free Coins

Lately, the uncertainty had been weighing on her so much that she often drifted off while sketching.

Ronald noticed her distraction.

He had a good sense of what she was up to these days and easily guessed the worries that haunted her.

After a moment's thought, he went into the kitchen, prepared a few desserts, and carried them out to the balcony.

Sweets, he knew, could soothe a restless mood.

When Tracy had eaten two pieces, he finally spoke. "CeeCee, are you worried because you can't figure out what Matthew's next move will be?"

She wasn't surprised. Ronald's cleverness always exceeded her expectations.

So she nodded and asked, "What do you think Matthew will do?"

Ronald picked up a piece of pastry, biting into it as he considered. "Rescuing Winona would cost too much. If Matthew's as smart as I think, he won't do it.

"He doesn't want to pay the price, and he doesn't want the Millers using it against him. The simplest way is to make sure the Millers never speak again."

He spoke indirectly, but Tracy immediately understood.

The realization struck her.

If the Millers really had evidence against Matthew, then silencing them forever would be the surest way to protect himself.

But if Matthew went that far, what should she do?

Her original goal was simple, avenge Patricia and fulfill the promise she had made to David.

The Renaults and Matthew had never been David's concern. For him, they were always strangers.

Even in his final request to her, he never mentioned them.

If Matthew really decided to silence the Millers, it wouldn't hurt Tracy at all-she could just look the other

way.

But could a man ruthless enough to kill to protect himself forgive her once he realized she had set the trap that pulled the Millers down and nearly dragged the Renaults into it?

She remembered Derek's words to always consider the worst outcome.

Ronald caught the hesitation in her face.

2:07 pm M

Chapter 185 Ridiculous Fate

+10 Free Coins

Though he didn't know the full story, he could tell she was scared-that Matthew might target her.

After a pause, Ronald leaned closer and revealed what he knew. "CeeCee, you probably don't realize it yet, but Matthew's been looking into you lately."

Tracy was shocked.

She had arranged people to keep watch on Matthew, and none of them reported this. Yet Ronald knew.

His ability exceeded her expectation.

Tracy had her suspicions, but she didn't press further.

Thanks to Ronald's reminder, she made up her mind.

Since the Millers held something against Matthew, she needed to either protect Tony or get her hands on that leverage before Matthew turned his attention on her.

Once Tracy got back to work and focused, Ronald gave a small smile.

The dimples in his cheeks made him look like a kid stealing candy when no one was watching.

Beneath this unseen undercurrent, the internet was still buzzing about Winona's bullying scandal.

Every time public attention started to die down, Tracy paid for ad boosts and hired trolls to keep the conversation alive.

Because of the growing pressure, Winona's first trial verdict was announced faster than anyone expected.

The very same day, the Millers filed an appeal..

Tracy wasn't surprised.

The wait for the second trial was long. Winona was transferred to another facility to wait for the hearing.

Once visitation was allowed, Tracy was the very first to show up.

Her plan was simple. She wanted test Winona and see if she could uncover what leverage the Millers had on Matthew.

Knowing Winona, she would assume Tracy came just to gloat. Tracy braced herself for rejection.

But she was refused not by Winona-it was the staff.

“The inmate you’re looking for got into a fight with her cellmate last night,” one officer explained. “She was badly injured and taken to the hospital. She hasn’t been brought back yet.”

Following the address they gave her, Tracy went to the hospital, spoke with the doctor, and finally walked

into Winona’s room.

Because of her condition, Winona was placed alone in a private ward, her wrist cuffed to the bed.

But the cuff was unnecessary.

2:07 pm M

Chapter 185 Ridiculous Fate

Winona was now in a vegetative state.

Tracy pulled up a chair and sat down, kindly tugging the blanket over her.

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She looked at the pale figure on the bed and let out a quiet laugh. “Isn’t fate ridiculous? Who would’ve thought someone like you-so arrogant, so untouchable-would end up like this, just because of some random words?”

When she learned the full story, Tracy could hardly believe it.

The fight had started over something trivial. Winona had complained that her roommate’s snoring kept her awake. For that, that girl dragged her out of bed and beat her until her body gave out.

2:07 pm M

Chapter 186 Punishment

Chapter 186 Punishment

+10 Free Coins

Winona tried to fight back, but it only made the beating worse. In the end, she was left in a coma, like a living corpse.

Tracy couldn't help but laugh. "Winona, how does it feel to be the one getting bullied now?"

Winona had once pushed Patricia too far with her bullying that Patricia jumped off a building in despair. Now, Winona herself had been beaten into this state. It felt like karma.

Tracy wondered what Winona had been thinking in those last moments of being attacked.

Too bad for Winona, she only got to taste bullying for one night. Patricia had endured it for three whole years.

Tracy's voice was full of mockery. "Winona, after all the horrible things you've done, did you ever imagine this would be your ending?"

She leaned close to the hospital bed, speaking right by Winona's ear, her voice like a devil's whisper. "I asked the doctor. You can still sense everything around you. You can hear me, but you can't respond.

"Do you know how happy I felt when I heard you got beaten into this state? The only thing I regret is not seeing it happen with my own eyes!

"I should thank the one who did this to you. If it weren't for that, I never could've taken you down while the Millers and the Renaults were working together against me."

Winona lay motionless, but Tracy knew she could hear every word.

She smirked, though a part of her still wished she could see Winona's reaction.

Then Tracy's tone sharpened. "Do you know why your cellmate went so far-why just one complaint from you made her beat you into a coma?"

It all felt too convenient. Tracy had asked around. At the first trial, that cellmate was sentenced to death. The second trial wasn't over yet, but it looked like the death sentence would remain.

And just two days ago, the cellmate's son had received a scholarship-over a million dollars-from some mysterious 'goodhearted person!'

Tracy didn't need to guess who that was.

She explained it slowly, almost kindly, as if speaking to a child, "You thought holding dirt on Matthew would save you? That he'd pull strings to get you out?"

"With how big this got, saving you would cost too much. And with Matthew's greedy, selfish nature-do you think he'd bother?"

"To him, it's much easier to silence you forever than risk you talking.

"What do you think will happen to your dad now that you're stuck in bed, unable to speak a word?"

Tracy didn't know Matthew well, but David had told her the man was meticulous and never take

2:07 pm M

Chapter 186 Punishment

unnecessary risk.

+10 Free Coins

She leaned close, speaking slowly. "You know him better than I do. Do you think he'll stop at just leaving you like this?"

Maybe Matthew had wanted Winona dead from the start, but she was too lucky and survived.

Dead people never talk. But someone in a coma? They might wake up any time.

That was only Tracy's guess-she didn't care to confirm it.

What mattered was making sure Winona knew the truth. As long as she was alive, Matthew might come for her again.

And the only person who could've protected her-Tony...

Tracy's lips curled into a cruel smile. "You're lucky to be still alive. But do you think your dad will be as lucky as you?"

Winona stayed still, but Tracy felt lighter than ever.

She'd said everything she wanted to. Her time was up, and there was no reason to stay.

Grabbing her things, she stood and headed for the door. Before leaving, she looked back at the bed. "Winona, get well soon."

She meant it. Tracy truly wanted Winona to wake up-so she could face the chaos of the Millers, the danger of Matthew, and the life of a bully marked forever with her sins.

That was the life Winona deserved.

But if she never woke up, that was fine too. She'd be trapped in her darkness, alone, voiceless, always wondering if Matthew would finish her off. Not even madness would be an escape.

Let her suffer her punishment like that.

With that thought, Tracy left the hospital room. Her heart felt light, as if a burden had been lifted.

Maybe this weekend she'd finally have David's name carved on his headstone. Then she could visit the cemetery and tell both him and Patricia the good news.

Her steps felt almost cheerful as she headed for the exit.

But before she reached the doors, a guard stopped her.

At that moment, a crowd of doctors and nurses rushed inside, pushing a stretcher down the hall. Blood poured off the man lying on it

The stretcher passed Tracy, and she caught a glimpse of the man's face. It was Tony-Winona's father.

Her heart skipped.

Had Matthew made his move?

2:07 pm MO

Chapter 186 Punishment

Just then, her phone suddenly rang.

She glanced at the caller ID, then quickly stepped outside before picking up.

It was the person she'd assigned to watch Tony. They were calling to report what had happened.

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"He was crossing an intersection when a small truck came straight at his car. It rammed him and pushed his car more than thirty feet before stopping. The driver got out, reeking of alcohol. The police have already taken him in."

2:07 pm MAO

Chapter 187 Coincidence

Chapter 187 Coincidence

+10 Free Coins

"We've been following Tony's car. We also checked the dashcam. That truck was parked at the corner the whole time. It didn't move until Tony showed up. It's clear he was being targeted."

"Since the cops already took the driver away, we didn't act. Just wanted to report back first."

Tracy had already guessed Matthew would go after Tony. She just didn't expect him to move this fast, and in broad daylight, no less.

She knew Matthew's methods weren't ordinary. She might not be able to obtain proof, but she still instructed her people to investigate the driver.

At the same time, she arranged for more men to quietly guard Tony at the hospital.

If Tony was lucky enough to survive this time, Matthew would try again. Tracy had to be ready.

While she made calls and gave orders, Tracy walked toward the exit. But she had barely taken a few steps before someone blocked her way. "Ms. Yarwood, what a coincidence!"

Matthew appeared out of nowhere, smiling as if they were old friends.

Tracy slipped her phone into her bag and gave him a polite nod, distant but civil. That was enough to count as a greeting.

In truth, they had no connection at all. If they passed on the street, they should've acted like strangers.

So if Matthew stopped her now, it wasn't just for small talk.

Sure enough, he asked, "Were you here to see Winona?"

Tracy lifted her eyes. "And you?"

He didn't deny it. Instead, he explained, "Don't get me wrong. Winona and I were only coworkers. I had no idea about the things she did. I'm here today purely out of respect for our past work together.

As for the rumors, I didn't clarify them for the sake of our families' partnership. You studied business with the Jackmans before, so you should understand that, right?"

Tracy didn't understand why he was explaining all this to her. Her guard went up. "We don't know each other, Mr. Miller. I don't see why you need to explain anything to me."

She had no power over him, no leverage. It wasn't smart to get tangled with Matthew.

After saying that, she was ready to walk away.

But Matthew didn't get angry. Instead, he said casually, "The Investor Conference incident-that was your setup, wasn't it?"

Tracy froze,

She couldn't understand why he was so sure.

2:07 pm

Chapter 187 Coincidence

+10 Free Coins

Everyone knew she wasn't the Jackmans' heiress anymore. She didn't have the power to sabotage an Investor Conference organized by the Millers. That was why, when Winona accused her in front of everyone, nobody believed it.

They all thought Winona was just panicking and blaming Tracy because of their bad history.

When Tracy didn't answer, Matthew continued, "Don't worry. I'm not here for revenge. I admire your cleverness. I'd like to be friends."

Tracy's lips pressed into a thin line. Then she finally turned back to face him.

"If you want to be friends, then answer me one thing honestly." Her eyes locked onto his. "When Winona bullied her classmates all those years ago, did you not know?"

"The Millers had the power to bribe a principal and bury a scandal. But changing student records, silencing every witness in just a month, and even forcing several families into bankruptcy-that was way beyond the Millers' capability.

"It was you who did all that, wasn't it?"

Her words were phrased as a question, but her tone made it sound like a statement.

Matthew's smile stiffened. His smile remained, but the warmth in his eyes disappeared.

A moment later, he put his polished, gentlemanly mask back on. "I think you've misunderstood me."

As if he hadn't noticed her suspicion at all, he glanced around, then said, "This isn't the right place to talk. Let me take you to dinner. We can sit down and talk about everything. Whatever doubts you have, I'll explain."

Tracy knew too well what he was. She didn't hesitate. "No need. I ...

"CeeCee?"

That cloying tone made her skin crawl.

She turned-and of course, it was Erin.

Tracy frowned, her voice cold. "Do me a favor and just use my name from now on. That nickname disgusts me."

Back then, when Erin and Liam called her that, she hadn't felt anything. But now, unless it came from Ronald, the sound of it made her sick.

Erin's face froze. Her excitement faded, replaced with hurt.

"Did ... did I upset you again? I'm sorry, it's my fault. I didn't mean to ... I'm sorry..."
Tears welled in her

eyes.

2:07 pm ME

Chapter 188 Confrontation

Chapter 188 Confrontation

Erin's eyes turned red again.

+10 Free Coins

Seeing this, Daphne rushed forward, pulled her into her arms, and spoke with pity. "Erin, don't cry. Let me stand up for you."

Then Daphne spun toward Tracy. The pity in her eyes quickly hardened into blame. "Tracy, why are you harassing Erin again?"

Tracy was already used to this kind of reaction. She didn't even bother to lift her eyelids.

Matthew, standing nearby, watched everything with a thoughtful look. Erin's pitiful expression in Daphne's arms—he had seen it all before.

Back at the Renault estate, this had happened often. But back then, the one getting blamed wasn't Tracy. It was David.

Matthew's gaze slid back to Tracy. His eyes gleamed with something sharp behind his smile.

He and Tracy were the same kind of people.

People like them were meant to cling tightly to wealth and privilege, meant to live their whole lives above everyone else.

They would never let an outsider, someone who just came crawling back, take what belonged to them.

Maybe his stare was too obvious, because when Tracy glanced up, she caught him watching her the way a predator watches its prey.

Tracy froze.

David had told her once—when someone like Matthew fixed their eyes on you, there were only two outcomes. Either you became a toy he'd toss aside when he got bored, or he'd destroy you completely.

Meanwhile, Daphne, annoyed at being ignored, grew sharper. "I'm talking to you. What kind of attitude is

that?

‘Erin’s health has always been weak. I brought her here today for a check-up, and here you are picking on her? How could you?’

‘Don’t forget, if it wasn’t for her...’

“If it wasn’t for her suffering outside for 18 years in my place, her body wouldn’t be this weak. Everything would be my fault. Is that what you want to say?” Tracy cut her off

The harsh words, spoken with cold sarcasm, hit Daphne hard. It shut her up instantly,

Tracy frowned, impatience clear in her eyes. “I’ve heard this speech enough. Aren’t you tired of repeating it yourself?”

“The hospital’s mistake back then wasn’t mine. Why should I carry the blame for a switched-at-birth mistake I didn’t cause? You raised me for 18 years-I don’t resent you for the hardships I went through.

2:07 pm MAE

Chapter 188 Confrontation

+10 Free Coins

Even in the last two years, with everything that happened, I don’t hate you for that either. Isn’t it enough that we’re even now? Why can’t you just let it go?”

This was the first time Tracy had spoken so bluntly about her true feelings since coming back from the Angelic Etiquette Academy.

She was fed up with the Jackmans acting like they were always right.

Daphne hadn’t expected such a confrontation. For a moment, she just froze, shocked.

When she met Tracy’s distant, cold eyes, a strange panic gripped her heart.

It felt like the sweet, clingy daughter who used to hold her arm and call her “Mom” was gone forever.

“Tracy...”

Daphne’s voice was hoarse. She opened her mouth, but her throat locked up. No words came.

“Mom, don’t be mad at Tracy,” Erin suddenly spoke up. “You’ve always treated me so well. Of course, Tracy feels upset. That’s why she says things she doesn’t mean. I’m sure she doesn’t think that way.”

She turned to Tracy, her tone breaking into a sob. "Tracy, I know you still resent Dad and Mom for sending you to the etiquette academy. But they only did it for your own good.

"The Jackmans hold a powerful position in Cloudville. Everything we do reflects on the family. That's why they sent you there-to learn and to represent us. Sending you away hurt them, too. They missed you.

"If you still hold resentment, then blame me. I'll take it. As long as you can get along with the family, I'll give up anything. It's worth it."

She made herself look selfless, as if she were sacrificing everything, painting Tracy as the unreasonable

one.

Daphne's flicker of doubt toward Tracy vanished. Her heart swelled again with pity and love for Erin. "Erin, don't you worry. She's the one being unreasonable. We won't let you suffer anymore."

Her eyes shot back to Tracy, full of anger, just as Matthew, who had been quietly watching, suddenly spoke. "Ms. Jackman, this academy you mentioned-what is it?"

His polite smile had gone. His eyes went dark, his expression unsettling.

Both Erin and Daphne, caught off guard, froze at his question.

Before they could react, Tracy answered, "She means the Angelic Etiquette Academy. A place built to protect the image of high society. A place where they dump, train, and 'reform' the unwanted trash in rich families."

Her fists clenched. She stared at Matthew, her voice sharp. "From the look on your face... You know exactly what that place is, don't you?"

2:07 pm M.

Chapter 189 Romance

Chapter 189 Romance

So he sent David there on purpose ...

+10 Free Coins

Matthew pushed his emotions aside. He glanced at Erin and Daphne, both looking lost, then turned to Tracy, who was staring straight at him like she wanted to see right through him.

After a pause, he nodded. "I've heard of it. But I didn't expect Ms. Yarwood had been there, and that her own family was the one who sent her."

His lips curved into a half-smile as he looked at Daphne. "I always heard the Jackmans spoiled the daughter they raised by mistake. They gave her anything she wanted. But once they found their real daughter, their attitude flipped overnight. They started despising the girl they raised.

"I thought it was just gossip, people talking nonsense. But it seems the Jackmans do hate their fake daughter."

He was only stating a fact, but to Daphne, the words felt like an insult.

The Jackmans had attended the recent Investor Conference. She recognized Matthew there and knew better than to offend the Renaults. But she still couldn't hold back.

"If Tracy wasn't so thoughtless, always bullying Erin, we never would've sent her to the etiquette academy," Daphne shot back. "To me, Erin and Tracy are both my daughters. Sending Tracy away broke my heart, too. Don't you think your words are too much?"

Matthew didn't argue. He only let his smirk grow wider.

She claimed both girls were her daughters, yet treated them so differently. Did she not hear how ridiculous she sounded?

Still, family drama wasn't his concern. He wasn't here to play referee.

So he simply chuckled and nodded. "You're right."

Through all of this, Tracy stayed silent.

She knew Matthew wasn't defending her. He was defending himself.

In his eyes, both of them-Tracy and Matthew-were mistakes. Switched children in rich families.

The difference was, her switch had been an accident at the hospital.

He had been deliberate.

When Matthew's tone softened, Daphne's anger eased a little.

Erin still leaned in her arms, but her eyes kept darting between Matthew and Tracy.

Something flashed in her mind. Then she spoke in a soft, fragile voice, "You two seem familiar. Have you met before?"

The question felt odd. Tracy studied Erin closely and noticed something in her eyes-nervousness.

2:08 pm

Chapter 189 Romance

+10 Free Coins

What is she nervous about?

Matthew, meanwhile, didn't sense anything strange. "I'd heard of Ms. Yarwood before. But today's our first real meeting."

He looked at Tracy and smiled. "She's a very smart woman. I admire her. It's a shame she seems to have misunderstood me."

Erin's face stiffened. It was small, but Tracy noticed.

So Erin is nervous because of Matthew?

Tracy felt like she was getting close to something hidden.

After a moment of thought, she suddenly spoke, "Mr. Renault, didn't you just invite me to have dinner sometime?"

"Since you think there's a misunderstanding between us, let's talk it out over a meal. How about it?"

Matthew raised a brow, surprised she had changed her mind so suddenly.

He didn't know why, but after watching her for a moment, he nodded. Right there, he exchanged numbers with her and set a time for dinner.

Erin had watched the whole thing. She gripped Daphne's sleeve tighter without realizing it. Her face grew

more tense.

Tracy noticed, of course. And her suspicion deepened.

Erin had never been this nervous about her interactions with the Jackmans. But with Matthew, suddenly she was on edge.

Today wasn't the right time to dig deeper, though. So Tracy swallowed her questions, didn't bother saying goodbye, and walked away.

...

Her attitude made Daphne's temper flare all over again. "You ... you All the years we spent raising you-it was a complete waste!"

In the past, Erin would've comforted her right away. She would've patted Daphne's back, whispering soft words to calm her.

But now, Erin just looked at Matthew, her voice timid. "Mr. Renault, you and Tracy..."

She hesitated, unsure how to finish.

Matthew was patient. "If you want to ask something, just ask."

Erin let out a breath of relief. Then she asked, "Are you and Tracy planning to date?"

Matthew hadn't expected that. His expression froze for a second.

Erin's big eyes looked innocent, her tone pure. "Tracy once told me that romance always starts with dinner. That's how it began with her and Chris."

2:08 pm MAO

Chapter 190 Lovers

Chapter 190 Lovers

Daphne turned to Erin in surprise. Anger flickered in her eyes-but not toward Erin.

Dinner between a man and a woman meant romance?

How could Tracy have such filthy, indecent thoughts?

Matthew studied Erin for a long moment, then asked, "Chris?"

+10 Free Coins

Erin nodded. "Yes. From the Woodwards. They just started a new project with our family. Back then, Chris chased after Tracy like crazy. He'd drive to our house before dawn to pick her up, then bring her home after dark."

Her innocent face made the story sound sweet and ambiguous, as if there was more between them than innocent rides.

“Chris even gave Tracy a huge bouquet of roses. She said she loved them. At that time, Tracy was fighting with the family. She had no income, so Chris was the one supporting her.

“They almost ended up together. But unfortunately, Mrs. Woodward didn’t like her.”

She pouted, looking like she was standing up for Tracy.

It was as if she had no idea how inappropriate it was to say these things right in front of a man who might be interested in Tracy. She just kept going, like she’d opened a floodgate.

“Even if they didn’t end up together, I believe no one can replace the feelings they had. When Tracy got kidnapped, Chris searched all night without rest...

“Erin!”

Daphne finally snapped out of her daze and cut her off, her face full of disapproval.

The kidnapping of both Erin and Tracy wasn’t exactly a secret, but for the Jackmans, it was humiliating. And with the Renaults in Cloudville right now, looking for business partners, this was the worst time to bring up family scandals.

Erin blinked like she had just realized. She stuck out her tongue playfully at Matthew and stopped talking.

It didn’t matter. She’d already said enough.

If Matthew were smart, he’d see that Tracy was shallow, vain, and messy in her private life. Not the kind of woman for him.

Matthew’s smile never wavered, as if he hadn’t noticed what she meant.

But of course, he had. He understood perfectly well-and he saw straight through her.

The Jackmans were the top family in Cloudville, and they were one of the hottest picks at the Investor Conference, Long before he came, Matthew had investigated them.

He’d heard plenty about Erin-“Cloudville’s most beloved princess.” And the stories were always glowing.

2:08 pm M

Chapter 190 Lovers

Kind. Innocent. Gentle. Sweet.

Everyone made her sound like a saint.

But after actually meeting her today? She was nothing like the rumors.

+10 Free Coins

If Tracy, like him, was a “mistake” born from a family mix-up, then Erin was the one who was truly like him inside.

They were both selfish. Both were willing to do whatever it took to grab the wealth and power lying in front of them.

Matthew was very self-aware. He didn't mind the word “selfish.” He was proud of it. Without that quality, he wouldn't have the life he enjoys today.

Compared to the tricks he used inside the Renault family, Erin's schemes were low-level and pathetic. He wondered just how foolish the Jackmans must be to fall for it.

Of course, he wasn't about to warn them. And he had no interest in tearing down Erin's mask. Instead, he just gave vague, polite replies while she trashed Tracy.

To Erin, that looked like he didn't believe her. That he was taking Tracy's side.

Her expression twisted for a second. She wanted to say more, to ruin Tracy's image completely in Matthew's eyes.

But Daphne was still there. And Erin knew she'd already said enough. If she pushed too far, it might backfire.

So she forced herself to stop and instead asked Matthew for his number.

Her excuse was simple-she could be the go-between for him and Tracy..

Matthew acted like he didn't notice her little scheme. He smiled warmly, agreeing at once. “You're one of the kindest people I've ever met. It's a privilege to know you.”

Erin's cheeks flushed. She lowered her head, shy and flustered.

Matthew's smile deepened. His whole presence grew softer.

He knew he was attractive-his family name, his looks, his status. But he also knew he wasn't that irresistible. Not the kind of man women threw themselves at after one meeting.

Erin wasn't acting out of love. She was just trying to compete with Tracy.

Just like David had tried to compete with him back at the Renault Residence.

Matthew smiled with the charm of a gentleman. Erin blushed, head down, playing the shy girl.

To anyone walking in, they would've looked like a pair of lovers.

2:08 pm