

# Love Me Or Leave Me

## #Chapter 211 - Read Love Me Or Leave Me Chapter 211

### CHAPTER 211

As Isabella listened to Adrian's urgent assurances, a nagging doubt lingered in her mind. Though she wanted to press him further, she realized that with Adrian driving, it was not the moment for a confrontation. She tightened her grip on Damian's hand, her silence heavy with unspoken frustrations. Adrian, aware of the tension, continued to steal glances at Isabella and Damian in the rearview mirror. Isabella, catching his divided attention, snapped sharply. "Just focus on driving." Her icy tone underscored her concern for their safety, particularly with Damian in the vehicle.

"Okay," Adrian replied, nodding solemnly. He understood the importance of focusing on the road and redirected his full attention to navigating through the heavy traffic. The journey home, usually brief, dragged on for an agonizing 40 minutes due to the congestion. Once they arrived, Damian hurried to open the door, but Isabella had already unbuckled herself and exited the car with Damian by her side. Her face showed clear signs of distress from their earlier exchange. "Isabella, please believe me. If I am involved with another woman, may I suffer a miserable death, Adrian implored with earnest sincerity.

"Why did you hesitate earlier then?" Isabella demanded, her glare sharp and accusing.

"I was just remembering how stunning you looked the day we first met. Believe me, I wasn't thinking of anyone else," Adrian explained, his voice filled with a desperate plea for understanding. Isabella maintained a long, silent stare before turning away and heading toward the stairwell, Damian in tow.

Adrian felt a whirlwind of confusion and distress as he followed them to their doorstep. Just as they were about to enter, Isabella suddenly spun around, and the door slammed shut with a resounding bang, narrowly missing hitting Adrian. He instinctively stepped back, standing at the entrance, his hand raised to knock but then hesitated, ultimately lowering it. He was torn over whether to confess

his true identity to Isabella. His heart was heavy with turmoil, knowing full well that Isabella and Carly had a deep-seated disdain for the wealthy elite. The thought of revealing his background as one of those wealthy scions filled him with dread, and he vigorously shook his head, thinking, "No, I can't handle the repercussions just yet. But what do I do for now?

Adrian remained conflicted for a considerable time before finally pulling out his phone and searching the internet for advice: [What to do when you've accidentally upset your wife?] He scrolled through various suggestions, ultimately choosing a low-key approach

that wouldn't overly disturb Isabella and Damian. He ordered a bouquet online and settled to wait patiently outside her door, hoping this small gesture might begin to mend the rift between them.

As time seemed to crawl by, the wait felt interminable, but finally, after what felt like an eternity, the flower delivery arrived. Adrian quickly signed for it and, upon the deliveryman's hopeful look, he generously awarded a five-star rating. Squatting at the doorstep, Adrian clutched the bouquet of flowers, arranging his features into an expression of profound remorse.

Inside, after firmly closing the door, Isabella led Damian further into the depths of their home. Damian frequently turned to look back at the door and then up at Isabella with a puzzled expression. Despite his closer bond with Isabella and a tendency to often overlook Adrian, Damian had, over the past six months, come to appreciate Adrian due to his consistent affection and presence in their lives. "Daddy didn't come inside," Damian observed quietly after a moment. Isabella's face grew stern as she glanced toward the door. She was indeed seething with anger, and after shutting the door with force, she found herself straining to hear any sounds from outside. She half-expected Adrian to knock, to make some gesture to come in and explain, but the silence was absolute.

Isabella wondered, 'Has he left?' She couldn't help but feel a wave of disappointment and disillusionment. Over the recent months, she had gradually started to view Adrian as a potential dependable partner. She thought ruefully, Men as expected, I can only truly depend on myself: Resolutely, she turned to Damian and instructed—sharply. "Ignore him." Damian gave the door a

lingering, hesitant look but eventually turned away, deciding to follow his mother's directive. "Have you had anything to eat yet?" Isabella then asked, changing the subject to distract both Damian and herself.

Damian shook his head and answered, "No." He had previously expressed his displeasure with Adrian's subpar culinary efforts, especially criticizing the lunch he had prepared earlier that day. Seizing this opportunity to shift her focus, Isabella headed to the kitchen to prepare a meal for Damian.

That evening was spent in a flurry of activity; she cooked dinner cleaned up Damian's scattered toys, gave him a bath, and then took a shower herself, all the while pushing thoughts of Adrian to the back of her mind. The next morning, driven by routine, Isabella went to open the door, only to be startled when Adrian, who had been slumped against it, toppled forward as it swung open

Startled, Isabella instinctively reached out to catch him. Meanwhile, Adrian, groggy and disoriented, woke up abruptly. As his senses returned, he quickly stood up and, in his haste, handed the bouquet he had held all night to her. Isabella, taken aback, stared at him. Observing Adrian, who was still in the clothes from the previous day, with dark

circles under his eyes and his hair disheveled from spending the night leaning against the door, she hesitated before asking, "You... slept outside all night?"

Adrian earnestly replied, "Isabella, I'm not lying to you. I don't have another woman. I swear, it's only you." Desperate to reassure her, he added, "And I promise, after we get married, I will be faithful to you. I'll never get involved with anyone else. Despite his heartfelt assurances, Isabella remained

silent, her expression stern, but she did not push him away as she had the previous day. Instead, she turned and walked toward the kitchen without a word, her expression neutral.

Adrian, seeing a slight softening in her demeanor, felt his spirits lift. "Isabella, I'll make breakfast today. Why don't you go back to sleep for a bit? I'll wake you when it's ready," he suggested, though she continued ignoring him, reaching for the pasta in the cupboard. Unsure of how else to contribute, Adrian busied himself by re-washing the dishes. After finishing, he checked the time and realized it was about time to wake Damian. "I'll go wake Damian," he announced.

All the while, Isabella remained silent, only sparing a glance at his retreating figure. She was convinced he was hiding something from her. Her intuition was rarely wrong, and his evident guilt from the day before was a clear sign. Yet, given his persistent assurances, she was convinced it wasn't related to another woman. However, something else was troubling him. Isabella pondered over this as she watched the water in the pot begin to boil, ready for the pasta. As breakfast was finally ready, a sudden thought struck her. She wondered, 'Could he be in debt? Is that why he's so afraid of me discovering his past?

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## **CHAPTER 212**

In Daprein, Stacey had specially set aside a day to accompany Hayden to meet Eugene. Initially, she was quite nervous about this visit, but once they arrived, she realized that with Hayden by her side, there was nothing to worry about. Instead of introducing her to Eugene under a business pretext, Hayden posed as a suitor, requesting Eugene to design a commemorative ring for them. He recounted their story to Eugene, from their childhood to getting separated, to their respective marriages and divorces, and finally, their reunion after many hardships.

Originally distant and formal, Eugene became deeply moved by their story. The relationship between them quickly transformed from formal and distant to warm and friendly. To help Eugene create a ring that truly represented them, Hayden invited him to visit Zentscape, to see the place where he and Stacey had grown up and currently lived. Delighted, Eugene accepted the invitation with enthusiasm.

As they left Eugene's place. Stacey was still in a daze. She wondered if she was anxious over nothing as it seemed to be something really simple. Back at the hotel, Hayden chuckled upon seeing her dazed expression. "Still in shock?"

"Huh?" Stacey snapped out of her thoughts, looking at Hayden. Unable to resist, Hayden reached out and pinched her cheek. Just as he had imagined, it was soft and pleasant to the touch. His action, however, surprised Stacey.

Hayden quickly withdrew his hand and smiled. "We can't rush in negotiation. It needs to be done step by step. We've invited him to Zentiscape to understand us better. Once our relationship with him deepens, we can seize the opportunity to invite him to work with Carter's Jewel. Okay?"

Stacey nodded hurriedly. "Okay, I see. Hayden, you're amazing! She couldn't help but praise him sincerely. Pleased with her compliment, Hayden couldn't help but reach out and gently hold her

hand. His action caused Stacey to tense up again.

In the hallway, Hayden pulled Stacey into a corner and kissed her. Stacey's eyes widened in shock, her mind blank. Hayden observed her reaction and noticed she neither resisted nor struggled. A slight smile played at the corners of his mouth as he embraced her, deepening the kiss. Finally snapping out of her daze, Stacey pushed him away. Upon sensing her resistance, Hayden slowly released her, though still lingering with a hint of desire. "I'm sorry, I couldn't help myself," Hayden apologized solemnly after their lips parted.

Blushing deeply, Stacey was at a loss for words. "I-L... Stacey stammered nervously,

Hayden patted her head, laughing softly. "All right, don't think too much about it, When are you planning to return to the country?"

As expected, Stacey was distracted by the question. She answered after pondering for a moment, "We should be leaving soon. There's not much left to do here. If there's nothing else, we'll head back."

Hayden nodded. "Okay" He tilted his head, looked at her, and said seriously, 'Once we return, we need to plan a detailed itinerary for Mr. Fraley's visit. We have to include the places from our childhood and the experiences we've had, both past and present. Make our story as appealing as possible, so he not only enjoys our company but also falls in love with Zentiscape. This will greatly increase the chances of him agreeing to collaborate with Carter's Jewel."

Stacey nodded eagerly. "Okay, I will."

Hayden smiled. "Remember to include me in those plans."

Upon hearing this, Stacey was confused and dazed. Soon, she returned to her senses and asked worriedly. "Include you?"

Hayden nodded and explained, "Of course. We invited him to Zentscape under the guise of me pursuing you. If you're the only one showing him around places of our memories, my feelings for you might seem disingenuous." A fake romance wouldn't impress a top designer like Eugene, who had seen it all.

"But won't this affect your work? You must be very busy. Stacey was hesitant.

Hayden chuckled at her words. "Don't worry. My life isn't all about work." While his responsibilities and career at Hoggard Group were important, making money was just a means to an end. The true purpose was to improve life, to have enough

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wealth and status to enjoy it In other words, a wonderful life was the essence of existence, not endless work. He had toiled for so many years, and now that he had finally met a girl he liked, he wanted to take a step back, pursue her earnestly, and savor their life together. To him, this was the true meaning of life.

"But what about your responsibilities at Hoggard Technologies? Stacey asked, concerned.

"I'll have my dad take over for a while," Hayden replied casually. He had taken the reins at 18, giving his parents a long respite. Now it was time for them to return to the helm for a bit and for him to enjoy life. While Stacey was rendered speechless, Hayden added with a smile, "Relax, don't worry about me."

Stacey stared blankly for a moment, then nodded. "Okay."

"Besides, I'm entitled to a vacation. I've been working continuously for years without taking any breaks. It's only reasonable. to take all my accumulated leave at once," Hayden said.

Stacey thought about it and agreed, "You're right." People weren't machines. Hence, working non-stop would make life meaningless. "All right, once I finish drafting the plan, I'll send it to you for review. If there's anything amiss, let me know, and I'll make the necessary changes," she said.

Hayden nodded with a smile. "Sure." After escorting Stacey back to her room, Hayden finally left.

As soon as he was gone, Debra hurried over and asked anxiously “How did it go? Did you settle everything?”

Stacey nodded in a hurry. “Yeah, almost. Then, the two of them sat on the couch, and Stacey earnestly recounted the day’s events to Debra.

As Debra listened, her eyes brightened and appeared visibly delighted. “I knew it, Hay is a clever boy. Becky, make sure you plan well. If there’s anything you don’t understand, I’m here to help, Debra said joyfully.

Stacey smiled as she looked at Debra and nodded. “Okay.”

## **CHAPTER 213**

“If there’s nothing else to do here, let’s buy flight tickets for tomorrow and head back. We’ve been here for several days already,” Debra suggested.

Stacey nodded in response. “Sure.”

As Debra spoke, she reminded Stacey, “By the way, why don’t you ask Hay when he’s planning to leave? If it works out, we can travel together.”

Upon hearing this, Stacey was hesitant. “He’s probably going straight back to Strico, isn’t he?” Strico and Hivalis had their respective airports. Since they were heading back to Hivalis, Stacey assumed Hayden would head straight to Strico as well.

Debra sighed, realizing the practicality. “You’re right.”

“I’ll ask him anyway, Stacey said. Regardless, it was only polite to inform Hayden about their departure and check if their plans could align.

Debra nodded. “Yes, that’s a good idea.” As it was getting late, Stacey returned to her room and pulled out her phone to send a message to Hayden.

On the other side, Hayden had just stepped into the bathroom with his robe when his phone rang with a special notification.

his phone to tone he had set just for Becky. As soon as he heard the ring, he immediately put down his robe and picked up check the message. Stacey texted: [Going back tomorrow?] It was what he had expected, as he also had plans to leave tomorrow.

He quickly replied to Becky: [I’m planning to go back tomorrow too, but I need to make a stop in Strico first. Jeremy has been causing a fuss at home, insisting on seeing you. I need to go back and calm him down.] Jeremy’s fondness for Becky had surpassed even

Hayden's expectations. However, it was a good thing. At least, he wouldn't have to worry about Jeremy not liking her when they were together.

After reading his message, Stacey smiled warmly at the thought of Jeremy. She quickly replied: [I've missed Jeremy too. It's been a while since I saw him.]

Hayden responded: [I'll bring him to see you next time.]]

Stacey asked: [By the way, when is Jeremy's surgery? If possible, I'd like to be there with him.]

Hayden replied: [In 20 days, we'll have to be in Menterra for it.]

Stacey thought, "Menterra?" She soon understood, given the advanced medical technology there. Before long, she replied: [All right, I'll come to your place a day earlier, and we can travel to Menterra together with Jeremy.]

Hayden agreed: [Sounds good]

Having settled the matter, Stacey lingered over their chat for a while, feeling a mix of concern and hope for Jeremy's surgery. She wanted it to go smoothly so he could be healthy and live like any other child, able to speak. She thought perhaps she should visit a church and pray for Jeremy's safety as soon as she returned to the country. With that thought, she finally put down her phone and picked up her robe to take a shower.

"Mommy! Mommy, where are you?" Halfway through her shower, Lillian and Kevin burst into Stacey's room, calling out

her.

Upon hearing their voices, Stacey sighed. However, she was already accustomed to such interruptions after caring for the children all this time. "I'm in the shower she quickly responded

"Why are you still in the shower? We've already finished and want to go to bed now. Before that, we want to hear a bedtime story, Mommy, Lillian demanded with a sweet voice.

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"I want to hear one too,-Kevin chimed in.

The bathroom door creaked as the two children pushed against, trying to get in. Meanwhile, Stacey continued her shower, pretending not to hear. "Mommy, how much longer are you going to be in there?" Lillian asked impatiently.



"I'm almost done." Stacey replied quickly.

"Are you going to open the door soon?" Kevin asked. Maintaining a calm facade, Stacey answered her eager children while finishing her shower. When she finally wrapped herself in her robe and opened the door, Lillian and Kevin immediately clung to her, with one on each side.

"Mommy, you took forever! It felt like ages," Lillian complained.

"Yeah, we almost lost our patience," Kevin added, with a surprisingly serious tone for his age. Stacey's eyelid twitched as she carried Lillian and Kevin to the bed, removing their shoes and

tucking them in. Once they were settled, she took out a storybook and began reading to them. Fortunately, Lillian and Kevin were unusually calm that night and fell asleep after just

After breathing a sigh of relief, Stacey gently placed the book on the bedside table, turned off the light, and went

one story.. to bed.

The next morning, Stacey was jolted awake by a nightmare. In her dream, a massive boulder had fallen from the sky, terrifying her until she woke up. Opening her eyes, she realized the "boulder" was Kevin, who had crawled onto her again. At almost two years old, they were solid little weights, and having them climb on her was no joke. Sighing, Stacey rolled over and gently pushed him off. Kevin, undeterred, immediately climbed back up, tugging at her hand. "Mommy, wake up! The sun's up!"

"No, it hasn't. Let me sleep in a bit longer," Stacey mumbled, keeping her eyes shut tight. However, Lillian soon joined in, clambering onto Stacey's body, adding her weight to the mix. That was enough to force Stacey's eyes open. Looking down, she saw Lillian and Kevin, now wide awake and full of energy, bouncing on the bed. Resigned and left without a choice, she was forced to wake up. She lifted Lillian and placed her to the side, then sat up and swung her legs over the edge of the bed.

"Mommy, it's time to get dressed!" Lillian, the little smarty-pants, reminded her in a sweet, sing-song voice, already reaching for her clothes. Kevin joined in, scrambling to find his outfit. They were still so young, their small hands clumsily grappling with the task. Only after Stacey had dressed herself did she step in to help. She first dressed Kevin in his tiny clothing, then lifted him, and set him down gently on the floor. Lillian was next to get dressed up in her equally tiny clothing before being placed on the floor beside Kevin. "Don't forget to comb our hair," Kevin piped up, his voice filled with insistence.



In fact, Kevin's hair was short and didn't need combing. However, he would feel left out if only Lillian got her hair done. To prevent any feelings of neglect and to ensure he felt equally loved, Stacey always pretended to comb Kevin's hair too. With a few perfunctory strokes with the comb, Kevin beamed with satisfaction. Lillian, with her hair slightly longer but still too short to tie up, received the same gentle attention. A few more strokes and she too was content.

## **CHAPTER 214**

After Lillian and Kevin finished cleaning up, they had to wait in line to brush their teeth and wash their faces. Fortunately, Gwen and Marie came and took over the two children, so Stacey could finally wash herself.

When the three of them were done washing up, Debra still hadn't gotten up yet. Lillian pouted and snorted. "Granny is sleeping in again."

Kevin said seriously, "The early bird catches the worm."

Stacey was amused as she listened to the children talk. "Well, don't speak ill of her," she said. The two children were so young. She didn't know where they learned so many words from

Kevin raised his head, looked at his mother, and asked again, "Mom, when will Granny get up?"

Lillian was also curious. "Yeah, is Granny getting up soon?"

Stacey didn't know. She pinched Lillian's and Kevin's faces, saying helplessly, "I don't know either. Let's play games for a while, okay?"

When Lillian and Kevin heard the word "games," their eyes lit up immediately. They exclaimed eagerly, "Qkay!"

Stacey asked Marie to bring the puzzles over and then she played with the two children on the couch. When Debra got up, they had already finished several puzzles. It had to be said that Debra slept in particularly late that day.

When Kevin saw Debra come out, he immediately ran over happily. "Granny!"

Debra was also happy. She bent down to pick Kevin up and comforted him, "Wow, Kev, you got up so early?"

Lillian ran over and said seriously, "Granny, we didn't get up early. You got up too late."

Debra was amused and pinched Lillian's chubby cheek, saying, "Yeah, yeah, it's Granny who got up late. You two are very well-behaved—going to bed early and getting up early. That's great!"

"Have you washed up, Mom? It's getting late, so I ordered breakfast," Stacey said. The hotel also had catering services. They just wanted to taste Daprein's delicious food a few days ago, so they went out to eat. After having fun for a few days, however they had enough of it, so today, they ordered from the hotel's catering service.

Debra was stunned and nodded. "All right." It was very late now, and there was no time to eat out. They had a flight to catch later, so it was better to eat in the hotel. They waited for a few minutes before breakfast was served. After breakfast, they began to pack their things.

They didn't realize how much they had until they packed up, and it was shocking. When they came here, the suitcases were empty. Now they were all stuffed full, not to mention some things they bought a few days ago had to be mailed back. Luckily, they managed to pack everything in.

Once everything was ready, it was getting late. They hurried downstairs with their luggage and took a taxi to the airport. It felt like they were far away abroad from home, but in truth, it was only a few hours away by plane.

Patrick picked them up outside the airport, right on time. Lillian and Kevin hadn't seen their grandfather for days, so as soon as they saw him, they ran over excitedly. Patrick was also overjoyed. He bent down and hugged the two cute children. After kissing them, Patrick looked up at Debra and Stacey and said happily, "The car is outside. Let's get in first."

"Let's go." Debra was happy too. Patrick had brought his assistant along, and the assistant took the initiative to take the luggage Debra and Stacey were pulling. They quickly left the airport and got in the car.

After sitting in the car, Patrick asked with a smile, "How was it? Did you have a good time?"

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Debra's eyes lit up, and she nodded, "Of course. Have you seen all the photos I sent you?"

Patrick smiled and nodded. "Yes, I have."

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The couple began to discuss happily. Stacey watched them and felt a little envious. She thought, 'Dad is really good to Mom. She's so happy.'

Back home, Lillian and Kevin began to run around again. Fortunately, Marie was following them, so Stacey and the others didn't have to worry too much. It took her a whole day to pack things up. After she was done, she finally calmed down.

Stacey thought of inviting Eugene to visit Zentscape, so she quickly turned on her computer and got busy. She opened a file, only to freeze up again. Hayden talked about her childhood. But she hardly remembered anything about it. How was she going to come up with a plan?

After thinking for a long time, Stacey had no choice but to shut down the computer. 'Why don't I ask Mom and Dad? They should remember my childhood, Stacey thought. She immediately left her room and returned to the first floor. Her parents were both in the living room. Stacey hurried over and asked them seriously.

While Stacey was upstairs, Debra told Patrick about their encounter with Hayden in Daprein and how he had helped them, especially the invitation to Eklonna's new product launch event. After that, Hayden took Stacey to meet Eugene. No matter which incident she was talking about, Debra felt sweet. Hayden was so kind to them, which showed he truly cared about Stacey. In her opinion, this sincerity made her the happiest. Patrick was glad to know these things.

When they heard their daughter ask about her childhood, Patrick and Debra immediately spilled the beans, as if they wanted to talk about everything that happened when she was a child. Stacey also listened carefully. After a while, she pulled out her phone and began to take notes.

A few hours later, Patrick and Debra finally finished reminiscing. Their mouths were a little dry, so they hurried to drink

some water.

When Adrian came back, he felt that the atmosphere at home was strange. 'Why is it so quiet?' he thought confused. Lillian and Kevin had different personalities from Damian. He remembered that those two were rather lively. 'Shouldn't it be more lively here?'

Lillian and Kevin were still young. Seeing their uncle coming in from outside, they suddenly felt a little confused. After a while, it was Kevin who recognized Adrian first. He immediately put down the toys and ran toward Adrian, shouting softly "Uncle Adrian!"

Seeing Kevin, Adrian was also overjoyed and bent down to pick him up. Lillian finally remembered who the man was. She got excited and ran happily toward Adrian with her favorite doll calling in a childish voice, "Uncle Adrian!"

Adrian squatted down and hugged Lillian too, giving her a quick kiss. Looking at the two kids running toward him, his doubt was cleared up. A doting smile spread across his face.

Patrick, Debra, and Stacey finally found Adrian. They all looked at Adrian with surprised expressions.

## **CHAPTER 215**

"Adrian." Stacey smiled and walked toward Adrian, surprised that he had come back.

Debra also said happily, "Why are you back today? Where's your girlfriend?"

As Debra spoke, she sneaked a glance behind him. Unfortunately, she didn't see her future daughter-in-law, and she was disappointed.

When Isabella was mentioned, Adrian became serious. "Isabella didn't come back with me. Her situation is a little complicated, but her older sister wants to meet you all."

"Sister?" Debra was confused.

Patrick was also surprised. "Her sister wants to meet us? Does that mean this is like a meeting between family? Have you two progressed that far already?"

When Debra heard this, a thought crossed her mind. She instantly snapped back to her senses and realized this had to be a meeting between family!

Her already cheerful mood became even more so. What could be more important than her son's future? Nothing!

Thinking of this, Debra pulled Adrian to the couch and thoughtfully poured him a glass of water. She hurriedly asked, "Adrian, tell us. What's going on with you and that girl? How far have you two progressed? When are you planning to get married officially?"

As Debra spoke, she suddenly became anxious and excited. "Right, shouldn't we start preparing? After our meeting would be the engagement and then the official wedding, right?"

Debra then added excitedly, "We can't let the girl feel slighted. Whether it's the engagement or the wedding, we have to make it grand!"

Adrian was at a loss.

He then carefully confessed, "Dad, Mom... Isabella and I... already have a child, a son, who is three years old."

What?

Patrick and Debra were confused. Their minds went blank, and they stared at him in a daze.

Stacey was also shocked and looked at Adrian in surprise.

They already had a child, and the child was three years old? So, how long had Adrian been with

t girl?

As Adrian thought about it, he began to recount everything that had happened.

Debra was completely unable to react. She stared blankly at Patrick before turning to Stacey, trying to find resonance with her family.

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After a long time, it was Stacey who spoke first. "So Isabella, who will be my sister-in-law, still doesn't know about our family's status?"

Adrian turned to Stacey and nodded seriously. "Yes. I've already bought an old house near the best school in Hivalis and had it cleaned up. You just need to disguise yourselves a bit and occasionally stay there for a few days."

The anxious Debra turned to Adrian and asked in a serious tone, Adrian, isn't it wrong to hide this from her?"

Adrian sighed. "I have no choice. If she finds out about my identity now, she definitely won't agree to marry me."

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Debra frowned. "But what you're doing is deceiving her into marriage. Adrian, I don't support you doing this."

Stacey thought for a moment and nodded. "I don't either. I wouldn't like being lied to either."

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Looking at Debra and Stacey, Adrian inexplicably thought of the last time Isabella said she didn't like being lied to. Was it true that all women were like this?

Adrian hesitated. "But they really hate rich people..."

Patrick said seriously, "What about the rich guy who assaulted her sister? Adrian, we can't let this go. Since you want to be with Isabella, we have to stand up for her sister and make sure they're not bullied."

Hearing this, Debra and Stacey also agreed.

Adrian said earnestly, "I'm already investigating, but this happened many years ago, and much of the evidence was destroyed by that rich guy back then. I've found some thifigs and sent them abroad to be restored. I don't know if the evidence can be recovered."

Patrick breathed a sigh of relief. "Okay."

"Dad, Mom... So, can I trouble you to pretend to be ordinary people for now?" Adrian requested cautiously.

Patrick, Debra, and Stacey didn't know what to say.

Debra could only helplessly say, "Adrian, it's not that easy for us to pretend. Your father, Bryce, and I rarely appear in public in front of the media, so it's easy to get someone to delete our information, but Charlie and Becky..."

Adrian looked at Stacey, who looked back at him.

They exchanged looks but stayed silent.

"How about Becky and Charlie not attend the meeting for now? After some time, I'll definitely tell Isabella the truth. After that, I'll formally introduce everyone to her and her family," Adrian suggested.

Patrick looked at Adrian disapprovingly.

Debra also frowned and asked, "When do you plan to tell her the truth?"

Adrian looked troubled. He hesitated for a long time and finally said, "I'm investigating her sister's case. If I find concrete evidence, we can help her with the case and send that rich guy to prison. Then, I'll tell Isabella the truth."

By then, Isabella and Carly probably wouldn't hate rich people as much anymore.

After all, not all the rich people were bad.

The living room fell silent, and no one spoke.

After a long time, Patrick said, "Since you're planning to tell her the truth after helping them with the case, then hurry and get the case overturned as soon as possible. Don't keep hiding it from them."

"Yeah, I know," Adrian immediately agreed.

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Thinking of the child Adrian just mentioned, Debra couldn't help but get excited and hurriedly asked, "Adrian, you just said that you and Isabella... Her name is Isabella, right? The two of you have a three-year-old child? Where is he now? What does he look like? Is he super cute?"

Adrian had a gentle look in his eyes when he thought about Damian. He took out his phone and showed them Damian's photo.

Debra, Patrick, and Stacey immediately leaned in, curious to see Damian's photo.

With just one look, all three were stunned.

Stacey was even more surprised. "He looks like Adrian."

Debra nodded fervently as she looked at Damian. Even just from the photo, she became emotional. She loved her cute grandson already.

"What's his name?" Debra asked after a while, unable to contain her excitement and curiosity.

"His name is Damian Graham. His mother and aunt gave him that name in hopes that he will be a strong person when he grows up," Adrian explained.

"Damian? That's a good name." Patrick also smiled.

Looking at the child in the photo, who looked almost identical to Adrian, Patrick continued happily, "When are we going to meet them? When we do, we'll get to see the child, too, right?"

## **CHAPTER 216**

"It shouldn't be a problem," Adrian said with a smile.

Patrick and Debra got excited instantly.



Stacey was also happy, but when she thought about her situation, she felt depressed. How could

Isabella like this? She wanted to see them as well!

Stacey looked at Adrian with an impatient expression.

she approach Damian and

Adrian felt inexplicably guilty under her gaze. He hesitated for a moment and then explained, "Well... Becky, it's not that I don't want you to go. After some time, when I tell Isabella and her family the truth about our identities, I'll introduce you to them as soon as possible."

Stacey felt both sad and envious, but in the end, she could only agree with tears in her eyes.

After that, Patrick and Debra became nervous. They were so used to a wealthy lifestyle that they realized they didn't know much about ordinary living.

To avoid being noticed as unusual when they met, they decided to learn about ordinary people's lifestyles and habits and work hard to control their actions and expressions.

Not only that, but they also had to pick out gifts for Damian, Isabella, Carly, and Ronald.

By their usual standards, they would have simply chosen the best, but now, because of the need to keep their identities hidden, they couldn't give anything too conspicuous.

Yet, when Patrick and Debra considered more ordinary things, they felt they weren't good enough for their grandson and future daughter-in-law, which made them very worried.

Stacey originally wanted to help pick out gifts, but as she started planning, Patrick and Debra stopped her.

Debra asked her not to worry about these things and to arrange Eugene's affairs as soon Stacey should stay in touch with Hayden and communicate with him more.

possible. She also mentioned that

Perhaps by communicating more, they could discover more childhood stories they didn't know about, like certain places or little stories only Hayden remembered.

In the eyes of Patrick and Debra, Adrian's marriage was important, but Stacey's future was equally important; both needed attention.

While they arranged Adrian's affairs, they also had to urge Stacey. They couldn't let this carefree woman forget about her arrangements with Hayden. What if that relationship faded after a long time?

The thought of it broke Debra's heart.

Stacey was not a fool. She could sense that her parents were trying to set her up with Hayden, and she was actually very confused now.

From their time together, Hayden seemed like a really good man.

She understood her mother's concerns. If she were to miss the chance to be with such an excellent man, she might never have another opportunity like this in her life.

But was it really necessary

to accept another person so soon?

Every time Stacey thought about this, she still felt uneasy and couldn't understand her feelings.

She undoubtedly didn't dislike Hayden; she even... kind of liked him.

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When Hayden approached her and kissed her, her heart would beat faster. She wasn't stupid; she knew what that feeling was, but after a failed marriage, she was terrified of entering another one.

"Dad, Mom, no matter what, I still want to pick out the most suitable gift for Isabella and Damian. Even though I can't go to the first meeting, I have to prepare gifts. Those gifts can also be kept for later. After Adrian confesses his identity to Isabella, we can give them to her, just like the ones you prepared for me before." Stacey looked at her parents and spoke firmly.

She would never forget the feeling she had when she reunited with Patrick and Debra and saw the gifts they had prepared for her year after year.

Even though the gifts were very precious, it didn't matter if they were just ordinary gifts. Just knowing that her family had been preparing something for her year after year, never forgetting or neglecting her, the feeling of being touched wouldn't change..

Now, preparing gifts for Isabella and Damian was the same. Even though she couldn't attend their first meeting due to special circumstances, she couldn't skip preparing gifts for them. This was her way of showing her feelings for Isabella and Damian.

After hearing Stacey's words, Patrick and Debra thought she made a lot of sense, so they agreed with her arrangement.

Debra said seriously, "Okay, go ahead and prepare. But don't forget about Hay. You promised a few days ago that you would accompany Jeremy for the operation. Make sure you remember that."

Stacey replied, "Okay."

"By the way, have you informed Bryce and Charlie? Since we're preparing gifts, let's let everyone know so they can get ready." Patrick turned to Adrian.

Adrian answered, "Okay. I'll tell them later."

"No need to wait. It's after work hours now; why don't you call them now and share the good news? Get Bryce to take two days off and come back. His identity is not as sensitive as that of Charlie and Becky. He can join the meeting," Patrick replied.

Adrian agreed, "Sure."

As such, Adrian called Bryce and Charlie immediately in front of everyone. To be precise, he used his phone to call Bryce and Debra's phone to make a video call to Charlie. With both phones together, he could talk to both brothers simultaneously, avoiding repeating the same thing several times.

Once the calls connected, Adrian told them what he had said to his parents and Stacey.

Bryce and Charlie reacted the same way as the others; they were stunned.

Charlie was especially shocked. He couldn't believe it and even questioned, "You have a wife? And your child is already three years old?"

Adrian turned to look at the phone with Charlie's video call and nodded. "Yes."

Charlie blinked and joked, "Did you recently go to a random country and eat some poisonous mushrooms? Are you hallucinating?"

Adrian's face darkened at once, and he snapped, "I'm not hallucinating; it's real!"

"Then I must be hearing things! I must be dreaming now! What is this? I'm crazy to have such a dream!" The next Charlie muttered to himself. Suddenly, the screen went black because Charlie ended the call unilaterally.

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Adrian was perplexed.

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Stacey was also stunned. She wondered what Charlie meant by that.

But then she soon figured it out and found it amusing. Charlie must be in denial about Adrian having a girlfriend and a three-year-old child. Since Charlie thought it was absurd and unreal, he must have thought this was all just a dream! That was too funny!

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## CHAPTER 217

On the other side, Adrian was rendered speechless by Bryce's words. But, the most important thing now was about Adrian. What Adrian just said was incredibly shocking.

"Adrian, everything you said is true, and I haven't heard it wrong? You have a girlfriend and a three-year-old child?" Bryce asked again to confirm.

Adrian agreed, "Yes."

Bryce couldn't help but think of what Charlie had just said. He was now feeling uneasy and wondered, 'Could it be that not only was Charlie dreaming, but I was also dreaming?'

"Adrian, please wait for a moment. Let me calm down first. I'll call you back," Bryce finally said cautiously.

Adrian was speechless.

Bryce hung up the phone soon. He was obviously unable to react and couldn't accept the reality. But, it was understandable, as it happened so suddenly and shocked everyone.

A few minutes later, Charlie called back with excited chatter. He double-confirmed that what he had just heard was true. Overwhelmed with excitement, he immediately shouted that he wanted to see his sister-in-law and nephew.

However, he was soon turned down by Adrian. Adrian told him that due to his prominent identity and that of Becky, they couldn't be introduced to Isabella and Carly for the time being. Thus, they couldn't meet Isabella and Damian yet.

Charlie was completely stunned. After understanding the whole situation, he couldn't help but unleash a tirade against Adrian. But, despite his outburst, Charlie finally agreed reluctantly.

At the end of the call, Debra reminded Charlie to take some time to prepare a gift for his future sister-in-law and nephew. Although due to special circumstances, he and Becky couldn't meet Isabella and Damian, the gift should not be forgotten.

Hearing that, Charlie nodded and thought, 'Of course. They are my future sister-in-law and nephew, after all.'

After comforting Charlie, Bryce called back again. Adrian patiently explained it to him.

Stacey watched as Adrian explained the same thing repeatedly to Bryce and Charlie. 'No matter how many times he had to explain, the smile on his face remained radiant. Since having his wife and son, Adrian has indeed changed from how he used to be,' she thought.

In the next few days, Stacey got busy. While preparing meeting gifts for her future sister-in-law and nephew, she was thinking about entertaining Eugene.

Thinking that she would accompany Jeremy for surgery in a few days, Stacey picked a cute little gift for Jeremy when she was buying gifts for Isabella and Damian. And of course, she also prepared gifts for Lillian and Kevin.

However, Stacey didn't expect that she would run into Janet in the mall when she was focusing on choosing gifts.

The moment they looked at each other, the two were stunned.

To be honest, since her identity was made public, Stacey hadn't met with Janet privately. "This seems to be the first time in while. After such a long time apart, Janet seems to have changed a lot, Stacey thought.

The clothes Janet used to wear were always the latest ones in the season, fashionable and beautiful. But now, Stacey could tell at a glance that Janet's clothes were from a long time ago.

Janet didn't have the latest clothes anymore. After her real identity was exposed, Gary and Karen kicked her out of the Mitchell family and froze all the bank cards given to her. Not only that, but they also sued her, demanding repayment of

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over 20 years' worth of support.

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Also, everything she did in the past was dug up by netizens. After being blacklisted online, major brands started withdrawing their endorsements of her. Not only that, but

she also had to pay sky-high breach-of-contract penalties to these brands. Although she did quite well in the entertainment industry in the past, she used to spend money extravagantly and ended up spending all her earnings. She didn't have any money left to pay the penalties.

Recently, she had been in an extremely desperate situation. The worst part was that if she couldn't pay the penalties in time, she might even face restrictions on travel and spending. At that point, she might not be able to buy train or plane tickets.

The company even replaced her manager, Lisa, directly after the incident.

She used to disdain Lisa for being useless and not bringing any resources to her, but now the company had assigned her a new manager. The new manager, Flynn, was notorious in the

company for being a pimp. He liked to use unspoken rules to exploit the artists under his management and then use them to make dirty money. The company's sudden decision to have Flynn manage her was obvious to even a fool.

Janet had been harassed several times in the days when she was managed by Flynn. If she hadn't been mentally prepared in advance and remained vigilant, doing her best to avoid any chance of being alone with Flynn, she might have already been defiled. However, that kind of avoidance could only last for a while. As long as her contract with the company had not ended and she was still in Flynn's hands, something would eventually happen sooner or later.

These days, Janet had been struggling. She must find a way to break free from this predicament.

But what could she do? The Mitchell family had abandoned her and even wanted her to repay the previous support costs. Her biological parents were even more relentless, coming to harass her every day, demanding that she donate a kidney to that idiot brother of hers. How ridiculous!

The only thing left for her now was some connections she made before. She had been a celebrity for many years, and many bosses wanted to keep her as their sugar baby. She wasn't willing before, but that was her only her only option now. She needed to find a backer so that she could turn her life around.

Janet spent several days working through her internal struggle and then began selecting her ideal financial backer. Even though the situation was already at its worst, she still subconsciously chose the option that would benefit her the most. She definitely wouldn't consider the men who were too old, too unattractive, or too cheesy.

After careful consideration, she ultimately chose, Ryan Zane, the CEO of Linkers Entertainment. She chose him not only because he was young, wealthy, and well-

connected in the entertainment industry, but also because the Zane family was a prestigious family on par with the Carter family.

The dream of being born into a wealthy and prestigious family had already been shattered, but Janet was unwilling to accept

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Why did Rebecca deserve such good parents, while hers were so terrible? If she could be with Ryan, if one day in the future she could replace Ryan's current wife as the real Mrs. Zane, she could turn her life around just like Rebecca and become a top-class socialite.

With that belief, Janet sold several out-of-season bags and used the money to buy the latest clothes

She was reluctant to sell them. But at the same time, she knew clearly that to get close to Ryan, she had to wear the latest fashion. She had to dress beautifully and appear in front of Ryan to have any chance of catching his attention and advancing her position. However, Janet didn't expect to encounter Rebecca here. 'How unlucky!' she thought.

## **CHAPTER 218**

Stacey and Janet didn't speak, nor did they have anything to say. Their gazes met briefly, and after a moment of stunned silence, they looked away.

Stacey continued shopping. She bought Jeremy some cute furry clothes. She also bought the same for Lillian and Kevin but in different sizes.

She bought these cute clothes because she found that many of Jeremy's clothes looked serious and formal. They even looked a little adult-like sometimes, resembling Hayden's style. It was not surprising that Jeremy looked like his father, but he was still young. Stacey thought Jeremy could also wear some childlike clothes to make him look much more lively and joyful.

After buying the clothes, Stacey continued shopping. But after shopping around for a long time, she still couldn't figure out what Jeremy actually liked. It seemed that despite spending so much time together, Jeremy had always been very well-behaved in front of her, appearing to like everything. But, she inexplicably wanted to choose something that Jeremy liked.

At the thought of that, Stacey took out her phone and texted Hayden. 'Hayden raised Jeremy all by himself. He should know what Jeremy would like, right?' she wondered.



Meanwhile, in Strico, at the CEO's office of Hoggard Group, Hayden and Jack stared at each other, both exuding a powerful aura. Despite the pressure from Jack, Hayden remained unflinching.

He expressionlessly placed a thick stack of documents on the table and said, "All the documents that need to be handed over are here. I'll give you three days to review them. If you have any questions, you can come and ask me. After three days, I'm going on vacation."

Jack couldn't stay serious any longer upon hearing that. He said aggrievedly, "Haydy, give me one more month, okay? Let me rest for another month, and I'll definitely come back."

Hayden's expression didn't change when Jack called him Haydy. He remained expressionless and continued, "Don't even think about it."

Jack was speechless.

Just then, Hayden's phone rang. It was a special ringtone. Jack was caught off guard by that ringtone. Then, he widened his eyes and looked at Hayden's phone curiously.

Hayden blocked the phone screen, looked at Jack, and said coldly, "Read the documents. You only have three days. If you don't finish the handover within three days, I'll report you to Mom."

When Jack heard that, his pupils dilated. He couldn't believe it and said, "Hay! You're 29 years old, you're an adult now. Jeremy is three years old already, and you're still being a tattletale?"

"Why not? Mom is still alive. I'm still a child in front of her," Hayden retorted expressionlessly.

Overwhelmed by anger and aggrievance, Jack exclaimed incredulously, 'I shouldn't have had children!

Jack was as angry as a bull, but in the end, he walked over to his desk and started reading the documents.

Hayden saw that Jack was finally obediently reading the documents, so he stopped watching Jack. Instead, he went to sit on the couch opposite and took out his phone to read the messages that Becky had sent him.

Looking at the phone, Hayden's entire demeanor changed. He no longer had the cold and detached aura he displayed when confronting his father earlier. Instead, he exuded a gentle and refined

charm, creating a very pleasant feeling.

Jack secretly raised his head and glanced at Hayden. He was stunned again. He disdainfully curled his lips and thought, 'Is this my son? How come I barely recognize him? That warm smile of his is so ugly. He is acting like he is the only one in a

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relationship. Who is he showing off to? It's impossible to win against Hayden. As long as this bastard is shameless and reports to his mother when something happens, I wouldn't stand a chance. So, why do people have children? What a trouble!' While thinking, Jack started to read the documents. At first, he read slowly, but after a while, he gradually regained his rhythm, and his reading speed increased.

After sending the message, Stacey felt a bit uneasy, worried that she might be interrupting Hayden's work. However, she was surprised to learn that Hayden wasn't working. Hayden mentioned that Jack had arrived, and he was currently handing over his tasks, so he wasn't busy at the moment. Stacey was quite astonished.

Last time, when she heard Hayden say that he could have Jack come back to work, she was shocked. But after thinking about it, she understood. However, understanding it in principle and accepting it emotionally were two different things.

Hayden now told her, even if it was just through the internet, that Jack was back, and they were in the process of handing over the work, she still felt surreal.

But, Stacey didn't say anything. She could vaguely sense that the family atmosphere in the Hoggard family should be quite good. Hayden's relationship with his parents seemed to be pretty good too. Otherwise, Jack wouldn't go over immediately when Hayden asked him to do so.

Hayden didn't need to rush about work, which made Stacey feel relieved. She began to discuss Jeremy's preferences with him and even sent him photos of a few sets of clothes she had bought for Jeremy.

They chatted for a long time, and before they knew it, time had passed. Stacey had unconsciously browsed several shops. In the end, she also got to know Jeremy's preferences and habits.

Jeremy wasn't very fond of items that could be bought directly from outside. He preferred things that were handmade with care by loved ones. For instance, Jeremy didn't like eating food from outside and usually only ate the food his dad cooked. Even his clothes were handmade by Hayden.

After understanding all that, Stacey was actually confused.

Jeremy only ate the food cooked by his father, which was understandable, but wearing handmade clothes really shocked Stacey. She didn't expect that Hayden made Jeremy's clothes himself. 'Jeremy was too picky. Or should I say that Hayden is an amazing father? Is there anything else that Hayden couldn't do?' she thought.

After realizing that, Stacey looked at the designer clothes she was holding and suddenly felt unsure if she should give them

away.

It suddenly occurred to Stacey that Cynthia could make clothes. She thought, 'Why don't I go to Cynthia and ask her to teach me to make some clothes for Jeremy?'

While thinking of that, another thought came to her mind. 'What if I'm really interested? Kids' clothes are so small and cute. The process of making them would be enjoyable, right? After learning how to make them, I can make clothes for Kev and Lily too. They have never worn clothes made by myself yet!'

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## CHAPTER 219

After spending the entire day shopping, Stacey not only prepared welcome gifts for Isabella and Damian but also ended up buying a mishmash of items. She had been contemplating Eugene's trip plan to Zentiscape and finally decided to discuss it with Hayden.

Realizing that Hayden could have a vacation, she was much happier. Once Hayden didn't need to work, she didn't have to worry that her constant texting and chatting would delay his work. With that in mind, Stacey carefully sent a message to Hayden, asking him about their childhood.

In Hoggard Villa, Hayden looked at the message from Becky with a doting smile on his face. Then, he typed slowly and earnestly told her about their childhood.

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Meanwhile, in Leavey Villa, Queenie returned from Daprein only to discover that she had become the family's laughingstock. Her unsuccessful attempts to pester Hayden in Daprein not only prevented her from attending Eklonna's product launch event with him but also led to her being mocked due to her dress. Someone even secretly recorded her embarrassing incident in the mall and uploaded it to the Leavey family's group chat.

Her father, Gavin Leavey, was the first to see the video in the family group chat. With a darkened expression, Gavin called Queenie immediately to ask about the situation in detail.

After Queenie received Gavin's call, she hurriedly checked the family group chat. As soon as she scrolled through the chat and saw the video sent by her cousin, Liam Leavey, her face instantly turned pale. The embarrassing incident captured in the video left her utterly mortified. Thoughts raced through her mind, 'No! How did this happen? How would someone record my embarrassing

moment in Daprein? Who could it be?" Queenie's mind was overwhelmed with questions, desperately trying to unravel the person behind it.

The first person who popped out of Queenie's mind was Hayden, but she dismissed that possibility in just a mere heartbeat. She believed in Hayden's character. Besides, she knew Hayden wouldn't resort to such furtive tactics if he wanted to deal with her.

However, her thoughts quickly shifted to another person – Becky! As that option came to her mind, Queenie was certain it was Becky. Considering that she and Hayden were previously married and she wanted to reconcile with Hayden, while Becky intended to hook up with Hayden, Queenie believed it must be Becky. 'Becky must be afraid that I'll get back together with Hayden, so she used such a dirty trick to deal with me. How shameless she is!' Queenie thought resentfully.

Suddenly, the door was pushed open from the outside, interrupting Queenie's thoughts and startling her. But she was relieved to see that it was Florine who entered. "Queenie, what happened with that video? H–How could someone capture you in such an embarrassing situation?" Florine asked, her concern evident as she stepped inside.

Queenie was irritated by the question and told Florine about her guess,

Upon hearing her suspicion, Florine frowned and hesitated, "Are you sure it's Becky?"

Queenie was full of resentment. "I can't think of anyone but her

Florine agreed and nodded. After reconsidering, she hurriedly said, "Queenie, Hayden is yours. You can't give up on him. If you hadn't thrown a tantrum before, you wouldn't have divorced..."

Queenie was frustrated. "But Hayden doesn't seem to like me at all." She hesitated, then told Florine what Hayden had said to her in Daprein

Florine's face darkened when she heard that. "Did he really say that?"

Queenie nodded and confirmed, "Yes."

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Florine was silent for a while before looking at Queenie and said seriously, "Queenie, don't give up first. I'll think of another way. The Hoggard family can't be so heartless. You have a child with Hayden, and the Hoggard family must consider it for the child. How can the child live with a stepmother instead of his biological mother?" After a short ponder, she finally added calmly, "Queenie, let's change our plan. Don't pester Hayden directly. You look for Jeremy and ask him to say that he doesn't want Becky to be his stepmother. The Hoggard family cares about him very much. If Jeremy doesn't agree with Becky as his stepmother, the Hoggard family will surely not allow Becky to marry Hayden."

When Queenie heard Florine's words, she inexplicably thought of the last time she secretly went to the kindergarten to visit Jeremy but found he wasn't particularly fond of her. "Mom, Jeremy doesn't seem to like me very much," Queenie said anxiously.

Florine took Queenie's hand and said confidently, "Queenie, you might not fully understand this, but no child in the world dislikes their biological mother, especially at such a young age. The last time you visited Jeremy must have caught him off guard, leaving him scared. Let's find a way for you to

spend more bonding time with Jeremy. I'm sure Jeremy will definitely come around and support you afterward."

Queenie thought Florine's words were reasonable, so she nodded and agreed.

While they were talking, Queenie's phone suddenly rang again. It was her grandmother, Chermaine Leavey. Looking at the caller ID, Queenie suddenly felt nervous.

"Pick up the call," Florine reassured her.

Queenie hesitated for a moment and then answered it. "Grandma," Queenie greeted on the phone.

"Queenie, are you busy recently?" Chermaine asked in a kind voice.

Yet, Queenie had nothing to keep her busy. Hudson didn't let her go to the company, so her sole focus at that moment was to find a way to reconcile with Hayden. She replied cautiously, "I—I'm not busy recently, Grandma. Is there anything I can do for you?" She couldn't admit to Chermaine that she was busy. After all, she still hoped to work in the family business. If Chermaine had informed Hudson of her busyness, Hudson would have been even less inclined to let her join.

"Nothing. I just haven't seen you for a long time. I miss you. Queenie, come back to see me if you have time. Let's have some talk. We haven't chatted for a long time," Chermaine said in a regretful and upset tone.

Chermaine truly missed Queenie. Queenie was the child of her eldest son and the first grandchild of the Leavey family. When Queenie was born, Hudson and Chermaine loved her very much and spoiled her as a treasure. However, they didn't expect her to be so disobedient when she grew up. Although Chermaine was angry, Queenie was still her grandchild after all. She would still feel distressed for her.

"All right, I'll go back to Leavey Manor tomorrow," Queenie promised. After finishing her words, Queenie knew clearly that the reason Chermaine would suddenly think of her was all because of the video in the family group chat. However, Queenie had to go back to the manor.

"Why do you wait until tomorrow? How about tonight? I'll have someone prepare your favorite dishes. If you are free tonight, just come over directly," Chermaine commanded.

Queenie wanted to reject but didn't know how to say it. She hesitated for a while and finally agreed, "Okay." After promising Chermaine, Queenie said some polite words further and then hung up the phone.

## **CHAPTER 220**

After finishing the phone call, Queenie turned to face Florine. There was a seri

look on Florine's face as she said, "Queenie, the fact that your grandma is suddenly reaching out might be connected to that video in the group chat. Don't worry. When you get there, just admit to your grandparents that you realize your mistakes and are taking steps to correct them. That's why you went to see Hayden – it's because you have a child with him, and you want to take responsibility for Jeremy."

Queenie gave a small nod of understanding. "Okay."

Contemplating this, Florine walked over, lifted her hand, and affectionately ruffled Queenie's hair. With a sigh, she said, "Good luck, Queenie!"

The warmth in her mother's words filled Queenie with a renewed sense of bravery. She nodded with determination. "I'll do my best." At this, Florine's face broke into a relieved smile.

That evening, Queenie took some time to make a few preparations and grabbed her bag before heading out to Leavey Manor. It was a manageable drive from their home, taking just over an hour to reach the grand residence of her grandparents.

As Queenie's car rolled through the gates and into the garden, the butler immediately noticed and went to inform Hudson and Chermaine. Hudson, still harboring some residual anger, wasn't in the mood to greet Queenie with his usual cheerful demeanor. On the other hand, Chermaine, less

concerned about the business issues, was more distressed by the ordeals Queenie had endured over the past few years.

“Queenie, come here, let me see if you’ve lost weight,” Chermaine exclaimed with a worried expression, pulling Queenie close as she approached.

Looking at Chermaine, Queenie felt a twinge of sadness, thinking, “The Leavey family is vast, yet it really cares about me besides my parents. Grandpa used to be kind to me as well, but now...

seems only Grandma

As these thoughts crossed her mind, Chermaine led her into the living room and gestured for her to sit on the couch. Queenie sat down, facing Hudson, who was sitting across from her with an unyielding expression, not even glancing her way. Her heart pounded with nervousness, fear, and discomfort. After a long hesitation, she finally managed to utter, “Grandpa.”

Hudson slowly lifted his gaze to meet hers, his look cold and distant. Feeling a sharp pain in her heart from his cold demeanor, so unlike how he had been during her childhood, Queenie remembered Florine’s advice. She faced Hudson and said earnestly, “Grandpa, I’m sorry for my actions over the past few years. I was ignorant and I now recognize my mistakes.”

Hudson responded with a cold snort, though his demeanor softened slightly. Sensing a shift in his attitude, Queenie quickly moved to massage his shoulders, an act of filial respect. After a moment, Hudson gently pushed her away and questioned, “Queenie, do you truly understand your mistakes this time?”

Queenie quickly positioned herself directly in front of him, nodding emphatically. “Yes, Grandpa. I’m truly sorry. I... I was too headstrong before and it brought shame to the Leavey family.”

Hudson then asked, “Do you still intend to get back together with that kid from the Hoggard family?”

Queenie paused briefly before nodding again, looking Hudson in the eyes, “Grandpa, Hayden and I have a child together. I now understand that as a parent, it’s my duty to be responsible for my child.”

Hudson scoffed, “So now you recognize your responsibilities? You’re not going to chase after that boyfriend of yours anymore?”

A fleeting expression of pain crossed Queenie’s face at the mention of her ex-boyfriend. After a brief pause, she shook her head firmly. “I’ve broken up with him.”



Hudson mockingly replied, "Breaking up is easy. Today you break up, but who's to say you won't want to reunite in a few

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days?"

The pain in Queenie's heart intensified when she heard her grandfather's words, but she shook her head resolutely. "Grandpa, he and I are done for good. We will never reconcile in this lifetime."

Reflecting on Hudson's recent indifference, Queenie felt deeply saddened but remained earnest, "Grandpa, I'm truly sorry for my past ignorance, but I promise to do better. If I remarry Hayden and restore the relationship between the Leavey and Hoggard families, I'm sure it will benefit the Leavey family greatly in the future."

Hearing Queenie's words, Hudson slowly became serious. He stared at her and questioned, "So you've really made your decision to remarry and commit to a good life with the young man from the Hoggard family? You won't ever seek a divorce again or pursue another lover?"

'A lover?' Queenie thought. She almost wanted to clarify that Elden wasn't just some lover, but considering his recent actions, she reconsidered. 'It doesn't matter what Grandpa thinks of Elden now.'

"Grandpa, please stop teasing me. I won't make those foolish mistakes again," Queenie quickly reassured him.

At this point, Chermaine intervened, "Hudson, that's enough. Don't frighten Queenie anymore." Chermaine then added, looking at Queenie, "I think it's a good idea for Queenie to remarry Hayden."

Hudson glanced at his wife, then said resignedly, "Everyone knows the Hoggard family is decent. But do you think they're foolish enough to just take her back after everything she's done?"

Chermaine frowned and said, "Don't Queenie and Hayden share a child together? Let's talk to them. For the child's future happiness, it would be good for Queenie and Hayden to remarry." She then sighed, looking at Queenie. "I've seen Jeremy at several parties. He's quite handsome. If things hadn't gone badly a few years ago, Jeremy would have visited us more often, right?"

In Leavey Manor's living room, as Hudson listened to Chermaine's remarks, he remained silent for a while before finally speaking, "Queenie, if you're sincere about remarrying, you should put in the effort. Hayden is a good man. You would not suffer by living with him."

Queenie nodded vigorously. "I understand. Thank you, Grandpa."

Hudson observed her for a moment before saying seriously, "Queenie, if you truly remarry Hayden, I'll allow you to work in the company."

Queenie's eyes sparkled at this promise, and she asked excitedly. "Really? Grandpa, you're not just saying that?"

Hudson smiled at her enthusiasm. "Why would I lie to you?"

Overcome with emotion, Queenie rushed over and embraced him. Tears welled up in her eyes as she realized Hudson still cared deeply for her. Chermaine, watching the heartfelt reunion smiled. She checked the time and then invited Queenie to join them for dinner. That night, Chermaine had specifically instructed the housekeeper to prepare several of Queenie's favorite dishes, knowing she would enjoy them.