

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

## **#Left Behind 51 - Read The Unwanted Daughter: When Love Comes Too Late Left Behind 51**

Chapter 51 You've Got the Wrong Person

Chapter 51 You've Got the Wrong Person

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After a full day of work and dealing with Chris nonstop, Tracy felt completely drained.

Seeing how stubborn she was, Andrew's chest tightened with frustration. "You ..."

He took off his glasses and rubbed the bridge of his nose, clearly annoyed. "I don't want to waste time arguing with you. When you regret this, don't come crying to me to fix it!"

He put his glasses back on, didn't even glance at Tracy, and stormed off angrily.

Tracy stayed calm.

*Regret this?*

*The only thing I regret is not walking away the moment I realized I wasn't truly a Jackman*

*. Instead, I foolishly believed they'd treat me the same.*

She glanced down at the flowers lying on the ground, but didn't bend to pick them up. Instead, she called over a servant to throw them away.

She hated those flashy, bright roses.

They reminded her of the old version of herself—shining, beautiful, just like those flowers.

The servant held the delicate bouquet, mumbling as they walked off, "Such pretty flowers... What a waste to toss them out."

Then the servant suddenly froze. Standing silently in front of her was a man.

The servant jumped, stammering, "M—Mr. Woodward?"

Chris smiled softly. "You said you were going to throw these flowers away—who told you to do that?"

The servant hesitated. “I—it was Ms. Tracy.”

Chris chuckled quietly to himself when he heard it was Tracy’s order.

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Chapter 51 You’ve Got the Wrong Person

*No wonder*

*she’s so hard to win over—she’s just playing games.*

*Looks like I need to get serious.*

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Chris calmly handed over the phone he’d been holding. “Please give this to Ms. Yarwood. She left it in my car.”

He glanced at the flowers in the servant’s arms. “But don’t tell her I saw you trying to toss them.”

Tracy’s life was quiet and predictable. Besides going to work on time every day, she politely dealt with Chris’s gestures. Sometimes, she visited Franklin at the hospital.

The last time Franklin went back to the Jackmans, he had been all over the place emotionally and even passed out. Since then, he’d been resting quietly.

To keep Franklin calm, Tracy visited more often, sharing only good news and hiding the bad.

One day, after leaving the hospital like usual, she planned to catch the bus behind the building.

But as she rounded the corner, someone suddenly lunged at her.

After two years at the Angelic Etiquette Academy, Tracy’s body reacted faster than her brain when danger appeared. She turned and ran immediately.

But someone suddenly appeared behind her, pressing a white cloth firmly over her nose and mouth.

“Mmph!”

A sharp, familiar chemical smell hit her, and a dizzy wave crashed over Tracy’s mind like a hammer.

She struggled at first, but her strength quickly faded, and she lost consciousness.

Two men, who had appeared out of nowhere, looked around carefully, then dragged her into an old van that looked like it had been parked there forever.

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Chapter 51 You’ve Got the Wrong Person

Tracy had no idea how long she’d been out. Even in her dreams, that sharp chemical smell haunted her like a shadow.

No matter how hard she tried, she couldn’t escape that nightmare.

Splash!

72%

**+5 Free Coins**

Suddenly, cold water poured over her, and Tracy jolted awake, gasping for air.

The awful smell from her dream still seemed to cling to her nose.

In her 20 over years of living, Tracy had been drugged twice.

Once was now. The other was her first year at the Angelic Etiquette Academy.

Back then, the academy’s teachers had dressed her up nicely and sent her to a guest’s secret base.

Though she escaped, the sharp chemical smell and that terrifying masked smile stayed with her as a nightmare she could never shake.

“Hey! I’m talking to you—don’t pretend you’re deaf!”

The man who threw water at her tossed the bowl aside and grabbed Tracy’s hair, forcing her to look up at him.

Only then did Tracy fully come to.

They were inside a run-down factory, cluttered with junk everywhere, the stale smell of dust and emptiness thick in the air.

Besides a tall, square window and a loosely closed iron door, there was no other way in or out.

Tracy's hands and feet were tied to an iron frame. Besides the man holding her hair, four others stood nearby, gathered around a metal barrel with a fire burning inside.

All five wore identical helmets. Except for size and clothes, they looked totally ordinary—nothing special.

Tracy was no longer the delicate Jackinan's heiress she once was. The darkness

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Chapter 51 You've Got the Wrong Person

she'd faced at the Angelic Etiquette Academy had been far worse than this.

She stared calmly at the men in front of her. "What do you want?"

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Everyone knew the Jackmans had abandoned her. And since she hadn't come back in two years, she couldn't imagine why these people would kidnap her now.

The man in gray, holding her hair, reached out and lightly slapped her face. "I heard you used to be the Jackmans' precious jewel. We are tight on cash lately. So, what do you think we're doing with you?"

Tracy understood what he meant and replied calmly, "If you're after the Jackmans, you've got the wrong person."

Chapter 52 Kidnapped

Chapter 52 Kidnapped

**+5** Free Coins

“Erin is the Jackmans’ real treasure. I’m just the girl they accidentally swapped years ago. Two years back, they changed my last name and kicked me out. You can check the news—there’s even a photo of me.”

The Jackmans made a big fuss about the name change, trying to give Erin her rightful status. A quick search online would show everything.

But the guy in the gray jacket didn’t care at all. He even laughed. “Of course, we know you’re not their real daughter. Otherwise, why would we bother kidnapping you?”

With the Jackmans’ influence in Cloudville, the true heiress always had bodyguards around. No one dared touch her.

The man in gray let go of Tracy’s hair and pulled out a phone.

It was the very phone Tracy had bought not long ago.

He grabbed her hand, unlocked it, and started scrolling, saying, “We’ll call the Jackmans soon and demand five million for ransom. You’d better behave, or else ...

His voice trailed off.

Not because the threat was too scary to say, but because he froze when he saw the contacts on the phone.

Only two contacts showed up, and just one call log with “Grandpa.” No social media apps, nothing else.

Even his helmet couldn’t hide his surprise. “Where are the Jackmans’ contacts?”

Tracy stayed cool. “I told you, you’ve got the wrong person. I’m not with a Jackman anymore. So, of course, I don’t have their contacts.”

The gray-jacket man hurried over to the metal barrel and whispered to a man in a leather jacket,

That guy pulled out his phone and typed for a moment, like he was messaging

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Chapter 52 Kidnapped

someone.

## +5 Free Coins

Soon, he came back with Tracy's phone and a piece of paper. "Tell the Jackmans to send the ransom to this account. Once the money's in, we'll let you go. But if you don't behave, we won't go easy on you."

They showed a string of numbers on her phone.

Tracy thought she'd forgotten the number long ago, but seeing it now, she instantly recognized it as Liam's.

"Hello?"

The familiar voice came through, and Tracy took a deep breath to steady herself.

"I'm Tracy. Someone's trying to kidnap the Jackmans' heiress to extort money, but they got the wrong person and kidnapped me instead. They want five million sent to their account

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Her voice was steady, calm, like she was reading from a script. It almost didn't sound like she was the one trapped.

Silence filled the phone, as if Liam was trying to process her words.

After a long pause, Liam's impatient voice snapped, "Tracy, what kind of stunt are you pulling now just to get our attention?"

His words didn't faze Tracy at all.

She had guessed this would be his reaction before calling.

Seeing her calm, almost mocking look, the kidnapper in the leather jacket froze.

He quickly leaned toward the phone. "Mr. Liam, Tracy really is with us. If you want her safe, send the five million to the account she mentioned within half an hour."

Liam scoffed. "Tracy, do you think I'm dumb enough to fall for some liar? You're not that stupid!

"If you're really kidnapped, send me a video in one minute. If not, don't waste my time with your pathetic tricks!"

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## Chapter 52 Kidnapped

He hung up angrily, so fast that the kidnappers were stunned.

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*We know*

*Tracy isn't favored by the Jackmans, but she'd still been their precious daughter for 18 years. Even if*

*she was just a pet dog, I expect more concern hearing she'd been kidnapped.*

Liam stayed furious after hanging up and didn't even want dinner.

"We spent so much effort sending her to the Angelic Etiquette Academy, and she hasn't changed a bit. Now she's using these dumb games to get our attention!"

Others at the table had heard the call and looked displeased.

Clearly, no one believed Tracy was really kidnapped.

Erin sighed, speaking at the perfect moment. "Tracy's being ridiculous. Even if she's mad at me, she shouldn't joke about something like this. Doesn't she know we'd all worry?"

"She knows exactly what she's doing," Benjamin said angrily, setting down his utensils. "I think she's only doing this because she feels safe doing it!"

Just then, Liam's phone rang again.

He checked it, and the kidnapper's voice came through. "Mr. Liam, we recorded the video you asked for. See if this is the Tracy you know."

Liam's face changed.

In the video, Tracy was tied awkwardly to the iron frame, her hair and clothes messy. Water dripped down her pale cheek, and she looked utterly miserable,

Liam jumped up, panic in his eyes. "Sh—she can't really be..."

The other Jackmans watching, who had been indifferent or annoyed, finally

showed concern on their faces.

Chapter 53 Just Do It Already

Chapter 53 Just Do It Already

71%

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Daphne's heart skipped a beat. "What's going on? Why would someone kidnap Tracy?"

Benjamin's brow furrowed deeply. "They're actually trying to snatch the Jackmans' heiress. This is a direct challenge to the Jackmans."

Andrew pushed up his gold-rimmed glasses and quickly pulled out his phone. "I'll have someone check right now."

Just as he was about to call, Erin's confused voice cut through. "Tracy's really brave. She didn't even cry when facing the kidnappers."

"If it were me, I'd be bawling my eyes out. Probably begging for help on camera."

Her words hit like a shock. The nervous group froze.

They rewound the video and, sure enough, saw Tracy showing no panic—just calmly staring at the screen.

In that moment, a wave of anger flooded them—anger at being fooled and almost tricked, because they hadn't really noticed Tracy's expression before.

Those eyes fixed on the screen held both hope and despair.

Despair, because she knew the Jackmans didn't truly care about her, yet her heart still clung to a foolish hope.

Then Erin added, "I remember Tracy hasn't taken money from home since she got back. She's probably been broke for months."

"What a coincidence; she's suddenly kidnapped. The kidnappers want five million and push to get it in half an hour. It's almost like they're scared we'll back out."

She sounded innocent, almost naïve, as if she was unaware how much her words stirred the room.

The other Jackmans exchanged glances, suspicion clear in their eyes.

*Erin is naive, but we aren't.*

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Chapter 53 Just Do It Already

*Kidnapping?*

*This is obviously some scam Tracy is pulling*

*to get money!*

71%

**+5 Free Coins**

Liam snorted. "I'm not sending them a cent! Kidnapping's a crime. Let's see if they even dare kill her in half an hour."

No one at the table touched their food—they just stared at their phones.

Erin gave a subtle look, a strange smile flickering then disappearing.

*Just wait.*

*They'll soon get exactly what they want.*

Half an hour later, a phone rang.

This time, it was Daphne's.

"Mrs. Jackman, we know you love your daughter. Surely you don't want anything bad to happen to her, right? Mr. Benjamin probably doesn't want his daughter's kidnapping to become a scandal either. Five million. Transfer it to our account within half an hour, or else..."

The kidnapper's voice was cold and threatening.

But the Jackmans were furious, not worried.

Still, no one spoke.

Another half hour passed. Now Andrew's phone rang.

"Mr. Andrew, your beloved sister is with us. If you want her safe, transfer the money within half an hour—"

“Enough,” Andrew said flatly, his voice cold.

“Tracy, if you need money, just ask your family. Why resort to tricks and lies?” His eyes burned with anger. “You couldn’t get money from Liam, so you’re going after Mom and Dad. Have you thought about how scared you’re making them?”

“Tracy, you really disappoint us all!”

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Chapter 53 Just Do It Already

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71%

**+5 Free Coins**

There was a pause on the other end, then Tracy’s soft laugh. “Mr. Andrew, have you ever thought maybe I really was kidnapped?”

Andrew froze.

With the *Jackmans’* power in *Cloudville*, it’s possible for one of us to get kidnapped.

That’s why we’ve had *bodyguards* placed around Tracy since she was little, and Erin’s current guards cost a *fortune*.

But *this kidnapping* isn’t even

*real*.

*Tracy is just trying to scam money, and she’s so clumsy about it that we can right through her.*

Suddenly, Liam grabbed the phone, cursing angrily, “I wish it were true! Tracy, you cold, scheming wench—if you’re kidnapped, you deserve it!”

“That ransom? Forget it. Guys, if you wanna kill her, just do it already, but dump her body far away. Don’t even let me hear about it!”

After cursing, Liam hung up and blocked the number.

The kidnappers laughed at the call. “They raised you for 18 years, and they just threw you away like this.”

Even through their helmets, Tracy could feel their pity.

But she didn’t want sympathy anymore.

Instead, she stared at the kidnappers, expression unreadable behind her own calm.

From what they said, they’d already guessed the Jackmans would abandon her.

The kidnappers hadn’t decided what to do with Tracy yet. They tossed the phone aside and went to talk with the others.

No matter what they said, only the man in the gray jacket stayed, watching over her.

The others left the run-down factory. The gray-jacket man sat beside the metal barrel, fiddling with his phone, occasionally glancing at Tracy to make sure she

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Chapter 53 Just Do It Already

didn’t move.

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These people were clearly pros—not just hiding behind identical helmets but careful while guarding a hostage. Even the ropes binding Tracy were tied with expert skill.

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Chapter 54 Cargo

Chapter 54 Cargo

Chapter 54 Cargo

## Chapter 54 Cargo

71%

+5 **Free** Coins

But Tracy had learned how to escape from being tied up, no matter how tight or complicated the knots were.

The one who taught her was Derek ...

Every time the gray-jacket guy looked away, Tracy carefully twisted her wrists.

Her moves were so light she'd already loosened the ropes around her wrists, but the gray-jacket man didn't notice a thing.

Now, all she had to do was wait for the perfect moment.

She was praying that, just this once, luck might finally be on her side—and pretty soon, that moment arrived.

The kidnappers who had left earlier came back to the run-down factory. The man in the leather jacket was carrying another guy. He was covered in blood, and nobody knew if he was alive or not.

He gently set the man down, feeling his neck to check if he was still breathing. After making sure he was alive, he turned and told the others, "You two go get some medicine. It would be a shame to lose such valuable cargo."

His cold voice made it clear they thought human life was worth less than an expensive item.

The gray-jacket man put away his phone and kicked the bloody guy on the floor, curious. "So this is the prized cargo from Jezelton..."

Bang!

Before he could say more, the leather-jacket man slapped his helmet sharply "Have you forgotten the rules?"

The gray-jacket man glanced at Tracy but didn't say another word.

The leather jacket man stared silently at Tracy for a moment, deep in thought.

Then he told the two other men, I'm going to pick someone up. You two stay here

## Chapter 54 Cargo

and hold things down.”

Not trusting the situation, he pointed to the bloody guy and warned, “This shipment isn’t like the others—there are many ways things could go wrong.

**+5 Free Coins**

“Be alert. If something feels off, move the cargo somewhere else right away.”

After the orders, the leather-jacket man hurried off, leaving the gray-jacket man and one other behind.

The two locked the factory’s heavy metal door tight, then went outside to patrol and watch for trouble.

Once Tracy was sure the door was locked, she waited a moment before loosening the ropes still holding her hands. Then she carefully crouched and untied the bindings around her legs.

Her limbs felt stiff after being tied for so long. She leaned on the metal frame, letting her muscles relax before moving on,

Quietly, she crept over to the bloody man and gently nudged him.

He wobbled a bit but didn’t wake. The firelight from the metal barrel flickered on his face, making his features clearer.

Though covered in blood, his face was clean, like someone had purposely avoided hitting it.

He was young, handsome with sharp features, strong and determined, with long, thick eyelashes.

Tracy had seen many handsome guys.

At the Angelic Etiquette Academy, beautiful girls and striking guys were everywhere—Andrew and Liam, who grew up with her, were two very different kinds of handsome.

This guy easily ranked among the best she'd seen.

Making sure he was still out cold and wouldn't suddenly wake up and make noise, Tracy didn't stare any longer. She carefully moved toward the door.

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Chapter 54 Cargo

**+5 Free Coins**

The factory door was made of big metal sheets. Though locked, the seams weren't tight.

Tracy curled up in a corner and cautiously peeked outside. She saw the gray-jacket man and his partner holding flashlights, watching the busy street and the area around while chatting.

"The Jackmans really don't care," the gray-jacket man said with a bitter laugh. "Eighteen years raising her, then just tossing her aside. That's cold."

The other replied, "Rich family drama's just entertainment for us. Once we release the girl after we're done pretending and deliver the cargo to the Angelic Etiquette Academy, we'll get more money than before."

Hearing "the Angelic Etiquette Academy" made Tracy freeze. A rush of instinctive fear hit her hard.

The "*cargo*" *they're talking about—do they mean this guy?*

*Is he going to be sent to the Angelic Etiquette*

*Academy?!*

The partner patted the gray-jacket man and said, "Our rule is no talking about operations or identities on the job. Why don't you keep your mouth shut?"

The gray-jacket man chuckled. "There are no outsiders here. Those two inside are either unconscious *or* tied up—what's there to be scared of?"

His partner knew his temper and said nothing, only glancing nervously at the locked door.

Tracy instinctively shrank back, curling her body up, heart pounding.

Footsteps slowly came closer. She held her breath, wishing she could even silence the sound of her own heartbeat.

If the man shone his flashlight through the door crack, he would see her curled up in the corner.

But luckily, he just checked the lock on the chain and didn't do anything else.

The gray-jacket man laughed at him. "You're way too careful. There's no other way out-how could she escape?"

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Chapter 54 Cargo

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"We should just take turns patrolling outside. When the boss gets back, he can help out."

Neither of them went inside but split up to patrol outside.

Tracy finally relaxed a bit and didn't waste any time. She quietly got up and slipped back inside the factory.

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Chapter 55 Trusting Someone

Chapter 55 Trusting Someone

Chapter 55 Trusting Someone

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**+5** Free Coins

The big door was locked tight, and someone was guarding outside. Tracy knew she couldn't get out that way, so she needed to find another plan.

Tracy's eyes landed on a seven-foot-high window with shattered glass.

Besides the door, that was the only way out.

Right below the window stood a tall iron frame, and the run-down factory was full of all kinds of messy junk.

Tracy gathered some stuff she could stack up as steps to help her climb the frame.

Her movements were quiet and soft, careful not to make a single sound.

When she finished, she took off one shoe and put it on the frame, but didn't climb up yet.

After double-checking she hadn't missed anything, Tracy turned and suddenly locked eyes with a pair of sharp eyes.

The surprise scared her so much she almost screamed, but she held it in.

The bloody man who'd been unconscious somehow woke up and was now staring at her with no expression.

Though his youthful face was strong and handsome, with clear, sharp eyes, Tracy couldn't shake the heavy, dangerous feeling she got from him.

He reminded her of the broken people she'd seen at the Angelic Etiquette Academy over the past two years—those almost driven crazy by that place.

Her heart tightened.

She knew exactly what kind of hell that was.

*If this*

*man is sent to the Angelic Etiquette Academy... the consequences waiting for him could be worse than what I've been through.*

Thinking about the Academy's glittering yet grimy facade, Tracy felt a tangle of

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pity and unease.

She knew all too well how rotten that dazzling hell was. She'd only survived because people had risked their lives to clear her path, to get her out.

So she couldn't just stand there and watch someone be sent there right in front of her.

After a moment, Tracy hurried over and crouched beside the man. She whispered, "I'm kidnapped too. I can help you escape if you follow my plan."

He nodded without hesitation.

He'd woken while Tracy was watching outside the door.

He saw how calm she was, and how her eyes showed hesitation and kindness for a moment, so he trusted her—for now—but still looked cautious.

Seeing him decide so quickly, Tracy relaxed a bit.

If she'd gotten someone clueless, she might have been stressing over how to save them and how not to get caught herself.

Tracy helped him up by the arm. "Can you still move?"

He nodded. "Yeah."

His voice was rough. Tracy supported one of his arms, and he pressed the other on the ground as he stood.

His injuries were bad, his muscles tight from pain, but he didn't complain as Tracy helped him deeper into the factory.

The farther they went, the darker it got. In the corner, a metal sheet leaned against the wall, making a small triangular shelter.

Tracy helped him into the space and looked at his clothes. "Can you take off your jacket?"

He hesitated a moment, then peeled it off.

The movement pulled at his wounds, but he didn't flinch.

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## Chapter 55 Trusting Someone

### +5 Free Coins

He agreed to follow her plan, and even if he didn't understand it, he didn't ask questions.

Tracy had been ready to explain, but seeing him act so quickly, she froze.

She hadn't expected a stranger to trust her like this in a life-or-death moment, while the Jackmans, who had raised her for 18 years, only doubted her.

She swallowed her feelings and looked at his blood-soaked shirt, the fierce wounds showing beneath. She warned, "Stay still. Don't make a sound."

Then she turned and ran back quickly.

The man leaned against the wall, his eyes never leaving her.

She reached the iron frame under the window and rubbed blood stains from his jacket onto the floor, the stacked stuff she'd used as steps, and the frame itself.

Finally, she balled up the jacket and ran back to him.

The man understood her plan immediately and shifted inside the shelter.

Tracy sat beside him, curling her body as small as possible, carefully watching outside.

Now, all they could do was wait.

Tracy kept her eyes outside, not knowing the man beside her was watching her too.

His clear eyes were full of curiosity and doubt as he studied her.

In the quiet little space, the only sounds were their breathing.

After a while, the man suddenly asked, "What's your name? Why did they kidnap you?"

His voice was low, and the tight space made it sound like a whisper right by her ear.

Tracy turned and met those clear eyes.

Only now, on edge, did she realize how close they were. Instinctively, she shrank

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Chapter 55 Trusting Someone

back a little.

Even though they were both trapped, Tracy stayed careful.

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Whether with people she grew up with or strangers trapped in that hell, she knew that trusting someone so easily could cost way too much. She wasn't willing to risk it again.

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Chapter 56 Don't Want Them to Find Me

Chapter 56 Don't Want Them to Find Me

Chapter 56 Don't Want Them to Find Me

**+5** Free Coins

"Shouldn't you at least introduce yourself before snooping into other people's business?" Tracy asked the man, her voice cold and dripping with clear hostility.

The man didn't seem to notice the frost in her tone. He tilted his head and looked at her for a moment before smiling. "I'm Ronald West, just turned 21, from Jezelton. What about you?"

Tracy hadn't expected him to be so blunt.

*Did he miss what I meant, or is there something else behind that honesty?*

The dim light made it hard for Tracy to see his face clearly or to read what was really in his mind.

After a long pause, she answered, "Tracy Yarwood, 22, from Cloudville."

In the dark, his clear eyes suddenly flashed.

Ronald was about to say something when the sound of chains rattling came from the gate.

Tracy immediately shrank back, holding her breath without even thinking.

The gate swung open, and a man in gray jacket came in with two others. "Grab the medicine and give it to that *guy* fast. If

cargo dies-

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The gray-jacket man stopped talking, clearly shocked that Tracy, the one who should've been tied up, and the person who was supposed to be unconscious on the floor, were both missing.

"Where are they?"

He hurried over and immediately saw a pile of things under the square window and a shoe hanging on the iron frame.

"Damn it. I really underestimated that woman!" He threw the shoe down. "Hurry, chase after them!"

They rushed out without even bothering to lock the door.

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Chapter 56 Don't Want Them to Find Me

After waiting a while, Tracy finally dared to crawl out from her hiding spot.

**+5 Free Coins**

There was no way to climb the wall under the window since there were no footholds or grips, and the iron frame was too high to climb without help. She never planned to escape that way.

But Tracy knew those people would figure out her trick soon enough. She couldn't stay.

Tracy grabbed her phone and shoe, along with the medicine the gray-jacket man had dropped. Supporting Ronald, she hurried away from the factory as fast as she could.

It was pitch dark, no lights anywhere, making it almost impossible to see or know which way to go.

She bit her lip and picked a random direction to run with Ronald.

As they ran, memories of someone's advice played in her mind.

"The street's too open, and you'll be a visible target. You've got to head where there's no path, somewhere easy to hide.

"When running, always erase your tracks. If you get the chance, make fake trails in other directions to confuse whoever's chasing you.

"Remember, stay calm. As long as you've got breath, don't stop. Just keep moving forward."

Those were the exact words she'd been told when escaping the Angelic Etiquette Academy long ago.

She hadn't needed them for two years, but now, they came back.

Ronald followed quietly like a shadow.

As they ran, his wounds kept reopening. The blood soaked through again, the pain and paleness on his handsome face impossible to miss in the night, but he never

made a sound.

Watching Tracy clear tracks and make fake trails with practiced ease, he felt like she'd planned this escape a thousand times in her mind before today.

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Chapter 56 Don't Want Them to Find Me

Who *is she*?

*What has she* been through?

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*Why* does it feel like, even *though she's right here*

, *she's locked inside some separate world*?

The people who took *us aren't ordinary. She's smart enough to know that*, after being kidnapped, the best *thing is to wait for her family to rescue her*.

But *she's trying so hard to escape—does that mean she knows her family won't come?*

*Has she been left behind by them?*

Or, like me, *was she handed over to kidnappers by her own family?*

Tracy didn't know how long they'd been running.

Her legs felt numb, like machines with no feeling, just following the order to run.

Finally, they left the wild open grass and hills behind and reached an old neighborhood packed with low houses.

When Tracy saw the lights and people, her strength drained instantly. She collapsed, completely exhausted.

Ronald hadn't expected her to fall and went down with her, pain making him hiss sharply.

Only then did Tracy remember she wasn't alone and quickly asked, "Are you okay?"

Ronald gasped, teeth clenched in pain. "I'm okay for now, but if we keep going, I might not last much longer."

Though he joked, Tracy heard the weakness in his voice.

She was out of breath too, but they still weren't safe—they didn't even know where they were.

Thinking **hard**, Tracy asked, "Can you hold on? I'll get you to a hospital first-

“No hospitals!” Ronald said suddenly, his voice urgent and serious.

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Chapter 56 Don't Want Them to Find Me

Tracy stared at him. “You’re badly hurt. Why won’t you go to a hospital?”

His eyes, like whirlpools, seemed to pull her in.

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After a long silence, he said, “Because I was handed over to kidnappers by my biological family. I don’t want them to find me.”

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Chapter 57 CeeCee

Chapter 57 CeeCee

“Can you help me, Tracy?”

45 Free Coins

Ronald looked like a lost puppy caught in the rain—those sharp eyes filled with a helpless plea.

His honest tone and gaze hit Tracy right in the chest.

She didn’t get why Ronald, a total stranger, was so open with her, but somehow she sensed the hidden pain behind his calm words.

She’d been abandoned by the Jackmans, but at least they weren’t blood family.

Still, it hurt deep, and only after two brutal years at the Angelic Etiquette Academy had she finally let go.

Ronald, though, was left behind by his own blood.

Tracy looked away.

Those clear eyes seemed so innocent, like they belonged to a college kid who'd never faced a real storm.

She didn't understand how Ronald's family could treat him like that.

Just like she never understood how her own family of 18 years could be so cruel to her.

Tracy didn't insist on taking him to a hospital. She scanned the area.

When people feel unsafe, they hide in corners. Right now, they were in a small alley, which was perfect for that.

She pushed herself up on her sore legs, ready to move, when suddenly, her wrist was grabbed.

Ronald's hand shook a little. "Where are you going?"

He looked up at her, his bright, strong face made fragile by pale skin, showing a vulnerability that begged to be protected.

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10:45 Thu, 4 Sept

Chapter 57 CeeCee

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**+5 Free Coins**

Tracy pressed her lips tight. "I'm going to check around. We can't just stay here forever."

She pulled free and shoved the bag of medicine she'd been holding into Ronald's outstretched hand.

Then she dragged a trash bin nearby to shield him from view and pulled out a big black plastic bag.

"Stay here. I'll be right back."

After saying that, she covered him with the plastic bag and hurried off.

The trash bin stank so badly that the smell hit Ronald's face hard, making it scrunch up, but he didn't push the bag away.

He gripped the medicine bag tight and lay still on the ground.

He'd promised to follow Tracy's plan, so he obeyed.

The night made everything around them feel eerily quiet and stretched the waiting longer than it should be—long enough for Ronald to feel abandoned by the whole world again.

That feeling was the worst thing he knew.

Sticky blood oozed from his nasty wounds, and his pale face looked even paler.

His head felt heavy and foggy, his eyelids drooping, while the dark around him felt like a beast ready to pounce and swallow him whole.

Tracy promised she'd be back *soon*, but she's *not* back yet...

For the first time, Ronald felt death so close.

Maybe this is just how it's meant to *be*

*No* matter how hard I fight, I'll always be the one left behind, dying quietly in a filthy pile of trash.

No *one*

*to bury* me, *no* one who cares...

Chapter 57 CeeCee

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As his vision blurred, a figure suddenly appeared. She quickly pulled off the plastic bag covering him and rushed over, worry clear on her face.

Her movements were so direct and sure, as if nothing could stop her from getting to him.

For once, he wasn't the one abandoned.

Ronald smiled suddenly, like he saw the first light of dawn shining on him.

"You're back..."

There was a hint of pain in his voice, and Tracy froze.

They'd only just met a few hours ago, knew almost nothing about each other except names and ages, yet she had this wild thought for a moment.

It was as if, in his world, she was the only person he could count on.

But if the *family I've lived with for 18 years can turn*

*their backs, then can anybody really depend on anyone?*

Shaking off the crazy thought, Tracy asked seriously, "How do you feel? Can you stand?"

Seeing all the blood on the ground earlier, she'd feared the person she barely managed to save had died.

Ronald smiled and said lightly, "Don't worry. I'm young and strong. I won't slow you down, CeeCee"

That name made Tracy pause,

Only two people had ever called her "CeeCee"-Liam and Erin.

Her eyes dropped, and she stayed quiet as she helped him out of the alley.

Ronald noticed her sudden mood change and, unsure if he'd said something wrong, wisely kept quiet.

His body was in bad shape, and if not for sheer willpower, he'd have collapsed long ago.

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Chapter 57 CeeCee

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**+5 Free Coins**

Still, he tried *to* walk on his own, leaning on Tracy only when the pain got too bad.

It was late, and the old neighborhood was mostly empty. But with Ronald's blood-soaked look, Tracy could only cover him with her jacket for some protection.

10:45 Thu, 4 Sept 0.

## Chapter 58 After We're Done Pretending

## Chapter 58 After We're Done Pretending

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**+5 Free Coins**

Soon, Tracy and Ronald arrived at an old, run-down neighborhood. After walking through a dark, empty alley, they reached a door hidden behind a staircase.

This was the place Tracy had rented earlier while scouting an escape route.

Ronald couldn't go to a hospital, but with his body covered in blood, he desperately needed a place to rest and get treated.

The apartment was tucked away behind the staircase in a damp, shadowy corner of the old neighborhood. Though the space was big, it felt more like a basement, dark and rough.

Ronald's foggy mind cleared a bit when he saw the shabby spot. "Is this your home?"

Tracy helped him down onto a wooden couch. "Sort of. I just rented it."

She'd never met her real parents, while the Jackmans ... The moment they sent her off to the Angelic Etiquette Academy, they stopped being family.

This apartment was the first place she'd ever rented with her own money, so she counted it as her "home."

Her cold tone made Ronald pause.

It was like he saw a reflection of himself.

The kidnappers had brought a pretty full stash of medicine for Ronald—anti-inflammatory drugs, stuff to stop the bleeding, even tetanus shots.

Tracy gave him the tetanus shot first, then started cleaning his wounds.

She pulled off his blood-soaked shirt, now impossible to tell what color it was before, revealing the true state of his injuries.

Even though Tracy had seen plenty of wounds before, she couldn't help but suck in a sharp breath,

Whip marks, stab wounds, cuts, burns...

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10:45 Thu, 4 Sept

Chapter 58 After We're Done Pretending

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All kinds of awful scars. None were deadly by themselves, but the fact that they covered his whole body showed someone had tortured him on purpose.

Tracy looked up and couldn't help asking, "Doesn't it hurt?"

He escaped from that run-down *factory with all those injuries without even* making a sound -how *is* that *possible*?

Seeing her not freak out over the wounds and actually ask if he was in pain, Ronald hesitated.

In his memory, she was the first person to look at his injuries and ask about his pain.

A smile slowly appeared on his face.

"I've been hurt so many times that I'm used to it already. It doesn't hurt anymore."

When he smiled, his eyes curved like crescents, and two small dimples showed on his cheeks.

His bright, contagious smile almost made Tracy forget the suffering behind those words.

She looked down and silently kept tending his wounds.

Though Ronald always seemed like the kind of guy who'd honestly answer anything, Tracy didn't push him for more.

They were strangers, and this meeting was pure chance—they had no reason to dig into each other's pasts.

Her hands moved fast and smooth, like she was stitching flowers instead of fixing bloody wounds.

Ronald remarked with curiosity, "You seem really good at this."

She looks like she does it all the time, treating *injuries* until it becomes second nature.

Tracy kept working without stopping and answered with his own words, "Been hurt a lot, got used to it, so I learned."

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## Chapter 58 After We're Done Pretending

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Ronald raised his eyebrows and watched her carefully as she seriously dressed his wounds.

*Seems like she has a story too.*

His gaze drifted to Tracy's arm.

Because of the darkness earlier, he hadn't noticed anything when she took off her jacket and gave it to him.

Now, with better light, he saw the marks on her arm.

Old scars, just as bad as his injuries.

*People with stories usually carry some kind of pain.*

*I have mine.*

*Tracy probably does too.*

After running so hard and bleeding so much, Ronald was already weak and had dozed off.

Tracy didn't dare fall asleep.

She wasn't a doctor, and Ronald's injuries were too serious. If anything went wrong, they'd have to go to a hospital after all.

Luckily, she stayed awake until dawn, and Ronald showed no signs of trouble.

When the sky brightened completely, Tracy stopped worrying about the sleeping man, packed up, and left.

Being kidnapped meant she had to report it to the police and let them investigate the people behind it all.

After a sleepless night, Tracy finally had a moment to calmly think about the kidnapping.

*The kidnappers were careful. If they really wanted the Jackmans' money, they would have looked into my situation first. They wouldn't have chosen to kidnap me,*

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10:45 Thu, 4 Sept.

Chapter 58 After We're Done Pretending

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I don't have *any* of the Jackmans' *contacts saved on her phone*—so how *did* the kidnappers get those numbers?

Why *did* they keep calling *every Jackman's member, demanding ransom*, acting like they *already* knew I'd be *abandoned*?

What did *the gray-jacket guy* mean when he said to “*release the girl after we're done pretending*”?

*If I don't figure these things out, I might be kidnapped again. Next time, I might not be so lucky.*

Just as Tracy left, Ronald woke up, blinking sleepily.

The strange, old surroundings made him jump up from the couch immediately. It took him a moment to remember why he was there.

His tense body slowly relaxed as he looked around, but didn't see Tracy anywhere. Instead, he noticed 200 dollars sitting on the table.

Chapter 59 When Do I Get to Meet Them?

Chapter 59 When Do I Get to Meet Them?

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The 200 dollars were left there on purpose by Tracy—enough to buy some food or to help Ronald if he needed to leave on his own.

Ronald picked up the money and, for some reason, let out a quiet laugh.

*She's barely able to afford a decent place, yet she's kind enough to leave 200 bucks for a stranger she's known for less than*

*a day.*

*Does she treat everyone this way?*

Two dimples showed on his pale cheeks, making Ronald look like a kid who'd always lived in sunshine, never knowing any darkness.

Leaving the rented spot, Tracy headed straight to the nearest police station.

She had planned to just walk in, but right at the entrance, she ran into Chris.

Seeing her looking so worn out, he quickly asked, "Tracy, are you okay?"

"I was going to pick you up at the hospital yesterday, but then I found out you were kidnapped. I tried to follow, but those kidnappers were too fast, so I lost you.

"I stayed up all night looking for you. Where did you go?"

He looked tired and worn, like he'd been searching nonstop.

But those shoes—so clean—made Tracy skeptical.

At the graduation pool party, Norris told his bodyguards not to let her leave the water. Yet somehow Chris managed to get her out safely.

Thugs kept causing trouble at her job, and the police didn't help. But whenever Chris showed up, he pulled her out of danger.

She'd been kidnapped in a confusing mess, and Chris just happened to appear and "tirelessly" look for her all night.

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**10:45** Thu, 4 Sept 0.

Chapter 59 When Do I Get to Meet Them?

This whole “hero *saving the*

girl” act—*he* never seems *to* get tired of it, huh?

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A small smile tugged at Tracy’s lips as she looked down. “I thought nobody wanted me anymore.”

Her voice was soft and full of pain, as if she saw Chris as her only support.

Chris’s eyes flashed, and he quickly said, worried, “How could you think that?

“Even if the whole world turns its back on you, I’ll stand by you.”

He opened his arms to hug her, but Tracy stepped back.

She stared right into Chris’s deep eyes, as if she was trying to see through him. “Are you serious?”

“Of course!” Chris said confidently. “You deserve the best. The Jackmans are idiots to have abandoned you.”

His words and expression were full of feeling. If Tracy were a naïve girl dreaming of fairy-tale love, maybe she’d believe him.

Her eyes dropped, and she smiled softly.

Only the Jackmans and kidnappers knew she’d been abandoned. She never told Chris.

She didn’t call him out or ask why he hadn’t called the police when he saw her being kidnapped. Instead, she went along with his words. “Mr. Woodward, you’ve been way too good to me.

“Even the Jackmans haven’t treated me as well as you have.”

Hearing that, Chris’s heart jumped with joy.

*If I’d known* that harsh move would work so well, *I* wouldn’t have wasted so much time and energy driving her to and from work!

He was about to say more when Tracy suddenly changed her tone.

"I get how you feel, Mr. Woodward, but you're the only son of the Woodwards, and I'm just an ordinary person. We're not right for each other."

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Chapter 59 When Do I Get to Meet Them?

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The trust she just gave him vanished, replaced by a distant look in her eyes. "Even if you don't mind, your parents definitely won't approve."

Chris almost froze.

We haven't even officially gotten *together*, and *she's* already thinking *about my parents*?

I guess it makes *sense*. *The Jackmans rejected her*, and *if she doesn't* find support soon, she'll never have a good *life* with wealth *and honor*.

Chris smiled more gently. "Don't worry. My parents won't oppose me."

After all, he never really planned to be with this girl, who wasn't even related to the Jackmans. What he did had Liam's blessing, so of course, his parents wouldn't object.

To make sure Tracy believed him, he added, "My parents would definitely like a beautiful, kind, and strong girl like you."

Finally, a smile showed on Tracy's face. "Really? When do I get to meet them?"

Meeting them meant she could finally ask about Derek and address the bitterness and obsession he never let go of, even in death.

Chris hid his contempt behind a gentle look and promised, "Don't worry. I'll definitely take you someday."

Tracy didn't really believe him, but since she'd asked, she knew she'd get the chance.

Instead of going to the police station, she followed Chris's lead and asked him to help take her back to the Jackmans.

No one in the Jackmans had cared at all about her kidnapping from start to finish.

When she got to the villa's doorstep, she ran into Liam, who was just about to head out for a race,

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Chapter 60 Stage the Kidnapping

Chapter 60 Stage the Kidnapping

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Liam frowned the moment he saw how worn out Tracy looked. "What have you done to yourself?"

Our family *is* strict—  
*so strict that even I wouldn't dare stay out all night. But Tracy didn't come home last night, and she looks like a*

*complete mess. How embarrassing!*

He was about to scold her when she walked right past him without even looking his way, as if he didn't exist.

Liam froze, then snapped. "Hey, stop right there!"

He grabbed her hand and yanked her back. "You're a girl, and you've been out all night. I haven't said anything yet, so why are you getting mad at me?"

Tracy frowned and yanked her hand free, her voice sharp with impatience. "If you've got something to say, Mr. Liam, just say it."

She'd barely escaped that run-down factory by sheer willpower, stayed awake all night watching Ronald, and didn't have energy for this.

"I was just trying to care about you, and this is how you act?!" Liam's anger flared up again.

When he said "care," Tracy laughed a bitter, loud laugh. "Mr. Liam, by 'care,' do you mean ordering those kidnappers to kill me and dump my body somewhere far away so you wouldn't even hear about it?"

Liam's face went stiff.

He'd been so heated last night that he spoke without thinking, and now he regretted it. He never thought Tracy would actually find out.

The man who was furious a moment ago suddenly lost his fire, avoiding her mocking stare.

Tracy's expression grew even sharper with sarcasm.

*He can't even admit what he said. What right*

*does he have to lecture me?*

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**10:46** Thu, 4 Sept

Chapter 60 Stage the Kidnapping

Not wanting to waste more time, Tracy turned to leave.

+5 **Free** Coins

But when she glanced back, she caught Erin's eyes—red, swollen, full of hurt.

Tracy had seen that look a thousand times. She knew what was coming next.

Sure enough, Erin ran over, tears in her eyes. "Tracy, please don't be mad. Liam didn't mean it like that."

She stood in front of Liam like she was defending him. "He was just too angry and said things he shouldn't have. He really does care about you."

"If you're really upset, then ... blame me instead!"

She looked so small and hurt, while Tracy just stared blankly, making Erin look even more pitiful.

Liam, who'd been holding back, stepped forward, chest puffed out, and blamed Tracy without hesitation. "You're so cold. Erin stayed up all night worrying about you! How can you blame her?"

Tracy looked at Erin's perfect skin and flawless makeup—no sign of someone who hadn't slept at all.

Erin lowered her head, tears welling up. "Liam, as long as Tracy comes back safe, I don't mind praying for her all night, even if I'm scared to death."

Liam sighed, torn between helplessness and care. "Erin, I told you the kidnapping was staged. Why are you still worried?"

He shot a glare at Tracy. "See? We didn't pay any ransom, and she's back safe and sound."

"Maybe she stayed out all night because her plan failed, and she was too embarrassed to come back. Or maybe she wanted us to worry so we'd go looking and she could get what she wanted."

"But we didn't fall for it, so she just snuck back quietly."

The more Liam said it, the more he believed it.

Maybe Tracy ignored me earlier because she felt guilty!

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**10:46 Thu, 4 Sept D.**

Chapter 60 Stage the Kidnapping

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**+5 Free Coins**

Erin's eyes glistened with tears as she looked at Tracy, confused and doubtful. "Tracy, did you really stage the kidnapping?"

Her face twisted with pain and anger. "How could you do this? I don't care about myself—I can stay up all night worrying. But do you know how much Mom and Dad suffered when they heard the news?"

"If you were jealous because they treated me better, fine—deal with me. I can take it. But how could you hurt Mom and Dad just because of jealousy?"

Her eyes were full of disappointment and blame, as if she'd stayed silent for too long and finally snapped.

But Tracy stayed calm and unreadable.

Her expression was like watching a show.

Suddenly, Tracy remembered something.

Even Chris shouldn't have had all the Jackmans' contacts—and the kidnappers were calling their private numbers.

As Liam's anger flared more because of Erin's words, Tracy finally said, "If you want to know if the kidnapping was staged, just ask the police."

Liam's angry words caught in his throat, and Erin froze.

But Tracy ignored them and pulled out her phone. She dialed the police. "Hello, I'd like to report a kidnapping..."

"

Her voice was clear and quick. Before Liam and Erin could react, she hung up.

Her face stayed calm. "The police will be here soon. Whether I staged it or not, they'll investigate and find out."

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