My Great Escape Led Me to You

Chapter 18

Emily Blair lifted the jade ring in her hand, holding it up in front of Andrew Lane. "This ring was broken by Amelia Lane."

The homeroom teacher gave her a cold glance. "Amelia is such a good kid—there's no way she'd break your ring on purpose. Don't think you can frame her for something she didn't do."

“But you? You just go around hitting people without knowing the whole story. Honestly, you're hopeless."

How laughable.

Amelia Lane breaks her jade ring—oh, that's just an accident, not intentional.

But when Emily hits Amelia, suddenly she's a delinquent, doing it on purpose.

Isabella Austin looked at the broken ring, her tone gentle and considerate. "That ring doesn't even look like it's worth much. If you like it, I can buy you a better one. There's no need to get so worked up over something like this."

"Besides, Amelia has plenty of beautiful jewelry. There's no reason she'd want to break yours, Emily. I really think you're misunderstanding her."

Her words sounded tactful, sympathetic even.

But to anyone actually paying attention, her meaning was clear as day-pure mockery.

The Lane family, Miss Blair... People like them would never care about a cheap trinket like this. Only Emily Blair would treat something so worthless as a treasure.

To them, her ring was nothing.

Around her, the other students started to laugh.

Emily met Andrew Lane's eyes.

His dark, inscrutable gaze watched her in return.

He said nothing in response to the others' comments.

That meant he agreed, didn't it?

Bitterness twisted inside her, laced with a sharp, silent scorn.

How could any of them understand? They'd all been born with silver spoons in their mouths. None of them had ever needed to.

Just then, the principal walked over, his tone heavy with meaning. "Emily Blair, you were the one who started this. You need to apologize to Amelia."

He knew exactly what he was doing. Everyone did. The Lane family had taken Emily in, sure, but it was obvious who they really cared about—Amelia Lane.

In the face of the Lane family, the truth didn't matter anymore.

Emily was expected to apologize. That was all.

Emma George wrung her hands in frustration. “Emily Blair, how dare you hit Miss Lane? Apologize, now!"

Andrew Lane's voice cut through the commotion, final and cold. “Emily Blair, apologize.” His eyes were icy, expression unreadable. “If you can't, you don't need to come back to the Lane house."

A shocked murmur rippled through the crowd.

Was he threatening to throw Emily out of the Lane family?

Emily ignored their words. She just stared down at the shattered ring in her palm.

"Of course you wouldn't understand. You're all rich-if you lost this, you'd just buy something better, something more expensive, without a second thought."

"But this ring—my dad saved up for a year to buy it for me."

"It was his last birthday present to me before he died. It's all I have left."

Emma George's face froze, her anger suddenly replaced by awkward uncertainty. "Emily, why didn't you ever tell me?"

Andrew Lane's face, the looks of everyone else—Emily didn't care anymore. She didn't want to see any of it.

She tightened her grip on the broken ring, raised her head, and looked straight at the principal, her voice steady and cold.

"I won't apologize. I didn't do anything wrong."

“There's a camera in the classroom. Check the footage. It will show you everything.” The principal hesitated.

Amelia Lane's eyes flashed with panic. Without warning, she threw herself into Isabella Austin's arms, her voice breaking with perfectly timed tears.

"Why are you doing this to me? Look at what she's done—I'm hurt, I just wanted an apology. Is that so much to ask? Isabella, it really hurts..."