

## Chapter 2

Angela wasn't someone who smoked before.

She'd always been bright, beautiful, and effortlessly outstanding—the kind of girl who naturally drew all the light in the room.

It was her parents' deaths that shattered her so deeply she couldn't climb out of the darkness, and smoking became the only thing that eased the pressure.

Donald didn't fail to understand that, but he couldn't accept how cutting she had become.

Nina was his only sister, and she had just returned to the country two months ago.

However, Angela couldn't tolerate her.

What kind of woman had no compassion and no space in her heart for others? How could someone like that still deserve his concern?

Donald turned away coldly and went back to the bedroom.


Angela caught that frosty expression and let out a bitter, self-mocking smile. 1

Everyone claimed Donald was the perfect husband.

Only she knew he had a temper.

When he was angry, he shut down completely.

And even when he bothered to speak to her, it was only because of that ridiculous vow he once made about her always being right, something he

obeyed out of habit rather than sincerity. 

That night.

Donald had planned to ignore her, but he remembered their daughter's request and said in a stiff tone,

"A birthday marks the day you came into the world. It only matters when it's celebrated on the actual day. She said she doesn't want to celebrate early this year."

Angela paused.

Dolly's birthday had always been special. Every year, Angela celebrated three days in advance, tailoring everything to her preferences and granting as many wishes as she could.

Dolly would always hug her, rare and precious, saying, "Mommy, you're the best. Thank you, Mommy."

But not this year?

Angela said firmly, "Nina taught her that."

"Why do you blame Nina for everything?" Donald snapped instantly.

"Unbelievable. Your parents have been gone for five years. How long are you planning to keep living in that dead end?"

Angela clenched her hand hard, feeling a crushing weight on her chest...

That night, she fell asleep and had a dream.

Angela dreamed of the earthquake in Morrow City five years ago—the moment her mother shielded her heavily pregnant body and was crushed

to death by falling debris.

She woke up in tears.

The space beside her was empty.

Donald stood by the floor-to-ceiling window, answering a call.

“What’s wrong, Nina? Don’t cry. Are you in danger? Say something, tell me where you are.”

His face was full of panic.

He didn’t even bother changing his clothes and rushed out in his loungewear.


“But Donald... didn’t you see that I was crying too?”

Angela’s heart finally went cold.

She removed her wedding ring and dropped it into the trash.

...

At dawn, Angela headed downstairs.

Nina, who had clearly been waiting, walked toward her with an ornate covered dish in her hands. 

“I’m sorry, Angela. I know I shouldn’t have come back, but I really couldn’t stop worrying about Donald and Dolly.”

Angela gave her a sidelong glance. “And what if you can’t stop worrying? Planning to take my place and live here with him?”

Seeing no one else around, Nina dropped the act altogether.

"So you noticed. Will you let me have him?"

Angela's delicate features iced over.

"Don't be angry. I'm joking... It was my fault for calling him away last night, so I made a dessert to apologize."

Angela had no patience for Nina's fake sweetness. She was about to walk past when Nina spoke softly behind her:

"Apple rose tart."

Angela froze.

All the blood in Angela's body seemed to stop.

Before the earthquake, her mother had clung to her playfully, begging her to make apple rose tarts.

Angela kept refusing, unwilling to cook.

Her father, doting as always, went out to buy some instead.

No one expected the earthquake to hit.

Her mother threw herself over Angela, shielding both her and the unborn child under the collapsing debris.

Angela watched her mother's body twist unnaturally under the weight, yet she still forced a smile.

She was still trying, desperately, to comfort her daughter.

"Good thing my girl didn't make me those apple rose tarts... at least I'll leave this world with one last longing..."

Tears shimmered in Angela's eyes.


From that day on, she never touched apple rose tarts again.

And the roses in the estate never bloomed afterward either...

"Try one, Angela. Tell me how my apple rose tarts taste."

Nina smiled so sweetly.

Angela knew that she was doing this on purpose.

Donald must have told Nina where it hurt most. 

Angela forced out a single word between her teeth.

"Leave."

Nina pretended not to hear her.

"From what I know, your parents' memorial day is coming up," Nina said lightly.

"As your sister-in-law, I wanted to show my respect. I thought I'd bring these apple rose tarts to your mother.

"Maybe she'll rest easy after tasting them... maybe she'll even get a good reincarnation."

Angela's fury exploded.

She spun around and slapped Nina hard across the face.

"Ah!"

Nina went down with the dish, crashing onto the floor. Her left cheek


began to swell instantly.

Yet she covered her face and laughed—calm and triumphant, like a hunter who'd just snared her prey.

Angela glanced at the scattered pastries on the ground.

They weren't apple rose tarts at all.

They were strawberry tarts.

Nina had lied about the flavor just to provoke her. 

Angela quickly steadied her breath. "Trying to set me up? Then you'll pay for it."

Before Nina could understand what she meant, another sharp crack filled the air.

Her other cheek took a full, stinging slap, burning like fire.

Angela picked up a piece of strawberry tarts, grabbed Nina's chin, and shoved it into her mouth.

"Did Donald never teach you to show respect for the dead? Keep mocking the deceased, and you'll invite retribution..."

Hearing the commotion, Donald came rushing downstairs, dragging Dolly by the hand.

"Angela!"

His face was dark with fury as he yanked her back violently.

Angela wasn't prepared for the force; her back slammed straight into the glass cabinet, sharp pain making her brow tighten.

"Donald..." Nina whimpered, eyes brimming with tears, big drops rolling down her cheeks as if she'd suffered the greatest injustice in the world.

Donald lifted his hand, wanting to touch her face but hesitated, afraid of hurting her.

His eyes then cut toward Angela, cold and vicious.

"Apologize."

Angela held back the pain and met his glare with icy defiance.

This man wasn't just blind—he was blind in every way that mattered.

He never paused to ask what happened or consider right from wrong; he simply rushed to shield his sweet-faced sister without the slightest hesitation.

She said, "You can both kneel and listen."

Donald's expression turned frigid.

"Angela, no matter how much I love you, I will never allow you to bully Nina like this."

He grabbed Nina's wrist with his left hand, lifted it, and swung it hard.


A sharp crack echoed through the room.

Five red fingerprints rose instantly on Angela's right cheek.

Silence fell, heavy and absolute.

Angela could almost hear her heart shattering, piece by piece, beyond repair.

She let out two low laughs, her entire body wrapped in a dangerous, razor-edged coldness.

Then she grabbed Donald's arm, stepped in, pivoted her weight, and flipped him clean over her shoulder. 

He hit the floor with a heavy thud.

Dolly burst into terrified sobs.

"Bad mommy! You hit Aunt Nina and hurt Daddy! Get out! Get out of my house!"

A tidal wave surged violently through Angela's chest.

Her eyes reddened as she looked down at the man on the floor.

"Donald Turner, we're done."

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