

The Breaking Point of Love

C 271

Beck had barely ended the call when Shanice came running with a light wand in her hand. “Uncle Beck, can I call Jo on video?”

After a quick pause, Beck nodded. “Sure.”

The call went through, and Jordyn picked up almost instantly.

The moment the call connected, Shanice beamed. “Jo, look have a light wand!”

Worried that Jordyn couldn’t see it clearly, Shanice passed the phone to Beck and ran a few steps away to show the whole thing.

They were in their garden, and it was dimly lit. Hence, the light wand stood out even more.

Jordyn was still taking it in when Shanice ran back, grinning. “I got this as an Ember Festival gift! Isn’t it cute?”

There were many things from two or three years ago that Jordyn could no longer remember.

But seeing Shanice with the light wand triggered a few fleeting memories.

“Yeah, it’s cute,” she said. “I think I used to have one too.”

‘Really? Don’t you have a light wand now?’

Jordyn shook her head. Watching Shanice run around with the light wand actually looked fun.

Shaking her head again, she blurted out, “I’m going to ask my dad to get me one! Don’t hang up—we’ll talk in a bit”

Before Shanice could reply, Jordyn dashed upstairs with her phone.

A day before the Ember Festival, a small part of the Flemings’ extended relatives would be at the Fleming Manor to celebrate the Ember Festival.

And now, Trevor was busy mingling with others.

When he saw her running over, Trevor excused himself and carried Jordyn a little further away. “What’s wrong?” he asked.

“Shanice got a light wand as a gift. I want one too.”

“A light **wand**?”

“Not **those** I have in my room.”

With that, Jordyn held up her phone. “Shanice, show my dad your light **wand**.”

“Oh...”

Shanice took a few steps back, **revealing** the whole thing.

After Trevor examined it, he thanked Shanice, “Okay, I got it. **Thank** you, Shanice.”

“You’re welcome.”

Trevor then asked Beck, who **was** still holding the phone, “Got any plans later?” Beck hesitated briefly. “Might go for the countdown. You?”

“I’ll be heading out, too,” Trevor said.

Beck wasn’t surprised.

After all, given the significance of the night, there was no way Trevor wouldn’t go find Wynn.

Beck didn’t press further and changed the subject. “Were you tied up earlier?”

“Yeah, I **was** still entertaining guests,” Trevor answered.

Beck understood.

Being the head of the Flemings, the Ember Festival was never an easy time for him.

“I’ll let you ge

“I’ll let you get back to it, then.”

“Alright.”

Before handing the phone back to Jordyn, Trevor smiled. “Enjoy the Ember Festival.”

“You too.”

Trevor returned the phone to Jordyn. “You two chat; I’ll have someone buy a light **wand** for you.

“Okay!” Jordyn replied happily.

Then, Trevor walked away,

Beck, too, gave the phone to Shanice so she could chat with Jordyn.

When they had talked about their plans earlier, he hadn’t asked where Trevor was going, just as Trevor hadn’t invited him to tag along.

That alone made it clear—Trevor didn't want any company tonight.

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Chapter 272

After setting off the fireworks, Celeste and Jamie bid farewell to the family elders and headed out.

Their destination was the Baumond Broadcast Tower, one the best places to take in the city's nightscape.

The night before the Ember Festival, it would also feature stunning light show and other festivities.

As they arrived at the broadcast tower, a crowd had already gathered.

The air buzzed with laughter and excitement.

The light show hadn't started **yet**.

Hector and a few of his classmates had made plans to celebrate the Ember Festival at the tower.

Not long after they arrived, he found his friends and joined them.

When they saw Celeste and Jamie, Hector's classmates politely greeted them. But soon, they couldn't help sneaking glances at Celeste and whispering to Hector, "Your cousin is beautiful—like, really beautiful!"

Hector grinned. "Obviously!"

The group was swept up in the festive energy. They goofed around, taking photos and recording videos.

Celeste and Jamie stayed back, letting them enjoy themselves.

Just then, Celeste's phone buzzed.

It was a text from Beck. "Will you be at the broadcast tower for the light show tonight?"

Celeste was a little confused. Still, she replied, "I'm already here. Why?"

Beck responded almost right away, "**Shanice**

and I **are** on our way as well.”

Upon reading the text, Celeste paused for a second. “I see.”

What a coincidence.

Beck left the conversation at that.

Not long after, the light show started.

Celeste watched in awe, completely absorbed—until a familiar voice rang out. “Ms. Celeste!”

She turned and, sure enough, spotted Beck and Shanice.

The moment Shanice saw her looking, she beamed with excitement, stretching out her arms.

Celeste pulled Jamie along as they wove through the crowd toward Shanice and Beck. When they reached them, she scooped Shanice into her arms.

Shanice wrapped her arms around Celeste’s neck, eyes glued to the light show, shrieking in delight. “Ms. Celeste, Jook!”

Celeste chuckled. “I see it.”

The festive energy was contagious, and she found herself smiling the entire time.

Beck watched her, then, worried she might get tired from holding Shanice for **too** long, gently took the little girl back. “Where’s Hector? Didn’t he come with you?”

“He did, he’s over there.”

Celeste gestured toward Hector and his group, who hadn’t wandered far

Just **as** she was about to turn away, she caught sight of three familiar figures.

Her smile disappeared.

It was Harvey, Lilian, and Calvin

She wasn’t sure what they were saying, but Harvey tousled Calvin’s hair with a warm, affectionate gesture. The three of them stood close, looking every bit like a happy, loving family

Celeste’s expression changed in an instant.

And Beck noticed it immediately.

He followed Celeste's gaze and noticed Harvey and the others.

Before he could look away, Calvin spotted them too.

Seeing familiar faces on a festive night like this, Calvin lit up with excitement. He waved eagerly and called out, Beck!"

At his voice, Harvey and Lilian turned.

Their expressions warmed when they saw Beck.

But as soon as their eyes **landed** on Celeste, the warmth drained from their expressions.

Especially Lilian.

Her brows knitted almost right **away** upon seeing Celeste standing beside Beck.

Since they had already run into each other, it would be rude to ignore them completely.

Beck hesitated for a moment and turned to Celeste. "I'll go say hello."

Celeste's response was flat. "Go ahead."

Beck gave her another glance before carrying Shanice toward them.

Jamie had noticed the shift in Celeste's demeanor as well.

She wasn't entirely sure what had happened to Celeste in the past, and Harvey **was** little more than a vague figure. in her memory.

However, the way Celeste's expression cooled in an instant Jamie's sharp intuition told her exactly who **Harvey** and Lilian were.

A

pang clenched in her chest. Jamie grasped Celeste's hand and asked, "Maybe we should go?"

Celeste didn't want to ruin their Ember Festival.

Thus, she shook her head. "I'm fine."

Her mood shift had nothing to do with lingering feelings for Harvey.

It was just... Seeing him with Lilian brought back thoughts of her mother.

Especially tonight.

+25 BONUT

Why did they get to enjoy Ember Festival together happily while her mother-

Oh, right. Not just the three of them. They were a family of four.

Wynn was probably off on a date with Trevor,

They had destroyed her mother's life, yet their family of four kept thriving. What a cruel joke.

Jamie squeezed Celeste's hand but said nothing.

She had known their family wasn't like others.

For them, holidays weren't a time of celebration—they were a time of grief.

Visiting Isabelle was painful; so was not visiting.

Every trip to the nursing home forced them to relive the past in excruciating detail, leaving them restless.

Moving on was painful, and so was refusing to move on.

Their family had been scraping by—not great, not awful, just surviving.

But then Wynn came back out of nowhere and took Trevor away from Celeste. And now, to top it all off, her entire family had relocated to Baumond. It just made their lives even harder.

Noticing Celeste and Jamie's expression shift, Hector excused himself from his friends and headed over.

He wasn't sure what was going on. "What's wrong, Celeste?"

Before Celeste could reply, Jamie shot a look toward Harvey's group and said, "The ones talking to Beck are the Lockets,"

Hector instantly got the message, his lips pressing into a firm line.

Meanwhile....

Beck had just finished exchanging pleasantries with Harvey and the others.

When he turned back, he saw that Celeste and the others were gone.

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The Rodriguez family didn't have a tradition of staying up late for the Ember Festival. By the time Celeste and the others got home, Betty was already asleep,

When Celeste went **upstairs**, the clock struck midnight.

Her phone had been vibrating nonstop.

Matthias, Beck, and several colleagues from YodaVision had sent her Ember Festival greetings, including Theodore and Harold.

She replied to each of them, including Beck, before sending greetings of her own to Zachary and Lottle.

Just then, Theodore sent another message, asking if she had time in the next few days. He mentioned that he'd been too busy with work to properly **thank** her last time, and now that he had a break, he wanted to take her out for a meal.

After finishing her chat with Theodore, Celeste set down her phone and went to take a shower.

Whether they visited or not, seeing Isabelle was always painful for the Rodriguez family.

But on a day like this, how could they truly not go?

Every year, on the morning of Ember Festival's first day, Celeste and Betty would prepare a feast, pack it up, and take it to the nursing home.

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This year was no different.

Hence

, on the first morning of the Ember Festival, Celeste was up early.

Betty, Ivan, and Adeline were already awake when she came downstairs.

Seeing her, Betty and Adeline both handed her a gift box.

Betty gently cupped Celeste's face and said warmly, "May everything go smoothly for you this year, Cel."

"Thank you, Granny."

After breakfast, Celeste and Adeline headed into the kitchen to prepare the ingredients.

Both Betty and Ivan were skilled cooks, but when it came to making food for Isabelle, they could **only** assist because Isabelle could always tell who made the food, and it would trigger an emotional episode.

So, for years, **this** had always been Adeline's task.

Over time, as Celeste learned to **cook**, she and Adeline began splitting the work

In truth, she had wanted to learn how to cook ever since she was a child—for Isabelle's sake.

But Betty wouldn't allow it.

Betty believed Celeste was too young. If she learned to **cook** at an early age because of Isabelle, it would mean taking on that weight far too soon.

Celeste's childhood had already been difficult enough. Betty wanted her to have as much happiness as **possible** without being constantly tied to the past.

Two hours later, a table full of dishes was **ready**.

#25 NONUS

Chapter 2/3

Jamie and Hector helped pack everything up.

With the **Ember** Festival gifts in hand, the six of them **made** their way to the nursing home.

They had also prepared small gifts for the doctors and nurses who looked after Isabelle.

Isabelle was still as frail as ever, her eyes vacant.

Celeste, Betty, and the others stood where Isabelle couldn't see them, watching as she showed no reaction to the gifts the doctors had brought on their behalf.

The nurse placed the gift box prepared by Betty in Isabelle's hands, but she barely seemed to notice it. After glancing at it briefly, she let it fall to the floor as if it meant nothing to her.

She had little appetite, Even with a feast laid out in front of her, **she** showed no interest. Only when the nurse placed a **few** bites in her bowl did she eat.

Before she had even sampled every dish, she lost interest and withdrew into her own world once more.

Seeing **this**, the nurse sighed and cleared the table.

Celeste's eyes stung, but she held it in, not wanting to dampen the mood for others.

But really, they all felt it.

After spending half an hour there, they left.

#79 BONUT

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It was already close to noon when they **left**.

Going home to cook didn't feel right. None of them were really in the mood.

In fact, they didn't have much appetite for lunch at all.

But they still had to eat.

Celeste then suggested, "Let's cat out.

Betty nodded. "Okay, whatever you decide, Cel."

After parking, Celeste and Ivan had barely stepped out of the car when they spotted the Lockets and Shaws.

It seemed they had come to the same restaurant.

As they arrived, someone recognized Wynn and Harvey, wannly greeting them and inviting them to join their table.

The Lockets and Shaws also noticed the Rodriguezs.

Patricia let out a scoff, looking at them disdainfully.

Lilian barely gave them a **glance** before looking away.

Wynn didn't even bother—she acted as if they weren't there at all.

Just then, the restaurant manager hurried out, addressing Wynn with a polite smile. “Ms. Locket, Mr. Fleming’s preferred private lounge has been prepared for you. Please, this way.”

Wynn gave a small nod, not even glancing at Celeste and her family. Instead, she turned to Cassian, the man who had just invited them to dine together. “Apologies, Mr. Vale but this is a private family gathering. Let’s arrange something another time.”

Cassian, sensing the **clear**

rejection, quickly nodded. “Of course, of course. I wouldn’t dream of intruding on your family dinner.”

Without another word, Wynn followed the restaurant manager inside.

Celeste hadn’t expected to run into them here.

She looped her arm through Betty’s, hesitating a little. Reassuringly, Betty patted her hand. “It’s fine. Just go on

“Alright,” Celeste said.

As **soon** as they stepped inside, a well-dressed host approached with an apologetic smile. “I’m so sorry, but we’re fully booked for the afternoon. Unfortunately, we don’t have any available tables at the moment.”

Celeste had been here plenty of **times** before.

A full **house**? Practically unheard of.

This was definitely the Lockets and Shaws’ doing.

She clenched her jaw.

Celeste wasn’t the only one who realized it. Ivan and Betty had caught on as well.

426 BONUS

“Ms. Rodriguez?”

Upon hearing her name, she turned around, only to see Caleb.

“Hello, Mr. Jennings,” **she** greeted him.

Caleb’s gaze flicked to the host, who was starting to look uneasy. He then turned to Celeste. “What happened? Why aren’t you going in?”

Celeste’s tone was calm. “Well, the staff told us that all the tables are booked.”

Caleb glanced at the host. “Oh, is that so?”

The host definitely knew who Caleb was.

Moreover, his family—particularly Harold—was inside the restaurant at this very moment.

Seeing that Caleb might intervene on Celeste’s behalf, the host panicked and stepped forward. “We just received word that a table has opened up. A private lounge is **now** available. Please, come in.”

Celeste didn’t move. She was staring at Betty **instead**.

“Le

head somewhere else to eat,” Betty said.

“Okay.”

Celeste turned to Caleb. “Thank you, Mr. Jennings.”

“It’s no big deal,” Caleb replied casually. He paused for a second and nodded in greeting to Betty and the others.

The Rodriguezs left.

Caleb stepped into the restaurant, his gaze sweeping over the host.

The host **was** sweating, forcing a nervous smile, but he didn’t dare say a word.

The fact that he wasn’t offering an explanation told Caleb everything **he** needed to know—the person behind this had real influence.

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Celeste had barely started her meal at another restaurant when her phone buzzed twice.

It **was** a message from Lottle.

She tapped it open and found two photos attached.

The people in the photos? Trevor and Wynn.

She pursed her lips. Without examining them further, **she** exited the chat.

The second she did, Lottie's call came through

Celeste hesitated briefly, then got up and stepped outside to answer. "Lottie, hi."

"Cel, did you see the photos I sent you just now?"

She only glanced at one of the photos; she didn't bother looking at the other one.

Still, she said, "Yeah, I saw them."

Lottie launched into a rant. "My friend sent the first photo to me last night, saying that they spotted them at a hotel. On Ember Festival, of all holidays! Can you believe it? They actually booked a room together? Shameless,

Celeste's expression remained unchanged. She didn't even frown one bit and just hummed a soft reply.

"The second one is even worse. My friend screenshotted her post. She flaunted the roses and gifts Trevor gave her for Ember Festival—she took the pictures right in the hotel room. And she had the nerve to act all smug, like it was some perfect and romantic night. Honestly, she just makes me sick."

After giving a casual response, Celeste asked, "Have you eaten yet?"

"Not yet. I went out with friends for a countdown last night, drank way too much, and just woke up. I even forgot to reply to your wishes."

"It's fine."

Celeste added, "Enjoy your Ember Festival."

"You too, Cel."

As Lottie finished speaking, she thought of Trevor and Wynn again. She hesitated, debating whether to keep talking about it, but then changed the subject. "Cel, what are you up to right now?"

"I'm having lunch with Granny and the others."

"Oh."

Lottie scratched her head. “Sorry, Cel. I probably killed your appetite. I shouldn’t have brought that all up.”

“Don’t worry about it,” Celeste responded gently. “Go freshen up and eat something, or your stomach’s going to give you trouble again.”

“Yeah, yeah, I know.”

The **two**

chatted for a while longer before ending the call.

Since it was still early after lunch, Celeste took a walk with Betty, strolling through the streets and window- shopping.

+25 ROPAS

This time, they didn’t run into anyone. By the time they returned home, their moods had noticeably improved. The Rodriguezes didn’t have many relatives in Baumond, so the Ember Festival was never particularly hectic for them.

By the evening of the second day, Celeste finally had some time to herself.

She opened her laptop and resumed going through the research materials Zachary had given her.

Just after ten, as she was about to shower, her phone rang

It was a call from Trevor.

Celeste glanced at the screen but didn’t bother answering, instead, she walked straight to the bathroom.

After showering, she did some more research. As she finished taking notes, she heard the sound of a car pulling up outside.

Her hand on the mouse suddenly paused.

She thought of Trevor’s call from earlier.

Frowning, she set the mouse aside and walked over to the window—just in time to see Jordyn jump out of the car, calling out, “Granny!”

Celeste pressed her lips together, turned away, and picked up her phone. That was when she noticed a message from Trevor, sent after she ignored his call.

“I’m heading overseas tomorrow. Please take care of Jo for the next few days.”

She stared at the text for a moment before putting away her phone.

Then, Jordyn came running upstairs and pushed open her bedroom door. The second she saw Celeste, her face lit up, and she threw herself into Celeste’s arms.

“Hi, Mom!”

The Breaking Point of Love

Celeste instinctively reached out, steadying Jordyn to keep her from falling

But the moment Jordyn crashed into her arms, Wynn’s perfume drifted into her **nose** once again.

Celeste took the girl’s backpack and set it aside on the couch. Just as Jordyn was about to run toward the bed, Celeste gently pulled her back. “Did you shower?”

“I did.”

And yet, Wynn’s scent still lingered on her. That could only mean one thing—Wynn had either been living with Trevor, or the two of them had just dropped her off together.

They just hadn’t bothered to come inside.

“You’re all sweaty,

change into something clean,” Celeste said flatly.

Jordyn recalled that after her shower, she had been running around and probably worked up a little sweat.

Hence, she nodded obediently and went into the bathroom to change.

Celeste, on the other hand, continued to organize her research materials.

As soon as Jordyn finished changing, **she**

came out of the bathroom. Then, she took out a **bunny**-shaped light wand from her backpack. “Mom, look! It’s a light wand.”

Celeste glanced at it, then paused for a quick moment. “This…”

“Dad bought it for me! Isn’t it cute?”

Celeste nodded.

Jordyn then ran over, turned off the lights in Celeste's room and switched on the light wand. With excitement written all over her face, she asked, "Isn't it prettier when the lights are off?"

"Yeah, it is."

She added, "Do you like it a lot?"

"Yes, I love it!" With that, Jordyn took out another light wand from her backpack. "Dad bought me two, and this one's for you! Mom, will you take a stroll with me downstairs with the light wand?"

"I already took a shower, Jo. Let's wait until tomorrow. **And** you've changed your clothes too; we don't want to get them dirty."

Jordyn's **enthusiasm** seemed to fade a bit, her excitement cooling off. "Oh..."

She remembered it had been over a month since she'd last seen Celeste.

Noticing that **Celeste didn't** seem particularly interested in the light wand, Jordyn stopped showing it to her and put it **away**

. Then, she ran over to hug her. "Mom.."

Celeste put away her book. "What's wrong?"

Jordyn didn't say anything. She kicked off her shoes and snuggled into **her** embrace.

"I missed you so much, Mom."

With **that**, she wrapped her arms around Celeste's neck, planting a few kisses on her cheek

+25 **BONUS**

"Mom, you smell so nice," she said gleefully.

Celeste tightened her arms around Jordyn. Seconds later, she caressed her face quietly.

She could tell that Jordyn's face changed slightly, showing hint of maturity.

It seemed she was beginning to look more like Trevor.

Celeste lowered her gaze and saw that Jordyn wasn't wearing any socks. She gently placed her on the bed and covered her feet with the blanket. "How long are you staying here this time?"

Jordyn shook her head. "I don't know. Dad didn't say anything about it. He just asked me to wait for him here," she answered.

Celeste nodded slightly, saying nothing.

Just then, Jordyn remembered something. **She** hopped off the bed to rummage through her backpack. "Mom, I bought a souvenir for you when I went abroad."

She found the crystal ball she had bought for Celeste and eagerly handed it to her.

After getting close to Wynn, it had been a long while since Jordyn prepared any gifts for Celeste.

Celeste took the gift with composure. "Thank you. I like it a lot."

The Breaking Point of Love

The next day, when Celeste went upstairs after breakfast, she noticed Jordyn was on a video call with Trevor.

Jordyn looked up and called out to her.

Celeste hummed a soft reply, then opened her laptop.

On the other end of the phone, Trevor asked, "Do you have any plans for today?"

Jordyn was lying on the bed. Cheerfully, she replied, "I want to watch a movie, and Mom will be taking me to see **one** this afternoon!"

Celeste was engrossed in the materials she had organized the day before.

Moments **later**, Jordyn came over holding the phone. "Mom, Dad wants me to give this to you."

Celeste paused, took the **phone**, and glanced at Trevor's face on the screen. She didn't feel like having a video chat, **so** she placed the phone on the desk, pointing the front camera at the ceiling. "What is it?"

"Thank you for **taking** care of Jo these few **days**," Trevor said.

Celeste didn't reply. Her attention was still on her laptop as she typed, adding in the ideas she had missed yesterday.

"Anything else?" she asked.

"No," Trevor said. "Enjoy **your** Ember Festival."

Celeste muttered a soft reply before ending the call. She handed the phone back to Jordyn.

As noon approached and she was just about to take Jordyn out, her phone rang.

It was Matthias.

She smiled slightly and picked up. The moment the call connected, Matthias's voice dropped to a hushed tone. "Shit, I just ran into those two again!"

Celeste stilled. She knew exactly who he **was** talking about,

Before she **could** speak, Matthias caught Trevor and Wynn looking his way.

Matthias was at a loss for words.

Seconds later, he uttered, "They're **heading** over. I'm gonna hang up."

"Okay.

The moment she ended the call, Trevor and Wynn had already reached Matthias,

"Where are you off to, Mr. Yoder?"

Matthias didn't answer. **Instead**, he **flashed** a tight and insincere smile. "Mr. Fleming, Ms. Locket, we're not exactly friends. Next time, feel free to just walk past me."

Wynn laughed lightly. "Mr. Yoder, you really do have a way with words."

Matthias quirked a brow, about to respond, when Wynn noticed his suitcase. "Oh? Headed abroad, Mr. Yoder?"

He let out a dry chuckle. "I don't recall us being on speaking terms, so, no. No comments."

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Without waiting for a reply, he grabbed his suitcase and walked off, leaving them behind in the VIP **lounge**.

Once **he** was far enough away, he redialed Celeste. “What are you up to?”

Celeste had just changed into fresh clothes. “Getting ready to head out for a movie,”

“Sounds **good.**”

He asked, “Going solo?”

“With Jo.”

Matthias was speechless for a brief moment.

“Wasn’t she supposed to be with the Flemings for the Ember Festival? Why’s she at your place?”

While adjusting her makeup, Celeste replied nonchalantly, “They dropped her off here last night.”

Matthias snorted. “So, Trevor wants some alone time with Wynn, but your daughter gets in the way, so they just dropped her off at your place? Wow. No shame at all.”

Celeste didn’t respond.

Just then, Jordyn came bouncing over and grabbed her hand “I’m ready, Mom! Let’s go.”

“Alright.”

She then told Matthias, “Forget them. Just-have fun.”

Matthias sighed. “Yeah, yeah. I’ll be back **soon**—won’t leave the company

all on you.”

Chuckling, Celeste replied, “Okay.”

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+25 BONUT

After grabbing a bite and watching a movie, Celeste and Jordyn passed by an arcade. Jordyn’s eyes lit up—she hadn’t played games with Celeste in ages. Without hesitation, **she** pulled her inside.

Trips to the mall, movies, and arcades were nothing new for Jordyn, but getting to do them with Celeste again made it feel special. She was having the time of her life.

That evening, Celeste **had** dinner plans with Theodore.

As they left the arcade, she figured she'd drop Jordyn off at home before heading to the restaurant.

But Jordyn wasn't ready to part ways. She tugged on Celeste's hand and pouted. "Can't I come with you?"

Celeste hesitated.

It was just a casual dinner with Theodore—nothing formal

Hence, bringing Jordyn along wouldn't be a big deal.

With that in mind, Celeste called Theodore and asked if he was okay with her bringing a child.

Theodore chuckled as he replied, "Cel, just bring them along. I don't mind." Then, after a brief pause, he asked, Yours?"

"Yeah."

Theodore was a little surprised when he heard that..

The last time they met, she had mentioned being married, but he hadn't expected that someone who looked so young already had a child.

About 30 minutes later, Celeste arrived at the private lounge, holding Jordyn's hand.

Theodore was already there. Seeing the little girl, he smiled "Cel, so this is your daughter? She looks just like your

Smiling, Celeste nodded.

"What's **her**

name?"

"Jordyn Fleming."

"Fleming?"

Theodore stilled for a moment.

Something about Jordyn looked familiar, but Theodore couldn't immediately recall where he had seen her before.

Then, as soon as Celeste confirmed it, realization dawned he had seen the Flemings on New Year's Day. The little girl holding Trevor's hand back then was undoubtedly Jordyn.

He blinked in shock. "Your husband is Trevor?"

Celeste nodded.

Then, he was at a loss for words.

When she had first mentioned being married, he had wondered why someone as exceptional as her would settle down so young

+25 BONAI

After all, few could truly measure up to her.

But if it **was** Trevor...

Well, realistically speaking, in terms of background, status, and capabilities, he was probably the only real match for her in their social circle.

Theodore let out a small smile, but as his thoughts wandered, he recalled the distant look in Celeste's eyes when she first mentioned her marriage.

Then there was New Year's Day—he **had** seen the Flemings, yet she had been nowhere in sight.

It wasn't just a strained relationship. The cracks between her and Trevor ran deeper than he had imagined

He gestured for them to sit and took out two gift boxes, handing them over.

Celeste instinctively refused. However, Theodore's tone was kind as he said, "It's just a small tradition. Nothing much—take it."

With no other option, she accepted. "**Thank**
you, Mr. Robinson."

Turning to Jordyn, Celeste prompted, "Say thank you, Jo."

Jordyn, bright and well-mannered, beamed up at Theodore. "Thank you, Mr. Robinson."

"You're welcome."

Chuckling, Theodore studied her features. "She's definitely got more of Trevor's looks."

“She does.”

Theodore grinned. “Whether she takes after Trevor or you, with parents like you **two**, she’s going to turn out just fine.”

Celeste lowered her gaze, offering only a faint smile without responding.

Theodore then asked, “So, has my stubborn son finally made peace with you?”

She shook her head, smiling. “If anything, things have gotten worse.

Theodore laughed outright. “Good.”

Completely unconcerned, he added, “He’s had it way too easy. A little lesson in humility will do him some good. Honestly, I’m kind of looking forward to it.”

After **that**, their conversation drifted to other topics.

Once dinner was over, Celeste and Theodore continued chatting for over an hour before finally parting ways.

With the movie outing and dinner behind her, Celeste spent the next few days at home, poring over the research materials Zachary had sent her.

While Celeste immersed herself in research at home, Jordyn was well-behaved. Aside from the occasional outing with Hector and the others, she mostly stayed in her room, entertaining herself.

Still, she’d call Trevor on video every day.

And most of the time, Wynn was right there with him.

It wasn’t that Celeste made a habit of listening in, but Jordyn knew how she felt about Wynn. Thus, whenever Wynn was around, she’d take her tablet outside rather than staying in her room.

After two or three days of deep focus, Celeste finally had a Breakthrough.

For the first time **since** receiving, Zachary’s materials, her ideas felt clear and tangibl

That day, she worked nonstop from morning to night, so absorbed that she didn’t even respond when called downstairs for lunch.

Seeing this, Adeline simply brought her food upstairs instead,

Jordyn noticed her food had gone cold, and Celeste still hadn't eaten. **So**, she called out, "Mom, **eat** first."

+36 BONUS

Celeste merely mumbled a reply while keeping her eyes on the laptop screen, unaware she had actually responded. Jordyn tried calling her a few more times. It wasn't until then that Celeste took a break and ate her meal.

The same pattern repeated at night.

She was so engrossed in her work that she didn't even make time to eat. Jordyn had originally intended to ask her for help with a bath, but after several unsuccessful calls, she **gave** up and went downstairs to ask Jamie for help instead.

When Jordyn finished her bath and returned to her room, she found Celeste still glued to the laptop. Hence, **she** quietly climbed into bed by herself and drifted off to sleep.

Jordyn woke up, still feeling drowsy, and realized it was already morning. She got up, holding her doll, and walked to Celeste. "Didn't you sleep at all, Mom?"

Celeste replied casually, "**You** can sleep first. Don't worry about me."

Jordyn was at a loss for words.

She had already slept and woken up, and Celeste was still sitting in front of her **laptop**.

"Aren't you tired, Mom?"

Celeste hummed a soft reply.

Noticing her frown, Jordyn thought she had disturbed her. Initially, she was going to ask if Celeste was hungry, but she held back. Quietly, she went to wash up.

The Breaking Point of Love

Having worked non-stop for over a day and night, Celeste

ted down everything that needed to be documented

and sent it to Matthias. Finally, she made her way downstairs for breakfast.

After going through the **materials** she had sent, Matthias was so excited his hands trembled. "This is exactly it, Cel! It's perfect!"

Rubbing her aching temples, Celeste replied, "I'm going to sleep for a bit. Let's talk later."

"Sure thing."

Celeste slept until late afternoon.

When she woke up, she found Jordyn playing with a puzzle in her room.

As soon as Jordyn saw Celeste, the former stood up. "Mom, you're awake!"

Celeste nodded in reply.

"Are you thirsty, Mom? Should I get you a glass of water?"

Celeste paused for a second. "Yes, please."

After pouring Celeste a glass of water, Jordyn went back to her own game.

Celeste watched as she played the puzzle, and she realized how much she had neglected her in the past few days due to her work.

But

today was the last day of the holidays.

Tomorrow, she would be back at work at YodaVision, and she'd have less time to spend with her.

With that in mind, she called, "Jo."

Jordyn turned around to look at her. "What is it, Mom?"

"When will your dad be back?"

"He said not so soon, though."

Jordyn asked, "Did you need him for something?"

Celeste shook her head. "No, nothing. You go ahead."

"Okay."

Finishing her glass of water, Celeste sent a text to Trevor.

"When will you be back? I'm going to work tomorrow, and have no time to look after Jordyn. Come take her back."

About half an hour later, she received a reply from Trevor.

“I’ll be back in two days.”

Then, Celeste left the conversation there.

After dinner, Jordyn went to take a stroll **with**

Betty.

Celeste, on the other hand, received a call from Matthias right after she went upstairs.

Since they were discussing and organizing some ideas, Celeste had the phone on speaker when talking to Matthias

Jordyn came back after the stroll. She **heard** Celeste talking to someone, and the voice on the other end of the phone was completely unfamiliar to her. Feeling a little upset, she blurted out, “Who are you talking to, Mom?***

“A friend of mine.”

“Oh...”

Matthias heard Jordyn’s voice, but he stayed silent.

He also didn’t bring up that he had seen her when she was young, or that he had even held her before.

Their call went on until past 10:00 pm, and it wasn’t until then that they ended the call.

On the next day, Celeste went back to work.

Ever since YodaVision began developing the two projects she’d created last year, there had been a shortage of staff.

They had intended to hire more people at the end of last year.

However, Celeste and Matthias had been too busy to do so.

With the need for expansion **growing**

more urgent, Celeste took charge of the arrangements on her first day back at work after the holidays.

Trevor had mentioned that he would be back after two days.

But four days had passed, and he **was** still overseas.

On the fifth day, Celeste received a call from Jordyn when she was still at the office. “Mom, Dad is back! He has sent someone over to pick me up.”

“Got it,” Celeste responded. “Make sure you don’t leave anything behind.”

“Okay!”

Seconds later, Jordyn asked again, “Can you come back and see me off, Mom?”

Celeste still had a pile of work to do.

She **was** going to reject her at first.

Yet she recalled how she hadn’t spent much time with Jordyn because of her busy schedule.

Moreover, Jordyn would probably forget about her for a while after this. **So**, she agreed, “Okay, I’ll go back now.”

Jordyn cheered, “Yes!”

strip as

Matthias had returned from his well.

Celeste, worn out from work lately, had his full support if she wanted to leave early and take some time to rest.

It was just that...

Matthias scoffed. “Trevor dropped everything to go on a honeymoon with that woman and even delayed coming back for a few days. He didn’t feel guilty at all. But **you, as** a mother without custody, feel guilty just for not being able to spend time with your child? Honestly, I think Trevor is just taking advantage of how soft-hearted you throwing the kid on you and running off to have fun.”

The Breaking Point of Love

Just after Jordyn called Celeste, the car Trevor sent to pick Jordyn up showed up.

In the end, Jordyn didn’t manage to see Celeste before she left.

As she reached the private lounge, Jordyn ran straight into Trevor's arms. "Dad, Wynn, hi!"

Smiling, Trevor softly ruffled her hair. Wynn helped Jordyn set her backpack aside, Beck, Miles, and Linda were there in the private lounge as well.

Seeing how much Jordyn missed Trevor and Wynn, Miles duckled **and** said, "See? I told you, Trevor. You should've brought Jo along on the trip. Look how upset shes. If **you'd** stayed away any longer, Jo would probably have been in tears."

Miles's comment made it seem like staying with Celeste had been unfair to Jordyn.

Before Trevor and the others could say anything, Beck smoothly steered the conversation in another direction. "Did you do anything fun while you were there, Jo?"

Jordyn settled down in her seat. "I did! I went to watch a movie with Mom, and we played VR games together. We also dined out."

Miles chimed in, "**Was** that all?"

"Yeah," Jordyn responded nonchalantly. "Mom was too busy to spend time with me."

Miles assumed that when Jordyn mentioned Celeste being busy, she **meant** caught up in the **usual** Ember Festival family gatherings.

After all, that was how it **had** been for him and Beck.

They had been swamped since the end of last year, juggling endless visits with different relatives. Just as they finally settled, work picked up again, and they were tied up nonstop. It wasn't until today that they finally managed to set aside some time to grab a meal with Trevor and the others—to relax and catch up.

Wynn was reading a book.

Taking a sip of her drink, Jordyn **glanced** at the cover of the book out of boredom. It looked familiar, catching her attention enough for her to take another look.

Then, Beck asked, "Are you interested in the book, Jo?"

Jordyn shook her **head**. "No, I just realized Mom has the same book."

Upon hearing what Jordyn had just said, Wynn stilled for a moment as a subtle smile played on her lips.

The beginner and advanced editions of this book had the same cover.

Wynn was **reading** the advanced edition. She hadn't even encountered this sort of detailed content during her PhD, **let** alone in her **undergrad**.

She had been reading a lot lately, **and** since Linda visited the Lockets almost every day, she knew the book had both a beginner and advanced version.

At Jordyn's words, she figured Celeste **was** definitely reading the beginner's version.

She almost burst into laughter.

+25 BORBUN

However, since Trevor and Beck were there, she held it back

Beck, on the **other** hand, had figured the situation out himself.

He lowered his gaze, smiling and staying quiet.

Just then, Miles suddenly turned to Beck. Raising an eyebrow, he asked teasingly, "I heard your mom's been pushing you to go on blind dates, Beck. Found any good matches yet?"

And **that** instantly drew everyone's attention.

Linda had heard about it too, and, because of that, she was even more worried.

She stared nervously at Beck, waiting for his answer.

Yet, Beck completely ignored her. He gave Miles a look as he answered, "Can't you go on a day without gossiping?"

Miles smiled playfully. "I'm just curious. That's all."

Beck remained silent.

It was obvious to them that Beck wasn't interested in blind dates.

His silence spoke volumes, **and**

everyone understood right away.

Then, Miles blurted out, "So, how's it going with the woman Shanice kept mentioning? If you like her, why **not** just tell your mom? Or is her background too different from yours, and you're worried your mom won't approve of her?"

Beck didn't take a glance at Trevor. Instantly, he interrupted Miles, "Honestly, there's all this food, and you're still running your mouth?"

The more Beck kept quiet about it, the more curious Miles became.

Miles went on, “I get it; you’re worried your mom might disapprove, so **you** didn’t bring her home. But it’s been a while now

at least let us meet her. You can bring her here to see me and Trevor.”

Without waiting for Beck to respond, Miles turned to **Trevor**. “Don’t you **agree**, Trevor?”

Trevor chuckled, glancing at Beck. “When the time comes, you probably won’t have to urge him at all. Beck will bring her over for us to meet. We should just stay out of it.

Miles was speechless.

Everyone knew that, of course.

He was just curious about the person.

Linda lightly tugged on Wynn’s sleeve. “Wynn...”

Miles had told her that Beck had a crush on someone else before, and she refused to believe it back then.

Well, it seemed like that was true, after all.

Wynn smiled, looking relaxed. She didn’t utter a word.

It was true that they had never met the woman Shanice had mentioned before.

However, did Beck actually care about her that much? Or was the **woman** merely a decoy? Perhaps Beck orchestrated this whole thing just to keep his true feelings hidden.