

# **The Unwanted Daughter: When Love Comes Too Late**

## **#Left Behind 221 - Read The Unwanted Daughter: When Love Comes Too Late Left Behind 221**

Chapter 221 An Outsider

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**31**

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If the Jackmans were going to cover for Erin, Tracy didn't care if she dragged the whole Jackmans down with her.

"The rest of this stuff, donate it under Grandpa's name," she told the lawyer.

The lawyer didn't look shocked. He just let out a quiet sigh. "You and Mr. Franklin ... You two really are something."

His voice had a hint of emotion, as if he respected the bond between grandfather and granddaughter. He said with a sigh, "Mr. Franklin told me that when I handed you these things, you wouldn't keep them. You'd tell me to donate them under his name.

"But he also told me that when I donated them, I should put your name on it, Ms. Yarwood. He said it was his last chance to do something for you.

"He said all this was supposed to be your 18th birthday gift, but then ... everything happened. And so you wouldn't feel awkward about your place in the Jackmans, he waited until now."

When he finished, the lawyer packed up the papers and pen, then left.

The second the door clicked shut, Tracy's voice broke. "Grandpa ..."

The tears came in big, hot drops. Her voice shook with muffled, painful sobs.

Ronald's chest ached. He couldn't help it—he pulled her close and patted her back softly. "Cry, Tracy. If your heart hurts, just let it out. I'll be here the whole time."

His words were like opening a floodgate. Everything inside her burst free, and she cried hard, broken sobs that shook her whole body.

Ever since Franklin died, she'd been holding herself together, never letting her guard drop. After the funeral, it was like she couldn't breathe.

Now she finally let go. She let the grief crash over her completely.

Her cries grew hoarse. The rough, raw sound could break anyone's heart.

No one knew how long she cried before her voice faded, and then she fell asleep.

She'd been wound so tightly for days, and once that tension snapped, her body gave out. She got sick fast. Naturally, her plan to meet the donor was put on hold.

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Erin didn't know where Tracy had planned to go, but she heard from Andrew that Tracy now own 20% of Jackman Enterprise's shares.

*I've worked for years to get 10%. How is it fair that Tracy got double?*

She hid the dark jealousy in her eyes and put on a worried look. "Tracy's shares are the same as yours, Andrew. Won't that hurt the company?"

Andrew didn't answer right away. He just stared at the papers in his hands.

He'd always known Franklin liked Tracy best, more than any of the other kids. But he never thought Franklin would give her everything—even company shares.

*No matter how much you spoil her, she's still an outsider. Grandpa must have lost his mind at the end.*

Andrew sighed before speaking. "Tracy's not a rival to Jackman Enterprise. She won't hurt the company."

*She's not an employee and won't get involved in the company's affairs*

*. Those shares just mean she'll get a bigger dividend each year.*

But Erin kept up the worried act. She anxiously said, "Still ... after Grandpa's death, Tracy's got a big grudge against the Jackmans. If she tries to interfere ...

"

Her words made Andrew remember the way Tracy had looked at him at the funeral.

She hated him. She hated all the Jackmans.

Andrew's hands shook slightly as he held the documents.

Erin noticed and kept going. "I just feel like she's not the same as before. Remember last time? She hit me in front of everyone.

"Now, with Grandpa gone, she's got all these wrong ideas about us. If she uses those shares to mess with the company..

"I can take a hit from her, that's fine. But Dad and you worked so hard for this company. I'd hate to see anything happen to it."

Her voice sounded so sincere that Benjamin nodded in full agreement. "Erin's right. Tracy has been reckless lately. With that many shares, she could cause trouble."

Daphne's voice was sharp with displeasure. "Twenty percent is more than what Erin, Liam, and I have combined. I don't know what your grandpa was thinking, giving so much to an

outsider."

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The word "outsider" made Liam freeze.

*Tracy grew up in Jackman Villa. How is she an outsider now?*

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But no one argued with Daphne. Even Andrew, who hadn't thought that way before, said, "You're right. I didn't think about it before, but Tracy's already pulled away from us. She even hit Erin in public. She really shouldn't have that many shares."

Chapter 222 Getting Harder to Control

Chapter 222 Getting Harder to Control

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Erin's eyes lit up, and she jumped in at the perfect time. "Even so, Grandpa just gave those shares to Tracy. If we take them back now, won't it look bad?

"If Tracy says something in front of outsiders, people who don't know the truth might think we're trying to steal what's hers."

She sighed, looking frustrated, as if she hated that she couldn't help. "If only I had as many shares as Tracy. I'd hand them over to Andrew myself, so everyone could see that the Jackmans treat me and Tracy the same."

Andrew looked at her, touched. "If Tracy were half as thoughtful as you, I'd have a lot less to worry about."

Then his tone shifted, as if he'd made up his mind. "I'll talk to Tracy and have her give you 5% of her shares. Then you'll both have 15% each. Blood-related or not, you'll be treated the same, and no one can say otherwise."

Erin's heart leapt with joy, but she put on a troubled face. "Are you sure that's a good idea?"

Andrew was about to nod and say it'd be fine when Liam, who'd been quiet the whole time, finally spoke. "Andrew, even though Tracy's not related to us by blood, she's still part of the Jackmans. Wouldn't taking the shares back be too much?"

"Those shares were Grandpa's gift to her. He just passed away, and now we're going to take them? It's ... it's..."

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He didn't even know what word fit. And even if he did, he wouldn't dare say it—because Erin's eyes suddenly went red.

"I was only thinking about what's best for the company. Do you really think I'm trying to take from Tracy on purpose? H—how could you think that about me?"

Her tears came fast, and Daphne, protective as ever, pulled her close and glared at Liam. "Watch

your mouth, boy! Erin's your sister—how could you bully her like that?"

"I didn't—"

Liam tried to explain, but Andrew slammed his hand on the table angrily before he could finish. "Liam, apologize to Erin. Now."

Benjamin stayed quiet, but the angry, disappointed look in his eyes said enough.

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In that moment, Liam felt like they'd shoved him out onto a block of ice, drifting alone in the sea—pushed farther and farther away.

And then it hit him—he'd seen this before.

His face went pale as the memories came flooding back.

He remembered Tracy, sitting on the floor, pale as people accused her; Tracy, cornered while people shouted at her; Tracy, panic in her eyes as people demanded answers.

And in every accusing, scolding, questioning face... there were Jackmans, including him.

Right then, it was like he finally understood what it had been like for Tracy in this family—why she treated them the way she did now.

But he still didn't fully get it.

*Mom, Dad, Andrew—they aren't unreasonable people. So why do they turn irrational when it comes to Tracy?*

Liam's lips shook as he said slowly, "I was just saying what's on my mind. I'm not bullying Erin."

Daphne's face was full of disappointment. "We all saw it with our own eyes, and you're still making excuses?"

Andrew's voice was firm and authoritative. "Liam, I'll say this one last time. Apologize to Erin right now!"

Erin stayed in Daphne's arms, silent except for soft sobs.

To Liam, the scene was so familiar that it made him shake,

Only before, he'd been on the other side. And the one standing where he was now had been Tracy,

Sometimes you don't know how much a knife hurts until it cuts you.

Liam stared at the faces in front of him. Along with shock and confusion, a strange, creeping fear spread in his chest.

He stumbled back a few steps before he could stop himself. His eyes scanned each familiar face—faces that, for the first time, felt like strangers.

“You all...

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## Chapter 222 Getting Harder to Control

His voice shook as he pointed at them, but no more words came for a long moment.

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Then, whether from fear or something else, he suddenly turned and ran. His panicked figure looked like a demon was chasing him.

The Jackmans froze, glancing at each other in confusion.

It was Erin who finally spoke. “Liam’s been acting like he doesn’t like me lately. Did I do something wrong? I—I can change if it’ll make him forgive me. Sob ...”

*This idiot is getting harder to control.*

*If things really get out of hand, I won’t mind sacrificing this piece on the board.*

Erin cried hard and looked so pitiful that the Jackmans’ hearts softened. They surrounded her with gentle words, comforting her, all while blaming Liam for being unreasonable. Some even guessed Tracy had something to do with it and cursed her a few times, too.

Liam didn’t know any of it.

After rushing out of Jackman Villa, the cold wind hit his back, sending a chill through him. It cleared some of the fog in his head.

In his life, Liam had messed up plenty of times before. But this was the first time his whole family had turned on him. Beneath the unease, what he felt most was ang

## Chapter 223 Found Something

## Chapter 223 Found Something

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Liam had only spoken up because he wanted what was best for the family, but somehow they all thought he was picking on Erin, and they were blaming him without even trying to find out what really happened.

Liam had never been hit with that kind of unfairness before, and it left him boiling inside with nowhere to let it out. So he just grabbed his car keys and went out to race.

Whenever he felt upset, driving fast was the only thing that calmed him down. Normally, he'd cool off by the same night and go back home to Jackman Villa.

But this time, he stayed away for days, almost like he was trying to prove something. He didn't go home or call.

It wasn't just because he was mad or didn't know how to face them. There was also this deeper kind of fear sitting in his chest.

They had never treated him like that before. And it was the first time he really understood what Tracy had gone through with the Jackmans.

And he had been one of the people who made her feel that way.

With all those mixed-up feelings, Liam just wandered around for days, like an aimless ghost. And during that time, it was as if the Jackmans forgot he even existed. They didn't call or even

text.

For the first time, Liam didn't feel sure about the "home" he'd grown up in—it didn't seem as safe as he thought. And in that confusion, fear slowly crept in.

It felt like he'd become the second Tracy.

While Liam was stuck in that mess of confusion, shock, and fear, the first Jackman to show up looking for him ... was Erin.

She wasn't about to give up someone this useful unless she had no other choice.

So she came over, talking in a softer voice, even saying sorry to give him a way out. She asked if he'd been eating well and keeping warm these past few days.

It was just an apology, but she'd done this act so many times before in Jackman Villa, so she knew exactly how to smooth away Liam's frustration.

When she noticed his mood easing, Erin slipped her arm through his and pouted. “Liam, what

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happened that day was just a misunderstanding. Mom, Dad, and Andrew were just upset. You’re not still mad at me, are you?”

Liam could never stand Erin’s pouting. And with her saying sorry first and showing she cared, he didn’t lose any pride, so of course, he wasn’t mad anymore.

Looking into her red-rimmed eyes, he even felt a little guilty.

Sure, he’d been holding a grudge these past few days—after all, because of her, his parents and Andrew had scolded him.

But instead of being mad at him, she came to make peace first. Compared to her, he felt like he was being too petty.

Once Liam promised he really wasn’t upset, Erin let out a big sigh of relief and rested her head on his shoulder. “You’re the best, Liam.”

He smiled down at her warmly, all affectionate, as if he’d forgotten the fear and hurt from being cornered by the whole family just days ago.

Then, a sharp ringtone cut in.

Liam pulled out his phone. The number wasn’t saved in his contacts, but he knew exactly who it was.

Because of his doubts and Tracy’s warning, he’d secretly hired private investigators to see if Erin had anything to do with those photos.

And this was the number of the one who’d been updating him.

Erin saw the screen and frowned. “Who’s that?”

Looking into her clear, curious eyes, Liam suddenly felt like she was this perfect, flawless angel who was too good *for* this world. And thinking about what he’d been doing behind her back filled him with guilt.

We’ve lived together *for years*, and *I know* better than *anyone* how kind Erin is. How could I doubt her with no proof?



Without even thinking, he shut off the phone and smiled gently. “No idea. Probably just some telemarketer.”

*Erin is too good, too kind.*

*I can't let her know I suspected her—it would crush her.*

*When I have time, I'll call off the investigators and cancel the whole thing.*

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From now on, I will *never doubt Erin again*.

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With that in mind, Liam went to see the investigator that very day, ready to tell them to stop.

But before he could even say a word, the investigator hit him with a bombshell.

“Mr. Liam, we followed your lead and actually found something.”

The man handed him a file. “Just like you thought, the one who sold those photos to the media was this guy, Tom Allen. But do you know where Tom got those photos from?”

Liam had come here planning to end the case. He shouldn't have cared anymore.

Trying to Convince Himself

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So after just a moment's hesitation, the private investigator said, “It was your dear sister, Ms. Erin Jackman.”

“That's impossible!” Liam didn't even stop to think before shutting it down. “Erin has the kindest heart. She could never do something like that.”

That was what he said out loud, but deep inside, the suspicion he'd been forcing down started bubbling back up. His eyes locked on the file sitting on the table, but his hand stayed frozen, too afraid to actually pick it up.

The private investigator was just a man paid to do a job. He'd already found the truth; whether his client wanted to look at it or not was none of his business. So he sat there quietly, not pushing.

Liam didn't know how long he sat there, staring. Eventually, his fingers trembled as he finally reached for the file.

The second he opened it, all the color drained from his face. His hands shook without him even realizing.

"Th-this can't be real. How could this happen..."

He had just convinced himself to trust Erin completely, to never doubt her again. He never thought reality would hit him this hard, this fast.

Instinctively, he wanted to deny it and tell himself maybe the investigator had made a mistake.

But the man across from him swore, "This is the same conclusion every single one of the agencies you hired came to. If you don't believe me, Mr. Liam, you can have anyone you want double-check it."

As a private investigator, he'd heard plenty about how much the Jackmans spoiled that long-lost, biological daughter they'd found halfway through her life. So it didn't surprise him at all that Liam didn't want to believe it.

But he wouldn't have brought this to Liam if he wasn't sure.

Liam knew that, too-after all, he'd been the one to hire several different investigators at the same time just to be certain.

And the truth in that information was what made it so hard to breathe right now.

The Erin I know-the one who's gentle and innocent-how could she...

He didn't even notice when the investigator left. He didn't know how he ended up walking out.

When he came back to himself, he was standing in front of Tracy's rented apartment.

He hesitated outside for a long time before finally pushing himself to go in.

When Ronald opened the door and saw him, his frown expressed how much he didn't welcome the guest.

"What are you doing here?" Ronald's voice was low, as if he didn't want to disturb whoever was inside.

Ever since Franklin's death, Tracy had been surviving on sheer willpower alone.

11:36 am PP

## Chapter 224 Trying to Convince Himself

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The day the lawyer came, she cried so hard that she seemed to cry out that last bit of strength and collapsed into illness right after.

Ronald had only just gotten her to the point where she was slowly recovering. The last thing he wanted was someone from the Jackmans showing up now.

To him, this small apartment was their first real home together. Every piece of furniture, every decoration, had been chosen with care. That was why he'd never wanted to move.

But with people from the Jackmans showing up at their door again and again, it was starting to feel unbearable. Maybe it really was time to move.

Liam could feel the wall of cold energy coming from Ronald. Normally, he would've snapped right back.

But now, standing in front of the man Tracy trusted most, he felt something strange-almost guilty.

It was as if he was looking at someone who had taken the place that used to belong to him-a place he had thrown away with his own hands.

He rubbed the bridge of his nose. "I ... came to see my sister-I mean, Tracy."

Ronald's whole body blocked the doorway. "If you have something to say, say it to me. I'll decide whether or not to pass it along."

Liam frowned. He clearly didn't want to talk to Ronald.

But when he glanced past the small gap in the door, he caught sight of Tracy sitting on the couch.

She was standing close and must have heard him, but she didn't even spare him a glance.

He knew then that she didn't want to see him.

That realization made his chest tighten. His voice came out louder without him meaning to. "Tracy, can you just ... talk to me? Like before?"

Before, Tracy had been the person he trusted and relied on most in the Jackmans.

Whenever something was bothering him, he would come to her and listen to her comfort him or let her help him figure it out.

He missed that. He missed her.

Maybe she felt the emotion in his words, because Tracy, who was initially sitting on the couch without moving, finally stood and walked toward the door.

She had Ronald step aside, but she still didn't invite Liam in.

Her eyes locked on his like she was trying to read his entire soul. "Did you find something about Erin?"

She knew Liam too well. Every time he ran into something he didn't want to face, he'd get all upset and

lost, then come find her for advice or comfort.

Not long ago, he'd mentioned investigating those photos. And now he was here, looking like this-it wasn't hard to figure out what had happened.

11:36 am P PPD

Chapter 224 Trying to Convince Himself

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Hearing her see straight through him made Liam feel... he didn't even know if it was relief or shame.

"I ... "

He wanted to deny it. But when he met Tracy's eyes, the words wouldn't come.

In the end, he looked away. "No. Erin is the kindest person in the world. She'd never do something like

that."

He wasn't sure if he was answering her or trying to convince himself.

1:36 am P PPD.

Chapter 225 Don't You Remember?

## Chapter 225 Don't You Remember?

Liam kept telling himself again and again how kind and pure Erin was, that Erin would never do something like that, and it had to be some mistake.

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It felt like the only way to keep believing that-something he'd been clinging to deep down-was to repeat it until it blocked out everything else.

But Tracy knew him too well.

'You already know the truth,' she said sharply. "You're just lying to yourself. Don't you think that's pathetic?"

Then something seemed to click for her. Her eyes opened a little wider, like she'd finally figured him out. 'Liam ... you can't admit Erin's not perfect. Is it because you think she saved your life? Is that why, in your mind, she can never do anything wrong?"

Liam's eyes shifted away, his silence telling her everything.

Yeah. Erin saved my life. So even if the whole family turns on me because of her, I'll never have the right to turn on her.

In my heart, Erin will always be good-so good that even if the whole world doubts her, I can't.

He kept warning himself. But Tracy's cold laugh cut right through his thoughts. "Liam, you're pathetic, but I feel sorry for you.

'You keep thinking Erin saved you on Suncord Mountain, but you don't even know the truth. The one who risked her life-searching for days without rest, coming back hurt-it wasn't Erin.

'It was me. When everyone else had given up on you, I was still out there like an idiot, running around the mountains to find you. I ran into snakes and wild boars, and I almost died more than once-all just to save you, you ungrateful punk.

'Liam... I really regret saving you back then."

With every word, the color drained from Liam's face.

No.

...

...

no no way...

"You're lying!" His voice cracked into a hoarse yell, as if shouting was the only way to block out the truth he didn't want to hear.

It was Erin who saved me! You were traveling somewhere else! Erin's hands even got hurt in the process- she's the one who saved me!" His words came out rushed and messy,

But even as he said it, a memory pushed its way in-something Franklin had told him.

The search teams had looked for him for days with no luck, yet Erin just happened to walk in and find him. And she, a girl who couldn't even carry much weight, somehow carried a full-grown man back? Except for a few scrapes on her hands, she wasn't even injured.

It didn't make sense at all.

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Chapter 225 Don't You Remember?

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Tracy gave him a half-smile that held no warmth. "This 'traveling' you think I was doing- who told you that? Did you even check? And Erin saving you-did you see it yourself, or just hear about it?

"Liam, you've been impulsive your whole life. If I'm being nice, I'd call it straightforward. But really? You're just stupid.

"If you had even half a brain, you'd go find out who Erin really is. And if you actually feel guilty about what you've done to me, then drag Erin down for me."

She knew Erin cared too much about the Jackmans' love. If one of them hurt her, it would cut deeper than if Tracy did it herself.

And with that, Tracy was done talking. She slammed the door hard in his face.

The rental was hidden behind a stairwell in an old building. Even on a bright, sunny day, not a single bit of sunlight reached here.

As the door shut, darkness swallowed Liam whole. It pressed in on him as panic and fear crept into his chest, sinking into his bones.

I don't wanna doubt Erin. I really don't. But... Tracy said she was the one who saved me.

Every feeling-shock, confusion, anger-crashed over him at once, as if they were trying to tear him apart. He sank down on the flowerbed ledge in the courtyard, staring into space. He stayed there until the sun set and then rose again.

Some of the old neighbors out for morning exercise saw him-pale, slouched, and lifeless. Thinking something awful had happened, they sat beside him and tried to comfort him.

Maybe it was their kindness, or maybe something just clicked in his head. Either way, Liam suddenly got up and rushed back to Jackman Villa. He didn't care how messy he looked. He went straight to find Andrew.

Andrew's study was packed wall-to-wall with important company files. Over the years, even Erin, his beloved sister, had never been allowed to wander in.

So when Liam barged in without knocking, Andrew's face instantly darkened.

"You've gotten way out of line lately! First, you bullied Erin in front of us, and now you're barging into my study? Looks like you've gone way too long without being taught a lesson!"

Liam froze when he heard Andrew bring up how everyone accused him of bullying Erin that day. The memory of being blamed and shut out by the whole family came rushing back.

The anger and bitterness that had faded after Erin's apology started to rise again. But this time, there was something else mixed in-resentment.

For the first time, he actually felt resentment toward Erin.

But that wasn't why he was here. So he pushed it down and asked, "Andrew... when I was in trouble on Suncord Mountain, was it really Erin who saved me?"

Andrew stared at him like he was speaking nonsense. "Did you get drunk last night? Erin got hurt saving. you-don't you remember?"

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Chapter 226 Speechless and Angry

Chapter 226 Speechless and Angry

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“Besides the scratches on her hand, did she get hurt anywhere else?” Liam asked.

“What kind of question is that?” Andrew slammed his hand on the desk, pissed. “Do you want Erin to have worse injuries? What did she ever do to you for you to think something so cruel?”

“That’s not what I meant. I ...” Liam started, but the words stuck in his throat.

Andrew had always been the serious, proper one in the family, and he was calm no matter what. But when it comes to Erin...

It wasn’t just him. Everyone in the family was the same. The second Erin is involved, they all lose control. They don’t even seem like the same people anymore.

That thought sent a cold chill through Liam’s chest.

He shook his head hard, trying to push it away, and changed the subject. “What about Tracy? I heard she was traveling back then. Where’d she go? Did you see her leave with your own eyes?”

Andrew frowned at him like he was crazy. “Why are you acting so weird today? Back then, Tracy was scared we’d be mad at her, so she only told Erin about her trip. You already knew that.

“It’s been years since then, and now you’re suddenly bringing it up, still doubting Erin. Did Tracy say something to you?”

Liam didn’t even hear the last part. His whole body went stiff. “So ... both the story about Erin saving me and the one about Tracy traveling... they both came from Erin? Nobody actually saw either of them happen?”

Tracy’s questions from yesterday slammed back into his head, hitting like lightning. His heart twisted, and he stepped back a few times.

Seeing his pale face, Andrew’s anger turned to worry. He walked out from behind the desk. “Liam, what’s wrong with you lately?”

Liam used to defend Erin no matter what. If anyone so much as looked like they might hurt her, he’d be the first to step up.

But just the other day, Erin told me that Liam had been taking Tracy’s side over and over and even blamed Erin for things she didn’t do. He’s become unreasonable.

He sighed, voice firm. “You’ve been talking to Tracy a lot lately, haven’t you? Did she say something to you?”



Before Liam could speak, Andrew's tone turned cold and full of disgust. "You know she competes with Erin about everything. She'll take any chance to push her around, and she lies all the time. Why would you believe her?"

"Now she's got over half more shares than Erin, so you know she'll show off in front of Erin. She might even cause trouble at the company."

"To stop problems later, I'un gonna talk to her and make her give Erin 5% of her shares. Then they'll have

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Chapter 226 Speechless and Angry

the same amount, and she won't be able to use that extra power against Erin."

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Liam's head shot up in shock. "Andrew, those shares are Granpa's inheritance for Tracy! He just passed away, and you're already trying to take them? That's basically stealing!"

Andrew looked at him with open disappointment. "You really have lost it. Still defending Tracy."

"What I'm doing is for Erin and the good of the company. You've never cared about the company, so don't try to mess with my decisions."

His tone was final. The decision was made, and he wasn't letting Liam argue.

Andrew was also thinking he had to stop Tracy from messing with Liam's head. That same afternoon, he went straight to her rental place.

Tracy's sickness came fast but was slow to heal.

She had been resting at home for days and was gradually getting better. Ronald finally decided to take her outside for some air.

But they had barely stepped out when they ran into Andrew.

Ronald's face darkened right away. Now he was even more set on moving somewhere else.

Andrew didn't even look at him. His eyes were locked on Tracy. "You-"

He came in ready to demand answers, but when he saw her face looking thinner, his steps paused. His voice softened without him meaning to. "What happened to you?"

Tracy didn't answer. Instead, she frowned. "Mr. Andrew, what do you want?"

Her cool tone made him frown too. The tiny bit of concern in his eyes vanished instantly.

He didn't waste time talking. He shoved a file toward her, his voice commanding. "Sign this."

Confused, Tracy took it and opened it. Then she let out a short, cold laugh.

"You want me to give Erin 5% of my shares for free? Andrew Jackman, just how stupid do you think I am?"

It was the first time since coming back that she'd called him by his full name, and that alone showed how speechless and angry she felt with him.

Ronald had known no good would come from a Jackman showing up here. But even he didn't expect the great CEO of Jackman Enterprise to make such a shameless demand.

Forget Tracy-even Ronald almost laughed in his face.

Instead, he shot Andrew a cold, sharp look without saying anything and quietly took out his phone.

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Chapter 227 Glued to Their Phones

Chapter 227 Glued to Their Phones

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Andrew didn't even realize how he sounded. He frowned at Tracy. "I'm doing this for your own good.

"If you hold the same percentage of shares as I, it's gonna stir up trouble in the company. It could even attract shady people who'd cozy up to you just to use you.

"And didn't you always say we spoil Erin more? Well, now you and Erin will have the same shares. That proves the Jackmans treat you both the same, and you no longer have to fight with her over anything."

He said it like he was handing her a huge favor, his voice full of confidence.

Tracy just stood there, face cold, letting him finish his nonsense.

She used to think Andrew—who had always looked out for her—was the calmest, most reliable man she knew.

But that steady, dependable guy from her memories was gone. She couldn't even recognize the man in front of her.

Now, all she felt was how ridiculous it all was. Nothing else. She'd already filed the man standing in front of her under "stranger."

She waited until he was done, then said slowly, her voice flat, "Mr. Andrew, are you done?"

"If so, leave. I don't have time to play this pretend family game with you."

Andrew had already guessed she'd say no.

Five percent might sound small, but the profits from it were enough to make anyone jealous—especially since it was the first time in years she'd beaten Erin at anything.

He softened his tone. "Tracy, don't be like this. I know what you're thinking—you just want to use those shares to go against Erin.

"If you hand them over, I promise I'll personally bring you back to Jackman Villa. Mom and Dad will spoil you again, just like before. As long as you can get along with Erin, we're still family."

His talking like he understood everything didn't surprise her. If anything, it was exactly what she expected.

Andrew had always been the golden boy wherever he went. It made him cocky, as if he could read anyone in a second and be right every time.

Back then, she never minded. She'd even been proud of him.

Now, it just made her sick.

She was about to speak, but a loud, exaggerated gag cut her off.

"Ugh!"

Tracy turned her head. Ronald stood there, one hand holding up his phone, the other over his mouth like he was about to puke.

11:37 am PPPD.

## Chapter 227 Glued to Their Phones

When he saw them looking, he rolled his eyes so hard that it was almost insulting.

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“You’re asking for her shares, then acting like you’re doing her a favor? Why don’t you give me your shares instead? I don’t mind doing you that favor.

“And seriously, maybe you shouldn’t be the CEO of Jackman Enterprise at all. With skin that thick, you should be out on a construction site laying bricks-you could build a whole building with what’s on your face.”

He hit the words “CEO of Jackman Enterprise” extra hard, making sure it stuck.

Ronald didn’t swear, but his words still landed like punches.

Andrew had never been humiliated like this-except every single time he clashed with Ronald.

“You little...”

His face darkened as he pointed at Ronald, ready to snap back, when he noticed the phone still in Ronald’s hand.

A bad feeling hit him. “What are you doing?”

He tried to grab the phone, but Ronald had been ready for that. He darted sideways and ducked behind Tracy.

“Tracy, you see this? He’s trying to hit me. Is this how the CEO of Jackman Enterprise acts?”

Ronald’s voice was all fake hurt, but he repeated Andrew’s title again for good measure.

Andrew had no clue what Ronald was up to, but Tracy did.

Her two years at Angelic Etiquette Academy might have cut her off from the world, but since she’d come back, Ronald had taught her plenty, including how livestreaming worked.

Right now, Ronald was broadcasting the whole thing live.

Tracy shot him a surprised look. He was pretending to look pitiful, but he clearly knew how annoying he was being. He raised his brows at her with that “I’m a genius” face, clearly fishing for praise.

She couldn't help but laugh. The heavy mood Andrew had put her in instantly disappeared.

Not saying a word, she pulled out her phone and spent a big chunk of money to boost Ronald's stream.

Andrew still didn't know what they were doing, but seeing them both glued to their phones gave him a bad feeling.

That feeling didn't last long before it became reality.

Just as Andrew was about to lunge for Ronald again, his secretary called. "Mr. Andrew, it's bad-what just happened was streamed online. The internet's already exploding, and the PR team has no idea how to

handle it."

Andrew's face went pale.

11:37 am P P P

Chapter 228 Jackman Enterprise Scandal

Chapter 228 Jackman Enterprise Scandal

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As the company CEO, Andrew knew exactly how dangerous the internet could be. If what just happened really went out live...

He didn't even think. He yanked out his phone and checked the screen-then froze. It felt like the sky had just crashed down on him.

In only a few minutes, the internet was already blowing up with trending topics.

"Company CEO Caught Snatching Shares-Is Jackman Enterprise About to Fall?"

"New CEO Diary: Taking Your Shares Is Doing You a Favor"

"Franklin Just Passed and the Jackmans Are Already Grabbing Power: Talk About Shameless!"

"A New Definition for Thick Skin"

Andrew's face turned glum, the aura radiating off of him making the people around him shiver.

He glared at Ronald, eyes sharp as glass. "I'm gonna..

"1

He was about to explode, but then his gaze caught the phone still up in Ronald's hand, and his words got stuck.

Ronald wasn't about to let him off easy. He tilted his head and said in a mock-scared voice, "Tracy, look at him. He's staring at me like he's gonna eat me alive. I'm scared."

Tracy's lips twitched. She didn't smile big, but her eyes lit up.

She patted Ronald's shoulder like she was calming a kid. "Don't worry. He doesn't bite."

Andrew knew they were ganging up on him, which only made him madder. But with that livestream still rolling, he couldn't do anything.

In the end, he just snorted coldly. "I was gonna take you back to Jackman Villa, but it turns out you've got some gigolo outside. You're a disgrace."

He spun and stormed out. The way he moved almost looked like running away.

Ronald let out a short laugh, full of open mockery.

He can't even handle a little pressure, and this guy calls himself the CEO of Jackman Enterprise?

He's trash!

His eyes flashed with quick contempt-there one second, gone the next.

Then, like flipping a switch, Ronald went back to his sunny, college-boy self.

He turned the camera on himself and Tracy, smiling so bright it could blind someone.

"Hey, everyone! I'm the so-called 'gigolo' the CEO of Jackman Enterprise just mentioned. Honestly? I think

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Chapter 228 Jackman Enterprise Scandal

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he's just jealous that I don't have to get up early to work every day. Poor Mr. Andrew, having to run around just to grab some shares. Must be tiring."

Ronald's smugness was off the charts. On anyone else's face, it'd be annoying, but on him-someone with good looks, sharp features, and deep dimples-it somehow made him even more likable.

He leaned closer to the camera, dimples showing. "And let me answer what Mr. Andrew said. Tracy and I aren't married, and there's nothing going on between us. So how's that 'a disgrace'?"

"Tracy makes the money. I do the cooking and cleaning. We've got it all split up. No one's freeloading. If that makes me a gigolo, then I think you should really keep up with the times."

Even without being face-to-face, Ronald's words hit like bullets. In his car, Andrew, who'd just left, was so angry he smashed his phone.

No one had ever gotten under his skin like this before.

Ronald!

I'm gonna make him pay!

Tracy didn't stop Ronald from saying any of it.

She wasn't dumb-she knew exactly why he did it.

She'd seen Andrew's moves before. She knew that "gigolo" comment wasn't just an insult-it was bait for the livestream viewers.

She could already picture it: him calling Jackman Enterprise's PR team, telling them to use "gigolo" to distract the public.

Too bad Ronald saw through it and wrecked his plan.

After saying a few more lines, Ronald checked the comments. Once he knew Andrew's trick wasn't catching on, he ended the livestream.

Back when he ran the "T" account, he'd already figured out Tracy hated being on camera-maybe even feared it.

He guessed it was tied to some secret, so he never pushed her. He always protected her, making sure she never had to show her face.

Putting his phone away, Ronald leaned in with a big grin. “Tracy, I killed it just now, right?”

With the camera off, Tracy relaxed a little. She gave him a thumbs-up. “You did great.”

Ronald’s smile grew. “Oh, I’ve got something even better coming.

“The Jackmans keep bullying you over and over. It’s only fair they pay for it. Tonight, you’ll see. Just watch your phone.”

His tone was teasing, his smile full of mystery. He didn’t say what he’d done, which only made Tracy more

curious.

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Chapter 228 Jackman Enterprise Scandal

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That night, she kept refreshing her phone but found nothing—just the afternoon news about Andrew showing up.

She started wondering if Ronald’s plan had failed. Then—bam. A new trending topic shot up the charts like it was on fire.

“Jackman Enterprise Scandal”

11:37 am PPPD.

Chapter 229 Couldn’t Be a Coincidence

Chapter 229 Couldn’t Be a Coincidence

The second Tracy saw those three words, her heart jumped. She tapped the link right away.

Her eyes flew down the page, fingers scrolling fast, until the whole thing clicked.

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Turns out, Jackman Enterprise’s brand-new product had just been exposed for totally copying a small foreign brand. The other company had the patent first, and except for the name, Jackman Enterprise didn’t even bother to change the packaging.



The real patent owner was furious. They sued right away and said straight up that they weren't taking any settlement.

Then things got even worse-people found out the raw materials were cheap knock-offs. Tons of customers had all sorts of problems after using it.

Jackman Enterprise had spent a ton buying the project from someone else. They'd thrown in money and effort this was the Jackmans' most important project of the year.

Later, the Jackmans gave it to Woodward Enterprise to run. But the Woodwards hired a shady supplier-a total scammer. The first batches were already made with bad materials. By the time they found out, the supplier had taken the cash and disappeared.

Now the Jackmans and the Woodwards weren't just losing all their money-they were also facing a mountain of lawsuits and payouts.

Back then, Andrew used Franklin's funeral as a PR stunt to promote the new product. It worked. Orders blew up, and factories worked nonstop. But now? All that inventory was just sitting there like bricks.

The thrill of seeing preorder numbers explode was now gone. Now, it was pure panic watching the returns pile even higher.

Maybe this was Andrew's karma finally catching up.

Even without being there, Tracy could imagine how crazy things must be at Jackman Villa right now.

Ever since Franklin's funeral, she'd felt this heavy weight in her chest. Now, some of it finally felt lighter.

She knew this wasn't random-Ronald had worked hard behind the scenes.

And she knew Ronald didn't like hearing her say "thank you" all the time, so she didn't say it out loud. She just kept it in her heart like a debt she'd repay someday. She kept watching for updates.

She wanted to see how Andrew planned to dig himself out and if the 20% of shares she still had could finally come in handy.

But to her surprise, before the Jackmans made a move, the Woodwards acted first.

On the surface, the Woodwards looked united. But behind the scenes, Albert and Felicia were always fighting for power.

Felicia had been in charge of the Jackman project. At first, she used its success to crush Albert and get the upper hand. But now that things had flipped, Albert had the upper hand.

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Chapter 229 Couldn't Be a Coincidence

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He wanted to use this chance to strip Felicia of her power-except Felicia moved first. She threw out a

scapegoat.

And of course, that scapegoat was her “only son,” Chris.

Honestly, Chris had brought it on himself.

When the Woodwards took over the Jackman project, everyone thought it was a sure win. Chris thought so

too.

Thinking he had leverage over Felicia, he volunteered to join and even brought in that shady supplier himself.

So when things fell apart, he was the first to take the blame.

No one else cared about the Woodwards' family drama, though. Everyone's focus stayed on the Jackmans.

They'd stolen the project from someone else, thinking they'd get rich, but ended up walking right into a trap. And now that the supplier was gone, they had to bear the loss.

The patent date was solid proof. Even with all their power, the Jackmans couldn't change it. Their only option was to talk to the foreign brand directly.

Too bad the other company's answer was a hard “no,” no matter what the Jackmans offered.

With no choice left, Andrew had to fly overseas, leaving Clouldville in the hands of Benjamin, who'd been retired for years.

The Jackmans used to be on top in Clouldville. Now, because of this disaster, they were the punchline of half the city. Daphne and Erin didn't even want to go out anymore.

The only one still willing to leave the house was Liam.

In his mind, no matter how bad it got, Andrew could fix it. So he never bothered with company stuff. All he cared about was finding out who saved his life on Suncord Mountain.

His first lead was finding out where Tracy was at the time.

If she'd been traveling, there'd be receipts or bookings. But after digging, Liam found no sign of a trip. What he did find was a hospital record.

On the exact day he got back from Suncord Mountain, Tracy had been rushed to the same hospital he was in, unconscious. She stayed in a coma for three days.

The reason she was taken there was that a rescue team had found her on Suncord Mountain, badly injured and out cold.

Suncord Mountain.

Serious injuries.

That couldn't be a coincidence.

Liam felt like he already knew the answer, but he didn't want to believe it.

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Chapter 229 Couldn't Be a Coincidence

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He wasn't scared of being wrong—if he was, he'd apologize and make it right. What scared him was facing the truth about how badly he'd treated her after the misunderstanding.

11:38 am P PPD

Chapter 230 Turned Right Around

Chapter 230 Turned Right Around

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Liam couldn't stop thinking about it—ever since that accident on Suncord Mountain, every time he saw Tracy, he showered her with blame, insults, and humiliation, and he

remembered how her eyes went from trusting him, to disappointed, and finally to completely cold.

As if he were running away from those memories, Liam told himself a lie, saying there had to be some kind of mix-up. Even if Tracy got hurt on Suncord Mountain, that doesn't mean she was the one who saved me. And Erin is so sweet and innocent-how could she possibly lie to me?

Yes. There has to be some misunderstanding!

Almost like he wanted proof he was right, Liam threw himself into digging deeper, and that was how he found one of the rescue workers who had pulled Tracy off Suncord Mountain years ago.

The man didn't expect Liam to show up after so many years asking about it, but by chance, he still remembered clearly.

"The first person we found was Tracy. She was covered in injuries and looked terrible. But the first thing she did when she saw us wasn't asking for help but telling us to hurry and save you."

The rescuer didn't know anything about the Jackmans' business and just kept praising her. "She told us where you were, then fainted. When we checked her, we saw she was dehydrated from going so long without food or water, and her arm was broken.

"I still don't know how a young woman like her could survive in the mountains for so many days, all alone, and still manage to save a grown man. The willpower that must've taken..."

As the rescuer talked, Liam's face went pale, and his body swayed without meaning to.

It really was Tracy... who saved me.

Liam gritted his teeth, not even sure what he was feeling when he asked, "What about Erin? Back then, a lot of people swore they saw her bringing me out."

The man didn't notice anything strange and answered honestly, "You mean that sister of yours? She was definitely on Suncord Mountain."

Hope lit up Liam's eyes-then went out just as fast.

The rescuer said, "After we brought the unconscious Tracy down, we told the Jackmans we'd found you. They rushed over right away and came with us to search.

"Erin was with me, but halfway through, she twisted her ankle and scraped her hand. The ankle wasn't bad -I fixed it right there, so it wouldn't have stopped her from walking.

But she cried and begged me to take her to the hospital, saying she'd report me if I didn't."

Even years later, the man still frowned when talking about it.

"Luckily, my captain called over the radio right then, saying they'd found you, unconscious, and were heading back. So I took her out of the mountain.

"When we got out, we ran-right into the captain carrying you on his back. Erin rushed over to grab your

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Chapter 230 Turned Right Around

hand, looking all worried."

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His tone was flat, with no real belief in it. He'd seen enough people to know who truly cared and who didn't.

For once in his 20-something years of cluelessness, Liam didn't need him to explain. He understood.

So this is the truth of what happened.

All these years, Erin has been playing me for a fool. And because of her, I've hurt Tracy again and again.

Thinking of her now, Liam finally understood what it meant to regret something so badly it hurts.

How am I supposed to face Tracy after this?

But Tracy didn't know about Liam's regret-or even if she did, she wouldn't care.

Right now, she was frowning at a text, staring at her phone in a daze.

Ever since Winona went into a coma, one thing after another had happened, and Tracy had almost forgotten Matthew even existed.

She hadn't expected him to suddenly reach out now that the Jackmans were in trouble, saying he wanted to work with her.

He wanted to use her 20% of the shares to take a big bite out of the Jackmans' business.

But Tracy had no interest in the Jackmans' "cake." What she wanted was revenge for Franklin and Walter, making sure the Jackmans couldn't be Erin's shield or support.

Even if she ever wanted to destroy the Jackmans completely, she would never team up with someone like Matthew. That'd be like asking a demon for help-it would only turn out worse.

So Tracy flat-out rejected his "offer." He stayed quiet for a long time before finally replying, "Alright, then. I just hope you won't regret this."

At first, Tracy didn't understand what he meant. But within two days, she found out.

Matthew turned right around and teamed up with Andrew.

The Renaults had been looking for a partner in Cloudville for a while. The Jackmans had been their first choice-until that scandal hit. Normally, that would've taken them out of the running.

Yet right now, the Renaults reached out and offered them a deal.

Not only did they give the Jackmans the cooperation contract, but they even put money in early, giving the company, whose cash flow had been stuck, a chance to breathe again.