



Chapter 9

Leon's eyes flickered, and without his glasses, a flash of raw, unruly anger showed through.

Nathan had clearly expected this reaction. He pressed a hand on Leon's shoulder and said, "I'm not showing you this to make you angry. I want you to step back and look at this woman with some rationality."

Leon's voice was gentle but firm. "No matter what she's done, she's right."

Nathan froze. "Leon, do you even realize the position you're in? For all you know, they'll fight now and make up in bed later."

Leon lowered his gaze and looked again at the video on the phone.

Without knowing the full story or what she was thinking, he really had no place to interfere too much.

But in this video, everything was turned against her, with everyone ganging up on her.

Leon raised his arm and brushed Nathan's hand aside.

He walked to the window ledge and spoke in a low, cold voice, "There are two things I need you to do..."

...

The police arrived at Rosewood Manor and conducted a detailed search but found no hidden cameras.

Yet the angle of the recording made it undeniable that the footage had come from inside the study.

They questioned everyone one by one.

The staff were anxious and terrified.

Only Nina remained completely calm, insisting she knew nothing.

Donald returned in his car, shot Angela a cold glance, then went over to shake hands with the officers and speak with them.

“Thank you for coming. The camera in the study was installed by me... I’ll compensate my wife. No need to waste police resources on a marital argument.”

Nelson had connections at the station.

No doubt Donald had contacted him in advance.

Since Angela never mentioned the video had been maliciously edited when she called the police, everything naturally became “simplified.”

The officers followed procedure, took statements, gave a brief warning, and wrapped up the visit.

Angela glanced at the man and woman standing so close their shadows merged into a single straight line.

“Shouldn’t the two of you be apologizing to me?”

Even barefoot, she stood at 174 centimeters, and with heels she carried an imposing presence as she spoke.

Nina panicked and ducked behind Donald, tugging cautiously at his sleeve.

“Donald, Dolly likes doing her homework in the study lately. She hates

being watched while she works, and I was afraid she'd get into something dangerous... so I secretly installed a camera. It accidentally caught you and Angela arguing.

"But Donald, I didn't mean to edit the video and post it online. It's just... Angela hit me, and she hit you, and Mrs. Turner got hospitalized because of her. She keeps hurting the people I care about. I was angry... and upset, so I..."

A single teardrop fell onto Donald's palm without warning.

His heart melted instantly.

The video had already spread like wildfire through every HeartLogic work group; practically all of Northhaven knew Angela's "reputation" now.

Nina was young and pure.

She'd only acted on impulse for a moment; she couldn't possibly be the villain.

Angela, on the other hand, had never been popular, and after everything she'd done, she was the one who deserved the blame.

After weighing everything, Donald said, "You were in the wrong first. If anyone should apologize, it's you."

Nina lifted her brows in quiet triumph, a wordless message written all over her face: "I win again."

Angela brushed past her with a contemptuous glance, stepped up to Donald, and jabbed a finger into his chest.

"You've lost all conscience."

Donald's heart clenched as if something had gripped it tight, and he blurted out, "Angela..."

Angela turned away and headed toward her car.

After walking a short distance, she slipped her phone from her trouser pocket and saved the recording.

"You think you're the only ones who can secretly film and record? I can do it too."

The real reason she had called the police was to force Donald to rush back and protect Nina, so Nina would feel emboldened by his favoritism and confess her own cruelty without restraint.

Those two really never failed to disappoint her...

That evening, Nelson's wife, Rachel Rowan, invited Angela to dinner at Mid River Restaurant.

"Angela, I'm sorry... I couldn't help you at all."

Rachel looked at her friend apologetically.

She knew Nelson had helped Donald smooth things over. She'd argued with him about it, but nothing changed.

Angela smiled and comforted her instead.

"Who said you didn't help? Didn't you register a few accounts and defend me like crazy in the comments section?"

Rachel's cheeks flushed. "How did you know?"

Angela said, "It was obvious. Out of tens of thousands of comments, only

one person was on my side.”

“Rachel, thank you.”

Angela took her hand.

Rachel tightened her hold on Angela's hand. “I should be the one thanking you for choosing me as your friend.”

Rachel had grown up under a harsh stepmother.

She'd always been the timid one, an easy target for other people's mockery.

There was a period when she dreaded accompanying Nelson to events.

Nelson would focus on his own socializing and leave her on her own.

Angela was the one who noticed her panic and discomfort.

After that, hoping to shield her, Angela—who rarely liked attending events—began accompanying Donald more often just so Rachel wouldn't be alone.


But Rachel felt useless.

When Angela needed someone in her corner now, she had no idea how to actually help.

All she could do was type comment after comment on her phone: Please stop attacking her. She's genuinely a good person.

With Rachel beside her, Angela's mood lifted a little.

But it didn't last.

Just as the dishes were set on the table, Rachel was forced to leave after a string of calls from Nelson. 

Angela said it was fine, but the moment Rachel stepped into the driver's car, Angela's shoulders sagged.

A weightless kind of loneliness settled over her.

She ordered a bottle of red wine and drank alone.

Then, suddenly, a clear, sweet little voice chimed.

"Ma'am..."

Angela looked up.

It was Sunny and Leon.