

The Unwanted Daughter: When Love Comes Too Late

Chapter 9 Mrs Jackman, You're Overthinking

Andrew's smile disappeared, and his voice turned cold. "Tracy, you're not a kid anymore. I'm not gonna keep falling for your little games, saying no just so we'll offer more."

Tracy almost laughed out loud.

Saying no to get more?

Before Erin came back, anything nice they got went straight to Tracy. She even kept the packaging like it was something special.

But once Erin showed up, suddenly Tracy was "taking too much." Suddenly, none of it was really hers.

So, she learned to stop asking.

But even not asking became an issue. Then she was "manipulative," "ungrateful," and "gross."

She remembered once just wanting some college prep books. Their answer was simply, "I don't hear about the others needing those. Are you trying to act better than everyone?"

"The Jackmans don't owe you anything. We took care of you for 18 years. If you want something, go earn it."

She never asked them for anything again.

Tracy turned toward the window, saying nothing. Something about it hit Andrew hard.

She used to follow him around, calling his name in a sweet, clingy way. Now? It was like they were strangers.

To him, she was still mad about being sent away. Her silence and attitude were all payback.

The more distant she acted, the more he felt she needed to be put back in line.

So he said nothing else.

When they got back home, Andrew got out first. He didn't wait or look back.

Tracy followed quietly, like nothing had happened.

As soon as they walked in, Daphne and Erin were right there, dressed up and clearly headed out.

Their smiles dropped a little when they saw Tracy.

Daphne asked casually, but with a clear edge, “Your grandpa didn’t say anything, did he?”

Andrew caught what she really meant. He shook his head.

Daphne let out a breath, and her voice even softened a bit. “You’ve really matured, Tracy.”

Andrew raised an eyebrow but didn’t argue.

He figured there was no need to ruin the vibe, so he let it go and didn’t “expose” Tracy.

He changed the subject. “So, where are you two going?”

Daphne smiled brightly. “Erin’s graduation is coming up. I wanted to help her find the perfect dress.”

She gestured at a bunch of dresses laid out in the living room. “I had a few brought in, but none of them feel quite right. So we’re heading out to shop together.”

Erin leaned into her with a glowing smile. “I told Mom it’s not a big deal. I’m not used to dressing up, but she insisted.”

Andrew looked at her like she was the best thing in the world. Gone was that cold tone he’d used with Tracy. “Well, you’d better get used to it,” he said, grinning. “You’re a Jackman now. You deserve the best.”

Erin playfully tugged his sleeve. “You spoil me! I’m really lucky to have you guys.”

The three of them stood there in their happy little bubble, blocking the doorway. Tracy stood quietly at the side, like a ghost.

She knew better now than to try to squeeze into that kind of warmth. She’d learned the hard way.

Still, Erin turned and gave her a bright smile. “Oh, you’re back? Mom and I are going shopping. Wanna come?”

Before Tracy could say no, Daphne added, “Come along. It’s been so long since we all went out together.”

Tracy didn’t want to be part of their fake friendliness.

But Erin had already grabbed her arm and was pulling her along before she could say a word.

Tracy froze. She wanted to pull away. But she didn’t dare.

She remembered what happened the last time. Just one tiny pull to break free, and Erin would “fall” right in front of someone from the family.

Then came the pitying looks and accusations. They'd say how mean she was and say that she pushed poor Erin. They'd punish her and rough her up, all while pretending to be fair.

Worst time? They said she pushed Erin down the stairs, so they tied her up and shipped her off to the Angelic Etiquette Academy.

So now, she didn't fight. She let herself get dragged along.

In the car, Daphne and Erin talked and laughed like the perfect mother-daughter pair.

Tracy sat in silence, her old hoodie and quiet presence making her stick out like she didn't belong.

Daphne glanced back at her and gave her a weird mix of sympathy and pride.

Tracy had definitely changed. She was quieter and more obedient. And part of Daphne was glad.

Would she have turned out this way without going through tough times? We made the right decision!

your birth mom, but you're still my good girl.

"Erin's been through a lot too. As long as you two don't fight, I'll treat you both the same."

I've raised Tracy for 18 years. I can't just give up on her.

But she was always jealous and picking fights. So I had to toughen up.

Tracy looked down. Her face was calm, without a twitch.

Treat us both the same?

She remembered those words clearly. She had heard them on her 18th birthday.

She believed them, too. And look where that got her. Every time, they backed Erin. Every time, she had to say sorry for things she didn't do. All under the excuse of "we're just looking out for you."

Now, she was done falling for it. She pulled her hand away slowly. "Mrs. Jackman, you're overthinking. I can never compare to Ms. Jackman.

"I used to be confused. I thought I had the right to try because you raised me. But I know better now."

That place had broken all her old ideas. She finally saw things clearly-blood always came first.

She needed them to hear her stand up and get off her back. She wanted them to know that not everything she did was because she was jealous of Erin.

Daphne didn't respond right away. Her chest tightened.

It felt like something important was slipping away, something she didn't even realize she'd been holding onto until just now.

"T-Tracy, what do you mean by that?"