

Crushed Affections

Chapter 8 We've Got Different Surnames

Dominic didn't come home that night. However, Bella wasn't worried. She had no interest in finding out where he'd gone. She had to figure out how to stop paying attention to him.

When Bella woke up at dawn, she slowly made herself a simple breakfast and enjoyed the rare moment of calm.

She would be heading to Felix's house in the afternoon to give piano lessons, so she had her morning free. It was time to deep clean the house.

Upon thinking about it, Bella realized she hadn't enjoyed a day of rest for the past three years.

After breakfast, she began tidying up the house. The gigantic Miller Manor was a chore to clean. Bella only finished cleaning the basement and the first floor at midday. After taking a short break, she started cleaning Dominic's study.

For the past three years, Dominic had locked the door to his study, so Bella had never cleaned it. Today, she noticed that he hadn't locked it. Thus, she decided to help him tidy up.

When she walked in, there was the overpowering smell of dust, which made her choke. Bella had no choice but to put on a mask. Thankfully, the windows had been tightly closed. There wasn't an exceptionally thick layer of dust on the floor.

Bella went to the balcony and opened the windows. Sun illuminated the room and chased the darkness away. It gave the room a lively glow.

When she finished cleaning his study, 1 00 pm had rolled around. Bella curled into a chair out of exhaustion. She pulled a random book out of his bookshelf. When she opened it, an old piece of paper uttered to the floor.

It was Dominic's study, and everything inside belonged to him. Nothing could be damaged.

Bella bent down hurriedly to pick it up. When she saw the words there, she froze. The paper was an essay she had written in middle school, entitled "My Brother".

She hadn't noticed when this essay had been torn from her book. Bella definitely hadn't expected it to be with Dominic.

The paper had yellowed slightly due to the passage of time. However, the words could still be seen.

Bella's penmanship had been excellent since a young age. She had looping handwriting which was still legible even now.

For some reason, every mention of "brother" had been erased. Did Dominic hate her that much? He wouldn't even let her call him her "brother" in an essay.

Suddenly, she heard footsteps downstairs. Bella folded the paper and stuffed it into her pocket. Then, she slotted the book back into place.

Bella ran right into Dominic as she left the study. Feeling a little nervous, she started to stammer, "Um..."

Dominic frowned and asked coldly, "Who gave you permission to enter?"

She played with the corner of her shirt as she replied, "I—I just wanted to help you clean up. Your study was too dusty. Aren't you going to use it? I'm done cleaning it. If you don't want me touching your belongings, you could hire a maid to help you tidy up."

Dominic pushed her away and surveyed the study. He relaxed slightly and said, "I'll get someone to clean it. You have no right to do that. Just because you're living here doesn't mean you own the place, got it?"

Bella smiled dismissively. She answered, "Got it. I've got something else that needs attending to. I'll be leaving now."

She had barely taken a few steps away from him when Dominic said, "Why are you so in need of money? Have I been stingy with you for the past few years? Don't embarrass me out there."

Bella paused, but she didn't turn back to him. She said, "Thank you for taking care of me all these years. I'm a working adult now, so I no longer need your help.

"I've got a job, and I'm making money by legal means. We've got different surnames. No one knows about our relationship. Even if I were to embarrass someone, it wouldn't be you."