

The Unwanted Daughter: When Love Comes Too Late

#Left Behind 61 - Read The Unwanted Daughter: When Love Comes Too Late Left Behind 61

Chapter 61 All Tracy's Fault

"Can I go change my clothes first?"

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Erin and Liam didn't answer, so Tracy just turned and walked off—this time, no one tried to stop her.

Liam hadn't expected her to be so quick and sure. A flicker of doubt crept into his mind, wondering if maybe he'd misjudged her.

Erin, meanwhile, felt panic rising inside.

Chris *isn't* known for handling things carefully. If the police find out ...

She glanced at the stunned person next to her, then hurriedly said, "Liam, what do we do? If the cops figure out Tracy staged the kidnapping just to waste their time, she's not going to get off easy.

"If it's just a fine, that's one thing, but what if she gets detained? That would leave a record, and that could ruin her whole life."

Erin looked lost, almost on the verge of tears. "Tracy was way too reckless. What are we supposed to do now?"

Liam snapped out of it and tried to calm her. "It's her own fault, Erin. Don't waste your energy worrying about someone like her."

Erin shook her head, not convinced. "Even though Tracy never wanted to accept me, how can I just watch her go through this alone?

"And if she gets detained, it'll hurt the company, hurt Mom and Dad, Andrew, and even you. I don't want to see that happen."

She gripped Liam's hand tightly, panic in her eyes. "Should we call Andrew and figure something out?"

Liam swallowed his anger and nodded. "I'll call Andrew right now."

When the call connected, he exaggerated the situation, making it sound like a major disaster for Jackman Enterprise.

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Chapter 61 All Tracy's Fault

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So when the police showed up at the Jackman Villa, they ran into Benjamin and Andrew coming back.

Andrew pushed up his glasses and stepped forward first, handing over his business card. "I'm Andrew, CEO of Jackman Enterprise. Sorry to trouble you. Today's events are just a misunderstanding.

"The person who reported this is my sister. She had a fight with the family and staged everything to get attention. No real kidnapping happened."

Benjamin kept a serious face and backed him up, "Exactly. This is a family matter. The police chief even had dinner with me recently and wants to meet my family sometime."

With the Jackmans' status in Cloudville, two family heads calling it a misunderstanding made it impossible for the police to push further.

So when Tracy finally stepped outside, she caught the last glimpse of police cars driving away.

She knew the Jackmans too well. Hearing the sirens, she quickly changed clothes and came out, but she was still too late.

After the police left, Andrew saw Tracy standing there and frowned.

"Tracy, you really went too far this time."

Tracy looked up at him but didn't say a word—just turned and walked off.

In Andrew's eyes, his *judgment*

is always right, so I'd better not waste my breath.

Seeing her reaction, Andrew's face grew even colder. "Stop right there!"

Tracy didn't slow down at all.

Andrew's anger flared hotter. "If you walk away again, I'll disown you as my sister!"

Finally, Tracy stopped.

That made Andrew's temper cool a little. The thin line of his lips under his glasses twitched into a small smile.

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Chapter 61 All Tracy's Fault

I knew the one thing Tracy cared about most was family

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All these years, she's gone out of her way to target Erin, just to get our attention.

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Before Andrew's smile faded, Tracy said, "Mr. Andrew, you said a long time ago that you only had one sister in this life, Erin."

He had said those words on their shared birthday.

They were born the same day, but the Jackmans only remembered to get a gift for Erin, forgetting about her completely.

Back then, she was hurt but told herself they just wanted to make up for Erin and accidentally forgot her birthday.

She told herself that even if she just ate a piece of cake with them, that would be enough for her birthday.

But just as she reached out, the carefully made five-layer cake Liam had prepared toppled onto Erin, ruining her beautiful dress.

Erin cried.

Tracy, once the cherished one, was blamed and called cruel by everyone. Andrew even told all the guests he only recognized Erin as his sister for life.

From that day on, Tracy knew she no longer had an elder brother.

Her bringing this up now made Andrew's anger choke in his throat.

He'd regretted saying those words in the heat of the moment at such an event. He had wanted to apologize properly someday.

But Tracy kept opposing Erin and making so many frustrating mistakes that Andrew never got the chance. Gradually, he forgot about it.

In the end, it's all Tracy's fault.

Andrew's face turned cold again upon that thought.

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Chapter 62 I'm So Done

Chapter 62 I'm So Done

Chapter 62 I'm So Done

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"Do you always have to be so sarcastic and sneaky when you talk?" He stared hard at Tracy. "If Dad and I hadn't shown up just in time, do you even realize how much trouble you'd be in?"

Tracy honestly didn't know what she'd done wrong this time.

As Tracy looked at the furious Benjamin, the disappointed Andrew, the smirking Liam, who seemed like he was enjoying the show, and Erin, whose eyes were red with sympathy and hurt, her gaze was colder than if she were looking at strangers.

"I'm not one of the Jackmans, so you don't plan to defend me about the kidnapping, and that's fine. That's why I reported it myself.

"I'm the real victim here. I'm just trying to get justice. So why do I keep ending up as the troublemaker in your eyes? Even if I cause trouble, what does that have to do with you?"

That part confused her the most.

They always say

I embarrass the Jackmans, that I'm not worthy of the name, yet they keep

using their family name to control me.

Why?

The Jackmans didn't realize how much she wanted to get away from them. Andrew still looked at her with disappointment. "Can't you just speak properly?"

"You keep saying, 'You're not one of the Jackmans.' Are you still mad we changed your last name?"

He rubbed his forehead, clearly tired of her stubbornness. "Just stay home quietly for now. Later, I'll hold a press conference to change your last name back. Will that make you happy?"

His tone was tired, as if he was finally giving in, as if everything she'd done was just to get this one thing, and now he was generously agreeing.

Erin snapped her head up, staring at Andrew in disbelief. She didn't expect him to say that.

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Chapter 62 I'm So Done

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She looked at Benjamin and Liam for support, but Benjamin stayed calm with no sign of disagreement, and Liam even looked a bit excited.

I've worked so hard to

make the Jackmans dislike Tracy—there's no way I'll let her come back.

Quickly, Erin stepped forward. "That's wonderful!"

Her face lit up. "Tracy, aren't you going to thank Andrew? Once your last name's changed back, I'll be your sister again.

“Then I won’t just have Mom and Dad and Andrew’s love, and Liam’s support—I’ll have you to spoil me. I’ll be so lucky!”

She fluttered her eyelashes, teasing Andrew and the others playfully. “When Tracy’s back, you all have to treat her even better. That way, she won’t do dumb things out of jealousy, and we sisters can finally get along.”

She looked innocent, but every word was a reminder of how much the Jackmans favored her—making sure everyone knew ‘wicked’ Tracy was jealous of her.

Andrew and the others’ expressions changed immediately. Liam even pulled Erin close, standing protectively in front of her.

“Don’t think changing your last name means you can compete with Erin,” Liam warned sharply. “To us, you’re nothing compared to her.”

Andrew nodded. “Changing your last name is just to stop you from causing more trouble. It doesn’t mean we agree with what you did.

“I don’t want to see anything like today happen again. If it hurts the company, I’ll treat you like an outsider.”

Tracy pressed her lips together.

At the end of *the day, all they care about is the company’s image.*

Watching them unite against her just for Erin, Tracy felt nothing.

“When did I ever say I wanted to change my last name?” she said coldly. “I don’t deserve the Jackman name, Mr. Andrew. You don’t need to pretend you’re doing me a favor.”

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Chapter 62 I’m So Done

5 Free Coins

Liam snorted, clearly not buying it. “You say you don’t want it, but I bet you’re secretly happy. You think we’d fall for your little games?”

He sneered, "If you didn't care, you wouldn't have faked a kidnapping."

Tracy felt like laughing out of sheer frustration.

"You're the ones accusing me of faking the kidnapping. You're the ones blocking the police from investigating. Does the truth really depend on whatever the Jackmans say?"

Liam snapped first, quick to anger. "What do you mean? Are you saying we falsely accused you?"

Tracy gave him a cold look. "Wrongly accused or not, the police will find out when they come back to investigate."

"Why do you think I don't want them to check? It's for your own good!" Andrew's voice rose.

"Filing a false report could mean detention. If the media finds out the Jackmans' daughter staged a kidnapping to scam the family, it wouldn't just ruin your reputation, but it'd hurt the company too."

Since becoming CEO of Jackman Enterprise, Andrew had always put the company first. This was no exception.

Tracy laughed bitterly. "Oh, all for my own good again.

"I'm so done with you saying you're doing stuff for my own good, when it's really just to cover your disgusting actions!"

She looked at them, eyes burning red. "You stopped treating me as your own a long time ago. I don't want to be one of the Jackmans. What does my reputation have to do with you? And what does Jackman Enterprise have to do with me?"

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Chapter 63 Can't Let Tracy Go

"Even if the company falls apart tomorrow, that's on you all—"

Smack!

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+5 Free Coins

A sharp slap interrupted Tracy's words, pulling her back from the edge of her fury.

Everyone froze. No one expected Benjamin—the quiet one so far—to suddenly hit her.

Tracy tilted her head, ears ringing, then heard Benjamin's angry voice. "What nonsense are you talking? The Jackmans raised you for 18 years. I don't expect you to be grateful, but what right do you have to hate us?"

Her face burned from the slap.

Though she'd left that nightmare behind, the hurt on her face felt worse than any she'd gotten at the etiquette academy.

But facing Benjamin's fury, Tracy stayed steady. "I never hated the Jackmans."

Even when she was first sent to the Angelic Etiquette Academy, all she wanted was their help. She never hated them.

It was true that they raised and spoiled her for 18 years. She didn't resent being sent to the academy. She thought it was just paying them back for everything.

Tracy met Benjamin's gaze without blinking. "I don't hate the Jackmans. But I want no ties to you all. Just thinking about being one of you makes me want to puke. I can't even sleep."

She was scared that if she fell asleep, they'd send her back to that academy "for her own good" again.

Every word was serious and clear, as if she were afraid they wouldn't understand the truth in her heart. "So, Mr. Benjamin, don't worry about me causing trouble just because I'm the Jackmans' heiress. I don't care about that."

Benjamin's anger instantly faded, as if cold water had been poured over him. He just stood there, stunned.

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Chapter 63 Can't Let Tracy Go

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Looking into Tracy's cold eyes, he vaguely remembered when those same eyes once looked at him full of love and admiration.

She used to wrap her arm around his, cooing, "I can't believe I'm your daughter. I'm so proud and lucky!"

But now she said that she felt sick just thinking she was a Jackman.

How could she—my own daughter—say that?

Benjamin's anger turned into deep sadness. "I held you close and loved you since you were little. I fed you formula and changed your diaper—I never let the nanny do it. How have I ever hurt you?"

"You don't regret your mistakes, and now you say things like this... You really disappoint me."

His eyes glistened with tears.

Though a top business figure in Cloudville, he looked like a broken father crushed by his child's words, barely standing.

Andrew quickly stepped in, frowning at Tracy. "Tracy, how can you say things like that just to hurt Dad? Apologize right now!"

"I didn't mean to hurt him." Tracy stayed calm. "I'm just telling the truth. Isn't that what you all want?"

No matter when, they always complain that I embarrass the Jackmans.

No matter the

situation, Erin is the only true Jackman's daughter they acknowledge.

Before, I was stupid to think we could be family without blood ties. I deserved the two years of hell I went through.

Now, I see the truth, and I'm giving them what they want. I won't try anymore to be one of

the Jackmans.

Andrew wanted to say more, but Benjamin raised his hand to stop him. "Enough. If you don't want to be a Jackman, then get out of the house!"

Everyone stared at Benjamin in shock.

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Chapter 63 Can't Let Tracy Go

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Even when Tracy's last name was changed, he never said he wanted to kick her out.

Andrew was first to react, trying to calm Benjamin down quickly. "Dad, calm down. I believe Tracy doesn't really mean that."

Liam looked worried. "Dad ... "

He wanted to say more, but froze at Benjamin's anger. Instead, he turned to Tracy.

"CeeCee, don't be stubborn. Apologize to Dad. He's just angry now. If you admit you're wrong, he won't actually kick you out."

Tracy glanced at Liam.

She couldn't remember how long it had been since he last called her "CeeCee." Hearing it again felt empty inside.

Since Erin came back, she felt like she didn't have a place in the family anymore.

Benjamin still looked angry but didn't argue with Andrew or Liam. Instead, he kept his eyes on Tracy, waiting for her to soften and speak first.

If she hadn't pushed me so far, I wouldn't have said those words about kicking her out.

She's still the daughter I raised. If she shows a hint of regret, I won't hesitate to take back what I said and keep her in the house

.

But she's been spoiled too much. She needs some tough lessons.

Erin watched it all, nearly grinding her teeth in frustration.

They all say they only accept me as a daughter and sister, but they still can't let Tracy go.

Chapter 64 Sudden Change

Chapter 64 Sudden Change

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Erin pushed down her feelings and stepped out from behind Liam. “Tracy, we’re all family here. Just try to be a little softer with Dad.

“You might not be his biological daughter, but he’s always treated you like one. Faking a kidnapping to scam money—that’s just way too much. No wonder Dad’s upset.

“Just apologize to him properly. I’m sure he’ll forgive you and won’t really kick you out of the house.”

As soon as she finished, the way the Jackmans looked at Tracy changed.

If this were before, Tracy would’ve seen Erin as kind and gentle, just like the Jackmans, and would’ve believed Erin genuinely wanted her to stay.

But now, Erin’s true feelings were clear to Tracy: She was secretly hoping Tracy would leave.

A sarcastic smile pulled at Tracy’s lips. “Ms. Jackman, you act like you want me around, but every other word is about how I faked the kidnapping for money, and how much the Jackmans love you.

“If you really want me gone, you should just say it straight instead of saying things you don’t mean, making me sound like some desperate parasite clinging to the family.”

Erin’s face froze in shock.

Two years ago, *she would’ve panicked and denied everything in this situation. What changed to make her so sharp now?*

Erin quickly tried to pull back her feelings and stammered, “I didn’t mean that! I-”

“Whether you mean it or not, I don’t care. I’m not interested in staying as one of you Jackmans,” Tracy cut her off, tired of the weak defense,

She was worn out.

Wasting time here was pointless—she needed rest. She had work tomorrow.

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Chapter

64 Sudden Change

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With her face swollen and red on one side, Tracy glared coldly at the group. “I’m moving out of the Jackman Villa right away. But I have one condition.”

The three Jackman men immediately caught on.

I knew it. Tracy *is* scheming *to take things from* Erin again—there’s no way she’d *just give* up the Jackmans’ wealth.

She must be about to make *some* crazy demand *to stay!*

They lifted their chins arrogantly, waiting for her to speak so they could expose her trick and teach her a lesson.

All three had their eyes on Tracy, unaware that Erin’s expression had shifted several times.

Of course, Erin wanted Tracy gone so she could be the one true Jackman’s heiress and enjoy all the attention alone.

But she suddenly remembered something.

My goal is to take everything that used to belong to Tracy.

Even though Tracy hasn’t been around for two years, the Jackmans haven’t completely given up on her. If Tracy leaves now, it might ruin my plan ...

No one noticed the flicker of doubt in Erin’s eyes.

Tracy glanced at her but didn’t care.

Her voice stayed steady. “My only request is that Grandpa doesn’t find out I’m leaving the Jackman Villa.

“I knew you’d come up with some impossible demand... ” Liam’s proud voice cut in, but he stopped himself.

He stared blankly at her. “Wh—what did you say?”

They grew up together Tracy knew exactly what Liam wanted to say.

She shot him a mocking look. “Mr. Liam, if you want me gone, then stop pretending with fake niceties, like telling me to soften up and apologize just to

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Chapter 64 Sudden Change

stay. That’s disgusting.”

If it weren’t for Franklin, the moment she got out of the Angelic Etiquette Academy, she wouldn’t have set foot in the Jackman Villa again.

Embarrassment, shock, and anger twisted Liam’s face uncontrollably.

+5 Free Coins

Before he could say anything, Benjamin snapped angrily, “Let her go! She doesn’t know her place. Why are you still trying to convince her?”

Benjamin’s cheeks flushed red with rage as he stared at Tracy like she was an enemy. “If you walk out of the house today, don’t come crying back later!”

“Mr. Benjamin, don’t worry. That day will never come,” Tracy answered quickly, as if she was scared he’d change his mind.

Benjamin’s expression grew even darker.

Erin rushed forward, worried, patting his chest. “Dad, don’t be mad. Tracy’s just stubborn—it runs in the family, right? She’s just like you. She doesn’t really mean what she says.”

She glanced at Tracy, bit her lip, then added, “We’re family. It’s normal to argue sometimes.”

She nudged Andrew. “Andrew, Tracy didn’t sleep all night. She must be exhausted. You should take her inside; Liam and I will talk to Dad.”

Her words were clear and carefully planned, with none of the sadness or hidden meaning from before, almost as if she really wanted Tracy to stay.

There was even a hint of urgency in her tone.

Tracy frowned slightly, studying Erin closely.

She knew exactly how much Erin wanted her gone from the Jackmans. Those last few *sentences* don't *sound* like *Erin's usual way of talking*.

Nothing much happened *just now*—so *why the* sudden change in Erin's attitude?

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Chapter 65 Where Are You Going?

A sudden gut feeling told Tracy something was off.

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She already wanted to leave the Jackmans, and the more Erin tried to hold her back, the less she wanted to stay.

Her voice was low but firm. "I'm packing up now, and I'm leaving the Jackmans."

Benjamin's anger, which Erin had just calmed, flared up again. But Tracy didn't give him a chance to speak. She spun around and headed straight for her room.

She didn't care about the Jackmans' stuff, but she wasn't about *to* leave her own things behind in that awful place.

Tracy didn't have much—just some art supplies and a few cheap clothes.

Packing didn't take long, but as she opened the door, Andrew caught up to her.

Seeing that she was really leaving made Andrew, usually calm and steady, suddenly angry. "Tracy, what are you trying to do?"

But Tracy wasn't interested in arguing.

No matter what *I* do—or even when *I've done nothing*—the Jackmans always see me as the troublemaker.

So, what's the *point*?

She looked away from Andrew and walked past him like he was a stranger.

“What...”

Andrew froze and reached out to grab her, but missed her hand and knocked her bag to the floor,

Clothes and art tools spilled everywhere, sharp and cruel, stabbing at Andrew’s chest like knives.

He blurted out, “Is that all you’re taking from the Jackmans?”

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Chapter 65 Where Are You Going?

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He never imagined those cheap clothes would be what Tracy would wear one day.

Tracy pressed her lips tight. “These are my things. They have nothing to do with the Jackmans.”

She bent down to pick everything up without looking at Andrew and started to leave again.

This time, Andrew grabbed her wrist, annoyed. “What do you mean, ‘my things’?”

Does she have to say it so coldly, separating herself from us like that?

Tracy turned with a cold smile. “What, Mr. Andrew, do you think I stole from the Jackmans? Want to frisk me?”

“Tracy, that’s enough!”

Andrew finally lost his cool, yanking her wrist and roughly pushing her to the side.

With a loud noise, everything she was holding flew out, and Tracy hit the ground hard.

Andrew’s angry face froze, suddenly flickering with panic and

worry.

I didn't *even use much force—why did she fall so badly?*

He moved to help her up, but Tracy emptied the rest of her bag's contents.

"Mr. Andrew, check if anything here belongs to you Jackmans, so you don't accuse me of stealing later. I'm not sure I could handle that."

Andrew's foot halted mid-step.

Less than three feet separated them, but it felt like a huge gap yawned between them.

A heavy disappointment settled over Andrew. "Tracy, can't you be reasonable? Why do you have to make the whole family miserable and give outsiders something to laugh at?

"Do you know how much damage today's drama would do if the media got wind of it? To the company?"

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Chapter 65 Where Are You Going?

Maybe I've spoiled Tracy too much, letting her get away with bad behavior.

Maybe her fall was some twisted cry for attention.

Andrew's voice went cold.

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He clearly forgot that back when Tracy upset him, he'd only ever pinched her check and never hurt her.

Even when she screamed in pain, he worried he'd been *too* rough, not that she was acting out.

Tracy had long stopped hoping for the Jackmans, but Andrew's words still stabbed deep.

"I don't think I'm capable of making the Jackmans miserable." She chuckled bitterly.

“Mr. Andrew, don’t worry. I won’t set foot in the Jackman Villa again, and I won’t say a word about your family outside. So you don’t have to pretend to care about the Jackman name and beg me to stay.”

She didn’t look at Andrew again. Gathering her things, she pushed herself up.

Turning, she saw Walter standing there—the one who should have been at the hospital with Franklin.

Her heart skipped a beat. Instinctively, she hid her bag behind her back and glanced past Walter.

Benjamin, Liam, and Erin followed, but not the person Tracy was searching for.

Walter knew exactly who she was looking for and explained, “Mr. Franklin can’t leave the hospital, but he’s worried about you, so I came back to check on you.”

If Walter hadn’t been here today, he never would’ve guessed Tracy was about to be kicked out of the Jackmans.

For the first time, Walter felt a bitter pang of disappointment toward the Jackmans.

Even without blood ties, she’s the kid they raised—how could they *be* so heartless?

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Chapter 65 Where Are You Going?

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He looked at Tracy with kindness and encouragement in his eyes. “Ms. Tracy, be honest with me—where are you going?”

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Chapter 66 They Were Just Strangers

Chapter 66 They Were Just Strangers

Chapter 66 They Were Just Strangers.

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He had worked for the Jackmans most of his life, and no matter how much the family valued him, he never overstepped his place.

But this time, he was determined to stand up for the girl he'd watched grow up.

Tracy understood exactly what Walter meant. All her bottled-up grievances surged to the surface, making her eyes sting.

She had so much she wanted to say, but in the end, she held back.

Pulling a bag from behind her back, she said, "I'm just going out to take out the trash."

Seeing that she didn't want to talk, Walter sighed softly.

He knew Tracy stayed quiet because she didn't want to trouble him or make Franklin worry.

Such a considerate girl—how blind the Jackmans are!

Walter's gaze darkened as it swept over the Jackmans. He'd already made up his mind.

Ever since Franklin saw them teaming up against Tracy, he'd been uneasy and asked Walter *to come by* every so often.

Walter never expected that on his first visit back, they'd be trying to kick her out!

He decided on the spot to move back from the hospital to the Jackman Villa.

On his first night back, Walter learned that ever since Tracy returned, she'd been living in the housekeeper's room.

Even his patience had limits; he snapped,

Though Walter was only the Jackmans' retired butler, even Benjamin treated him with respect. Daphne, the one he confronted, was upset but didn't dare lash out.

Still, she couldn't help defending herself. "It wasn't on purpose. Tracy just

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Chapter 66 They Were Just Strangers

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happened to come back during Erin's graduation, and I was so busy I forgot.

She gave Tracy a reproachful look. "Why didn't you remind me? It's just a room change. You could have told the housekeepers to do it. Did I have to do it myself?"

Tracy stayed quiet, her lowered lashes hiding the sarcasm in her eyes.

In the past, Daphne loved to personally handle anything related to her. When she came back from trips, she'd even make Tracy's bed herself, smoothing out every wrinkle.

But now she seemed to have forgotten, or rather, her attention and care had shifted to Erin.

Tracy didn't argue, but Walter snapped. "So, are you saying this is Ms. Tracy's fault?"

His voice was low but laced with anger. "No matter how busy you were with the graduation, you could've told a housekeeper. Do you think they'd dare refuse?"

"Even if you forgot, did the rest of the family forget too? If anyone had cared even a little, the housekeepers would've prepared a room or at least brought it up."

It was such a simple logic, and Walter understood it instantly. Yet since Tracy's return, not one of the Jackmans had thought of it.

The stream of questions left the Jackman family speechless

For the first time since Tracy's return, they felt a sense of guilt and concern for her.

Unfortunately, Tracy didn't care.

Walter was angry, but as an outsider, he knew he'd already said more than he should have.

Feeling sorry for her, he personally arranged a room for her and even bought her a lot of new clothes with his own money.

In the past, Tracy would immediately buy any new item from her favorite brands.

But over the last two months, he had seen with his own eyes that she only had a few cheap outfits to wear.

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Chapter 66 They Were Just Strangers

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If not for realizing she didn't want to talk about it, he and Franklin would've asked long ago.

If the Jackmans wouldn't spend a dime on her, he would.

Tracy didn't turn down Walter's kindness. She may not have needed the clothes, but she knew that refusing would only make him worried and sad.

Because of Walter, she ended up staying at Jackman Villa. As for the kidnapping, she and the Jackmans silently agreed never to bring it up again.

Walter moved her into a bigger and better furnished room, but it only made Tracy feel less safe. Still, she accepted his good intentions.

The next morning, though, she was almost late for work from a poor night's sleep.

When the workday ended, she didn't head straight back to the Jackman Villa. She went to the supermarket and went to the place she had just rented.

She picked up only basic household items.

She might not have managed to move out this time, but she would eventually, and this place would be her real home.

On her way back, Tracy pictured the room waiting for her—dark, filthy, and run- down.

When she had rescued Ronald, his suit had been stained with blood and ripped, yet she could tell at a glance the fabric was far from ordinary.

Even Andrew's wardrobe didn't have many suits that could match that quality,

A man like that would never live in a rental house that was even more shabby and dilapidated than a basement,

They were just strangers who met because of a crisis. After the crisis was over, they should have parted ways.

Yet when Tracy opened the door to the apartment, what she saw was nothing like she'd expected.

The dim, yellow light was replaced with a bright bulb. The dirty room was clean.

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Chapter 66 They Were Just Strangers

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All the broken furniture was gone, and the entire place, though not fancy, was clean and tidy.

Chapter 67 Post Online?

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A light green tablecloth covered the old wooden table, which was set with several steaming dishes, giving the room a cozy, warm feel.

Tracy was still in a daze when Ronald, wearing a gray-blue apron, came out of the kitchen carrying two plates of food.

He smiled brightly when he saw her. "Hey, you're back. Go wash your hands and come eat. Try my cooking."

His sweet smile, with his dimples, made Tracy feel a little stunned. "You ... "

She wanted to ask him why he hadn't left, but the words wouldn't come out.

Half dazed, Tracy let Ronald guide her to the dining table.

The food Ronald made wasn't fancy, but it looked, smelled, and tasted delicious. They seemed to have more flavor than the food the chefs at the Jackman Villa prepared.

"Wow, I didn't know you were such a good cook," she said, genuinely impressed.

Ronald was delighted by the compliment. "I cook for myself all the time. Just got better with practice."

She didn't press him on why he cooked for himself. She just looked at the dishes on the table. "Why are there only vegetables?"

Ronald looked somewhat helpless. "CeeCee, you only left me 200. After buying medicine and essentials, I couldn't afford meat."

He sounded a little sad as he spoke,

Tracy was taken aback.

She suddenly got up, took a box of meat from her bag, and said, "These are leftovers from the store where I work. They're clean. Do you want them?"

Ronald's eyes widened, and he smiled brightly. "Meat! Of course I want it!"

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The meat was already cooked, so Ronald quickly heated them up and put them on the table.

He was the first to pick up a piece and place it on Tracy's plate. "You eat first."

This meal was slow, but it was the most peaceful one Tracy had had in two years.

However, her stomach was still sensitive from her time at the Angelic Etiquette Academy, so she couldn't eat too much.

After the meal, she started unpacking.

Besides daily essentials, she'd bought two sets of bedsheets, but she couldn't afford a comforter.

Ronald, who had only 200 dollars, managed to buy two old comforters.

"The ladies in the neighborhood sold these to me. They're old, but they're clean," Ronald said.

He sounded a little proud as he talked about buying the quilts. "They thought I was a poor college student from the countryside and took pity on me, so they took extra care of me!"

That little look on his face somehow lifted Tracy's mood.

She unpacked everything she'd brought, including a set of painting tools and a painting she'd taken from the Jackman villa.

The painting was inspired by a conversation she had with Phoebe.

The painting showed green bamboo bent under a heavy layer of snow. The cool, elegant colors were beautiful, but the painting gave off a heavy, oppressive feeling.

This wasn't Tracy's old style, but she couldn't get back to her old style.

"You painted this?" Ronald's surprised voice suddenly made her jump.

He took the painting from her and looked at it closely. "It's oppressed yet resilient, contradictory yet straightforward. With a talent like this, you could have your own exhibition!"

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10:47 **Thu, 4**

Chapter 67 Post Online?

Tracy was surprised by his straightforward praise.

Exhibition?

Her biggest dream used to be to have her own exhibition.

But later, her only dream was to stay alive.

Tracy pursed her lips. "Even famous painters can't always get their own exhibitions. I just paint for fun."

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+5 Free Coins

She reached to take the painting back, but Ronald dodged, still holding it. "If this is just for fun, you must be a genius!"

The praise was so direct and genuine that it made Tracy's heart skip a beat.

She had almost forgotten what it felt like to be appreciated and complimented.

Ronald caught the brief moment of sadness in her expression.

After thinking for a moment, he said, "CeeCee, if you want to have an art exhibition, let's start by building your reputation."

He held the painting up in front of her. "Starting with this one, you can post all your work online. Over time, you'll attract people who can appreciate your art."

Tracy blinked. "Post online? You mean hire the media to promote it?"

She couldn't even afford a decent house, let alone pay for publicity.

Her words took Ronald by surprise. "No, I mean short videos. You've never used them?"

Tracy still looked puzzled.

She knew what a short video was, but it was a new trend back then, and she never used them.

And during her two years at the Angelic Etiquette Academy, she'd had no contact with the outside world at all.

Ronald was also confused.

10:47 Thu, 4 Sept

Chapter 67 Post Online?

Anyone who knows how to use a phone, even if they live in the middle of nowhere, knows about short videos. Why did she seem to know nothing?

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Ronald looked at Tracy with a puzzled expression for a moment before he began to explain. "A lot of people are using short videos to share their lives and live

stream ...

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Ronald had lost all his belongings when he was kidnapped, so he downloaded a video streaming app on Tracy's phone.

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Chapter 68 I'm Not a Freeloader

Chapter 68 I'm Not a Freeloader

Chapter 68 I'm Not a Freeloader

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He registered the account and named it "T." For the profile picture, he took a quick shot that caught his shoulder, carlobe, and half of his neck.

As he explained everything to Tracy, he also took a picture of her painting of snow on bamboo, made a quick video, and uploaded it.

Tracy had never seen anything like it before and was so fascinated that two hours flew by.

She finally snapped out of it when she saw it was dark and remembered she had to get back to the Jackman Villa.

She knew she had to get back early, since Walter was moving back because of her.

Before leaving, she changed Ronald's bandages.

With injuries that bad, most people would've been stuck in bed, but he still went out to buy groceries, cooked, and even kept the place spotless.

Just how used to pain was he to manage all that?

While Tracy was tending to his wounds, Ronald took her phone and adjusted the newly registered account.

Then a notification suddenly popped up at the top of the screen. Without thinking, Ronald tapped it.

The moment the message opened, he froze.

He turned to Tracy, who was still tending to his injury. "CeeCee..."

Tracy looked up and saw what was on the phone screen.

Her eyes flickered, and she held up her hand, which was covered in medicine and blood. "Can you open that for me?"

Ronald paused, his smile widening.

He tapped the voice message, and a man's voice came through. "Tracy, the third of

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Chapter 68 I'm Not a Freeloader

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next month is my dad's birthday. You've always wanted to meet my parents, right? I want to introduce you to them then. Will you give me that chance? I have something very important to tell you at that time."

The gentle voice and ambiguous words seemed to be a deliberate hint.

Ronald's smile suddenly became stiff, and a dark flicker passed through his clear eyes.

Tracy didn't notice, lost in thought as she looked at Chris's message.

She had brought up wanting to meet Albert and Felicia several times before, but Chris always made an excuse. Now he was the one bringing it up.

Chances were, this birthday party was no simple invitation.

She knew that, but she had to see Albert and Felicia!

“Help me reply. Tell him I’ll be there.”

After saying that, she went back to applying the medicine as if it wasn’t a big deal.

Ronald replied as she told him to and then saw that the only contact in her messages was the “Chris” who had just messaged her.

He looked at Tracy curiously. “Who is this Chris?”

Tracy didn’t stop what she was doing. She answered nonchalantly, “He’s the only son of the Woodwards. A rich guy.”

Ronald had never heard of the Woodwards from Cloudville, but he could tell from the man’s greasy message that he wasn’t a good person.

Ronald frowned, “He doesn’t sound like a good guy. You should be careful not to let him fool you, CeeCee,”

Tracy laughed at that. “He’s way richer than me. Couldn’t I be the one fooling him?”

“No way.” Ronald shook his head without hesitation. “You’re not that kind of person.”

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10:48 **Thu, 4 Sept**

Chapter 68 I’m Not a Freeloader

Tracy stopped applying the medicine.

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She looked into his clear eyes. “You’ve never met Chris, and we’ve only known each other for two days. Why do you trust me so much?”

Ronald's eyes were full of sincerity. "Because I'm not blind. I don't just see with my eyes; I also see with my heart."

Tracy couldn't be sure if he was being truthful, but she couldn't deny that she was touched by his words.

When everyone learned she was close to Chris, they all thought she was a gold digger trying to get in with the Woodwards. Even Andrew, whom she'd known her whole life, thought the same.

But Ronald, a person she'd only known for two days, believed in her without hesitation.

Tracy looked down and blinked away the tears in her eyes.

"You think too highly of me. Maybe I really am a gold digger."

She told herself that being a gold digger was better than desperately wanting a family's love that didn't exist.

Catching the chill in her tone, Ronald wisely dropped the subject.

Even though he tried to hide it, his wounds had begun to reopen.

Tracy frowned as she finished applying the medicine. "Don't move around until your wounds are healed. I'll clean the place when I get home from work."

Ronald laughed at her words.

Tilting his head, he looked at her with bright eyes. "Does that mean you want to support me, CeeCee?"

His

eyes were clear and innocent, a complete contrast to his battered body.

Tracy met his gaze, finding nothing else hidden in those eyes.

After a long pause, she said, "I can't even support myself, so how could I have

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10:48 Thu, 4 Sept.

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Chapter 68 I'm Not a Freeloader

enough money to support a freeloader?"

Ronald blinked and said firmly, "I'm not a freeloader. I can cook, clean the house, and do laundry. I don't eat much, I work hard, and I can earn money. Why don't you think about it again, CeeCee?"

Tracy looked down and started cleaning up the used medicine. "If you're so capable, then get better quickly and don't be a burden to me."

Chapter 69 Albert's Birthday Party

Her tone was cold, like she couldn't wait to cut ties with Ronald.

But when she left, she still secretly left him a few hundred dollars.

Ronald looked at the crumpled bills and chuckled softly.

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She was so good to him. He had to make money fast so he wouldn't be a burden to her!

Although Walter had moved back to Jackman Villa, he still spent every day at the hospital taking care of Franklin. Tracy was busy working long hours, so they didn't see each other much.

Still, with Walter around, no one at Jackman Villa dared to openly show their dislike for Tracy, which made her life a lot easier.

Soon, it was the day of Albert's birthday party.

With Walter's help, Tracy put on an understated gown that covered her arms and legs. She took the invitation that Chris had given her and went to the party.

Guests at a high-society party are only allowed in after their invitations have been verified.

Tracy was waiting for the security guard to check her invitation when Winona saw her from inside.

“Mr. Woodward, your leading lady is here,” she said excitedly, patting Chris’s arm.
“Make sure you seize the moment. Everyone’s waiting for the show.”

Chris smirked and raised an eyebrow. “Do not worry. I have been acting for so long, and tonight is the climax. I will not mess it up.”

After exchanging a glance with Winona, he put on a joyful expression and went to meet Tracy. “Tracy, you’re finally here. I’ve been waiting for so long.

“Today is my dad’s birthday, but in my heart, you’re the star of the show. You ... you

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Chapter 69 Albert’s Birthday Party

know what I mean, right?”

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He stared at her with a suggestive look, and his words were full of hints.

Tracy lowered her head slightly, which made her look shy to anyone watching.

But in that brief moment, she quickly glanced in the direction Chris had just come from.

“I know.” Her voice was flat. “I want to meet your parents first.”

Chris frowned for a second before smoothing it over. “Come with me somewhere first. If you agree then of course I’ll take you to meet them.”

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His tone still carried that same suggestive hint, but Tracy looked him straight in the eye. “I want to meet your parents first.”

Her stubborn refusal made a trace of annoyance stir in him.

Before he could snap, Tracy went on, “I lived with the Jackmans for 20 years, and they still abandoned me. So unless I’m sure, I can’t just trust your promises.

“If the way I am now is something you can’t accept, then just pretend I was never here tonight.”

Her tone was distant, as if she were about to end their relationship.

The act was reaching its climax, so of course, Chris couldn't let her leave. He had to agree.

Luckily, the party hadn't started yet, and his parents were in on the plan, so it would be easy for them to play along,

Chris walked in full of confidence, not realizing the person at his side had her own agenda.

The only reason Tracy tolerated his approach, and even showed up tonight, was to meet Albert and Felicia.

This was her first time seeing them in person, and they turned out just as she'd been told—warm and friendly on the surface, but selfish and arrogant underneath.

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10:49 Thu, 4 Sept.

Chapter 69 Albert's Birthday Party

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After Chris introduced her, Albert didn't even glance at her. He simply stood up and walked out, as if deliberately trying to embarrass her.

Felicia stepped forward with a loving smile. "He just gets nervous and likes to be alone. Don't worry about it, Tracy."

She took Tracy's hand warmly. "Such a beautiful girl. Chris is so lucky to have met you!"

Tracy didn't like her touching her and pulled her hand away. "Do you know how we met?"

Felicia glanced at Chris, her eyes full of questions.

But she quickly put on her gentle smile again. "I heard from Chris that he helped you, and that's how you two got the chance to know each other—"

"Mr. Woodward did help me, but that's not why we stayed in touch," Tracy suddenly said, cutting off Felicia's small talk.

Her tone was serious and oddly insistent. "I agreed to get to know Mr. Woodward because he looks a lot like a friend of mine."

Chris, who had been standing there with a gentle smile, felt his heart skip a beat.

He suddenly remembered the name Tracy had blurted out when he pulled her from the pool.

Tracy kept her gaze fixed on Felicia, articulating each word clearly. "The friend I know is called Der-"

"Mom, the party's starting *soon*. Why don't you go help Dad greet the guests?" Chris cut her off.

He strode over, yanked Tracy up from the couch, and dragged her away. He didn't care that her leg hit the table corner or how hard he was gripping her.

Tracy's face turned pale, but she ignored the pain and looked back at Felicia.

Felicia also stood up from the couch, folded her hands, and smiled, looking elegant and gentle.

10:49 **Thu, 4 Sept**

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r 70 They Knew and Let It Happen

Chapter 70 They Knew and Let It Happen

When Tracy met Felicia's gaze, it was cold and sinister.

+5 Free Coins

In that instant, Tracy knew that Felicia had heard the name she hadn't had a chance to fully say.

Chris dragged her out of the hall and shoved her into a guest lounge.

His usual gentle and gentlemanly demeanor was completely gone, replaced by a dark, grim face.

Braced for it, Tracy stumbled a couple of steps before steadying herself and meeting his glare without flinching.

Chris spoke through gritted teeth, "How do you know Derek?"

With the façade gone, Tracy saw no point in pretending. “Mr. Woodward, you don’t know how I met him?”

She smirked mockingly. “Didn’t you send him to that place yourself?”

Chris’s face turned ghostly pale, and his angry demeanor suddenly faltered.

“You ...” He choked on his words. “Did he send you here?”

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Tracy stayed silent, just looking at his face without any emotion.

She didn’t understand Chris’s reaction.

Is it fear?

Guilt?

Or regret?

It felt like forever before Chris finally spoke. “What were you trying to tell my mother? Did he tell you to pass on some kind of message?”

Tracy shook her head. “He did, but it wasn’t for Felicia. It was for you.”

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Chapter 70 They Knew and Let It Happen

Chris’s eyes flickered. “What is it?”

“Before I pass on his words, answer me one question first.”

Tracy took a step closer to him, her gaze becoming intense. “You took over his identity, so why do you still go by the name Chris?”

Chris looked up abruptly, meeting her eyes, which seemed to be looking right through him.

He wasn't a fool and quickly figured out what had happened. "He told you everything?"

Tracy nodded, not denying it.

Derek and Chris were identical twins.

Before they were ten, they were both Albert's illegitimate children.

The older brother, Derek, was smart and a fast learner. He was kind, gentle, and good at making friends.

The younger brother, Chris, was shy and quiet and had a congenital heart condition.

The Woodward's business was built by both Albert and Felicia, so a divorce would be bad for both of them. And Felicia couldn't bear children.

So Felicia took Derek and Chris from their biological mother and sent them abroad to be trained in secret. She told everyone that her children were sick and were getting treatment abroad.

But the Woodward's would only have one heir.

The more capable Derek was the obvious choice.

So on their first day back from abroad, Chris drugged Derek, secretly sent him to Angelic Etiquette Academy, and took his place as the "Woodward's only son."

That was the story Derek told Tracy.

But if Chris had really taken his brother's identity, he should have introduced

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Chapter 70 They Knew and Let It Happen

himself as "Derek."

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That's why Tracy knew something was wrong the first time he introduced himself.

She wanted to see Albert and Felicia for two reasons. First, to expose what Chris had done to his own brother.

Second, she wanted to ask them on behalf of Derek about their role in the whole "taking his identity but not his name" thing.

As Chris looked at Tracy's eyes, which were so desperate for an answer, he felt like he was seeing his own reflection.

He must've *wanted to know the answer just as badly*.

Chris suddenly laughed. "Haven't you always been the smart one? Mom and Dad knew we were twins, but they let me keep my own name when I took your place. Can't you figure out why?"

He was looking at Tracy, but it seemed like he was speaking to someone else through her.

Tracy's eyes darkened—she got exactly what he meant.

Thinking back to the look Felicia had given her earlier, Tracy could tell Felicia knew what she was going to ask, yet didn't want her to say it out loud.

Because Felicia had not only silently agreed to it, she might've helped make it happen.

Chris was still smiling, but it was a cold smile, with a trace of madness.

He looked as if he was seeing his twin brother, who had always loomed over him like a dark cloud, standing before him.

"All our lives, you've been the better one, the one people liked more. And me? With this damn heart condition, I didn't even have a friend.

"We came from the same womb, with the same face, so why did you always have to be better than me in everything?

"So what if you're so great? No outsiders know you exist. I'm the Woodward's heir

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Chapter 70 They Knew and Let It Happen

now, and I'm the one everyone likes!"

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After his outburst, Chris's eyes began to clear, but his smile was still arrogant and unhinged.

"Tracy, do you think telling my mom will save Derek? Here's the truth—before I even made my move, my parents already knew what I was going to do to him, and they let it happen."

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