

Love Me Or Leave Me

#Chapter 161 - Read Love Me Or Leave Me Chapter 161

CHAPTER 161

Hayden didn't appear in the video call, but his voice rang out clearly in it

Stacey, who had been on the video call with Jeremy, was slightly stunned when she heard his voice. However, she quickly reacted and explained seriously, "Yeah, I shot a TV series some time ago. It should be broadcast in a month. The other actors and I will participate in a variety show to promote the series."

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"What variety show?" asked Hayden.

"Have you heard of 'Happy Little Mango'?" asked Stacey tentatively. She wondered if someone like Hayden would watch variety shows.

"Well, I've seen it on TV occasionally. You're going to appear in that show?" replied Hayden.

Stacey nodded and said, "Yes,"

"Are you going to shoot in a few days?" asked Hayden again.

Stacey answered affirmatively.

"Where is the shooting location? Can you tell me the specific shooting time?" Hayden continued to ask in a cold and clear voice.

Stacey was confused when she heard this. Hayden's questions were too detailed, and he asked casually as if it was normal.

South City, informed Stacey Still, she thought there was no problem answering him honestly. I'm leaving tomorrow. It's "Well, I happen to have the next few days off and have nothing to do. I'll take Jeremy to South City for a walk and visit you. that okay?" asked Hayden

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Visit me? No problem with that, I think. Stacey thought. She immediately smiled and agreed, "Okay. Call me in advance when you arrive. I'll pick you up at the airport."

“Okay,” replied Hayden with a smile.

With their next meeting arranged, both Hayden and Jeremy were relieved and happy. The video call ended cheerfully.

Meanwhile, in Carter Villa, Stacey’s heart started to pound after she ended the video call Hayden would bring Jeremy to visit her, and she wondered if their relationship was that close now

While she was in thought, she heard slight noises at the door. It seemed that Debra had returned from an outing with her

friends.

“Mom,” called Stacey happily as she stood up subconsciously, looking at Debra, who was coming home.

As soon as Debra returned home, she could see her precious daughter. She was in a good mood and came in with the latest bag she bought that afternoon, among other things. She placed them on the table for Stacey to look at with flourish and happily said, “Stacey, look, these are my haul today. I bought them for you. Do you like them?”

Stacey didn’t know whether to laugh or cry. She said helplessly. “Mom, I have a lot of bags and can’t use them all

“Those are old and outdated. These are the latest designs, all beautiful!” said Debra excitedly.

Stacey

knew Debra just loved shopping to she stopped arguing. She smiled and nodded before praising. “Yeah, they’re beautiful. I like them.”

“Right?” Debra was also happy, feeling particularly good.

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Stacey smiled and hurriedly said, “By the way Mom, Mr. Hoggard... Hayden and Jeremy video— called me just now. He said he will take Jeremy to visit me in South City in a few days.”

“Huh?” thought Debra, surprised. She remained motionless and stared at Stacey with a burning gaze before saying. “Hay did

Stacey Carter nodded and said, “Yes,”

“You two are so close now?” asked Debra happily the next moment.

Debra was very happy that Stacey had new friends. She also hoped that Stacey could meet more and better friends and start her life anew in a better direction.

Stacey didn’t know how to reply to that.

Debra waved his hand and generously said, “It’s okay. The Hoggard family has good characters. Since Hay wants to befriend you, you should try to get along well with him.”

Stacey remembered that the Carter family and the Hoggard family used to have a good relationship. That must be why Hayden and Jeremy were quite friendly to her. She wondered if she had thought too much before. “Okay,” she replied.

“Well, when will you go to the shooting?” asked Debra again.

Stacey hesitantly replied, “Tomorrow.”

Debra’s eyes flickered before she pretended to be in a bind and said, “It’s too sudden, so I might not be able to go with you this time. Well, Charlie’s there to take care of you, so I can rest assured. Her tone turned relieved toward the end.

Stacey nodded and said, “Yeah. She wasn’t a child anymore. She felt that she could be independent and didn’t need her mother to follow her anytime and anywhere.

Seeing that she agreed, Debra immediately became happy and said, “Okay, then it’s decided. I’ll help you pack up your things later. I’ll take care of Lily and Kev at home when you go filming tomorrow.”

Stacey was puzzled and hurriedly said, “I can pack on my own.”

Debra really treated her like a child when she was already a grown-up. It was ridiculous.

Hearing this, Debra felt helpless. Her daughter had grown up and didn’t need her care anymore. She didn’t know what to do,

Debra sighed before saying, “Okay, I leave the packing to you. Still, if you need my help, just tell me. As long as I’m free, I’ll warp to you as quick as teleportation!”

Stacey was puzzled at her words, which sounded like game lingo. She wondered if Debra had been playing video games. “Okay,” she agreed.

After packing up and resting at home for the night, Stacey flew to South City the next day.

Debra and the two children watched the plane take off happily.

The Hoggard family suddenly became close to the Carter family. They had to speculate on the intention for Becky's sake.

During this period, Debra also asked Patrick to ask someone for some information. He found that five years ago, Jason was -seriously ill, and the hospital issued several critical condition notices.

Everyone thought that Jason was going to die, and he also felt that his end was near. However, now that his end was approaching, he got really worried about his grandchild's marriage.

The Hoggard family was anxious to find a suitable marriage partner for Hayden. Hayden also started going on blind dates. They decided on a girl in just one month, and the two quickly got married.

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Coincidentally, Jason's illness took a turn for the better miraculously, and he gradually recovered after Hayden's marriage.

Everyone thought that Hayden got married to a perfect partner and the marriage was good, which brought good fortune to Jason and saved his life.

However, no one expected that the woman Hayden married had a problem. She had a feeling for someone else.

It was said that Hayden's wife even refused to sleep with him after getting married, and their children were conceived through IVF at the urging of the woman's elders.

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Originally, it would've been fine. Anyway, as long as the man and the woman had no objections, it would be fine if the couple could live their life separately.

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However, a bizarre thing happened when the woman was around seven months pregnant. She heard that her sweetheart had come back from abroad, and she suddenly wanted to get a divorce and have an abortion. She was willing to sever ties with her parents and have an abortion to be with her sweetheart.

Debra heard that at that time, the Hoggard family was furious when the woman insisted on aborting her seven-month-old child. Sharon even fell ill and was hospitalized for a month before being discharged.

It was unknown how they dealt with this matter, but the woman did give birth to the child in the end. However, after the child was born, Hayden and the woman went to the Courthouse to arrange for a divorce. When the woman was in postpartum care a month later, the two officially got divorced. From then on, they no longer had any relationship.

After hearing about the divorce, the woman's parents immediately severed ties with her and kicked her out of the family. Unfortunately, the woman had been infatuated with love and didn't care at all. She packed up her things, dragged her suitcase, and followed her sweetheart away.

After investigating these things, Debra was fully relieved.

If the Hoggard family really wanted Hayden and Becky to be together, she had no problem with it. She also thought that the two were suitable. However, the condition was that the two must have

feelings for each other.

Of course, feelings were ultimately up to fate. So, Debra wanted to let nature take its course and let the two get along with each other at their own pace. The only thing she needed to do was to keep a distance from Becky and not follow Becky every day as before. Otherwise, the two would be embarrassed when getting along with each other while an elder was present.

Stacey was unaware of her mother's thoughts at this moment. She took a flight for several hours before finally arriving in South City.

As soon as she got off the plane, Lynn was already waiting for her at the airport. Stacey hurried over to her.

"Lynn, called Stacey with a smile.

Lynn reached out to take her suitcase and handed it to the assistant next to her. "Charlie is waiting for you outside," said Lynn.

"Charlie?" Stacey was surprised.

"Yeah." Lynn nodded.

They walked quickly, but halfway through, a sharp paparazzi spotted them. "Isn't that Becky?" shouted the paparazzi while staring at her.

Stacey and Lynn both subconsciously raised their heads to look over, which inadvertently confirmed their identity.

"Run!" said Lynn anxiously.

Stacey was already experienced. She had pulled Lynn to run before the latter even spoke. To put it simply, the two started running almost at the same time. They ran very fast and reached outside not long after.

The minivan was already parked outside and the door was opened in advance. They went over and got into the minivan immediately. The door closed, and the minivan immediately drove away. The process was smooth.

Stacey exhaled gently and looked out of the back window. She could see some paparazzi holding cameras and frantically

taking pictures of the minivan.

It didn't matter anymore. She quickly turned around and looked aside. She hadn't seen Charlie for many days. "Charlie" called Stacey happily after sitting down

Charlie chuckled, immediately scooted aside, and said happily, Sit down. I've brought lots of delicious food

As he spoke, he reached out and opened the box on the small table in front of him, revealing a large plateful of still- steaming spicy lobsters. The strong fragrance immediately wafted out.

"Did you just buy it?" asked Stacey.

Charlie nodded immediately and said, "Yeah. Isn't it delicious? Lobster is the best.

Lynn sat speechlessly before saying, "Charlie, your manager didn't allow you to eat these, right?"

Hearing this, Charlie got nervous and hurriedly said, "You won't tell her, right?"

Lynn didn't know what to say. "I'm not a busybody. Still, she did it for your good."

"What's going on?" Stacey was confused.

Lynn glanced at Stacey and explained, "Charlie"

Charlie got nervous and immediately interjected, "Ah, Lynn! There's no need to tell my sister about this, right? I think it's more enjoyable to eat lobsters together."

Stacey was even more puzzled.

Lynn remained silent for a moment before finally saying. "Charlie's been having a stomach problem recently. He gets diarrhea every time he eats lobster. His manager asked me to keep an eye on him and not let him eat lobster."

Stacey thought for a moment before immediately grabbing the lobster from Charlie's hand and putting it into her mouth.

Charlie was shocked and looked at his sister in disbelief. "Becky

Stacey casually said, "Charlie, it's not suitable for you to eat this for now. How about not eating these lobsters today? Peel the lobster for me, okay? I'll peel the lobster for you when you can eat it later, all right?"

"I just want to eat a little," said Charlie pitifully.

"You have a show to record later," Lynn reminded him coldly.

Charlie was speechless. He looked at Lynn and complained, "You guys are so cruel that you won't let me eat anything. So inhuman."

Stacey laughed and said, "Charlie, just bear with it for a while. You'll recover later, and you can eat it then

"But I want to eat it now! Charlie pursed his lips.

Stacey no longer paid attention to him. She peeled the shrimp and ate it herself.

It had been some time since she returned to the Carter family, and she finally understood Charlie. Although he was her elder brother, sometimes he was really childish and cute, like an old child.

The next moment, Charlie gave up and cuffed. "Forget it. I won't eat it. Becky, I'll peel the lobster for you."

Stacey smiled and looked at Charlie before saying, "When you get better, I'll peel it for you then."

Charlie's eyes immediately—lightened again. He was excited and said, "Okay, but I get to choose the time, all right?"

Stacey was puzzled. She felt that there was something wrong, so she asked tentatively, "When do you want to choose?"

As Charlie spoke, he had already peeled a lobster for Stacey.

He put the lobster on the small plate in front of Stacey and said with a smile, "Not during a special occasion. It's like family gatherings. Well, it's when our family gathers together. Becky, I'm telling you. You can only peel lobsters for me then and not for them. I want them to be jealous!"

Stacey chuckled and thought that Charlie was quite cute. "Okay. Next time we have a family gathering. I will peel lobsters for you and only you," said Stacey with a smile. Apart from Charlie, there shouldn't be any other childish people in the whole family, right?" she thought.

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They soon arrived at the hotel. Lynn had already arranged a room for them, so Stacey only needed to bring her luggage over and check in directly.

The actors who arrived there in advance also came to greet her after she finished arranging her belongings. Among them was Malcolm, the leading actor of "The Empress"

It had been a while since they saw each other after filming "The Empress," so this was a happy occasion for them.

Moreover, "The Empress" was going to be broadcast soon, so they were all anticipating the series' popularity.

After a short reunion, the most important thing was the script of the official recording. Yesterday, the crew of "Happy Little Mango" distributed the script to the cast. When they officially started to record the program, everyone had to perform according to the script so that the variety show could achieve the best effect.

In the room, Malcolm looked at Stacey with eyes shining brightly with excitement and anticipation. Then, he cautiously asked, "Becky, the script given by the crew is very lax. There's no rule that we have to lose to the crew of 'Rising Dragon: Can we beat them on our own?"

Stacey had already read the script. She nodded and said, "Yes."

In fact, it was an unwritten rule in the entertainment industry that popular stars should be given leeway.

The leading actor in "Rising Dragon" was Charlie. With Charlie's status, he should be given special treatment when the program crew of Happy Little Mango invited him. This was actually reflected in

the script. The program crew would try their best to give Charlie more advantages in the script and give him the most chances to perform. Even if others have the strength to beat Charlie in the game, they must make room for him and not steal his "spotlight."

However, the cast of “The Empress” was different. Becky was the leading actress in this series. The whole country knew that she was Charlie’s sister and that he spoiled her like crazy. Becky was his sister who had been lost years ago and had finally returned home.

Therefore, even if the cast of “The Empress” stole the spotlight of “Rising Dragon’s” cast during this recording, no one would scold them for not knowing how to behave toward their seniors. On the contrary, because the two siblings appeared as competitors for the first time in front of the screen, they could also be used as a gimmick to attract more fans.

In the show, if two crews compete with each other with their own skills, some accidents caused by mutual conflict could also be a major highlight.

If the crew of “The Empress” lost, people would say that their status was too far behind Charlie’s and it was normal for them to lose to a senior.

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If they won, people could also say that Charlie spoiled his sister and deliberately let the fans enjoy their siblings’ bond. This wouldn’t affect the reputation of the two crews, and the variety show’s rating should be high, which also served to the two TV series.

Therefore, they basically had no pressure during the recording of this program. As Charlie— explained to Stacey in the car, they could just relax and treat this as a leisure trip.

It took them a few days to finish recording this program leisurely

Even so, they needed to rehearse the games they’d be playing in the show in advance. There must be at least a tacit understanding within the team so that they could win.

While they were happy, Tina, the scriptwriter of “Her Majesty from Evergrande Entertainment, was in a bad mood because something happened to her.

For the original—novel “Her Majesty” was sued for plagiarism. In the beginning, Tina had no fear because Janet paid double for her manuscript. A portion of the payment could be used to pay for the fine, and the remaining money would still be a lot..

Tina was even somewhat proud and looked down on the origin author. After all, this was the current environment in the domestic entertainment industry.

However, her joy only lasted until today, and she could no longer laugh. It was because she was blacklisted.

She worked hard on the script for months and submitted it to a film company with full confidence but was directly rejected by major entertainment companies. The higher—ups

said that the plagiarism accusation surrounding the script of “Her Majesty was too loud, so they labeled Tina as a bad screenwriter and blacklisted her. They would never use her script again.

Tina finally panicked. She had been writing scripts for almost ten years, and now she had no other ability except for screenwriting. She would’ve had no income if no one was willing to use her script. Her future was ruined.

Tina was so anxious that she finally went to find Janet under her friend’s reminder. It wasn’t her who wanted to plagiarize the work. It was Janet.

Tina thought about it and hurried home. She entered her study, opened the drawer, and took out a voice recorder.

During their first meeting. Tina didn’t know what Janet wanted to do and, therefore, didn’t collect evidence. In their later meetings, she prepared a voice recorder and secretly collected a lot of evidence just in case. She didn’t expect that something would really happen.

A few minutes later, Tina called Janet, but Janet didn’t want to talk to Tina.

Janet’s voice was cold, and she directly denied that she told Tina to plagiarize “The Empress.” Janet said impatiently, “I don’t know what you are talking about. You wrote the script yourself. What does it have to do with me? I can’t write a script!”

Tina directly and succinctly said, “I have a recording. I recorded our conversation where you asked me to plagiarize the script.

Janet’s expression changed when she heard this,

Tina directly said, Janet, let’s meet up. I think we should meet and have a good talk.”

Janet wanted to say something but was afraid that Tina would trick her. She finally shut up before saying. “Come find me.”

Janet gave Tina the address, and that afternoon, Tina came to find her. Tina didn’t even have a rest and dared not to. This was related to her future career and lifetime job.

She didn’t know what to do if she couldn’t be a screenwriter in the future. Her life would be over. Tina was as anxious as an ant on a hot pan.

As soon as Tina entered the private room on the second floor of the coffee shop, Lisa walked over and checked her whole body. She even checked inside Tina’s clothes to make sure that there was no voice recorder hidden. Then, she took Tina’s mobile phone away and let her sit down on the couch after checking that the phone’s recording function wasn’t turned on.

Instead of returning the phone to Tina, Lisa directly put the phone on the coffee table to ensure that this conversation wouldn't be recorded.

After sitting down, Tina subconsciously reached out to take back her phone. However, Lisa suddenly reached out and blocked her hand.

Tina looked at Lisa, and Lisa also looked at Tina. A few seconds later, Tina withdrew her hand.

"What do you want?" asked Janet coldly.

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Tina took a deep breath and said. "I'm banned."

Janet frowned and said unhappily. "That's impossible! It's just plagiarism. So many people do it in the industry. They're still flourishing."

Tina grimaced when she heard this. "Of course, I'm aware. If I didn't understand the industry's rules, I wouldn't have agreed. to assist you with plagiarism."

"But that's the situation now. When I submitted my manuscript, they told me that due to the plagiarism incident, I am now blacklisted in the entertainment industry. They won't accept my work again," Tina said, her voice tinged with anxiety.

Janet was annoyed. "Did you offend someone?"

Tina got worked up, too. "No, I didn't offend anyone at all. Before the 'Her Majesty' plagiarism incident, my work was always well-received. All these problems started only after that. She continued, "And they claimed that the plagiarism issue with "Her Majesty" was so severe, they've labeled me a blacklisted scriptwriter. All of this must be due to Her Majesty!"

"Maybe you've upset someone in the past. They couldn't find any real faults, so they just used the 'Her Majesty' incident as an excuse to target you directly this time," Janet suggested casually.

Tina was speechless. Her thoughts were scrambled, momentarily swept up by Janet's suggestions. But it wasn't long before she sorted herself out. Looking directly at Janet, she warned, "Don't lead me astray. I'm aware of my actions, and I'm certain I haven't offended anyone before."

Then, Tina begged Janet Janet, you know a lot of people. Could you talk to them for me? Maybe get me off the blacklist!" Janet was speechless. "Who do you think I am? Do you think they will just

listen to whatever I say?"

Tina fell silent. She understood rationally that despite Janet being an award-winning actress, to the entertainment executives, she was merely a promoted entertainer. Even if Janet were to stand up for her, it might not make much difference. But Tina had no way out. The only reason she could pinpoint for being blacklisted was the "Her Majesty" incident, so she reached out to Janet subconsciously. She felt that since Janet and she were on the same boat, Janet would surely help her.

"I don't care. You're the one who asked me to plagiarize. You have to help me, or I'll release the recording. If I'm going down, I'm not going alone, Tina said irritably.

"You!" Janet glared at Tina angrily. Janet's face darkened, and she tried to stay calm.

Lisa poured Janet a cup of coffee.

Janet took a sip, then looked at Tina and said, "I have an idea."

Tina's eyes lit up, and she asked in a hurry, "What is it?"

Janet took a deep breath and said firmly, "Go to the author of "The Empress and offer her some money. Convince her to admit that she sold the copyright to you."

Tina was confused and asked, "What do you mean?"

Janet spoke coldly. As long as the author of "The Empress" officially grants you the copyright, it's not plagiarism. It's simply a legitimate adaptation."

Tina frowned. "But the copyright of The Empress" has already been sold."

"Then let her sell it again!" Janet said impatiently.

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After a moment of silence, Tina finally spoke. "I heard that the author of "The Empress signed an exclusive buyout contract. with Vicky for ten years." She paused, then added, "That means, for ten years, the film and television rights to "The Empress belong solely to Vicky. Even the author can't resell them to anyone else.

Janet was upset. "That's why I asked you to pay the author. Don't you know that money can make the world go round? As long as you offer her enough money, she will definitely agree."

Agree to what? Agree to sell us the copyright of The Empress? that's the case, then the real issue lies with the authors of The Empress. They're greedy, selling off the copyrights to multiple buyers without truly understanding the implications. We know nothing about it. We're victims too. Thinking that this tactic might work, Tina hurriedly nodded and said, "Well, I'll try

In South City, Stacey and the crew enjoyed a day off before starting their shoot the next day. The filming process turned out to be as relaxed as they had imagined. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

After a morning of shooting, during the noon break, a little child suddenly darted in and made a beeline for Stacey. He stretched his arms and hugged her legs tightly. Stacey's eyes lit up when she saw Jeremy. She asked in surprise, "Jeremy? You're here?" As she said that, she squatted down and carried Jeremy, thinking. Jeremy is really cute!

Hayden followed closely behind. His striking features and the nobility of his gestures gave him an air of distinction. The head of Southern TV arrived as well, walking alongside Hayden with a bright

smile on his chubby face, clearly in high spirits. The director and the coordinator of "Happy Little Mango" quickly came out to greet them. The atmosphere was electric, everyone excited and slightly cautious in their presence

Jeremy held up his writing tablet, on which a message was already written: [Becky, I miss you so much!]

Stacey's heart melted at the sight of the adorable child. She kissed Jeremy and said with a smile, "I miss you, too! I really, really miss you!" After saying that, Stacey took Jeremy's hand and stood up slowly. She looked at Hayden and said with a smile, "You are here."

"Yeah." Hayden nodded.

Hayden scanned the area but didn't spot the people he was looking for. Finally, he asked, "Where are Lily and Kev?"

Jeremy's eyes lit up when he heard the words. He immediately looked at Becky expectantly because he wanted to see his younger brother and sister.

Stacey was amused by Jeremy's reaction. "Does he like Lily and Rev too? Stacey answered, "They are at home. They didn't come here."

Jeremy was confused. Then, he took out his writing tablet and wrote: [Why?]

Both Stacey and Hayden looked at Jeremy's writing tablet. Amused by Jeremy's question, Stacey squatted down again to meet his eye level and asked with a smile, "Jeremy, do you like your younger brother and sister?"

Jeremy nodded enthusiastically in response. Then, he quickly took out his writing tablet and wrote: [I like them!]

Stacey's heart warmed at the sight of Jeremy's crooked handwriting. 'He is so cute, she thought,

"Okay," Stacey responded happily.

While Stacey reveled in her happiness, Charlie, who had been standing beside her, adopted a slightly defensive posture. He eyed Hayden with suspicion, his gaze curious yet cautious. Intuitively, he suspected that this man might be trying to woo his

sister.

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"It's almost noon. Have you had lunch? Hayden asked.

Stacey shook her head and replied, "Not yet, but I'm on break now and can join you" Her spirits were high, so she offered. "Mr. Hoggard, let me treat you to a meal. Mr. Lane, would you like to join us?" she asked with a smile, turning to Adam Lane, who was accompanying Hayden.

When Adam heard that, he glanced at Hayden and quickly shook his head, politely declining, "No need. I promised my wife I'd be home for lunch today. If I don't get back, she'll be upset."

Everyone laughed when they heard that.

Hayden smiled and commented, "You seem to have a good relationship with your wife."

The next moment, Adam, the head of Southern TV, nodded. He smiled and responded, "Since that's the case, let's all go and

Everyone went out smiling. Meanwhile, Adam got into his car and drove home. Stacey and Charlie walked Hayden and Jeremy to their car. They were accompanied by Lynn and Charlie's manager, Cassie Colt. Stacey had known Hayden and Jeremy were visiting, so she had researched the famous restaurants in South City and picked out several good places. She could now take Hayden and Jeremy to try them out together.

Jeremy remained by Becky's side the whole time, preferring not to wander too far from her. Upon reaching the restaurant, Stacey guided Jeremy into the establishment and

carefully lifted him, personally settling him on the couch. Jeremy rarely died out in his childhood. At that moment, he glanced around, absorbing everything with sharp interest.

The waiter handed out menus, one for each person. Stacey invited Hayden to order his favorite dishes first, then took the menu and began picking out options with Jeremy. Jeremy flipped through the menu and pointed out several dishes with vibrant colors. Stacey ordered all the dishes Jeremy had selected then turned and handed the menu back to the waiter.

Hayden kept an eye on Jeremy as he picked out the food. Hayden knew that his son had already picked out enough food, so he decided not to order anything else. Charlie snorted and randomly picked two dishes while Lynn ordered one for herself. Cassie also chose a dish..

The waiter put away all the menus before leaving the room.

After the waiter left, Stacey looked at Hayden and tried to find a subject, "Hasn't your company been busy lately?" she asked. Stacey felt awkward and thought, 'We can't just sit there in silence.

"Well, we have a few days off, Hayden replied briefly.

"Wow!" Stacey replied. Her eyes lit up as she deliberately praised, "I am so jealous of you. You should get a good rest."

Hayden smiled and said, "You can take a vacation too."

Stacey thought about it and shook her head. She couldn't afford to rest. "I need to make a lot of money. I have to support Lily and Kev," she replied and smiled. Stacey's parents were very kind to her, and the Carter family was wealthy. However, Lillian and Kevin were her children, and she felt it was her responsibility to raise them on her own. She couldn't let her parents take on that role for her.

"That's good," Hayden replied and nodded.

I can raise Lily and Kev] Jeremy wrote on his writing tablet and then held it up to Becky. Every Christmas, his grandparents and many relatives gave him money. Now, he had plenty of savings to

help support his younger siblings.

Stacey laughed when she saw Jeremy's words.

Charlie also read what Jeremy wrote. He was alarmed when he saw it. "You don't have to raise them. They are my nephews, and I can raise them! Charlie said to Jeremy on purpose.

When Jeremy heard that, he became anxious and hurriedly wrote again, I can raise them.]

“No, thanks,” Charlie refused.

Jeremy grew anxious. He clutched his writing tablet, looking back and forth between Charlie and Becky, unsure of what to do.

Stacey looked at Charlie and said helplessly, “Charlie, don’t pick on Jeremy. Then, she turned to Jeremy and smiled, saying, “Don’t worry. I can afford to raise Lily and Kev. You don’t have to it.”

Jeremy continued to write. I have a lot of money. I can support my Lily and Kev!)

Stacey didn’t know whether to laugh or cry at Jeremy’s words. She hurriedly said, “Yes, I know you’re a good boy and really want to help. I’m very grateful, but we’re not short of money now

Jeremy looked slightly dejected.

“You can still do it, Hayden suddenly interrupted. Jeremy turned to his father, and Hayden looked back at his son, earnestly explained, “If you like Lily and Kev, you can use your pocket money to buy them things, such as food, drinks, clothes, toys, school supplies... or anything”

Stacey was dumbfounded.

Jeremy’s eyes lit up and he hurriedly wrote, [Can I?]

Hayden nodded and said, “Of course. You can buy something and give it to Lily and Kev if they are willing to accept what you give them.”

Charlie was stunned. He wondered, ‘Why is Hayden encouraging his son to buy those things for Lily and Kev? It’s not like the Carter family can’t afford to raise babies! Is he up to no good? He must have ulterior motives. At that thought, he said, “Lily and Key won’t accept gifts from you.”

Jeremy was worried again, but Hayden looked at his son and comforted him, “Don’t worry. Your gift is not for him but for your siblings. As long as they like it and are willing to accept it, he can’t do anything about it.”

Charlie almost choked.

Jeremy’s face immediately lit up, and he nodded vigorously.

Without thinking, Charlie turned around and complained to his sister, exclaiming. "Becky, Hayden bullied me!"

Stacey was amused "Charlie, Mr. Hoggard means no harm," she said.

Meanwhile, Lynn and Cassie remained silent, trying to stay out of the situation while thinking, "The love drama among the rich. We can only stand on the sidelines and watch

While they were talking, there was another knock on the private room's door. Stacey quickly got up to open

the door.

The waiter brought the dishes and placed them neatly on the table. Jeremy's eyes sparkled with curiosity as he looked at the colorful food. Stacey picked up the serving fork and served Jeremy some food. Despite being a little clumsy, Jeremy carefully placed some food in Becky's bowl to share with her. After his father's last lesson at home, Jeremy had put much effort into practicing using a serving fork. Although he wasn't skilled, he could finally serve food with it.

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Hayden stayed in South City for two days, waiting for Stacey to finish filming the latest episode of the variety show. They spent a fun day at the amusement park with Jeremy before saying goodbye and heading home. Jeremy was reluctant to part with Becky when it was time to leave, but Hayden finally convinced him to go.

Stacey then flew back to Hivalis, where Debra was waiting for her at the airport with Lillian and Kevin, just like before. Her life seemed to be starting anew, filled with peace and beauty. However, the tranquility was short-lived. Three days later, Vicky, the director of "The Empress," sent Stacey an unexpected message.

Vicky texted: [Becky, Mermaid Tail told me something today. She mentioned that Tina Morgan approached her, offering money in exchange for a public admission that she had already sold the rights to Tina.]

Stacey was puzzled by Vicky's message. She wondered, I know Mermaid Tail is the original author of The Empress. But who exactly is Tina Morgan? She looked up Tina online and discovered she was the screenwriter for Janet's new show, "Her Majesty." Not long ago, when "Her Majesty" was released, they found that it heavily plagiarized "The Empress." The settings and main plots of both shows were nearly identical. At that time, Charlie and Lynn advised her to stay out of it, assuring her they would contact Mermaid Tail to address the issue.

Looks like the original author managed to defend her rights? Stacey thought, replying to Vicky: [Did Mermaid Tail agree to sell the rights to Tina']

Vicky replied with a mischievous smile and continued texting: (Of course not! Mermaid Tail has signed a ten-year exclusive contract with me. She is legally bound and cannot sell the rights to The

Empress to anyone else during that period. Tina is foolish for not even knowing Mermaid Tail's true identity and trying to bribe her with money. Becky, do you know who Mermaid Tail really is?]

Stacey texted back: [Is she someone important?]

Vicky replied: [Absolutely. I just happened to hear about this. It turns out that Mermaid Tail works at Hoggard Technologies and writes on the side. Are you familiar with Hoggard Technologies?

Stacey was silent for a moment, thinking about Vicky's message, Really... What a coincidence!"

Vicky continued: [At first, I did not know what Hoggard Technologies did. But after discovering that Mermaid Tail was working there, I decided to look into it. You wouldn't believe it! was surprised when I found out. Hoggard Technologies is one of the top ten companies in the world! Mermaid Tail must car more in a single month than we do in a whole year. Tin is foolish to think that she could bribe Mermaid Tail with just tens of thousands of dollars, especially considering the potential damage to Mermaid Tail's reputation. It's ridiculous! Does Mermaid Tail look like someone who needs money?]

Stacey responded: [So, Mermaid Tail didn't agree to Tina's request, right?]

Vicky replied promptly: [Of course not! Becky, don't worry. The Empress' is not only superior to 'Her Majesty' in terms of copyright issues but also in terms of production quality. I am confident that The Empress will surpass 'Her Majesty' once it is released.]

Stacey suddenly realized that Vicky had contacted her because she was worried that Stacey might be upset. "The Empress" had been plagiarized, and its adaptation became an earlier movie. Stacey thought about it and found herself surprisingly calm. She had almost forgotten about the plagiarism issue with Her Majesty until Vicky brought it up.

The lead in Her Majesty' is Janet. If this had happened before, I might have been unable to let it go so easily. But now, I truly don't care anymore, Stacey thought to herself. After a moment, she smiled softly. It seemed she had fully moved on from the shadows of her past. The wrongs done by the Mitchell and Edwards families no longer felt like an insurmountable barrier in her heart. As she thought about it, she suddenly remembered Patrick's wish for her to take over the family

to return home and seriously learn how to run the family business with business. Perhaps the time had finally come for h Patrick's guidance.

Just then, Lillian ran into the room and hugged Stacey's leg, shooting, "Mommy!"

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Stacey snapped back to the present and looked down at her daughter with a smile. She bent down to pick Lillian up and carried her over to the couch, where she sat down, Smiling warmly, Stacey asked, "Lily, why did you come to find Mommy all of a sudden?"

"Mommy, I missed you!" Lillian said in her sweet, childlike tone

Stacey chuckled and kissed Lillian on the forehead as she said, I've missed you too.

I... I missed you too, Mommy!" Kevin shouted eagerly, running in from the doorway.

Stacey reached out and picked Kevin up as well, playfully pinching his nose with a smile. "I missed you too, Kev," she said.

"Mommy, what were you thinking about just now?" Lillian asked, looking at Stacey curiously.

Momentarily puzzled, Stacey turned her gaze to Lillian. "What are you asking about?" she asked.

"Mommy, you looked really happy just now," Lillian said. Her gaze was serious as she spoke. She held on to Stacey, a smile spreading across her face. "Were you thinking about something fun? I want to play too!" she added.

Stacey's smile widened as she nodded. "Yeah, Mommy's been thinking about a lot of things. You know, the things that used. to make Mommy sad don't seem important anymore. What matters is the wonderful life ahead of us together," she said.

Lillian was slightly puzzled and didn't fully comprehend what Stacey was saying.

"Mommy is happy!" Stacey added in a reassuring tone. Kevin did not fully grasp what Stacey was saying, but he could feel her happiness, which also made him happy. Stacey looked at Kevin with a warm smile and said, "Yes! Mommy is happy."

After a moment of reflection, Stacey took out her phone and posted on her official account: [The rest of our lives will only get better.] She then put her phone down and hugged Lillian and Kevin tightly. With a beaming smile, she asked, "How about I tell you a story?"

Lillian and Kevin's eyes sparkled with excitement as they looked at Stacey. They nodded enthusiastically and replied in unison, "Yes! We want to hear a story"

Stacey stood up, walked to the nightstand, and opened the drawer. She pulled out a storybook and returned to the couch. Sitting down, she opened the book and read the story to Lillian and Kevin in a soft, soothing voice.

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CHAPTER 167

Stacey was now a star, adored by fans who flocked to her official account. Every post she shared received immediate attention and countless likes from her followers. Becky's family, friends, and even Theodore and Jenny were among them. Though most people did not know what had happened to Becky, they could sense her happiness through her posts and left comments wishing Becky joy and a better life.

Meanwhile, Theodore felt a deep sense of misery as he thought to himself, Stacey's happiness means leaving me and starting over for a better life, doesn't it? They had been so close once, and Rebecca had truly loved him.

However, a knock on the office door interrupted his thoughts. Theodore looked up to see Jude standing there, and he quickly entered, reporting. "Mr. Edwards, Wyatt has been found!

The pen in Theodore's hand froze in mid-twist. He stood up abruptly, his expression darkening as he demanded. "Where is he?" Theodore nearly clenched his teeth. If he had not trusted Wyatt so much back then, and if Wyatt had not betrayed him. things with Rebecca would not have ended like that.

"Brighton City, Jude replied.

Theodore sneered and commanded, "Cancel all my appointments. Get me a ticket now. I need to see Wyatt immediately."

"Okay," Jude said, understanding the urgency. He was very efficient and quickly booked the earliest flight for Theodore, which departed in an hour. So they had only one hour to wait before they departed. While they waited, Theodore efficiently completed his most urgent tasks. Finally, they rushed to the airport, Jude accompanying him. After a two-hour flight, they arrived in Brighton City.

"Where is he?" Theodore asked impatiently as they exited the terminal.

Jude replied promptly, "He opened a small game studio called Prosperous Studio. It is located in the Brighton City New District. We should find him there."

“All right, let’s go,” Theodore said, nodding decisively. Jude then hailed a cab, and they headed straight for the studio. When they arrived, Jude knocked on the door, and an employee answered, looking slightly puzzled by the unexpected visitors.

“Who are you looking for?” asked the Prosperous Studio employee.

Jude smiled politely and said, “Is Mr. Shatner here? Our boss wants to see him.”

“Yes, he is inside,” the employee replied immediately upon hearing that they were looking for Wyatt. He led them into the studio. Prosperous Studio was relatively small. Only about seven or eight people were in the studio, and the company not even have a single private office. Wyatt and all the other employees worked at desks in the main hall.

Wyatt was engrossed in his work and did not notice the visitors. Theodore approached Wyatt’s desk with a determined stride. Theodore’s demeanor was extremely somber upon seeing his former good friend after more than a year apart, a storm of emotions brewing beneath his calm exterior.

“Mr. Shatner, someone is here to see you,” the employee said cautiously, standing beside Wyatt, who looked up in confusion and suddenly froze when he saw Theodore standing there. He stood abruptly, his face turning pale.

Without a word, Theodore punched Wyatt hard.

“Hey,” the employee yelled, startled by the sudden violence. Wyatt did not fight back, silently taking the blows. The commotion quickly drew everyone’s attention in the Prosperous Studio. Realizing

the urgency of the situation, someone rushed to pull Theodore away. They could not allow Wyatt to be beaten to death in the office, or they would all lose their jobs.

“Stay out of this,” Wyatt shouted coldly, shoving his employees aside. His voice was laced with anger and sorrow.

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The employees of Prosperous Studio stood confused and shocked, unsure of how to react. Theodore’s eyes were red with rage, his anger consuming him. He punched Wyatt again and again, each blow a release of his pent-up frustration and betrayal. Then, still unsatisfied, he picked up a chair and swung at Wyatt.

Wyatt’s assistant, who had been watching the scene with increasing horror, finally could take it no longer. She rushed out, grabbed the chair from Theodore’s hands, and pulled

it aside, preventing it from hitting Wyatt. "That's enough! If you kill him, will you take responsibility?" Emily Young yelled as she stood in front of Wyatt, glaring unhappily at Theodore and scolding him with fierce protectiveness.

The office fell silent, the tension heavy in the air. Wyatt stared blankly at the girl standing before him. He quickly pulled Emily aside when he realized what was happening. "This is not your problem, stay out of it!" he ordered, trying to protect her from the fallout. His hand trembled as he pulled Emily away. He was panicked, afraid Theodore would strike again and hurt the innocent girl who had bravely shielded him. But Theodore could not hold back and kicked Wyatt hard once more.

"Hey! Enough already!" Emily yelled angrily.

Wyatt took a deep breath and then looked at Theodore, saying, "Let's talk outside."

Theodore stared at Wyatt, clearly unhappy, but finally relented. They left the studio. Emily was worried but obeyed Wyatt's orders to stay in the office and not follow them.

In a private-room on the cafe's second floor across the street, They were silent for a long time before Wyatt spoke. "I didn't mean to betray you, but... Janet deliberately sent someone to seduce my sister and set her up. My sister was in love. Not only did she scrimp and save for that guy, giving him all her allowance from home, but she also took out an unsecured loan online. Wyatt looked at Theodore and continued, "Janet had my sister's nudes and blackmailed me, telling me to deceive you as she instructed, or she would post the photos online."

Theodore glared at Wyatt. The latter smiled bitterly and said, "Theodore, I've tried my best. I've reminded you to trust Rebecca and her character, but you never trusted my words."

Theodore was silent for a long time before finally asking. "The first time Rebecca and I went to the courthouse to file for divorce, was it you who had someone call my grandma?"

Wyatt fell silent at the question. After a long pause, he nodded and replied, "Yes."

"You son of a..." Theodore began to curse, but the words caught in his throat, leaving him unsure how to continue. He stayed silent for a while, finally muttering, "Rebecca and I are divorced She... doesn't want me anymore." Theodore's voice was slightly choked with emotion, his eyes reddening as he said, "I've been to see her many times, but she refuses to see me. Wyatt, I feel like... Rebecca is not just playing hard to get. She truly doesn't want me anymore."

Wyatt was shocked, not because Rebecca had divorced Theodore or rejected him, but because of Theodore's current attitude. He thought, "Is Theodore truly hurt? Has he really fallen in love with Rebecca?"

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After a long, tense silence, Wyatt finally spoke, "I'm sorry."

Theodore's face remained a mask of cold indifference as he coldly replied, "I don't need an apology. Just do me a favor. Find Rebecca and explain everything to her,

Wyatt was taken aback, his eyes widening in shock. He hesitated his voice slightly trembling as he said, "But... Janet might still have the photos of my sister. Theodore's frown deepened at Wyatt's words, a flicker of irritation crossing his features, Wyatt sighed and explained, "Even though Janet promised to delete the photos when I agreed to help her, she did show me that she deleted them. You know Janet's character, Theodore. She's not trustworthy. She could have easily made backups somewhere else. I can't risk my sister's future on a gamble. I'm sorry. Wyatt looked away guiltily. He was painfully aware that he was letting Theodore down, but he could not do what Theodore had asked. Wyatt could not risk Lila's future for a friend. Even though Lila was not innocent, she was his sister, and he had to protect her above all else.

The mention of Janet stirred a deep-seated irritation in Theodore. It was always Janet who caused problems. The thought of her made his frustration boil over. He could not help but wish that Janet had met a tragic fate long ago to spare him the endless complications she had brought.

The conversation ended on a sour note. After Theodore left, Theodore and Wyatt were no longer friends. Despite Wyatt's explanations, the damage was permanent and irreparable, and Theodore could not bring himself to forgive him.

Fully aware that their friendship was over, Wyatt felt its finality. They could never return to the closeness they once shared. However, from that day on, the heavy burden on his heart lifted slightly. He knew that Theodore now understood that misunderstandings marred the past, and he realized that the fault lay primarily with him.

At Carter Villa, after Stacey finished taking care of Lillian and Kevin for the night, she proposed to Patrick that she join him at the company the next day. Patrick's eyes immediately lit up with excitement when he heard Stacey. "Really? Becky, you want to come to the company with me?" he said, surprised.

Stacey nodded and replied, "Yes"

"Fantastic! In that case, come with me today. I will introduce you to everyone at Hoggard Technologies, Patrick said, his voice brimming with enthusiasm. His posture straightened with a newfound energy, and he seemed more motivated than he had been in a long time. Debra, who had been watching from a nearby chair, was speechless.

Patrick was genuinely happy. He had dedicated many years to the company, and as it grew, so did his responsibilities. Patrick had become busier and spent less time with Debra, which was challenging for both. He had always envisioned a future where his sons would eventually take over the family business, allowing him and Debra to retire and explore the world together. However, none of his sons showed any interest in inheriting the family business, which Patrick found frustrating and disappointing. Fortunately, Becky had a different perspective. There was a common saying that daughters were their fathers' little angels, which was undeniably true in Becky's case. Patrick was deeply grateful for his little angel

"Debra, I am taking Becky to the company today. Please look after Lily and Kev at home while we are gone. Patrick said, his tone filled with happiness.

"Go ahead, but remember to take good care of Becky, Debra advised, her voice carrying a motherly concern.

"Of course!" Patrick replied eagerly. Stacey, seeing Patrick's joy, felt a sense of happiness. They left the villa together and got into the car. After a short drive, they arrived in the vibrant heart of Hivalis, where Carter's Jewel headquarters stood tall amidst the hustle and bustle of the city.

Carter's Jewel headquarters occupied an impressive 33-story building. The first floor housed a standard jewelry store. The second floor was dedicated to the company's regular employees, featuring an array of offices and a spacious lounge. The third floor was a warehouse, storing countless valuable items from Carter's Jewel's extensive inventory. Floors four, five, and six were dedicated to the company's designers, each divided into various work areas. The fourth floor was for regular designers. That floor resembled a large office space, with many designers working together in open-plan offices. The fifth

floor was designated for senior designers and featured 64 individual offices, each providing a private workspace for the experienced designers. On the other hand, the sixth floor was reserved exclusively for Carter's Jewel's top jewelry designers – those world-renowned for their unparalleled expertise. Despite its expansive layout, the sixth floor was only divided into three sections, each dedicated to one of those top designers.

Patrick took Stacey to meet the three top designers: Linda Steinfeld, Bernard Spielberg, and Thomas Burtman. Everyone smiled during their first official meeting, but Stacey sensed the designers' curiosity and wariness toward her. Patrick continued the tour after leaving the sixth floor, leading Stacey through the other building floors. They saw many raw stones and met numerous buyers and business owners. Many of those owners smiled and greeted Patrick and Stacey warmly when they entered.

"This must be Becky. Congratulations on finding your daughter, Mr. Carter, Henry Brown said warmly.

Patrick smiled back, his pride evident. “Yes, this is Becky, my daughter,” he said. He continued with the introductions by saying, “Becky, meet Henry Brown. You can call him Mr. Brown. He’s a regular

customer here and loves to buy our raw stones. In addition to Henry, they met several other esteemed customers, including Alan Davis, Lucas Wilson, and Caleb Harris. Patrick kept smiling, enthusiastically introducing Stacey to each one and examining raw stones with them

Stacey felt a mixture of exhaustion and awe at the end of the day. It was not easy running a business. Patrick was truly impressive, maintaining friendships with so many customers, always cheerful, and successfully selling raw stones regardless of whether the customers won or lost. As long as their raw stones were sold, it was all profit.

After a busy day, as the afternoon was winding down, Stacey asked, “Dad, can I access the building’s surveillance footage?”

“Surveillance? Did you lose something?” Patrick asked. He was stunned and slightly puzzled, worried Stacey might have lost something important.

Stacey shook her head and replied, “No, it’s just that I met so many people today, and I can’t remember them all. I want to go through the footage to remember everyone.”

Patrick laughed and nodded. “Sure, no problem,” he said.

CHAPTER 169

Stacey started working at the company. Her job was hectic, but Patrick was always there to guide and help her, allowing her to understand her responsibilities quickly. As everything was proceeding smoothly, “The Empress” finally premiered. The moment it was released, it immediately captured the attention of many viewers, just as expected.

There were claims that “The Empress” had the same plot as “Her Majesty,” but the news of plagiarism quickly quelled these. People could clearly distinguish which was the original. Most importantly, the storyline of “The Empress” was exceptional. The costumes, makeup, filming locations, appearances, and acting skills of the actors and actresses were all outstanding. It could be said that every frame in the show was like a painting. Upon seeing it for the first time, many fans started screaming, taking screenshots, and sharing them on Twitter, urging their friends to watch the show because it was simply too good.

Many short video creators were excited, thinking. “Ah! Finally, there’s a phenomenal show after such a long time! Most importantly. The Empress was perfect for creating a trending top. “Her Majesty, which had been recently released, featured an almost identical plot, making it perfect for a comparison video. Thus, numerous bloggers and short video creators made comparison videos, juxtaposing the plots of “The Empress”

and “Her Majesty.” They edited clips of the two leading actresses from both shows side by side for comparison in a single video. Some bloggers humorously labeled “The Empress as the original and Her Majesty” as the imitation. The difference in quality between the original and the imitation was strikingly clear in the show, the actors and actresses, and their performances. This made the description both accurate and fitting.

In Mitchell Villa, Janet couldn’t sleep the night of “The Empress premiere. She had meticulously planned for so long. spending a fortune to hire a scriptwriter to plagiarize the script, all to ensure her show aired before “The Empress,” Janet was confident in her looks and acting abilities, anticipating

that Rebecca would be compared to her once “The Empress” was released, with everyone evaluating their acting skills. She wondered. But why didn’t the scenario I envisioned, where my acting is praised as superior to Rebecca’s, happen? Why? Janet kept refreshing the updates from the short video creators she knew, watching as they labeled the videos with the original and the imitation. The bold, enlarged words seemed to be mocking her directly. She thought, ‘It’s impossible. This can’t be right! It absolutely cannot be like this!’

The more Janet scrolled, the more panicked she became. Her face soured as she repeatedly compared the two, but there was no need for comparison. The moment Charlotte appeared, her natural aura immediately spoke for itself. Janet just didn’t want to believe it or accept the fact. She would never admit that Rebecca’s acting was better than hers. After all, Rebecca had only been in the industry for a little over a year. Janet mused, Rebecca is just a newcomer with no acting skills and no professional training. How could she be better than me? Everything Rebecca has now is just due to the Carter family’s support and media hype. How could she possibly have real talent? Ha!

Unwilling to accept this, Janet considered one thing. “Her Majesty was rushed. There wasn’t time for the actors and actresses to practice their acting skills before filming. Once the script was written, they immediately began shooting. She mused, ‘So....

this it? I lost to Rebecca because the filming was rushed and I didn’t have time to prepare. With this thought, Janet gradually began to calm down.

However, while Janet calmed down, Karen was on the verge of losing her mind in the master bedroom next door. Yesterday, someone approached her with the shocking claim that Janet was not her biological daughter. Karen dismissed the person as crazy, thinking. ‘Ha! How could Janet not be my daughter? The pain she endured during pregnancy and childbirth was still fresh in her memory. Karen reassured herself, Janet is definitely my biological daughter. I’m certain of it!’ However, that person took out a paternity test report and said that if she didn’t believe it, Karen could conduct a paternity test with Janet herself. Karen didn’t react well to that person and chased

them away, cursing them as she did. However, she couldn’t settle her restless thoughts after that person left. Their words were like a seed of doubt, taking root her heart and

troubling her. Karen thought about it repeatedly and eventually couldn't resist getting up and going to Janet's room

Lying on her side in a foul mood, Janet heard a noise at the door and glanced back at Karen, who had suddenly entered her room. She called out in surprise, "Mom?"

Karen couldn't help but observe her features. She had known since childhood that Janet didn't resemble her much, nor did she look much like Gary. However, Karen had never doubted it, as she had given birth to her. On the other hand, that person claimed that during the in vitro fertilization process at the hospital, the embryos were accidentally swapped by the

doctor.

Janet felt as though Karen was staring at her strangely. She frowned and asked, "Mom? Why are you looking at me like that?"

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Karen came back to her senses and shook her head. "I—It's nothing."

Janet looked at Karen with confusion and asked, "Mom, is there something you need?"

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Karen hesitated but eventually entered the room and spoke, saying, "Janet, I heard that Rebecca's new show was released. Many people are talking about you two..."

"Mom!" Hearing this, Janet became unhappy, and her face darkened. Of course, she knew that people outside were talking about her. They were comparing her to Rebecca, mocking her, and saying she couldn't measure up to Rebecca. Janet, thinking of this, grew upset and asked, "Why are you bringing this up? Rebecca has already cut ties with our family. She has nothing to do with us!" Karen remained silent. If it had been in the past, she would definitely go along with Janet's words. However, now, Karen seemed hesitant. Janet grew more puzzled by her mother's strange behavior and asked, "Mom, did you come in just to talk about this?"

Karen snapped back to her senses and quickly shook her head. "No, L... As she spoke, she walked over to Janet. After a moment of hesitation, Karen suddenly reached out and tugged on a strand of Janet's hair. Janet was instantly baffled. Karen felt a sudden sense of relief after she pulled out the strand of hair. She quickly added, "It's nothing. I... was just a little worried about you. I'm so angry seeing all those people criticizing you online. Are they blind? How could Rebecca possibly be better than you? It's because the Carter family is wealthier than us. They invested more in costumes and makeup, which made Rebecca look stunning. That's why people perceive her acting as better."

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“Yeah, Mom. You’re right. But why did you pull my hair?” Janet listened to Karen’s words but kept her gaze on the strand of hair in Karen’s hand. The strange look Karen had given her earlier, combined with the hair, made her ponder. As Janet thought about the hair, her mind immediately jumped to the idea of a paternity test. Why would Karen want a paternity test? Janet suddenly entertained a ridiculous thought. She wondered, Could I not be my dad’s daughter? Did my mom recently discover something and is now using my hair for a paternity test?’

Karen panicked at Janet’s question and hurriedly replied, “No! That’s not...” Karen realized she couldn’t find the right words. The unsettling comments from that person had made her anxious and distraught, causing her to act out of character and forget to cover her tracks. She had even gone into Janet’s room to pull out a strand of hair. Karen quickly threw the strand of hair into the trash can and looked at Janet, explaining, “I saw a bug on your hair and wanted to help you get rid of it, but I accidentally pulled your hair out.” Janet was speechless. Karen awkwardly paused for a moment before continuing. “I’ll go now if there’s nothing else. You should rest well. Don’t let those online comments bother you. That brat, Rebecca, will never be better than you!”

Janet looked at Karen thoughtfully and nodded. “Okay,” Karen eventually left her room. Janet stared at the strand of hair in the trash can, remaining silent for a long time before finally picking it up. Karen’s actions today had been strange, and she felt compelled to investigate. Janet suddenly remembered that her parents adopted Rebecca because of infertility issues. She wondered, ‘How did Mom end up getting pregnant later? Could it be that I’m actually not Dad’s biological child? Janet felt guilty for having such thoughts, but the thought of Rebecca receiving affection after reuniting with her biological parents sparked a flicker of expectation. Janet wondered, ‘Could it be possible that my biological father is actually someone even more exceptional

With “The Empress” skyrocketing in popularity, the plagiarism of “Her Majesty” was exposed. Many netizens discovered that Tina was the screenwriter of “Her Majesty,” leading to widespread criticism. It would have been manageable if the criticism had been confined to online discussions, but “The Empress” was too popular. As the show’s popularity soared, the focus on the plagiarism of “Her Majesty” intensified. More and more people were sharing news about Tina, the screenwriter accused of plagiarism. Soon, even those close to Tina became aware of the situation. Some of her former classmates even reached out to ask what was happening. Her parents back in her hometown called her too, as many people had informed them about the situation. Tina was so anxious that she was afraid to go outside, feeling as if anyone who saw her would look at her with disapproval.

The more Tina feared, the more she resented Janet, the instigator who had initially encouraged her to plagiarize. The countless online comments defending Janet, with Janet’s fans blaming Tina for the plagiarism, only heightened Tina’s frustration. They claimed that Janet was just following the script and was not to blame for the issue.

According to them, the blame should fall on the screenwriter, not Janet. Tina grew increasingly resentful. She wondered, Why should I take the blame for Janet? This whole situation was Janet's idea from the beginning. If Janet hadn't approached me and offered a high price to plagiarize, I would never have copied *The Empress* without reason.

After thinking all night, Tina made a decision the next day. Since the situation was already out of her control, she decided to leverage the evidence she had to make a significant profit. Janet was an award-winning actress, and "The Empress" and "Her

me other information about Janet that she had Majesty were the hottest topics at the moment. Additionally, Tina had painstakingly gathered. After staying up all night, Tina had noticeable dark circles under her eyes, but she no longer felt tired. Instead, she experienced a twisted sense of excitement. She thought, 'If I'm going down, everyone's going down with me. No one will escape!'

Tina turned on her computer and sent message to the most famous paparazzi online. She thought, 'It wouldn't be an exaggeration to sell these materials for 100 thousand dollars, would it?'

At Carter Villa, Stacey thought that once she got used to going to work at the company, her life would settle into a smooth and happy routine. However, she didn't expect that one afternoon, as she was getting out of the car after work, Jeremy suddenly emerged from a corner and ran straight into her arms. Stacey was stunned, instinctively holding Jeremy, and glanced around. She spotted a middle-aged man at the back, who seemed to be a driver of the Hoggard family. Stacey hesitated for a moment, then crouched down and held Jeremy in her arms. She asked with a smile, "Jeremy, what are you doing here? Where's your dad?"

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Stacey instinctively assumed that since Jeremy was so young, Hayden must be close by, following him around. Jeremy didn't respond. His bright eyes looked at her, and soon, tears began to well up in his eyes. Stacey instantly became anxious when she saw his tears. Sensing something was wrong, she quickly lifted Jeremy and soothed him. "It's okay, it's okay. I'm here. Jeremy doesn't need to be scared." Jeremy buried his face in her arms. His tears overflowed, streaming down in large droplets.

Stacey, holding the child, hesitantly walked toward the Hoggard family's driver. The driver approached as well and said respectfully, "Ms. Carter."

Stacey's lips moved, and she wanted to ask what had happened, but she held back when the words reached her throat. She thought, Jeremy is still crying, and asking such questions in front of him might make him even more upset. Stacey then said to the driver of the Hoggard family. "Well then... I'll take him inside the house first. Why don't you come in and rest a bit too?"

The driver nodded quickly. "Okay. Thank you, Ms. Carter. Stacey nodded and carried Jeremy into her house, with the driver following behind. They entered Carter Villa together.

Inside the house, Lillian and Kevin ran out. Since Stacey had gone to work, they had been waiting at home every day. As soon as Stacey came back from work, they would immediately rush over and hug her. They had missed her terribly. But today, Lillian and Kevin were both stunned to find Stacey standing at the door with a young boy,