My Great Escape Led Me to You

Chapter 6

A flicker of doubt crossed the maid's eyes as she hesitated by the bedside, staring at the lump beneath the covers.

Annoyance crept in. Emily Blair was just the chauffeur's daughter-what right did she have to order her around?

"This is your job, Ms. Blair," the maid muttered under her breath.

Emily ignored her entirely.

After a long moment, the maid glared at the unmoving shape on the bed before quietly closing the door.

Fresh from his shower, Andrew Lane stepped out of his room and noticed the kitchen light glowing downstairs. The faint sound of dishes clinking echoed softly through the house.

Eyes half-shut, he pressed his knuckles to his temple, trying to ease the dull ache left by the alcohol.

Without giving it much thought, Andrew made his way downstairs and sank onto the living room sofa, closing his eyes to rest.

Five minutes later, the maid emerged from the kitchen, carrying a steaming bowl of restorative broth. She set it down on the table in front of Andrew.

"Mr. Lane, the soup's a bit hot-please be careful," she said.

The unfamiliar voice caught Andrew off guard. He opened his eyes and looked at the maid, his brows knitting slightly.

"Why is it you?" he asked.

The maid glanced at Andrew's expression, a trace of malice flickering in her eyes.

This was supposed to be Emily Blair's job. If Emily hadn't shirked her responsibilities, the maid wouldn't have to be here waiting on Andrew herself.

“Ms. Blair refused to come, sir. I called her several times. Mr. Lane, you really ought to teach her a lesson-she can't go on like this."

Andrew's gaze shifted toward Emily's room.

Her door faced the living room-he could see it clearly from where he sat. The door was firmly shut, giving every appearance that Emily was sound asleep, just as the maid claimed.

He picked up the bowl, his expression unreadable. “Understood," he replied coolly.

He'd barely taken a sip before his brow furrowed.

The maid's heart leapt. "Is it not to your taste, Mr. Lane?"

Andrew took another swallow, but gave no answer.

Something was off about the flavor.

Emily Blair had been with the Lane family since she was fourteen. Six months after arriving, she'd started making him this very soup whenever he came home drunk.

She had a notorious sweet tooth and seemed convinced that everyone else must share it. Without fail, she'd load the soup with sugar—every batch sickly sweet.

Andrew had never cared for sweet things, and at first, he could barely tolerate the concoction. Out of consideration for her age, he'd tried to gently hint that she needn't bother, but Emily never seemed to pick up on his meaning. Day after day, she made the soup.

Eventually, he'd grown accustomed to the sugary flavor.

Now, faced with this bland, flavorless version, he found it oddly unpalatable.

After two sips, he set the bowl aside.

The maid blinked, watching him nervously. "You're not going to finish it, sir?”

She was anxious; Andrew didn't look pleased. Yet she'd tasted the soup herself-it was perfectly decent.

Andrew just grunted and headed upstairs.

At first, the maid didn't pay much attention to where he was going, but then she

heard a door creak open and her heart skipped a beat.

Looking up, she saw Andrew had opened Emily Blair's door.

As if stumbling upon some scandalous family secret, the maid instantly lowered her head and hurried back into the kitchen, bowl in hand.

The sound of soft shuffling roused Emily Blair from a hazy sleep. Blinking, she opened her eyes and saw, in the dim light, a tall, shadowy figure seated at her desk. Her heart nearly leapt out of her chest.

When she recognized his profile, she pushed herself upright in bed.

"Andrew Lane?" she whispered.

He set his book down and turned to look at her. The sharp angles of his face were half-obscured by shadow, but his dark, narrowed eyes radiated an icy intensity.

Emily instinctively clutched the blanket tighter around her. "Andrew Lane, what are you doing in here?"

He suddenly stood and strode over, looming above her. His tone was unreadable.

"What did you just call me?"

"What?" she stammered.