

Mr. Edwards' Unraveled Life

Chapter 831

Bonian's face iced over at the sound of his voice. Jayde didn't need to ask—this had to be Ethan, the illegitimate son.

"I'm his secretary," she said coolly, cutting off the assumption.

Ethan raised a brow, mock surprise on his face. "He hasn't locked you down yet? My bad."

"None of your business," Bonian said, voice sharp as glass.

Their eyes locked, tension crackling. Ethan's smile thinned, hands shoved into his pockets.

"Couldn't match your stubborn streak," he said. "Dad begged you to lead the company, and you clung to your law degree. Not like me."

Every word was a provocation. Bonian's gaze turned glacial. "My choices aren't up for discussion."

He walked off. Jayde followed. Ethan called after her. "Ms. Leung, see you around."

In the car, Bonian's cold fury lingered.

"Don't let him get to you," Jayde said gently.

"Avoid him," Bonian said, voice deadly serious. "Got it?"

She nodded. His intensity was unsettling. Ethan's identity was crystal clear now—but she figured their paths wouldn't cross again.

The next day, the office buzzed: Ethan had been appointed vice president of Lepage Group.

"A VP just like that?" someone whispered.

"Why him? Mr. Lepage already has an heir," another muttered.

Jayde played dumb. "I have no idea."

Her real concern was Bonian. Mr. Lepage's duplicity—pushing Bonian as heir, then sneaking Ethan in—was a brutal blow. She headed for Bonian's office. Raised voices spilled through the door.

Inside, Ethan lounged, smug as ever. “Nice office.”

“Who let you in?” Bonian snapped.

“I’m VP now,” Ethan replied. “Just dropping by.”

“Get out,” Bonian ordered.

“Don’t be like that, brother,” Ethan mocked. “Dad wants us to get along, doesn’t he?”

Bonian’s eyes were like steel. “You know exactly what he’s doing.”

Pitting them against each other—classic Mr. Lepage. Ethan’s grin faltered. “Always so righteous. You’re just lucky.”

“Leave,” Bonian said, done.

Ethan sneered. “You never cared about this place. But now I’m here, and guess what? You’re not the golden boy anymore.”

He brushed past Jayde on his way out. “Ms. Leung, fancy seeing you again.”

She stayed composed. “Vice President Lepage.”

He leaned in, smirking. “Tired of his ice yet? I need a secretary. Come work for me.”

Bonian’s voice was pure venom. “Ethan, you think I’m dead?”

Jayde stepped in. “Not interested.”

Ethan’s grin vanished, eyes darkening as she walked away. She laid the documents in front of Bonian. “These need your signature, Mr. Lepage.”

He noticed her lingering gaze. “Say it.”

“I’m not going to Ethan,” she said clearly, answering the fear he wouldn’t admit.

His pen paused. A faint smile broke through. “Your decision. Doesn’t matter to me.”

But things only got worse.

The old city project was finally on track, and Bonian had decided to leave the Lepage Group for good. Ethan, meanwhile, was clawing for control, poaching projects, fueling gossip. Public pressure on Bonian’s ethics escalated—no PR team in sight to counter it.

Then the firm let him go.

Bonian, eerily calm, resigned in person. Jayde went with him.

Outside, folders in hand, his eyes were hollow.

“Bonian, you don’t have to quit,” she said, desperate. “Go back. Fight.”

“No,” he said softly. “Toss these. If I can’t be a lawyer, I’m done.”

“But this was your dream.”

He didn’t flinch, shutting her out. “Go home. I need to be alone.”

Chapter 832

Jayde stood her ground. “I’m not leaving. Don’t push me away.”

Bonian didn’t turn. He stared out the window, shadowed in the fading light. “Lele’s out of school soon,” he said quietly. “He’ll worry if you’re not there.”

Her throat tightened. She didn’t want to go—but finally nodded. Before leaving, she made sure the assistant would stay and keep an eye on Bonian. Only after the assistant agreed did she leave.

At home, Lele scanned the entryway and sighed. “Mom, Uncle Lepage’s not here today?”

“He’s busy, sweetheart,” Jayde said, gently ruffling his hair. “He’ll come by later. Can you wait?”

Bonian had become part of their daily life—picking Lele up, eating dinner with them. Even Lele had gotten used to him being around. Though disappointed, he nodded quietly, his quiet acceptance tugging at Jayde’s heart.

That evening, Bonian finally arrived, hiding his exhaustion behind a soft smile. “Sorry I’m late, Lele. Look what I brought.” He handed over snacks.

Lele’s face lit up. The tension in the room eased.

Jayde watched Bonian carefully, relieved to see him steady. After dinner, as Lele dozed off, the two finally had a rare moment alone.

“I’ve made up my mind,” Bonian said. “If I can’t be a lawyer, I’ll stay with Lepage Group.”

Jayde blinked. “You’re doing this... for me?”

Of all the reasons she'd imagined, this wasn't one of them. Bonian had once left the family business to chase his dream of practicing law. To give that up—for her?

"You can't," she said, shaking her head. "Don't give up what matters to you."

"Who says I can't?" His eyes didn't waver. "You matter more."

His voice rang with the same conviction he'd had years ago. Her heart clenched. His words weren't just sweet—they were a sacrifice.

Then came a small voice from down the hall. "Mom? Uncle Lepage? I can't sleep..."

Jayde jumped up. "I'll check on him." She fled the room, her heart pounding.

Bonian watched her leave, the faintest smile tugging at his lips. He leaned back, deep in thought.

True to his word, Bonian released a public statement: he had officially resigned from practicing law to focus on Lepage Group. The media exploded. Some praised his bold decision; others mocked him for caving. But the ethical attacks lost their sting—after all, a businessman wasn't bound by a lawyer's code.

Meanwhile, the old city demolition moved ahead. New clues pointed to Desmond being paid off.

"He's been gambling hard, flashing cash," Jayde told the assistant. "He didn't fund that with pocket change."

"Someone paid him under the table," the assistant agreed.

Bonian turned to him. The assistant groaned. "You want *me* to chase him down again?"

Before Bonian could reply, Jayde jumped in. "I'll go. I found the lead—it's my call."

Bonian hesitated, then nodded. "Don't go too deep. Get answers if you can. Otherwise, bring him in."

Jayde raised an eyebrow. That tone—confident, commanding—was new. He was stepping fully into his role.

She and the assistant followed the lead to a shady pool locker, where they caught Desmond counting fat stacks of cash.

"I swear, I don't know who paid me!" he stammered. "I just got texts. It was easy money. I needed it!"

Jayde flipped through the pile—tens of thousands. This wasn't a one-time score. No wonder he'd sabotaged Lepage Group's payout. Worse, he'd let his mother suffer to bankroll his gambling.

She called the police. Desmond was arrested for incitement and previous charges. He got three years. The seized cash was rerouted to pay for Grandma Legault's care.

By the time Jayde got back to the office, she was dead on her feet.

"Secretary Leung," a staffer said. "Meeting in ten. Mr. Lepage says to prep."

She groaned but hurried to the conference room.

Halfway through the meeting, Ethan barged in, smirking. "Room for me?" He made himself at home, pulling out a chair.

Bonian didn't flinch. "Continue," he said coolly.

The presenter stumbled, then picked back up. "So, Huainan District's bid—"

"I won Huainan," Ethan cut in, raising his hand. "Surprise."

The room went dead quiet. Jayde's eyes widened—Ethan had already locked it in?

He leaned back, basking in the chaos. "Didn't know? My bad."

Bonian didn't flinch. "We have other projects," he said evenly. Just like that, he steered the meeting back on track.

Jayde exhaled. Once again, he flipped a loss into composure. Ethan's big reveal fizzled.

Chapter 833

After the meeting, Jayde lingered to gather papers. Bonian slowed his pace, clearly waiting for her. But before she could catch up, Ethan stepped in her path.

"Secretary Leung," he said smoothly. "Huainan's a tough nut. I need a sharp secretary. Leave my brother—join me."

Jayde didn't flinch. "I've told you already—I'm staying with Mr. Lepage."

Ethan laughed. "You think he's going to marry you? Mr. Lepage won't allow it."

She froze for half a second. Then calmly: "If that's your sales pitch, you're wasting your time."

"You don't care?" he sneered.

"I used to," she said. "Now? I do my job."

She walked away, heels clicking.

Ethan's face darkened. He punched the wall behind him, jaw tight. "Why him?" he muttered. "Same bastard blood."

Around the corner, Bonian frowned. "Took you long enough," he said as Jayde approached.

She didn't mention Ethan's insult. "The paperwork was a mess," she said instead.

"Drinks tonight," he said, already walking. "Come."

She hesitated, then nodded.

At the event, they entered together. One of the partners grinned. "Mr. Lepage's lady, huh?"

Bonian handed her a juice. "No alcohol. You'll pass out again."

Jayde blushed, remembering the last time she'd overdone it.

One partner chuckled. "So, when's the wedding?"

The room laughed, assuming it was just office gossip.

Bonian's voice cut through. "Soon."

Silence. Jaws dropped. One man cleared his throat, awkward. "Didn't realize she was... official."

Jayde's irritation faded. Bonian's quiet acknowledgment—no show, no spectacle—meant more than a public declaration.

Business carried on, drinks flowing. Bonian drank sparingly, but Jayde caught the whiskey on his breath—sharp, clean, like mint over fire.

"Bonian? You listening?" she waved her hand.

No answer.

"You're drunk, aren't you?"

"Not drunk," he said suddenly, pulling her into his arms.

She squirmed, glancing at the open car window. "Let go—people can see."

"No," he said calmly, hitting the button to close it.

Then he kissed her—cool at first, then warm and insistent. Jayde’s brain short-circuited. She pushed at him, breathless. “Stop...”

He finally pulled back, eyes steady. Not a trace of alcohol in them.

“You tricked me,” she snapped, rubbing her lips. “That’s not okay.”

“Unwilling?” he asked, clearly annoyed.

“That’s not it,” she said. “You didn’t ask—and you pretended to be drunk.”

He smirked. “Told you I wasn’t.”

Jayde glared. He’d outmaneuvered her again.

Their deal balanced Ethan’s Huainan win, but office chatter turned their rivalry into bets.

“I’m Team Lepage,” someone said. “Quiet but deadly.”

The assistant leaned over. “Secretary Leung, who’s your pick?”

From the hallway, the edge of Bonian’s suit jacket was just barely visible—he was listening.

Jayde smiled. “Mr. Lepage. I’m his secretary.”

Chapter 834

The assistant nodded, satisfied. Bonian’s faint smile at the door vanished as he left. Jayde’s grin widened—small loyalties could lift heavy days.

Half a month into kindergarten, Jayde called Teacher Gong. “Lele’s a dream,” Gong said. “Easiest kid I’ve had.” Jayde beamed. “He’s even better than I thought.”

At home, she hugged Lele. “Teacher Gong raved about you. I’m so proud.” Lele blushed. “I just listened to you, Mom.” Her heart melted. “Anything you want—just name it.”

“Dumplings with Uncle Lepage,” he said, eyes shining. “School says it builds family bonds. I don’t know my dad, so Uncle Lepage can fill in.”

Jayde's chest ached. Lele saw Bonian as a father. "Actually, Lele..." she began, ready to confess.

Her phone rang. "Bonian? Coming tonight? Lele wants dumplings—bring some."

Hanging up, she patted Lele. "Uncle Lepage's coming."

Lele cheered and ran off for candy. Jayde's guilt lingered—when would the truth come?

Bonian arrived—with flour, not wrappers. Jayde gaped. "No wrappers?" "Didn't see any," he said, sheepish. He'd mistaken wonton skins and refused to ask.

Jayde shrugged. "Flour works." She kneaded dough, splitting it into three. Lele's tiny rolling pin wobbled as he tried. "Easy, Lele," she said, guiding him. "Like this."

Bonian watched her, gaze soft. Lele caught on, stacking floured rounds. Jayde stretched—and Bonian reached out. "Flour on your face," he said.

She froze as he smeared more. "Bonian!" she yelped, checking her reflection—flour-streaked like a cat. She retaliated, dusting his face.

Laughter burst through the kitchen, flour flying until Jayde stopped the chaos. They washed up, Bonian gently wiping her cheek with a warm towel. "I can do it," she said. "Let me," he insisted—unyielding but tender.

The dumplings, hard-earned, tasted divine. Lele overate. Jayde suggested a walk. "Uncle Lepage too," Lele urged.

Bonian's easy nod silenced her protest. Strolling outside, strangers glanced and smiled—mistaking them for a family. Lele glowed, then dimmed. "I wish Uncle Lepage was my dad," he said, eyes wet. "I've never seen him."

Jayde's heart clenched. She looked to Bonian, who knelt. "Then think of me as your dad, okay?"

“Really?” Lele’s tears stopped, hope flickering.

Jayde’s guilt eased—just a little. At home, Lele fell asleep fast. Bonian sat close. “You’re not at fault,” he said. “He’s not ready for the truth. He just needs time—with me.”

“I know,” Jayde said, nodding. “This is best. For now.”

Chapter 835

Jayde sighed. “When Lele asked, I almost told him. If he’d pushed—‘Why didn’t my dad want me?’—I wouldn’t know what to say.”

Bonian pulled her close. “I’m the one who should feel guilty—not you.”

Lele clung tighter to Bonian with each passing day, his innocent affection drawing them closer. But Jayde hesitated, unsure where the lines blurred—or if they even existed anymore.

Then came the call: Mrs. Leung had landed in the hospital.

“She woke me screaming,” Jayde told Jace, breathless. “She was calling for Dad.”

“Slow down,” Jace said, gently prying her hand from his arm. “You’re hurting me.”

“She’s stable,” he added. “The screaming—it was triggered.”

“Triggered?” Jayde frowned. “By what? No one upset her.”

Jace paused. “It’s tied to your father.”

Her heart twisted. If her father were alive to see her mother’s decline... “Go be with her,” Jace said. “She needs you.”

Inside, Mrs. Leung cowered in a corner, frightened and lost. When she saw Jayde, she brightened, shuffling forward. “Mom, I’m sorry,” Jayde said, clasping her mother’s weathered hands, worn by years of hard labor and loneliness.

“Jayde, hungry? I’ll cook,” her mother said, eyes searching for a non-existent stove.

Jayde gently guided her to bed. “Just rest. That’s more than enough.”

Her mother obeyed, confusion softening to calm. Jayde stayed by her side for three hours before finally leaving.

Bonian called. “Lunch after work?”

Her mother's fragile image haunted her. "No appetite."

"Meet me anyway."

They met at a hot pot spot. Jayde stared out the window, blank. Bonian motioned to the waiter.

"All your usual dishes," he said.

Steam curled from the spicy broth, stinging her eyes. Jayde slid into the booth beside him. "Ignore me earlier—now you want to cozy up?" he teased.

She didn't answer. His light jab lifted the gloom a little. He piled her bowl high, barely eating himself.

"Enough," she said, guarding her bowl.

He relented, mock-regretful. Then came a voice. "Secretary Leung?"

Ethan.

Jayde's appetite vanished.

"My brother's here?" he smirked. "Thought you were with someone else."

Bonian chewed a vegetable, calm. "Done? Leave."

Ethan ignored him, turning to Jayde. "You won't kick me out, right?"

"Mr. Lepage speaks for me," she said, clipped.

"Let's share a table then."

A waiter arrived. "Sir, your table is this way."

Ethan lingered, glancing at Bonian. "No rush to ditch me."

Bonian knocked once on the table. The waiter took the hint and hauled Ethan off. Jayde ignored his parting stare.

"This place yours?" she asked.

"Not Lepage Group's," Bonian said. "Mine. Won it in a lawsuit years ago."

Her heart dipped. He'd lost his career in law—yet he spoke so casually, as if it hadn't cost him everything.

After lunch, she wandered the mall. She bought a forehead massager, then stopped by a jewelry store.
“I’m picking up something stored here,” she said.

Chapter 836

Jayde held the peace locket bracelet in her hand, heart heavy with memories. Her mother had given it to her years ago—something she’d tucked away to dull the ache of her absence. Now it felt like a wound reopened.

“It’s come back to me,” she murmured, bitterness rising in her throat.

At home, Mrs. Leung sat alone, lost in a world only she understood. Her mind, childlike since the brain injury, protected her from loneliness. But for Jayde, watching her like this cut deep.

“Mom, I’m back,” she said, voice forced bright. “Look—remember this?”

Mrs. Leung’s eyes lit up. “The bracelet... for Jayde.”

Jayde’s breath caught. “You remember?”

Even after everything—her memory fractured, her past fading—she remembered Jayde. Not her husband, not the trauma, but her daughter. Gifts. Small joys. That bond still lived.

“It’s yours,” Jayde whispered, her voice cracking. “I kept it safe at the jeweler’s.”

Mrs. Leung studied the bracelet, then gently slid it onto Jayde’s wrist. “Wear it, Jayde.”

Jayde turned away, tears sliding silently down her cheeks. She bit her lip, holding the sobs back.

A soft pat landed on her back. “Don’t cry,” her mother said, voice soft and sincere. “Jayde, don’t cry.”

That tenderness undid her. Jayde wept quietly, letting the moment hold her.

They spent the afternoon together, letting the silence soothe old grief. When it was time for Lele’s school pickup, Mrs. Leung grew restless. On impulse, Jayde said, “Let’s go get Lele together.”

At the kindergarten, Lele spotted them. He waved to his friends and his teacher. “Mom!” he shouted, backpack bouncing as he ran toward her.

Jayde took his bag. “How was school? Were you happy today? Don’t run too fast—there’s traffic.”

Lele didn’t answer right away—his eyes were locked on Mrs. Leung. “Grandma,” he beamed.

She held up a small windmill, bought on the way. Jayde had thought it was for her mother, but she realized now—it was for Lele. He lit up, cradling it carefully.

Jayde juggled Lele's bag, her mother's hand, and the walk home. "Let's grab some groceries," she said, steering them toward the calmer supermarket to avoid the chaos of the market stalls.

Inside, Jayde picked through produce while Lele played nearby. "Keep an eye on Grandma, okay?"

He nodded. He was just a kid, but perceptive. He'd asked his friends about their grandmothers and quietly figured out his wasn't quite like theirs. Still, he adored her.

As Jayde finished bagging some vegetables, a commotion exploded nearby.

"Thief! Stop her!" a woman shrieked.

Jayde whipped around to find Lele standing between Mrs. Leung and a furious woman.

"She's not a thief!" Lele shouted, cheeks flushed. "She picked it up to give it back!"

The woman, middle-aged and sharp-tongued, sneered. A frail girl stood beside her, quiet and brittle-looking. "I left my phone on the shelf. That old woman took it."

A small crowd circled, murmuring.

"Stealing's still stealing," someone muttered.

"She didn't steal it!" Lele's voice trembled with emotion. "Grandma just wanted to return it!"

The woman crossed her arms. "I'm the owner. That phone's mine."

Jayde rushed over, her stomach sinking as she saw Lele's tear-filled eyes.

"Mom," he said, choking on the words, "they lied about Grandma..."

"You did great," she said, wrapping him in a hug. Then she turned to the woman, voice ice-cold. "You're slandering my mother."

The woman's lip curled. "Your mom's an old crook. Shameful."

Jayde didn't flinch. "What you're doing is libel. That phone was left unattended—it's lost property. My mother picked it up to return it. That's not theft."

Chapter 837

The woman's face twisted, searching for a comeback. "You're dodging blame! No guilt, just excuses."

Jayde stood tall. "You're attacking someone disabled, calling her a thief in public. I'm not yelling at you—that's me being polite. You want respect? Start by earning it."

The crowd wavered, the mood shifting.

The woman, flustered, turned on her daughter. "Get up!" she snapped, shoving her hard. The girl stumbled and fell to the cold floor, crying.

Jayde's anger cracked, pity flaring. But before she could speak, the woman pointed an accusatory finger. "You scared her! That's emotional distress. Pay up!"

Jayde's jaw dropped. Extortion—so obvious it was laughable. This wasn't the first time they'd pulled a stunt like this.

She looked at the girl, then pulled herself together. "I'm calling the police," she said, pulling out her phone.

"You can't!" the woman shouted, panic rising.

"Why not? Planning to steal my phone now too?" Jayde shot back, unimpressed.

The woman's panic was almost theatrical now. Jayde pushed harder. "Your daughter's still on the ground. Let her up."

Grumbling, the woman yanked the girl to her feet, twisting her ear. "Useless," she muttered.

Jayde's heart twinged. "Hold on," she said. "You insulted my mother and humiliated a child. Apologize."

"Too far," the woman hissed, embarrassed and fuming.

Jayde raised her phone again. The woman's glare broke, and she muttered a bitter, barely audible "Sorry" before dragging her daughter away. The girl's fragile frame trailed behind, quiet and defeated.

Lele tugged Jayde's hand. "Mom... that sister looked so sad."

Jayde stroked his hair. "Yeah. She did."

She couldn't save everyone. But she could protect him.

At home, she worried the scene had left a scar, that the mess might shape how Lele saw the world. But later, he surprised her.

“That lady was a bad mom,” he said thoughtfully. “But you’re not. I can tell the difference.”

Jayde’s chest tightened with quiet relief.

When Mrs. Leung stabilized and stopped waking in the night, Jayde returned to work.

The assistant grinned. “Secretary Leung! So much time off lately. Can you beg Mr. Lepage for me next?”

“Ask him yourself,” she laughed.

He faked a shiver. “On second thought, I’d like to live.”

A coworker passed her a folder. “Can you drop this off with Mr. Lepage?”

Jayde nodded—then paused. “Pearl Harbor?” she asked, scanning the label.

“Yeah,” the assistant said, peeking over. “Didn’t you hear? They moved it up.”

“It was supposed to launch at the end of the year,” she muttered.

“Close enough,” someone else chimed in.

Jayde’s thoughts whirled. Lele had started kindergarten... the year was flying by.

She stacked the documents and headed to Bonian’s office. No answer. As she reached for the handle, the stack wobbled.

A hand shot out, steadying the pile. Bonian.

“Why carry all that yourself?” he asked.

“I just wanted to help.” She hesitated, worried he’d misunderstand. “Can you open the door?”

He took half the files from her arms, pushed the door open, and walked in. “Don’t just stand there. Come in.”

She followed, placing the files on his desk. “Pearl Harbor’s already starting?”

“Shareholders finalized it yesterday,” he said. “I’m leading the project. And you’re on it too.”

Her surprise faded into understanding. With Ethan gaining power, Bonian had no choice but to step up—prove himself, again.

Chapter 838

Jayde later overheard Ethan was also contending for Pearl Harbor. “Isn’t that Mr. Lepage’s project?” she asked, frowning. “Two leads?”

The assistant leaned in, voice low. “Old chairman’s orders.”

A chill settled in Jayde’s chest. Bonian’s recent distance—was it indifference or strategy? And why was Mr. Lepage meddling again?

She confronted Bonian in his office. He looked up, eyes narrowing. “Good timing. I’m heading to Bincheng tomorrow for Party B’s end of Pearl Harbor. Two days. Arrange care for Lele.”

“So soon?” she asked, taken aback.

He nodded, the decision firm. She wasn’t surprised to join him—her position required it—but her thoughts turned to Lele and her mother. “I’ll ask Aunt Lepage to take Lele,” she said, hesitating. “But my mom...”

Bonian’s tone softened. “Jace suggested a nursing home. Might help.”

Jayde’s heart clenched. More care meant less time. After years apart, letting go now felt cruel. “I can’t,” she said quietly.

“You don’t have to. Not now,” he replied. “Hire someone if that’s easier.”

Jayde called Norah, who agreed to stay with Mrs. Leung. But the idea of the nursing home lingered, heavy and unresolved.

That night, Jayde was quiet. Lele didn’t notice, but Mrs. Leung did.

“Don’t cry, Jayde,” she murmured, pressing a candy into her hand.

Jayde’s throat burned. For a fleeting second, she mistook it for lucidity. But her mother’s eyes were still childlike—comforting *her* pain. “I’m not crying,” Jayde lied, wiping her cheeks.

Mrs. Leung frowned, repeating, “Don’t cry...”

Jayde forced a smile. “I’m okay.” Then, tentatively: “Mom... if I had to send you somewhere I couldn’t visit often, would you hate me?”

Mrs. Leung’s eyes widened in panic. “Where?”

Jayde backtracked quickly. “Just kidding! Go play with Lele.”

Laughter filled the house, but the weight in Jayde’s chest remained.

Early the next morning, they reached the airport. Assistants handled the luggage, easing the rush. Jayde video-called Lele, reassuring him as he blinked sleepily. Comforted, she turned to the window, watching clouds drift by.

Bonian rubbed his stomach, wincing. Jayde remembered.

“Warm water, please,” she told the flight attendant.

Handing him medicine, she added, “Take this.”

He raised a brow. “You carry stomach meds now?”

“For you,” she said, arms crossed. “Take it or not?”

He took the pills, holding her hand briefly. “Since my secretary insists.”

The medicine worked slowly, but he relaxed. Jayde quietly switched seats to stay closer, ignoring his earlier complaints about random assignments.

Soon, his head rested on her shoulder.

“Mr. Lepage,” she whispered, trying to move.

He didn’t stir. She noticed his furrowed brow, the faint pain lines softening as he slept. She let him stay, unaware of the small smile tugging at his lips.

Chapter 839

Bonian stayed asleep, and Jayde let him be.

By dusk, they landed in Bincheng—too late for meetings. They checked into the hotel. Her room was beside his; the assistant’s was down the hall.

Jayde showered, only to have the water cut off halfway. “Even fancy hotels?” she grumbled, drying off.

Worse, her suitcase was with the assistant—and his phone was dead.

She hesitated, then called Bonian. “I forgot my suitcase.”

“I grabbed it,” he said. “Open up.”

Hair dripping, wrapped in a towel, she cracked the door. “Hand it over.”

He smirked. “What are you hiding? I don’t bite.”

“Like this?” she snapped, holding the door tight.

“I could come in,” he teased.

“No way.”

He wedged a foot in the gap. “Be as tough as you act,” he murmured.

She sighed, relenting. He stepped inside. As she grabbed the suitcase, their hands brushed—
warm, fleeting, electric.
“Got it. You can go.”

“Burning bridges already?” he asked lightly.

Her guard flew back up. Was he lingering to watch her change?

“What’ll it take for you to leave?”

His tone shifted, barely above a whisper.
“What’ll it take for you to accept me, Jayde?”

Her heart stuttered. Neither looked at the other, the weight of unspoken pain lingering between them. Then he left, the room suddenly colder.

Later, the assistant noted the tension.
“What’s going on between you and Mr. Lepage?”

“Just work,” she said, glancing at Bonian, focused on documents.

He looked up. “Play golf?”

“A bit,” she admitted. “The ball always flies off.”

His lips twitched. “So, no skill. Tomorrow—golf course. I’ll teach you.”

Something like anticipation crept in.

At the course, her shots went wild. Bonian watched, frowning, until one landed absurdly off course. He stepped in, tapping her knee.

“Wrong grip. Use your legs—or it’ll keep missing.”

He guided her hands, showing the swing. Her next shot landed true.

“For you,” he said, offering her a pair of black lace gloves. “Reward for scoring. Wear them tomorrow—for the banquet.”

Joy flickered, then dimmed. A gift for the event, not for her. “Right,” she said, masking disappointment. “Business.”

A dress arrived too—black, strapless, Audrey Hepburn-style. The miniskirt struck a nerve. She’d once seen Emmie in a similar skirt, long after her supposed death. Grief had clouded her certainty, but Emmie’s strange warnings still echoed.

Where was she now?

Jayde’s chest tightened. She didn’t try on the dress—Bonian already knew her size.

At the banquet, their entrance turned heads.

“Mr. Lepage, you honor us,” the host said. “We didn’t expect you at such a casual event.”

Chapter 840

No one paid Jayde much attention this time.

This banquet was different. The hook? Golf. Sink a shot, win a prize. But the real draw wasn’t the gifts—it was the bragging rights. The rich and powerful came for sport, not souvenirs.

A clean shot sent cheers through the crowd.

Franklin Cowan, a polished middle-aged man, turned with a smooth smile. “Mr. Lepage—and miss—care to give it a try?”

Jayde studied him. Polished, confident, a man used to charming rooms. But she held her ground. “Mr. Cowan, I hear you’re a golf enthusiast. Me? Hopeless. I’ll spare you the spectacle.”

Franklin chuckled, impressed. “You’re sharp.”

Blunt was more like it, but she let it stand. Charm or not, the man had presence.

Bonian hadn’t said a word, but then—“Alright. I’ll play.”

Jayde nearly choked on her wine. Bonian? Volunteering?

Even Franklin blinked. “Didn’t know Mr. Lepage golfed. Or am I out of the loop?”

Jayde deflected with a smirk. “Mr. Lepage already has fans.”

Franklin’s curiosity only deepened.

Then came the shout—“In!”

Applause erupted. Bonian had sunk the shot.

Jayde smiled, the tension in her hands loosening. She’d masked her nerves well, but inside she’d been bracing for disaster.

And then he did it again. And again. One clean shot after another. The record shattered.

“I think we all know who’s getting the prize.”

“Who else but Mr. Lepage?”

“The Lepage family—unreal. Even the younger ones make it look easy.”

Jayde’s smile faded. “Effortless, huh?” Her tone went cold.

They didn’t get it. Bonian’s grace came from grit, not luck. He didn’t coast—he clawed.

Franklin was about to call the winner when a voice cut in.

“Hold up. Don’t forget Secretary Leung.”

Jayde stiffened. Ethan.

He strolled in, the same features as Bonian but twisted by smugness.

Franklin frowned. “You’re cutting it close, Mr. Lepage.”

The crowd always called Ethan that—**Mr. Lepage**—a formality that emphasized the distance between him and Bonian.

Ethan just smiled. “Late or not, I get my turn.”

Franklin, visibly annoyed, relented. “Fine.”

Ethan grabbed a club, crossed paths with Bonian. They didn’t even look at each other.

Jayde held her breath.

Ethan’s first shot—clean. The crowd responded.

He turned to Bonian with a smirk. “What’s your score?”

“Seven,” someone said.

Ethan swung again. In. Again. In.

One final shot—smooth arc, confidence dripping from him.

Jayde tensed.

The ball spun... hovered... then stopped.

Short.

Bonian didn't miss a beat. "Guess you fell short."

Then walked off.

The silence was brutal.

Ethan burned in place, exposed by his own ego.

Then came the snap.

"Mr. Cowan, you sure about the score?"

Franklin's face darkened. "Are you calling me unprofessional?"

Insulting Franklin, a titan-turned-golf-purist, was a bad move.

Ethan tried to pivot, but it was too late.

"If you've got a problem," Franklin snapped, "settle it on the course."

Ethan glared, then stormed off, humiliated.

Franklin held up the prize: Porsche keys.

Bonian took them—then handed them to Jayde. "You take it. You won."

Jayde blinked. "You're giving this to me?"