

359: Leaving a Doubt in My Heart

A woman dressed in fine clothes, holding a crystal fan, walked gracefully into the room, leaning on her elbow, smiling brightly.

"So, you must be Caitlin?"

Caitlin looked the woman up and down. "And you are?"

"I'm Cynthia," the woman smiled and introduced herself. Without waiting for an invitation, she walked into the room and took a seat in the main chair.

Caitlin had done some research on The Yuncey Family members and recognized this woman. Cynthia was in her fifties, once a sharp and capable woman who had a loving relationship with her husband. Together, they were a power couple in the business world. Unfortunately, years ago, her husband, son, and in-laws all perished in a tragic fire, which severely impacted her mental state. Since then, she had remained within The Yuncey Family, recovering in seclusion.

In short, she was a pitiful figure.

"Cynthia." Caitlin greeted her softly.

Cynthia smiled, "Well, well, Caitlin, you've arrived at just the right time. You came back and disrupted the big family's product launch, slapped them right in the face. I can't tell you how much I enjoyed watching that."

"..." Caitlin raised an eyebrow, unsure about Cynthia's reaction. Was she trying to win Caitlin over or set a trap for her?

Caitlin wasn't in a rush to pick sides yet, keeping her tone neutral. "I just did what I felt was right. But it seems like you have some issues with the big family."

"Yes," Cynthia leaned back, her tone dripping with disdain. "I can't stand those people from the main house. They're all so full of themselves. What makes them so special? Just because they were born first? None of them are worth a damn!"

Cynthia didn't hold back in expressing her dislike for the main house members, openly venting her frustration to Caitlin.

"Cynthia, don't you worry about them overhearing you?" Caitlin offered a cautious warning, not wanting her to speak too recklessly.

"Worry? If they dare do anything to me, I'll just shout at them until they can't take it anymore!" Cynthia's words were full of venom.

No one in The Yuncey Family dared to provoke Cynthia. Her mental state was unpredictable—when her mood flared, she would lash out, shouting at anything and everything for hours. Whoever upset her would never hear the end of it.

Caitlin's curiosity grew. What had happened between Cynthia and the main house? Why did she despise them so much?

"Cynthia, do you have any other business?" Caitlin was getting impatient and ready to move on.

Cynthia, noticing Caitlin's intent to leave, asked, "Where are you going?"

"Oh, I just want to go for a walk."

"I'll come with you. There are so many rules in The Yuncey Family; I'll explain some of them to you."

Cynthia's enthusiasm was a bit too much for Caitlin to shake off, so she reluctantly agreed to have her accompany her.

With Cynthia leading the way, Caitlin walked around The Yuncey Family's garden and explored the main buildings. Cynthia was an open book, detailing everything about the people who lived in different parts of the house, giving Caitlin a deeper insight into the family.

As they passed through the back garden and walked past the crescent-shaped gate, Caitlin noticed a wall at the farthest end, with a locked gate that looked like a private courtyard.

Suddenly, a loud animal-like screech echoed from behind the wall. Caitlin turned to Cynthia, curiosity piqued, "Cynthia, is anyone living in that courtyard?"

"Don't go near there!" Cynthia grabbed her arm, pulling her back. "That place houses a crazy person! They might kill you!"

A crazy person? Kill her?

Caitlin was intrigued but forced to leave with Cynthia. However, her mind lingered on the mysterious locked courtyard. Was it possible that her mother was being kept there?

She would need to find a way to investigate further.

After exiting the garden, they bumped into Zahra, one of the servants.

Zahra greeted Cynthia and then turned to Caitlin. "Caitlin, I've been asked to find you. The master is hosting a banquet for you in the grand dining hall. Please come join us."

"Alright, lead the way."

Caitlin and Cynthia followed Zahra to the grand dining hall of The Yuncey Family. Inside, a large group of people had gathered—The Yuncey Family's entire clan seemed to be present.

The three children from the main house, three from the second branch, two from the third, as well as The Yuncey Family's grandchildren, sons-in-law, and other relatives filled the room. From the sheer number of people, it was clear that Timothy had been very successful in continuing the family's legacy.

The children scattered as soon as they saw Cynthia, running away from her in fear. When Caitlin entered, everyone in the room turned to look at her.

Timothy stood to greet Caitlin as she entered. He introduced her to the various relatives, and the few people Caitlin hadn't met before were introduced to her.

"Alright, you've met most of the family, I assume," Timothy said once the introductions were over. "Now, let's sit down. Tonight is a special banquet I've prepared for Caitlin to welcome her."

The long marble dining table, intricately carved and inlaid with gold, was set up for the occasion. Caitlin, the guest of honor, was seated next to Timothy. The rest of the family took their seats according to their rank.

The Yuncey Family had prepared a sumptuous meal, and Timothy urged Caitlin to enjoy herself. As they dined, Caitlin observed the room, noticing that everyone ate quietly, without a sound. While they appeared to be getting along, Caitlin could feel the tension between them—each person in The Yuncey Family had their own agenda.

As dinner neared its end, Caitlin suddenly asked, "Timothy, how did my grandmother disappear?"

The question landed like a stone in the still water, and everyone's attention shifted to Caitlin. Timothy's chopsticks trembled in his hand.

Cynthia's eyes widened in surprise, seemingly signaling Caitlin to remember the family's strict customs.

Carmen, ever ready to criticize, seized the moment. "Caitlin, we have a family rule—no talking about serious matters during meals. Why bring up something like that now?"

"I'm just curious," Caitlin replied, her voice steady.

"Have you never heard the saying that curiosity killed the cat?" Carmen scoffed. "If you're going to stay with us, you'll need to follow our rules."

"The rules are fixed, but people are alive. If I want to talk, can you really stop me?" Caitlin shot back, her eyes locking with Carmen's across the table.

The two exchanged silent glares, tension mounting.

"You—" Carmen opened her mouth to argue, but her mother, Greta, subtly pulled her back, taking the opportunity to smooth things over. "Caitlin is new here, and she doesn't know our family's customs. It's not that serious. She's not used to living in such a large family, but she'll get the hang of it."

Greta's words were polite, but Caitlin could hear the subtle barb. The implication was clear: Caitlin hadn't been raised properly in a large family, and she was being subtly mocked for her lack of decorum.

Since Greta had taken the shot, Caitlin had no intention of letting it go. Her next words were sharp enough to make Greta regret them.

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