

The Unwanted Daughter: When Love Comes Too Late

#Left Behind 271 - Read The Unwanted Daughter: When Love Comes Too Late Left Behind 271

Chapter 271 Where Are His Things?

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“David once told me that you seem like a polite, easygoing man. But in reality, you’re ruthless and will stop at nothing to get what you want. He warned me to always be careful if I ever crossed paths with you,” Tracy said plainly, without adding anything extra.

Matthew wanted the truth, and that was exactly what she gave him.

She repeated everything David had said about him, both good and bad.

Since Matthew had sent David to the Angelic Etiquette Academy, David certainly hadn’t spoken kindly of him.

Hearing that he was being made to look bad, Matthew didn’t get angry. He knew Tracy wasn’t lying. That was exactly how David would describe him.

But beyond that, Tracy didn’t offer any other useful information.

Seeing her stop, Matthew frowned. “Is that all?”

Tracy looked him straight in the eyes. “Yes, that’s it.”

His face hardened, clearly unconvinced.

He didn’t mind her speaking frankly, but those weren’t the answers he wanted.

Tracy knew what he wanted to hear.

David was the legitimate heir of the Renaults.

In such a wealthy family, he had no choice but to scheme for what he wanted, even if he didn’t

want to.

And because he knew so much, Matthew had set him up and sent him to the Angelic Etiquette Academy.

The answers Matthew sought were about the leverage David held.

Tracy had no grudge against Matthew. He was only after her because of that.

But David had never told her anything about it.

He had only gathered that leverage to protect himself, never imagining it would become Matthew's reason to go after him. Certainly, he wouldn't let that leverage to cause any trouble

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for Tracy.

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Most of David's conversations with her had been about Patricia.

But Matthew wouldn't believe that.

He glared at Tracy. "Are you messing with me, Ms. Yarwood?"

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Tracy shook her head, her tone serious. "I know you don't believe me, but that's truly all David told me.

"You know what kind of person he was. He's dead now. Do you honestly think he would have shared it with an outsider like me?"

Matthew froze. "He's dead?"

Tracy nodded, a flicker of sadness crossing her face as she remembered seeing David die.

But in sharp contrast, Matthew was quite pleased.

With David gone, the Renault heirship was his for good.

Matthew grabbed Tracy's shoulders excitedly. "If he's dead, then where are his things? Where did he hide them?"

Even though he was happy about David's death, he still didn't trust that Tracy knew nothing.

Tracy wasn't surprised by his reaction.

From what David had told her, Matthew was cautious almost to the point of paranoia.

Knowing she had been at the Angelic Etiquette Academy with David, Matthew would never let her go.

Whether or not David had told her anything, the result was the same—Matthew would always be watching her.

Realizing that, Tracy decided to use Matthew to set a trap for Erin.

As for Matthew's possible revenge later? Tracy didn't care.

She calmly pushed his hands off her shoulders. "I've told you. David never mentioned those things to me. If you don't believe me, you can check yourself."

Matthew's face darkened, his eyes sharp. "Aren't you worried you'll end up like David?"

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Tracy was sensitive to how people look at her, so she noticed his murderous intent immediately.

Still, she stayed calm and met his eyes. "Are you threatening me?"

Matthew sneered. "You were threatening me first."

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"I never meant to threaten you or be your enemy," Tracy said, tilting her head slightly. "If I wanted to, I could have taken Winona from the hospital and brought her and Tony straight to your parents."

Matthew's expression changed, and he suddenly grabbed Tracy's neck. "Tony is with you?"

After Tony mysteriously disappeared from the hospital, Matthew had been secretly searching for him. He hadn't expected Tracy to have him.

Feeling Matthew's grip on her neck, Tracy knew he wanted *to* strangle her, but she stayed composed.

They were in public, surrounded by people. Even if Matthew lost control, he wouldn't dare hurt her here.

So, she didn't resist. Instead, she looked at him and said, "David warned me about the kind of person you are. As soon as I realized you knew I'd been at the Angelic Etiquette Academy and started getting close to me, I knew you wouldn't let me go.

"That's why I secretly took Tony to protect myself. If David had told me where his things were, I wouldn't have had to do this."

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Chapter 272 DNA Results

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Matthew narrowed his eyes, still cautious, but he finally released her neck.

In public, he couldn't harm Tracy, but that didn't mean he would let her go easily.

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He had claimed his place as the Renault heir by using his position as the nanny's son. Even though the Renaults knew the truth, they had chosen him over David, all because of his careful planning and caution.

Within moments, Matthew returned to his usual calm and polite demeanor, as if he had never shown a dark side.

"You know what happened with the Millers," he said. "If you think you can use the same leverage on me without the Jackmans' support, how long do you think you'll last?"

Tracy rubbed her sore neck but stayed composed. "I guess you'll just have to wait and see."

Their conversation ended on a tense note.

Feeling tricked, Matthew decided he wouldn't waste more time playing along with Erin. That finally gave her some relief.

After a date with Norris to rebuild their relationship, she nearly collapsed onto her bed at home.

She'd been with Norris for so long without seeing him lose his temper. She hadn't expected it would be so difficult to calm him down once he did.

Even after trying her best and noticed him eased up a little, his attitude never fully returned to what it had been.

It seemed there was still tension between them.

Erin, used to being pampered for years, had lost some of her patience.

If Norris weren't the male lead, she might have given up long ago.

She tried to control her emotions, preparing to improve their next date.

But before she could steady herself, the door was suddenly kicked open with such force that it nearly shattered.

With a loud crash, the door slammed against the wall and bounced back.

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A hand caught it, and Liam walked in right after, looking really angry.

Erin frowned, annoyed. "You—"

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Before she could finish, Benjamin, Daphne, and Andrew walked in, looking worried. Even Norris, who had just left, followed close behind.

Erin calmed herself, putting on a frightened, victimized look. "Liam, what are you doing?"

Liam strode forward, throwing a file in her face as if slapping her. "Erin Yarwood, you liar! How long are you going to fool us?!"

Hearing his words and the worried expressions of the other Jackmans, Erin's heart skipped.

She opened the file and found multiple DNA test reports related to her.

Even with all her acting skills, she couldn't stay calm.

When she finally read the results, her hands shook as she gripped the papers.

Every test confirmed the same thing—she wasn't related to the Jackmans at all. Her bloodline traced to Tom.

Tom

has been missing for nearly two months. Where did his DNA come from?

Is Tom's disappearance connected to Liam?

Does he also know the secrets Tom

held that could destroy me?

All kinds of thoughts suddenly rushed through Erin's head.

But now wasn't the time to think about that. She looked up at Liam, already figuring out a plan.

Liam was now nothing but a useless pawn to her.

Her eyes reddened. "Liam, how have I offended you to make you set me up like this?"

Liam looked disgusted. "Set you up? The proof is right here! Why are you still pretending?"

Erin refused to admit anything. She pulled out a few other papers from the file—the DNA results of Tracy and the Jackmans.

After discovering Erin wasn't truly Jackman, Liam, usually impatient and foolish, was clever for once. He had secretly tested Tracy's DNA against the Jackmans.

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The results showed that Tracy was the real Jackman!

No one could know what Liam felt at that moment.

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He had expected Erin not to be Jackman's blood, but he never imagined Tracy was the real deal.

For years, they had favored Erin, the imposter, and hurt Tracy, who they had cherished for 18

years.

But now, Liam finally realized that the Tracy he'd hated so much was actually their real family. The whole real and fake heiress situation had never been true.

Unable to accept that, Liam lost his patience the moment he received the results and rushed to confront Erin.

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Liam thought with evidence this solid, he could finally rip apart Erin's fake, saintly mask—force the family to see the truth, and maybe even convince Tracy to come back to the Jackman family.

But clearly, Liam had underestimated Erin's cunning.

She pulled out the test reports about Tracy, her expression convincing. "All this scheming ... it was for Tracy, right? Did she make you do this?"

"You bullied me before because of Tracy. Later, when you came back to apologize, I really believed you'd changed. But now I see—it was all just another setup to frame me."

Her eyes brimmed with tears, her whole presence radiating a fragile, heartbreaking sorrow. "If Tracy really wanted to come back, she could've just said it. I'd gladly step aside for her. Why would she use such cruel tricks?"

"I finally found my real family. I don't mind sharing them with her ... but she can't even tolerate me. I—I ... "

She looked around the room and noticed the window was wide open. Something flashed across her face.

When she turned back to the Jackmans, her tear-filled eyes showed nothing but grief, despair, and pain—each look hitting them hard.

“Dad, Mom, Andrew, and Norris, meeting you in this life was already a blessing. I just hope, in the next life, I can still be your daughter ... and your lover.”

She closed her eyes. Her frail, pitiful figure stumbled toward the window.

Everyone who had been silently waiting for her explanation panicked. They rushed forward to stop her.

Luckily, Erin wasn't moving fast. She even stumbled “accidentally” against the corner of the bed, long enough for them to easily catch her.

Norris reached her first, grabbing her wrist and pulling her into his arms. His heart nearly stopped in terror.

“Let me go! Let me die! If I die, Tracy can have everything, and the house will finally be peaceful. Please, just let me die!” she sobbed, struggling weakly in his arm, giving the perfect image of a wronged woman in despair.

Chapter 273 The Curtain Falls on Her Act

The Jackman family's doubts gone in an instant. They held her in panic, soothing and consoling.

Only Liam stood apart, cold and unmoved, seeing right through her act.

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“If she wants to die, let her. She's not going to jump. She's stalling—waiting for you to stop her. Can't you see she's putting on a show?”

For the first time, he saw Erin's true colors with crystal clarity.

But he had forgotten that Tracy had unmasked her just like this, time and again, and no one had ever believed her either.

At his words, Erin only thrashed harder, her wails louder. “Norris, please ... just let me die ... ”

Of course, Norris only tightened his grip, refusing to release her.

The room turned into chaos. Daphne burst into tears, clutching her chest. “Erin, don't do anything stupid—please, calm down!”

Seeing the daughter she loved so much in such misery broke her completely. She couldn't think straight.

When she caught Liam about to speak again, she snapped. Storming over, she slapped him with all her strength.

The blow sent the unprepared Liam reeling sideways, his forehead slamming into the wall with a dull thud.

He felt dizzy and his vision blurred, but before he could steady himself, Daphne shouted angrily, "Liam! Are you trying to drive Erin to her grave?"

Liam, his cheek swollen and red, turned his head stiffly and met Daphne's hostile gaze.

Her eyes blazed with rage and hatred, as though she were staring at an enemy—not her own

son.

His chest burned, hotter than the sting on his face. "Mom..."

"Don't call me that!" she shouted, voice trembling with bitter disappointment. "I have no son who would side with an outsider and bully his own sister!"

A wave of helplessness crushed him. "I'm not lying to you. Tracy is the real daughter of this family. Erin is the fake one.

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"I don't know how she managed to switch the test results, but every DNA sample I collected them myself. No one else even knew about it. There was no chance of a mistake.

"To be sure, I didn't just use the old labs. I went to new ones, out of town, even abroad. Every single result came back the same."

He had told them everything. But still, the Jackman family only looked at him with deeper disappointment.

Benjamin let out a long, tired sigh. "If I'd known Tracy would cause so much trouble, I should have kicked her out the moment we found out who she was."

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Daphne shook her head in disappointment. “Liam, I always thought you were just reckless, that you’d grow out of it one day. I never imagined you’d go so far as to deny your own sister. Sometimes I wish you weren’t even my son—like Tracy—that way you could never hurt Erin again.”

Andrew fixed him with the stern, commanding look that had terrified Liam since childhood. “I’ll give you one last chance. Apologize to Erin—right now.”

Even Norris, though technically an outsider, couldn’t hide the anger in his eyes as he looked at

Liam.

Liam stood frozen, staring at these people he’d lived with for more than twenty years. Suddenly, they all felt like strangers. Strangers who refused to see the truth.

The evidence was right in front of them. Erin’s act was transparent—so obviously staged. And yet, they were blind to it, every single one of them.

He stumbled back two steps, pale and shaken. “You’re all... you’re all brainwashed by her! You’ve lost your minds!”

But his words only deepened their disappointment.

“I think you’re the one who’s lost it,” Andrew said coldly. “From this day forward, you’ll move out. You’re not allowed near Erin. Your cards will be frozen, and I’ll make sure no one out there gives you special treatment because you’re a Jackman. When you finally admit you were wrong, then—and only then—will you be welcomed back.”

The last time they’d shouted at him to “get out of the Jackman residence,” it had been in anger, a rash threat. This time, Andrew meant it.

And no one else in the family spoke up to stop him. Their silence was consent.

Liam’s eyes

eyes widened, tears threatening to spill. “You’re really going to throw me out—for her? For some fraud with no real background?”

It was the first time any of them had seen him look so broken.

He had always been impulsive, hotheaded, beaten plenty of times by Benjamin, lectured harshly by Andrew. But even then, he'd never backed down, never shown fear. He had always been defiant. Unshaken.

Seeing him like this, everyone at Jackman family felt a twinge of pity.

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Because Erin's sobs cut through the air again. "It's all my fault ... I'm the reason for this. If I hadn't come back, my sister wouldn't be stirring up trouble, turning Liam against the family. It's me. I ruined everything."

She buried her face against Norris's chest, her voice breaking. "Just let me die ... if I die, it'll all be over... let me die!"

She thrashed again in his arms, but her body never once lurched toward the window. Her struggles were all for show. Only Liam seemed to notice.

Norris's arms tightened around her protectively, his eyes flashing with fury as he glared at Liam. He opened his mouth, about to lash out, but stopped himself.

He wasn't family. It wasn't his place.

Instead, he drew in a sharp breath and forced calm into his voice. "If Liam insists the reports are real, and you all don't believe him, then there's one fair solution—let's do another DNA test right now. We'll all witness the samples being taken together. No one will have the chance to tamper with anything. With the Jackman family's resources, the results will be out quickly."

It was the most rational suggestion yet, and everyone agreed.

Everyone except Erin, whose head snapped up, eyes wide, disbelief written across her face.

Wasn't he supposed to defend her? To scold Liam on her behalf? Why was he helping him?

Norris had stayed silent the whole time, and now that he finally spoke, why was it to help Liam?

For the first time, unease crawled through her chest, sharp and suffocating. Worse than the day Norris had caught her meeting Matthew in secret.

More and more, things seemed to be slipping out of her control.

Still, one thing was in her hands. And that was the DNA results.

The words on the paper cut through Liam like a blade. "Confirmed biological relation."

His entire body went rigid. "No... No, that's impossible."

"You made a mistake! You must've messed this up! I was just here a few days ago with multiple DNA samples. Don't you remember? The results back then were completely different! This one has to be wrong."

"Do it again! I don't believe this—do it again!"

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And so, under his desperate demands, the tests were repeated.

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But no matter how many times they performed the test, the answer remained unchanged. Every test confirmed that Erin was, without question, the Jackman family's blood.

Liam's face drained of all color. He stared at the paper, trembling, his voice hoarse with disbelief. "This can't be real ... it can't be ...

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He had gone to such lengths, eliminated every possible margin of error. So why was the result still this?

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The technician, seeing Liam's refusal to accept reality, let out a weary sigh. "Mr. Jackman, I can assure you these results aren't wrong. We checked every sample, every step, carefully.

The earlier ones you brought us, too. Those weren't wrong either.

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But... could it be that the mistake came from the samples you delivered the first time? You did bring in quite a few, and frankly, they looked like they hadn't come from ...

He stopped himself, unwilling to finish that thought. After a pause, he rephrased more gently. "They didn't look consistent. Maybe you mixed them up by accident?"

"Impossible!" Liam shot back, his voice sharp, unyielding. "I didn't make a mistake. I never would. The mistake is yours—these results are wrong!"

He had planned so carefully, considered every possible way things could go wrong. He'd been meticulous at every step.

He was certain he hadn't slipped.

The only explanation was that something had gone wrong inside the lab.

Unwilling to accept it, he demanded more tests, even insisting they send samples to other facilities, as many as it would take.

But the Jackman family's patience finally snapped.

"Enough!" Andrew's eyes burned with fury and disappointment. "Liam, how much longer are you going *to* make a scene?"

He didn't give Liam another chance to speak. His voice cut like a blade. "If you insist on siding with Tracy in her nonsense, then leave with her. Get out of this house—and don't come back."

With that, he pulled the tearful Erin into his arms and stormed out. Their parents followed, not sparing Liam a single glance.

Only Norris lingered, looking back at Liam once before leaving. A strange unease stirred in his chest, something he couldn't quite name, but it gnawed at him nonetheless.

The feeling stayed with him, clouding his focus until frustration finally pushed him to act. He went to find Liam, determined to talk to him.

He thought it would be difficult. Liam had always relied on his Jackman family name, and now

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that he'd been cut off, cast out, surely he would vanish without a trace.

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But to his surprise, Liam walked straight into the Jackman Enterprise, indifferent to the gawking stares and whispered ridicule that followed him.

He wasn't there to beg forgiveness from Erin. He wasn't there to plead with Andrew. He was there to find Tracy.

When he saw her, he pulled out the stack of test results, his voice breaking as he explained. "I don't know how Erin rigged the system, but I swear—the results I got were real. I ... I was wrong. Tracy, I was wrong ... I really know that now. I—"

His words stumbled, his throat choked with unshed tears. He couldn't even finish a sentence.

Tracy, though, barely heard him. She was staring at the papers in her hands, her whole body cold, as if she had fallen into an icy pit.

Was she the Jackman family's true daughter?

Was she their blood?

She wasn't the imposter—wasn't the thief who had stolen someone else's life?

For a long moment, she felt nothing at all.

She just stared blankly at the few big words on the test results, suddenly bursting into laughter.

The laughter tore out of her, raw, wild, unstoppable. It was ridiculous. It was insane.

The Jackman family had cherished her for 18 years, treated her like a jewel, only to strip her of everything the moment they learned she wasn't theirs.

They cursed her, humiliated her, cast her aside—just to lavish love on the daughter they thought was real. They blamed her for everything, including Erin's supposed suffering.

But now, they claimed the truth was a lie. That she wasn't the fake heiress. That all of this—this nightmare—had been a farce.

How laughable.

How absurd.

Her laughter grew louder, sharper, until tears streamed down her cheeks and her body doubled over, trembling with the force of it.

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Liam's chest tightened with panic. "What's wrong? Why are you laughing like that?"

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Finally, Tracy straightened, wiping her tears, still clutching the report. She lifted it in front of him, her voice laced with bitter mockery. "You bring me this, and what? You want me to thank you? To forgive you? To believe you?"

Liam's face twisted with unease. "I just ... I just wanted you to know I really see my mistake now. They don't believe the results—but I do. I'll make Erin give back what's yours. I'll bring you home again. You're my sister, my real sister—this paper proves it. Please, believe me."

"Believe you?"

Tracy let out a short, scornful laugh, as if just heard the funniest joke. "You waving around a piece of paper is enough to make me trust you? Liam, did you forget what you told me the year Elsa came back—on your birthday?"

Chapter 276 One-Way Ticket

Chapter 276 One-Way Ticket

Liam froze, clearly caught off guard.

Slowly, the color drained from his face.

He remembered.

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It was during Erin's first year back with the Jackmans, on his birthday. Tracy had saved for months to surprise him with a carefully customized sports car. She presented it as a gift—only for Liam to smash it with his own hands.

Why? Because he believed Erin's lie—that Tracy had ruined the cake Erin had baked for him out of jealousy.

Even when Tracy produced evidence to prove her innocence, Liam ignored it. All it took was a single tear from Erin. He barked at Tracy in front of everyone.

Liam cursed, "You think I'll believe this evidence of yours? Tracy, no matter what you bring me, anything connected to you is a lie in my eyes!"

And then, the cruelest cut of all, "Because you're nothing but a spiteful, jealous witch who bullies Erin!"

Now, watching Liam's reaction, Tracy's smile twisted with scorn. "Looks like Mr. Liam remembers everything."

Liam swayed on his feet, his face pale as paper. "I ... I ... "

For a long time, he couldn't find his voice. He didn't even dare meet Tracy's eyes.

Under the weight of her mocking gaze, Liam finally found his voice again.

"CeeCee, I know I was wrong. I know I hurt you badly. I'm sorry. I'll do anything to make it up to you. Please ... just give me one more chance."

Tracy's voice was calm, her face unreadable. "If I killed you and then stood at your grave and told you I'm sorry, would you forgive me?"

Liam flinched. He didn't understand why she had to make it sound so dramatic.

Yes, he had wronged her, but he had been tricked. And now that he realized his mistake, shouldn't she at least let him try to make amends?

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They were both still young, and she was standing here alive and well. Why couldn't she just give him a chance to make things right?

He couldn't understand her, nor could he answer.

So he asked instead, "What do I have to do for you to forgive me?"

Tracy's eyes locked on his. She wasn't angry, only deadly serious. "Can you go back in time? Can you erase everything that happened to me?"

Liam's mouth went dry. He couldn't answer.

Tracy gave a small, bitter laugh. "If you can't, then stop asking for forgiveness. You make me sick.

With those last words, she walked away. The papers she'd been holding slipped from her hand, falling to the ground.

She left them there, abandoned like the foolish family she had already cast aside.

The sight made Liam stagger. His legs nearly gave out.

Norris appeared out of nowhere and caught him before he fell.

He had clearly been watching for a while, though he didn't fully understand what had just happened.

Why was Liam so certain the test results were true? Why had Tracy spoken with such cold finality?

Liam fell into a trance. It took him a long time to recognize who was holding him.

"Norris ..." His voice was hoarse, almost breaking into a sob.

Suddenly, he seemed to think of something. He grabbed Norris's hand tightly.

"Norris, you've been looking into Tracy's time at the academy, right? Did you find anything? Did something happen to her there that made her hate me this much?"

His voice shook, and so did his hands. "I know I was wrong. I know I hurt her. But tell me what she went through. I'll suffer the same pain, even ten times worse if I have to—if that's what it takes for her to forgive me."

For the first time, the proud, reckless Liam looked broken, his pain laid bare in front of

everyone.

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Norris, who had grown up with him and always treated him like a younger brother, felt his chest tighten at the sight.

He hesitated, then said quietly, "I didn't find out what she went through during those two years. But the academy itself ... something about it is wrong."

The Gills held power in Cloudville equal to the Jackmans. Even though the academy was supposed to be a closed, secretive place, with Norris's resources it should have been possible to uncover something.

Yet no matter how hard he tried, he found nothing.

Not her classmates, not her teachers, not even a trace of her daily life.

Norris was about to take full control of his family, and he had both the means and the wits to handle it. That was why this strange silence gnawed at him.

Something about the academy wasn't right. He considered visiting in person, but he couldn't get past the gates.

Even leaning on his family influence, he found the academy untouchable.

As if someone far more powerful than his family stood behind it, protecting it.

But these were things Norris couldn't tell Liam.

Liam, however, had already become obsessed. He refused to let go without an answer.

In his mind, if he could endure what Tracy had endured—if he could feel the same pain she had once suffered—then she might forgive him. And maybe, just maybe, their relationship could return to what it had been before Erin stepped into their lives.

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Chapter 277 The First Rule

Chapter 277 The First Rule

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One of them insisted on getting an answer, while the other didn't know how to react. The two nearly started an argument right outside the Jackman Enterprise's headquarters—until a new figure appeared.

“If you want to know about the academy, I might have some answers.”

Both men turned at once and saw Matthew walking up.

Because of his business ties with the Jackmans and, lately, his close connection with Erin, Matthew often came and went from the company. Running into him here wasn't surprising.

The moment Liam heard he knew something about the academy, he rushed over in a burst of excitement.

“What do you know? Tell me! That academy ... It's not what it looks like on the surface, right? Tracy came back completely changed. Did she suffer there? Was someone hurting her?”

Liam's eyes burned with obsession.

All he could think about was Tracy's cold stare earlier, her unhidden disgust, and the hatred aimed straight at him. He was desperate for answers.

Desperate to know what he had done so wrong.

Norris snapped back to his senses, frowning as he pulled Liam away. “Liam, let me handle this. You need to go. Find somewhere to calm down.”

He suddenly remembered that Liam had been thrown out of his house. The kid had nowhere to go, and his state of mind was clearly shaken by Tracy's harsh words. Norris didn't hesitate. He asked the bodyguards to take Liam away.

Andrew might have been furious with Liam, but he was still his younger brother. He wouldn't drive him completely into a corner.

Norris arranged for Liam to stay in one of his properties for now. Even if Andrew found out, he wouldn't say anything.

With Liam settled, Norris turned back to Matthew, who had been standing nearby the entire time with that polite, gentlemanly smile, patiently waiting.

Because of the incident with Erin not long ago, Norris had a bad impression of him. He instinctively distrusted him, sensing the man's hidden schemes.

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But when it came to Tracy's time inside the academy, his curiosity matched Liam's.

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He invited Matthew into a café and asked directly, "Mr. Renault, you said you know about the academy. What exactly do you mean?"

Matthew didn't answer immediately. His smile remained refined, his voice smooth. I know plenty. But probably not the kind of things you're looking for."

His words carried a hidden meaning. Norris caught it, though he wasn't sure what it implied.

After thinking a moment, he tried a different approach. "Then tell me this—do you know what life is like for the students once they're sent there?"

He had never told anyone about the way Tracy once asked him whether he knew the kind of life she had endured for the past two years. That question stuck in his chest like a thorn in his side.

Night after night, he woke up from his dream, hearing that question echo in his dreams.

So now, asking Matthew, his heart clenched tight. His hand on his knee curled into a fist.

Matthew, oblivious to the small signs, calmly sipped his coffee before replying at last.

"I know the answer to that, Mr. Gill. But I can't tell you."

Norris scowled, frustration rising. "What's that supposed to mean?"

Matthew raised an eyebrow. "It's not that I don't want to. But as a guest of the academy, I'm not

allowed to."

The word "guest" struck Norris as odd. "What do you mean by guest?"

Matthew's smile grew mysterious, his answer evasive.

“If you want to know what Tracy went through, why not see for yourself? But getting into the academy requires ... sincerity. Without someone to introduce you, it's impossible for you to get in. The question is, Mr. Gill, how much are you willing to give for the truth?”

Norris had been trained his whole life as an heir. His instincts were sharp, and Matthew's words lit a spark of unease inside him.

But no matter how clever he was, he couldn't imagine just how dark that academy really was.

After a pause, he answered firmly, “If you can take me there, Mr. Renault, we can discuss whatever payment you want.”

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To him, sincerity meant money or favors.

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With his resources and status, unless Matthew demanded the impossible, he could afford it.

Matthew knew he misunderstood, but he didn't correct him. Instead, he smiled widely and nodded.

The academy was such a wonderful place. Once Norris experienced it, he would surely thank him.

No one else knew the details of their conversation.

Liam tried to pry it out from Norris again and again, but he stayed silent. He had made a pact with Matthew.

Matthew had made it clear: silence was the first rule for anyone who entered the academy.

And because of that rule, Norris's curiosity only grew. The strange, restless feeling in his chest swelled, like something waiting to burst.

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After all, what ordinary organization would have such strange and demanding rules?

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No one knew what Norris was truly thinking, but everyone knew he had taken Liam in.

He might be his brother, but Andrew—despite all the harsh words he had said—wasn't actually going to push Liam to the edge. He simply turned a blind eye.

Benjamin and Daphne also pretended not to notice. No matter how upset they were, they couldn't just cut ties with their son.

Erin lost her temper. The moment she learned that Norris had meddled in and helped Liam, she nearly smashed everything in her room.

She knew perfectly well that Liam had been kicked out of the house for bullying her. And yet Norris had gone and taken him in.

Wasn't he supposed to love her the most? Wasn't she supposed to be more important than his

life?

In her mind, as the leading man, he was supposed to love who she loved, hate who she hated, and even betray the world if it meant standing by her side.

So why was he acting like this?

Erin was frustrated but also flustered.

Lately, too many things had slipped out of her control. What once seemed firmly in her grasp now felt like it was slipping through her fingers. She had reasons to feel uneasy.

And just then, Andrew came around, pretending to care about her work.

In reality, she knew he only wanted to use her to sabotage Tracy,

What a *hypocrite*!

Erin rolled her eyes in her heart but kept her face soft and gentle.

She'd been so busy juggling Matthew and Norris lately that she'd forgotten about Andrew's request. Not that she could admit that to him.

After sending him away with some excuse, she started thinking about how to sabotage Tracy.

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Because of Tracy, Liam—the most useful fool of a pawn—had turned his back on her. Erin needed to come up with something ruthless to put Tracy in her place.

And right then, she bumped into Simon.

Everyone in the company already knew he and Tracy were at odds over those deliberate delays.

The moment Erin saw him, a plan clicked into place.

She forced her eyes to shimmer with tears. Her face crumpled like someone crushed by the weight of the world, and she shuffled past him, sniffling pitifully.

It worked. Simon noticed immediately.

“Erin, what happened?”

In their little circle in Cloudville, Simon was her most devoted follower.

The moment he saw his queen crying, he looked like he was ready to storm off and fight whoever dared hurt her.

That was precisely what Erin was counting on.

“I ... I ... ”

Her voice cracked before she broke into sobs and threw herself into his arms.

It was the first time Simon had ever been this close with her queen. For a moment, his head spun, and he nearly floated away in excitement.

Then he heard her whisper through her tears, “I really don’t understand why Tracy hates me so much. If she wants to take my place, I can give it to her. W—why does she have to come between Liam and me?”

Simon frowned immediately and asked, “Tracy bullied you again? Erin, don’t be afraid. Just tell me what she did.”

Erin pulled back, tears still streaming, her face the very picture of heartbreak. “S—she pushed Liam into forging a DNA test. She said she’s the real daughter and I’m the fake.”

Her voice cracked, “If Tracy is upset because I took her place, I could give it back to her. Why does she have to tear the whole family apart?”

Simon’s eyes widened in shock. “She did that.”

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The Jackmans cared deeply about their reputation. They would never let rumors like this get out, which was why Simon hadn’t heard a word until now.

Erin nodded miserably, then added another sting. “And Norris... I don’t know if I’m imagining it, but he doesn’t treat me the same anymore. He used to be in love with Tracy. If he still loves her, 1-1 can step aside.”

She wiped at her tears. “Maybe I never should have come home. Maybe it would be better if I died. If I did, would that make her stop?”

Her voice trembled as she clung to Simon’s hand, her tear-filled eyes shining with despair. She looked like someone who had already given up with life, clinging to a single lifeline.

And that lifeline was Simon.

And in that moment, Simon felt like a savior. Straightening his back, he gripped her hand tightly and declared, “Erin, don’t ever think like that. None of this is your fault. It’s Tracy’s. If anyone should die, it’s her.”

A flash of cold anger flickered in his eyes.

No one hurt Erin and walked away unpunished.

Erin caught that look and knew she had succeeded. She didn't press further, only shed a few more helpless tears before stepping back.

After all, they were still at the office. She had gotten what she wanted—no need to linger and draw attention.

Chapter 279 What Happened to Yvonne?

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Simon had no idea what Erin was really thinking. He simply watched her leave, his face filled with devotion.

But once she was out of sight, his expression darkened. "Darn that Tracy! Why is that bitch everywhere I go?"

Simon had been holding a grudge against Tracy for a while.

Erin's words only fueled his anger, and suddenly he had the urge to deal with Tracy once and for all.

He turned his head sharply. "Ivy, get a few people you can trust. I've got a job for you."

Anyone who served as Simon's personal bodyguard had already proven their loyalty. Naturally, he would only assign Ivy to handle something this serious.

Ivy didn't disappoint. Within two days she carried out Simon's orders, preparing everything down to the smallest detail. When she reported back, her summary was precise and thorough.

Simon was thrilled. He patted her shoulder. "Good work! Hahaha! If this goes smoothly, I'll double your year-end bonus."

Over the past two years, Ivy had impressed him more and more.

Still, he couldn't help but think she was too plain. Her body was all lean muscle, none of the softness he liked in a woman.

If only she had Yvonne's face, he thought. Even with all that muscle, she wouldn't be stuck as a bodyguard.

Simon shook his head in pity, convinced Ivy had missed a golden chance. What he didn't notice was the flicker of emotion in her downcast eyes.

Later that afternoon, Ivy called in sick and quietly slipped away with the very files she had just reported to him. She snuck into Tracy's car without a sound.

Ever since the kidnapping incident with the academy, Tracy had bodyguards assigned openly and secretly all around her.

Her car was heavily guarded, making it nearly impossible for anyone, even Simon's top fighter, to sneak inside without being seen.

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The only reason Ivy managed it was because Tracy had deliberately allowed it.

She already had Ivy investigated.

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Ivy's story wasn't unknown to her: abandoned by her parents as a baby, left in the freezing cold beneath a tree. It was Yvonne who had found her, carried her to an orphanage, and given her the name Ivy.

Through those years, it was Yvonne who raised her, fed her, and cared for her like both sister and mother. When the orphanage eventually closed, Yvonne kept her close, scraping by and raising her on her own.

They weren't sisters—they were like mother and daughter.

Later, when Yvonne was forced into the academy by an employer, Ivy searched for her again and again. She even went so far as to fight Simon at one point. But in the end, after Simon offered her a million dollars, she gave up the search.

Since then, Ivy had climbed her way up the ranks until she stood right beside Simon, his most trusted bodyguard. To outsiders, she looked like someone who had sold her soul for money and turned her back on Yvonne.

But Tracy didn't believe that. She couldn't accept that someone Yvonne had raised would truly be that heartless. So when she learned Ivy was lurking around her car, she ordered her guards not to interfere.

Tracy assumed Ivy wanted to sabotage the vehicle. Instead, Ivy stayed hidden inside, waiting.

Hours later, when Tracy finally left work and slid into the driver's seat, Ivy emerged from the back. A blade pressed cold against Tracy's neck. "How do you know Yvonne?" Ivy demanded.

She'd wanted to ask this since the day Tracy confronted Simon, but she had forced herself to wait—until now.

Tracy didn't flinch. Instead, she asked calmly, "You're doing this for Yvonne? But last time you said you didn't owe her anything."

Ivy pressed the blade against her skin harder. Tracy instinctively tilted her head back from the

pressure.

"This is between me and her," Ivy snapped. "Just tell me how you know Yvonne—and where she

is now."

Even as Ivy tried to keep her voice firm, Tracy could feel the tremor in her hand.

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Beneath the cold steel, there was something raw, something broken. This wasn't the attitude of someone who didn't care.

Tracy hesitated, then said quietly, "She's dead."

Those words struck Ivy like thunder.

Her hand shook harder. Her voice cracked. "You're lying! She was so young, so strong—there's no way she's dead! Tell me where she is! Where is she?"

Her panic drove the blade deeper, nicking Tracy's skin. A thin line of blood ran down her neck.

Yet Tracy's expression never wavered. She looked almost detached, as if she didn't even feel the sting.

Where was Yvonne now?

Tracy wished she knew.

Maybe not even the academy itself remembered where they had taken their victims' hearts, their eyes,

and their organs.

Tracy lowered her gaze, swallowing back the storm rising in her chest.

"I'm not lying," she whispered. "She died—right in front of me."

Something in her tone carried a weight and sorrow that Ivy couldn't ignore. For the first time, Ivy believed her.

Still, the words crushed her. How could it be? How did she die?

Her grip loosened, and her voice fell to a hoarse whisper. "H—how did she die?"

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Tracy's tense body finally relaxed. She pressed her lips together and whispered, "She died for

me."

For someone like her—useless, powerless, nothing but a burden—to survive while Yvonne gave up her life, it was unbearable.

If Derek and the others had risked everything to lift her out of that hell, then Yvonne had been the first to reach into the darkness and pull her up.

Tracy would never forget the sight of Yvonne dying right in front of her.

That was the reason she had found the strength to stand up and fight back against the academy.

The car fell into a heavy silence. The air felt heavy.

Finally, Ivy spoke, her voice cutting through the stillness. "Where was Yvonne all those years she was missing? Was it because Simon betrayed her? Who was the employer that took her away?"

She had carried those questions for years, digging and searching, refusing to give up.

But Tracy couldn't answer the first one.

She couldn't let Ivy know the entire truth about the academy.

All she could say was, "Simon sold her out. The man who bought her wanted to break her, but she refused to submit. So, he locked her up and trained her into obedience. That's when I met her. She told me, "That man was Shawn Sander from Cloudville."

The Sanders family wasn't one of the city's most powerful clans, but they had clawed their way up through crime and corruption. By now, they had connections everywhere—both legal and illegal. Nobody crossed them lightly.

Ivy froze. She had never known who that employer was.

For years, she had stayed close to Simon, biding her time, waiting to learn the truth.

But Simon, terrified his men would discover how easily he could betray them, had erased all records of what happened. That was why she'd never found out.

Now she finally had her answer. Years of bottled-up hatred threatened to explode, her rage

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almost slipping past her control.

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She shoved a folder into Tracy's arms and warned, "Simon's after you. Be careful."

Then she yanked the car door open, ready to leave.

She was going after Shawn.

Ivy had endured all these years for one reason—revenge.

Tracy instantly guessed her plan and scrambled out of the car to stop her.

"Wait!" She grabbed Ivy's arm. "You're going to avenge Yvonne, aren't you?"

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Ivy's expression was sharp and cold, her face pale but steady. The breakdown from moments

ago was gone.

Though she was grateful for the news Tracy had given her, that didn't mean she would allow Tracy to interfere in her choices.

"This is my business. It has nothing to do with you."

She tried to pull her hand free, but Tracy only held tighter.

"Maybe it's not my business," Tracy said firmly, "but I promised Yvonne I'd watch over you— that I'd make sure you could live the rest of your life in peace. The only thing she couldn't let go of before she died ... was you."

Simon and the Sanders were far too powerful, and even with everything Tracy had, taking them on wouldn't be easy. For Ivy, standing alone, it was nearly impossible.

If Yvonne knew her sister was throwing away her life for revenge, she would never rest, even in death.

Ivy's icy facade finally cracked.. Her eyes grew red, her fists clenched tight, and her whole body shook.

She didn't even know if it was from anger or grief.

"But Yvonne's gone..." Her voice was hoarse. "If I pretend not to know who killed her, just so I can live comfortably, I'll never find peace for the rest of my days."

She feared that if she really chose to drift through the rest of her life, someday she would die with shame, unable to face Yvonne on the other side.

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Tracy hadn't spent much time with Ivy, but she could tell—she was stubborn, just like Yvonne.

Once she set her mind on something, she never backed down.

After a long silence, Tracy released her grip. "If you want revenge, I won't stop you. But first, you have to come with me."

She led Ivy to a cemetery.

They stopped in front of a blank grave marker. "This one is for Yvonne," Tracy said quietly. "She left nothing behind. No ashes, no remains. So the grave is empty."

"I planned to wait until I found you so we could fulfill her last wish together before engraving her name. But now, I think it's more fitting for you to do it. You're her sister. Her only family."

Ivy's fists trembled as she stared at the nameless stone. "How can there be nothing? When someone dies, there should at least be ashes. How can there be nothing at all?"

Tracy's gaze shifted across the other headstones. "None of the graves here hold remains. They're all empty. Each of them entrusted me with their final wish. Only when I fulfill it do I carve their names. That's my promise to them."

She turned back to Ivy. "Do you know what Yvonne's last words to me were?"

The Novel will be updated on this website. Come back and continue reading tomorrow, everyone!