

Love Me Or Leave Me

#Chapter 221 - Read Love Me Or Leave Me Chapter 221

CHAPTER 221

Time flew by swiftly, and before they knew it, the day of Jeremy's surgery was approaching. Stacey, diligent as ever, managed to delegate her responsibilities at work, secured a few days off, and flew to Strico a day earlier than planned to be there for Jeremy. Having been informed in advance of her arrival, Jeremy was

Overcome with excitement, he

awoke at the crack of dawn, rousing Hayden from sleep with his eager inquiries about when Stacey would arrive.

Hayden, though secretly sharing Jeremy's anticipation, was overwhelmed by ant questions. I'm excited for

boy's

Becky's arrival too, but this kid is driving me nuts!' he thought. Hayden said, trying to temper Jeremy's expectations, "She won't be here that soon. She's still got a flight to catch, and she won't be here until noon at the earliest." After repeating this numerous times, Hayden pinched the bridge of his nose in exasperation.

Meanwhile, Jason and Sharon found the entire scenario rather amusing. Sharon couldn't resist commenting to Hayden, "Look at how much Jeremy adores Becky. Ever since she came into his life, he's been so much more spirited and childlike."

Hayden, who had raised Jeremy single-handedly, was acutely aware of the transformation. Jeremy had always been a well- behaved child, but his personality was subdued, much like Hayden's own. However, Becky's presence had brought out a lighter, happier side in Jeremy. Though his

boisterous behavior was occasionally grating, it was clear that Jeremy had flourished, and that made Hayden genuinely happy.

"Why is Becky only arriving at noon? I miss her too," Sharon said, prompting Jeremy to vigorously nod in agreement,

like a bobble toy, and waved him over to her side. Sharon watched Jeremy nodding his head like a chicken pecking at rice. She immediately broke into laughter and waved Jeremy over to her.

missing Becky dearly. Sharon chuckled as she watched Jeremy nod, his heading

Jeremy, always obedient to Sharon, hurried over to her. Sharon took his hand and asked earnestly, "Do you really like Becky that much?"

Jeremy immediately nodded. "Mhmm."

Sharon then extended her pinkie, suggesting, "How about we make a pinkie promise? Promise me that you'll agree to let Becky be your mommy. You can't break this promise, okay?"

Hearing this, Jeremy quickly lowered his head to get his writing tablet and began to write something down. Since Sharon's eyesight and hearing were not as sharp as they used to be, Jeremy turned the tablet's volume to the maximum and hit the play button on the reading function, which loudly proclaimed, won't break it!" in its mechanical voice.

Jason smiled warmly at this sweet interaction. "That's wonderful, Sharon said, her happiness tinged with nostalgia as she thought of her late best friend, Gemma. 'How wonderful it would be if Gemma could see this,' she mused.

Just then, Joshua hurried into the room, his expression troubled. "Mr. Hoggard, Ms. Leavey is here," he announced with a hint of anxiety.

At the mention of Queenie, everyone's mood shifted. Jeremy's face fell immediately, and he began furiously typing on his

everyone to see: [I don't want to see her! I dont want to see that woman! I hate her!] tablet before holding it up

for

Hayden frowned deeply at this and turned to Joshua. "What is she doing here?"

Joshua sighed. "Ms. Leavey heard about Jeremy's surgery and said she wanted to be here to support him."

"How did she even find out about the surgery?" Jason asked, visibly upset.

Sharon's expression was one of annoyance. "Jeremy doesn't need her here. Tell her to leave."

At this, Joshua looked toward Hayden. Hayden remained silent for a moment before decisively instructing, "Do what

Grandma said. Let her leave. Jeremy doesn't need her company"

Relieved by Hayden's decision, Jeremy quickly wrote another message on his writing tablet: [I don't want her to accompany

1. me. I want Becky!]

Hayden read Jeremy's words, nodded in agreement, and murmured, "Okay." Joshua promptly relayed the family's decision and went out to confront Queenie..

At the grand entrance of Hoggard Manor, Joshua faced Queenie with an icy demeanor and unequivocally stated, "Ms. Leavey, neither Mr. Hoggard nor Jeremy wishes to see you. Jeremy has explicitly stated that he does not want your company. It would be best if you returned home."

Queenie had braced herself for a cool reception, aware that her previous visit had left a bitter taste, and understood that Jeremy might still be wary of her. Nonetheless, she clung to the advice given by Florine. She had never really spent quality time with Jeremy; his resistance was likely due to her sudden re-entry into his life. Queenie believed that children naturally gravitate toward their mothers and that if she remained present and attentive, Jeremy would inevitably gravitate toward her.

With this thought, she addressed Joshua with a firm resolve, "Mr. Oswald, I am not here to cause any trouble for Mr. Hoggard. Jeremy is my son, and I am here simply to perform my duties as his mother. Legally, as his mother, I have every right to visit him, and not even the Hoggard family can prevent me from doing so."

Joshua's face remained impassive as he responded flatly, "Ms. Leavey, please spare me these explanations. I am merely an employee here and it's not within my purview to address these issues. Mr. Hoggard and Jeremy have both made it clear they do not wish to see you. You should leave now."

Queenie was left without words as Joshua turned and walked away. The security guard promptly closed the gate, leaving Queenie isolated on the other side. She stood there, a mix of unhappiness

and confusion clouding her expression. She had anticipated some resistance, but the outright denial, even when she explained that her intentions were solely to see her son, left her deeply perplexed and unsure of her next move. She thought, 'What do I do now?'

Queenie lingered at the gate of Hoggard Manor, hesitant to leave, yet finding no apparent way to gain entry. It was around H o'clock in the morning when a sleek black Phantom rolled out from the courtyard of the manor. Queenie immediately recognized it as Hayden's vehicle; he only used this car for special outings.

A surge of nervousness washed over her as she watched the car approach. Her eyes locked onto the Phantom, tracking every movement. However, despite her anticipation,

the luxury vehicle merely sped past her, disappearing down the road swiftly. A fleeting impulse to chase after it crossed Queenie's mind, and she even took a few hasty steps in pursuit before the reality set in that she could never catch up to such a fast-moving vehicle by foot.

CHAPTER 222

Sitting by the window in the car, Jeremy saw Queenie. Although it was just a fleeting glance, he was still unhappy, and his

face was tense.

Hayden also saw it. His face darkened slightly, and he was displeased. But he was more concerned about Jeremy and observed his expression calmly. Seeing Jeremy purse his lips and look angry, he took the initiative to speak. "Don't worry about her."

Hearing this, Jeremy turned to look at Hayden. After a while, he nodded and said, "Okay!" He thought, 'I will not pay attention to that woman!'

"Becky should be at the airport soon," Hayden added.

Jeremy's attention was indeed diverted when he heard about Becky. His clear eyes lit up, and he exclaimed joyfully, "Yeah, I am so happy!" Thinking of Becky, he cheered up with a bright smile.

In fact, their departure time from home was a little early. After arriving at the airport, they waited for more than ten minutes before Stacey came out.

When Jeremy saw Becky, his eyes lit up immediately. He ran over excitedly and threw himself into Becky's arms.

Queenie had followed Hayden by taxi. When she saw Hayden waiting outside the airport with Jeremy, she found it strange and wondered, 'Whom would someone like Hayden personally pick up at the airport? And he even brought Jeremy along?' As time went by, she had wanted to go over and greet Hayden or Jeremy many times. But thinking of the Hoggard family's attitude toward her, she was a little scared and did not dare to go over immediately.

Queenie did not expect that she would hesitate for more than ten minutes until Becky came out of the airport. She thought, 'So it is Becky! The person Hayden and Jeremy came to pick up in person turned out to be Becky!' She, who was calm at first, suddenly became shocked and agitated. When Jeremy happily threw himself into Becky's arms, she finally could not help but rush over.

However, before Queenie approached them, two bodyguards suddenly came over to grab her and pull her away. When she saw the bodyguards who suddenly appeared, her mind seemed to be poured with cold water, and she suddenly sobered up.

Queenie subconsciously wanted to run away, but before she turned around to leave, Hayden glanced over. Hayden looked at her, and a hint of menace flashed across his eyes. She suddenly felt her scalp tingling, and an indescribable fear rose from the bottom of her heart. She froze, unable to speak or move.

After greeting Jeremy, Stacey looked up and unexpectedly saw Queenie. She was stunned for a moment, and then the smile on her face slowly disappeared.

Queenie also looked at Becky, or rather, Stacey. A hint of pain flashed in her eyes for a moment before it turned into hatred. She thought, 'Why did Becky take them away from me? Hayden is mine! And Jeremy is my son! Why was she so shameless as to steal someone else's man?'

"Ignore her." Hayden's magnetic voice sounded above Stacey's head, and her hand was suddenly held by his. Startled, Stacey subconsciously looked up at Hayden and came back to her senses.

Hayden then looked at Jeremy and uttered, "Let's go." They had come to the airport only to pick up Becky anyway.

Stacey was a little confused and did not quite understand what was going on, but she would go with them since Hayden said

So.

t of the airport together. The Hoggard family's car was parked at the gate. They got in

Stacey, Jeremy, and Hayden walked out of the airport together. The Hoggard family's car the car and left.

After the car drove out, Stacey could not help but look back. She wondered, 'Didn't Queenie come with Hayden and Jeremy?'

So... She is still bugging them?' She had mixed feelings.

+ 57%

While Stacey was thinking, a small hand suddenly grabbed her hand. She snapped out of her thoughts and looked at Jeremy. Jeremy looked at her, then took out the writing tablet and wrote quickly. After finishing writing, he held the writing tablet up to show her. She saw that he had written: [Don't look at her.] She thought, "The 'her' refers to Queenie, right?'

When Stacey recalled the last time Jeremy had gone to Hivalis to find her with tears, she could not help but feel distressed. She thought, 'Jeremy is just a kid. She gently hugged Jeremy and agreed, "Okay. You are a good boy, Jeremy."

Jeremy leaned gently in Becky's arms. He was reluctant to leave Becky and wished he could keep nestling in her embrace like this.

Stacey held Jeremy with one hand until the car drove into Hoggard Villa. After the car was parked, she released her hand.

Hayden and Jeremy got up, followed by Stacey. When they got out of the car together, Jason and Sharon came out of the villa with loving smiles.

"Becky, you are finally here. I have been thinking of you every day and looking forward to seeing you soon," Sharon said and chuckled.

Hearing this, Stacey felt warm in her heart and quickly greeted them, "Hello, Mr. and Mrs. Hoggard. How are you?"

"Good, good. We are good," Sharon replied with a smile.

Jason also responded happily, "Let's go inside first. Are you tired after such a long flight?"

"Kam fine," Stacey answered and smiled.

Then, everyone entered the villa together. Once inside, Stacey took out the gifts she had prepared in advance and gave them to Jason, Sharon, Hayden, and Jeremy one by one.

Everyone was very happy to receive Becky's gift, but Jeremy was the most thrilled. He held the gift Becky gave and did not want to hand it to Joshua to put away.

him tightly

"What is it?" Hayden glanced at the box Jeremy cherished and asked Stacey curiously. He had told Stacey before that Jeremy liked handmade things, so he guessed that she had to have made the gift for Jeremy herself.

Stacey was a little embarrassed, and her ears were slightly red. She answered in a soft voice, "It's clothes. They are not well made, but I made them myself."

Hayden's eyes lit up when he heard this. Then, he looked at the box in Jeremy's arms with envy.

Jeremy was more surprised. He held the box tighter and refused to let it go. He treasured it even more now.

Hearing that it was handmade clothes, Jason and Sharon were shocked. “Becky, can you make clothes?” Sharon asked in surprise.

Stacey’s ears turned even redder when she heard this. She shook her head and replied, “I am not really good at it. But I heard from Mr. Hayden Hoggard that Jeremy liked handmade things, so I learned a little from my aunt. This is all I can do.”

曲

CHAPTER 223

Stacey explained awkwardly, “Because I am not very good at making clothes, I only made one for Jeremy. The gifts for everyone else were prepared separately.”

When Jeremy heard that his gift was unique and that only his gift was made by Becky, his eyes became brighter than before. He held the small package in his arms and looked overjoyed.

Jason, Sharon, and Hayden were all a little amused and helpless when they noticed Jeremy’s strange behavior.

“Well, let’s stop talking about this. You must be tired after such a long journey, right? There is a vacant room upstairs. Would you like to take a nap in the room?” Sharon smiled and asked.

Stacey quickly shook her head and replied, “No. I am okay.” Although she did feel a little tired after flying for the whole morning, she could still take it at her age and did not need to take a nap right away.

Jeremy suddenly realized something and immediately held Becky’s hand. Stacey was startled and looked at him. He pulled her up, then turned around and walked upstairs. She hesitated for a moment and finally followed him upstairs.

Jeremy pulled Becky into his room, then turned around and closed the door. Hayden, who was shut out of the room, was speechless.

In the room, Stacey was also stunned. She didn’t expect that Jeremy would shut Hayden out. She reminded him, “Jeremy, your dad is still outside.”

Jeremy did not care. He quickly ran inside, opened the package, and checked what gift Becky had prepared for him.

Seeing that Jeremy wanted to check out the gift she gave him, Stacey smiled. She couldn't help but explain, "Jeremy, what I made may not be as good as those your dad made. You don't have to wear it if you don't like it. It's okay."

When Jeremy heard this, his hand that had just picked up the clothes paused for a moment. Then, he turned to grab the writing tablet and wrote quickly: [I like it!] He wrote these few simple words big with great force. After writing, he hurriedly handed the writing tablet to Becky.

Stacey's heart was instantly warmed when she saw it. 'Jeremy is so sweet, just like a little angel,' she thought. Smiling, she picked up the clothes, held them close to Jeremy, and thought the size should fit. "Jeremy, do you want to try it on?" Her eyes lit up, and she asked with anticipation.

Jeremy quickly nodded.

Stacey smiled. She held the clothes, thought for a moment, and asked, "Shall I help you change the clothes?"

Jeremy paused and then shook his head.

Stacey was puzzled.

Jeremy took the writing tablet, wrote something, and held it up to show Becky.

Stacey saw Jeremy's writings: [I'll do it myself.] She wondered, 'Can Jeremy change clothes himself already? That's amazing!' Her eyes flashed with surprise, and then she smiled and nodded. "Okay, go ahead and change them yourself."

Hearing this, Jeremy quickly nodded. After putting down the writing tablet, he picked up the clothes and immediately ran into the fitting room.

Knock! Knock!

Finally, there was a knock on the bedroom door.

N

Stacey instantly thought of Hayden, who had just been shut out of the room by Jeremy. She hurriedly stood up and went to open the door.

The door opened, and Hayden stood there. He was tall, wearing a white shirt. Because he was at home, his clothes were casual with a few buttons on the collar undone, revealing his tanned neck.

Stacey's heartbeat suddenly raced. Fortunately, she quickly reacted and said, "Jeremy is changing clothes."

Hayden stood at the door and asked curiously, "Is it the clothes you made?"

Stacey's cheeks burned again, and she was a little nervous. "I didn't know how to make clothes before, so I asked Cynthia for advice some time ago. The general design of these clothes was done by Cynthia. I just gave some suggestions on the design and then made the clothes with fabric." Fashion design was the most difficult part. She dared not and could not take all the credit for herself. The most important part of these clothes was the design, and it was all done by Cynthia. She only cut the fabric Cynthia suggested according to the design draft and then made it into a finished product stitch by stitch.

Hayden looked at her, and a smile emerged on his handsome face. "You've done a good job."

They were talking at the door, and Hayden didn't come into the room until the fitting room's door was opened, and Jeremy came out in new clothes.

Stacey and Hayden looked toward Jeremy almost at the same time. It was a set of bear-themed clothes, which was very cute and completely different from Jeremy's previous clothing style.

The moment Jeremy came out, Stacey's eyes lit up, and Hayden was stunned.

Stacey had long guessed that Jeremy's exquisite face would look great if he wore beautiful and cute animal-themed clothes, but she didn't expect him to look so handsome.

Hayden was a little overwhelmed. Although he knew Becky made clothes for Jeremy, he thought they were of a common style and didn't expect them to be so cute. The style of the clothes was completely different from that of those he used to make for Jeremy.

"Oh, so cute! Jeremy, you look good in these clothes!" Stacey couldn't help but instantly pounce on Jeremy, hug him, and nuzzle against him happily.

Jeremy couldn't help but smile brightly and cheerfully.

Stacey looked at Jeremy from the front, the sides, and the back. The more she looked, the more amazed she was. 'Oh! How can Jeremy be so cute?' she thought. She took Jeremy's hand and asked nervously, "Jeremy, can I take some photos of you in this suit? I think you look so cute, and I like it very much!"

It was the first time Jeremy had seen Becky so happy, so he nodded joyfully.

Stacey hurriedly took out her phone and snapped photos of Jeremy. 'He is so handsome, isn't he?' she thought. At this moment, she suddenly thought of Kevin, who had always wanted to wear nice clothes. She thought all kinds of animal-themed clothes would suit him since they could still be cute,

even if they were not for girls. She reckoned that Tearing fashion design was necessary for her. Once she learned it, she could design clothes of any style she wanted.

After a brief moment of shock, Hayden came to his senses and smiled slightly. He leaned against the door and looked at Stacey and Jeremy with a smile.

CHAPTER 224

Jeremy rarely got Becky's attention for such a long time. He whispered

'Becky pointed

her phone at me and clicked on it for a long time. She must have taken a lot of photos!'

Stacey took a lot of photos at once. Although she had taken photos of Jeremy from all angles, she still felt somewhat unsatisfied and exclaimed inwardly, 'How adorable Jeremy is!'

Jeremy picked up the writing tablet and message read: [I want photos, too.].

e something on it before handing it to Becky. The

Looking at Jeremy's writing tablet, Stacey agreed with a smile, "No problem. Let's choose the

photos together and send the nice ones to your daddy's phone. We'll ask him to keep the photos for you, okay?"

Jeremy looked at Becky and nodded delightedly. Both of them gathered and chose photos happily after that.

Knock! Knock! Knock!

Suddenly, knocks sounded on the door. Stacey, momentarily stunned, turned the door and saw I come in now?" Hayden. Hayden looked at Jeremy with a faint smile and asked solemnly,

It Jeremy pouted and turned to look at Becky. Then, he nodded reluctantly at Hayden in response. wasn't until then that Hayden entered the room, walked to their side, and leaned over to view the photos with them.

Stacey was surprised by such a natural habit of Hayden and thought, 'Though Jeremy is only three years old, Hayden respects him. He wouldn't step into Jeremy's room without his permission. He's truly a good father!'

"What's on your mind?" Hayden's voice suddenly sounded overhead.

Stacey was startled and subconsciously turned around to look at him. However, they were so close

for a

that the moment she turned her head, her lips accidentally brushed his cheek. Shee so close

moment before quickly leaning backward.

Hayden's smile deepened as he asked, "What's wrong?"

Feeling her ears burning, Stacey hurriedly turned around and replied, "N—Nothing." She was so nervous that she stammered.

A sweet smile crept on Hayden's face. Both of them soon lowered their heads in and continued

to browse the photos. It was just that this time, Stacey dared not to be absent-minded anymore and focused on the photos.

Stacey and Jeremy took a long time browsing the photos. Finally, they picked out the best photos and sent them to Hayden's phone. Once Hayden received the photos on his phone, Jeremy immediately raised his head and stared at Hayden intently. Hayden nodded at him, saying, "I'll keep them for you."

T

Tue, Aug

Only then did Jeremy feel relieved.

家88%會

It was already late after they had done all that. Sharon went up in person and asked them to go downstairs for dinner with a smile. The moment she entered the room, she happened to see Jeremy wearing new clothes. Her eyes immediately lit up in amazement.

“Wow! Is this the clothes Becky made for Jeremy? It’s so beautiful!” Sharon complimented happily.

Hearing Sharon’s compliment, Jeremy instantly became delighted again. He carefully touched his new clothes and exclaimed inwardly, ‘Aww! I love it very much!’

Sharon walked into the room and touched Jeremy’s new clothes carefully, just as Jeremy had done. The more she looked at the clothes, the happier she was. ‘Jeremy is only three years old. He grew

up

with his father, and his clothes were also prepared by his father. His father is good at everything. However, he’s way too serious. Even the clothes he made for Jeremy were also too formal, she thought.

“Good, good. These clothes look nice and suit Jeremy,” Sharon complimented happily, thinking, ‘Mother is the best, after all. Children will always cherish by their mothers.

With a happy smile, she turned around and greeted Stacey enthusiastically, “Becky, come. Let’s go down to have lunch together. Grace has already prepared lunch.”

Stacey hurriedly replied, “Okay. Thank you, Mrs. Hoggard.”

“Don’t be so formal, Becky. From now on, call me Grandma, just like Hay. You used to call me grandma, too, when you were a child. You don’t have to be so courteous with me,” Sharon said with a smile.

Momentarily stunned, Stacey remained silent for a while and agreed, “Okay.” After taking a deep breath, she greeted, “Grandma Sharon.”

Sharon smiled upon hearing that and nodded happily. Hayde had been fixing his hint of tenderness lit up in his eyes as he smiled faintly.

dze on Stacey. A

Jeremy ran over and took the initiative to grab Becky’s hand. Stacey looked at Jeremy and smiled. Sharon was delighted to see Jeremy like Becky so much and grinned ear to ear. They went downstairs together and finished their lunch happily.

After having lunch, it was time to take a nap. Joshua took Stacey to the guest room. But when she was about to go to bed, Jeremy suddenly ran over and showed her his writing tablet. There was a line on it that read: [Becky, I want to sleep with you!]

Stacey’s heart immediately softened at the sight of the writing tablet. She agreed, “Okay. Let’s sleep together this noon, Jeremy.”

Jeremy was overjoyed. His clear eyes lit up in excitement. The next moment, he took off his shoes and went to bed without Stacey help, Stacey smiled upon seeing that. Then, she also took off her coat and lay down on the bed. Soon, their biological clocks overwhelmed them. Stacey let out a gentle breathing sound with Jeremy in her arms.

G

18+ 88%

0

Jeremy hadn't fallen asleep yet. He whispered inwardly, 'It feels so warm and comfortable in Becky's embrace. Besides, Becky smells so good and makes me feel at ease. I truly like Becky and only want her to be my mommy. Not long later, Jeremy's biological clock overwhelmed him, and he dozed off in Becky's embrace.

Unbeknownst to Stacey and Jeremy, who had fallen asleep, Hayden was standing in the corridor. He had seen Jeremy run into Stacey's room earlier, but Jeremy didn't come out after a long time. He thought Jeremy must have clung to Becky and slept with her.

Hayden pursed his lips and pondered. Suddenly, something flashed across his mind. He mused, 'Jeremy is so clingy to Becky. If Becky and I got married in the future, would he steal Becky from me? There are indeed things we shouldn't think about. Once we think too much, we will be worried.' Hayden said nothing in the end, though. After he was ascertained that Jeremy was taking a

in Becky's room, he also returned to his room to take a nap.

nap

CHAPTER 225

Stacey spent a day with Jeremy in Hoggard Manor. The following day, she flew to Menterra together with the Hoggard family. Thinking that Jeremy might be able to talk after the operation, Stacey couldn't help but look forward to it and felt happy.

Jeremy was delighted as well. His eyes were brimming. He had been very happy since Becky came. But at the same time, he felt somewhat annoyed because Queenie also went along with them and even bought a ticket on the same flight as them. Becky sat with Jeremy on the flight while Queenie was sitting across from them, watching them all the time.

After a journey of several hours, they finally arrived in Menterra. Hayden had arranged everything beforehand. Someone picked them up once they had descended from the plane. After they hopped into the car, the car sped away immediately. Stacey couldn't

help but look back. She found that Queenie had also hailed a taxi and followed behind them.

“Ignore her,” said Hayden.

Momentarily stunned, Stacey nodded. “Okay.”

Jeremy held Becky’s hand tightly. Stacey noticed his nervousness and gently held him in her arms, comforting him, “Jeremy, don’t be afraid.”

Jeremy nestled in Becky’s arms and nodded.

They headed to the hotel first and settled in directly. Hayden had booked a presidential suite. There were several rooms inside, which was sufficient to cater to all of them.

Although the operation was scheduled long ago, Hayden’s mother was still worried when the day approached. Despite how worried they were, Jeremy still turned up at the hospital the next day.

After a series of procedures, the little one was finally wheeled into the operating room.

“Everything will go well, right?” Audrey whispered to herself after the door of the operating room was closed.

Jack looked at his wife and reassured her, “I’m sure it will

go

well.”

Stacey couldn’t help but look at Hayden, thinking, The operation will go well, right? With the Hoggard family’s background, they must have found the best doctors for Jeremy and have high confidence before proceeding with the operation.’

Hayden pursed his lips, saying nothing. In truth, he was worried, too.

Queenie, on the other hand, arrived late. She was still catching her breath when she showed up. It seemed that she ran all the way there. “Jeremy... Has the operation started?” she asked hesitantly, looking at the operating room.

Everyone looked at Queenie. However, it was merely a glance. Everyone soon shifted their gaze away again. No one was interested in her. Queenie always knew that the Hoggard family did not like her. She felt aggrieved but put up with it in the end.

G

After scanning around, she walked toward Stacey. Hayden frowned and pulled Stacey to his side. Queenie noticed that and immediately froze in her tracks. Her face turned pale, and she looked at Hayden in disbelief. Hayden merely cast her a cold glance before shifting his gaze away.

The operation would take about four hours. During those four hours, all of them waited patiently, silently, anxiously, restlessly, and worriedly.

Four hours later, the door of the operating room opened. Everyone almost stood up at once and rushed over anxiously. The attending doctor talked to Hayden in Menterran. Stacey could speak Menterran, too. Thus, she understood the doctor's words that the operation went well. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief and smiled happily right then.

Jeremy was soon wheeled out. The little one lay on the gurney with his eyes closed, and his face slightly paled. It was the first time that Stacey had seen Jeremy so fragile, which made her feel distressed.

Jeremy was transferred to the VIP ward later. Although it was a ward, the room was specially decorated and did not look like a ward at all. Instead, it was kind of like a cozy little home with a lot of love. There were still anesthetic drugs in Jeremy's body, so he would not wake up until the anesthesia wore off.

It was getting late and almost time for lunch. Stacey asked everyone for their preferences and went out to buy food. Queenie saw Stacey heading out and followed her. Hayden, noticing that, told her parents to accompany Jeremy and went out with them.

Queenie wanted to catch up with Becky at first. Little did she expect that Hayden would follow her. She felt so pissed off and wondered why Hayden cared about Becky so much. Nevertheless, she

remained rational and kept that anger in her heart, knowing that it would be useless to fall out with them now, as it would only make her be eliminated.

'Mom was right. The only thing I can grab now is Jeremy. I'm Jeremy's biological mother. He'll be closer to me, for sure. As long as I can get a chance to spend more time with him, he'll definitely listen to me,' Queenie thought. At the same time, she couldn't help but look forward to the future, wondering, 'I heard that Jeremy would be able to talk after this operation, which meant... When Jeremy can talk, will he call me mommy?'

Queenie disliked children in the past, especially since the child she had given birth to was not her loved one's. But now, she still couldn't help but look forward to it and imagine how adorable Jeremy would be when he called her mommy.

After Hayden and Stacey left, Queenie pondered for a while and left. As it was already noon, she would like to have lunch, too. Audrey, who had witnessed the scene, told Jack to stay back to look after Jeremy and left. Jack wanted to stop her but soon realized what she was going to do and said nothing.

Audrey followed Queenie out and caught up with her outside. In a calm voice, she said, “Ms. Leavey, do you have time at noon? Or if you happen to be free now, let’s find a place and have a chat.”

Queenie was surprised to hear that. Although she was nervous and uneasy, she nodded and agreed

242

in the end, “I’m free.”

n

Audrey took Queenie to a nearby restaurant and booked a private room. Only she and Queenie were in the room.

After a moment of silence, Queenie uttered cautiously and ingratiatingly, “Audrey...”

Audrey paused for a moment and explained, “You and Hay have been divorced for more than three years. Please address me properly.”

Queenie’s face instantly turned pale when she heard that.

When the waiter brought the menu over, Audrey ordered a few dishes. Queenie also took the menu, but she was not in the mood to order anything.

“Pick a few dishes. Don’t waste time,” Audrey urged.

Her words hit Queenie like a bucket of cold water. “Okay.” She hurriedly nodded and ordered a few dishes quickly.

曲

CHAPTER 226

After the waiter left, the private room fell into silence. Audrey wasn’t in a hurry to speak. She

uneasy Queenie became.

simply sat there calmly. However, the quieter she was, the more she wasn't in a hurry to speak. She

After a while, Queenie couldn't help but break the silence. She explained, "Mom, I was wrong in the past. I was immature back then, but I realized my mistakes now. I swear, I won't make those mistakes again. I'll be a good wife to Hayden and a good mother." As Queenie spoke, her tone grew increasingly anxious.

Audrey, seated on the couch, watched her calmly. She waited until Queenie finished speaking before saying, "Queenie, do you remember what you said three

years ago?"

Queenie's face turned pale upon hearing that. She hurriedly explained, "Mom, I—I was young and immature back then."

Audrey nodded and hummed in response.

Queenie, feeling even more nervous, added, "Mom, I was wrong. From now on, I'll be a good wife. Jeremy is my child, too. If Hayden and I remarry, we'll treat Jeremy well. But if Hayden marries Becky, a stepmother can never compare to a biological mother."

At that point, Queenie was desperate and continued, "Maybe Becky is nice to Jeremy now because she wants to marry Hayden. She might just be pretending. After all, she has her own children. Once she marries Hayden, she could change and mistreat Jeremy."

Audrey looked at Queenie, wanting to say something, but she held back.

Tears welled up in Queenie's eyes. She couldn't help but whisper, "I'll be good to Jeremy. I truly understand my mistakes and will change."

"Change is good," Audrey finally responded. She gazed at Queenie and added, "But once a relationship ends, it's final. Hayden never really cared for you, and that's something everyone is aware of."

Queenie fidgeted, feeling a sense of dread.

Audrey went on, "Back then, Mr. Hoggard was critically ill, on the brink of death. Hayden is a filial child. He didn't want his grandfather to pass away with regrets, so he hurriedly married you. Otherwise, with your tricks, marrying Hayden would have been impossible."

"Mom, I—I..." Queenie stammered, trying to explain but not knowing what else to say.

Audrey replied, "If you two hadn't divorced, I might have felt upset. After all, I'm a mother too. Now that you regret it, you should understand, right? As a mother, the greatest wish is for your child to be happy."

Suddenly, Audrey laughed. She looked at Queenie and continued, "When you kicked up a storm to leave three years ago, I was livid. Hayden is the apple of our eye and the sole heir of the Hoggard family. You were fortunate to marry him. But you didn't appreciate it. You caused such a scandal

– G

and turned Hayden into a laughingstock in the circle."

Audrey chuckled softly, her gaze steady on Queenie. "But now, looking back, your divorce was the best thing that could have happened to him. If you two hadn't divorced, he wouldn't have had the chance to be with Becky. Do you know what it's like to live with someone you truly love?"

"Oh, my apologies, I shouldn't have mentioned this in front of you. After all, the man you were willing to risk everything for doesn't seem to be very decent," Audrey added, with a deliberate

pause.

Queenie's expression grew sorrowful. "Mom, Becky isn't right for Hayden. A second marriage can't bring happiness. After they get married, she wouldn't treat Jeremy well."

Audrey smirked, her eyes filled with sarcasm as she stared at Queenie. "Queenie, if you didn't bring up Jeremy in every conversation, I might have some respect for you. But all you do is talk about him. Ask yourself honestly – do you truly want to cherish and protect Jeremy, or is he just a tool for you to use?"

Queenie's face went from pale to flushed, and she looked anxious. "That's not it, Mom. You've misunderstood. I—I really do want what's best for Jeremy. I'll be good to him from now on."

"You keep saying you'll be good to Jeremy, but since you've been back, what have you done for him?" Audrey sneered and continued, "You used Jeremy to pester and guilt-trip Hay into forgiving you and getting back together. Is that what you call love for Jeremy?"

Upon hearing those words, Queenie grew anxious and stammered, "I—I didn't. I..."

Suddenly, someone knocked on the door.

The two people in the private room paused, their conversation abruptly stopping.

“Come in,” Audrey said in the language of Menterra

As soon as she spoke, the door opened, and a waiter entered with dishes.

Since it was mealtime, Audrey didn’t utter a single word, eating quietly.

Queenie tried several times to speak, but the words wouldn’t come out. She ate her meal absentmindedly. Once she was done eating, she couldn’t hold back any longer. “Mom, I’m not the person you think I am. I truly made a mistake. Jeremy,.. Jeremy hasn’t lived with me since he was young. He’s not close to me, which is why he doesn’t like me. But I’m his biological mother. If I live with him for a while, he’ll surely come to like me, and I’ll take good care of him!”

Audrey flashed a faint, mocking smile. “Ms. Leavey, if you had paid more attention to Jeremy in the ward rather than fixating on Becky and trying to follow her, I might have believed you.”

Queenie fell silent.

Audrey looked at her and remarked sarcastically, “Jeremy had just undergone surgery and needs care now. You keep saying you know you made a mistake, that you’ll love and take care of him

88%f

n

45

properly. Yet, your attention is elsewhere.” A helpless smile played on her lips as she uttered softly, “Queenie, your words and actions seem to be expressing two different things.”

Anxious, Queenie hastily explained, “I’m not. Mom, I’m not like that. Earlier, I... I saw that Jeremy was in good hands with you, Dad, and Hayden all there. With so many people taking care of him, I thought it was fine for me to step away. If I had been alone, I would have stayed to look after him.”

てい

0

CHAPTER 227

“Queenie, I didn’t ask you to come out today to listen to your excuses. I merely have something to remind you,” Audrey said, her expression indifferent.

Queenie looked up at Audrey, stunned.

The latter continued coldly, "If you have an ounce of self-awareness, perhaps you can save some dignity for yourself. But if you continue harassing and lose all your dignity in the future, don't blame the Hoggard family for not giving you a chance."

"Audrey," Queenie uttered, immediately panicking. She hurriedly stood and reached out to grab Audrey. However, the latter dodged it, standing and walking away.

Meanwhile, Stacey and Hayden returned from buying food for the whole family, only to find that Audrey had gone out. They were slightly surprised.

When Jack softly explained Audrey's whereabouts to them, Hayden instantly understood, as did Stacey.

They spoke no more and had lunch quietly until Stacey noticed Jeremy's eyelashes seemingly fluttering as they were nearly finished and stopped eating.

Noticing her abrupt pause, Hayden asked confusedly, "What's wrong?"

Stacey put down the takeout box and approached the hospital bed, saying, "Is Jeremy waking up?" As she spoke, she crouched beside the bed, calling out softly and gently, "Jeremy?"

Jack and Hayden immediately put down their takeout boxes and came over nervously. Everyone stared at the boy on the bed with anxiety and expectation.

Jeremy's long eyelashes trembled slightly. A moment later, he slowly opened his eyes with a trace of puzzlement in them.

Jack and Hayden sighed in relief, and the latter quickly said to his father, "Dad, go and call the doctor."

Jack naturally knew the importance of this matter and hurried to inform the doctor.

Similarly overjoyed to see Jeremy awake, Stacey immediately asked softly, "Jeremy, how do you feel? Does it hurt a lot?"

The boy's vocal cords had been operated on, and with his throat wrapped in bandages, he couldn't - speak, much less move around.

"Don't talk or move. Blink once if you feel okay and three times if you're experiencing discomfort. That way, I'll know how you feel," Stacey hurriedly added.

After hearing that, Jeremy blinked once seriously.

09.12 Tue, Aug

Pleased, Stacey let out a relieved sigh, and Hayden followed suit while observing their interaction from the side.

The doctor soon came and examined Jeremy. After he confirmed there was nothing wrong, everyone felt more at ease.

For the next two weeks, Jeremy obediently remained in the hospital, waiting for recovery. After that period, he recovered very well. The doctor stated that Jeremy only needed to stay in the hospital for another two weeks to confirm there weren't any other problems. Then, he could be discharged and slowly try to practice his vocalization.

With his condition improving, Stacey had to leave. She had been in Menterra for two weeks, and Lillian and Kevin were still waiting for her at home. She couldn't abandon her children for too long.

Jeremy was reluctant to part with Becky. 'I only need to stay for another two weeks. Then, I can fly

you when I return home and visit Becky,' he thought. Holding a writing tablet, he wrote: [I will visit home.]

Stacey stared at the writing tablet before nodding happily at Jeremy, saying, "Okay. I'll await your visit at home." She mentally calculated the time and suddenly added, "Wouldn't it be almost Christmas in two weeks? We can go to Alagua City together. Our hometowns are both there, so it'll be very convenient!"

"Sure." Hayden nodded, replying with a smile. Jeremy's eyes also lit up with happiness.

Stacey held Jeremy's hand and smiled. "You haven't been to my hometown, have you, Jeremy? When you are discharged from the hospital, I'll take you there for a visit, okay?" she suggested.

Jeremy quickly nodded.

She spent time talking to the boy to appease him before finally bidding Hayden farewell and preparing to leave.

The day after Jeremy's surgery two weeks ago, Jack had already gone back. He couldn't stay away for long since he was still managing such a large corporation as Hoggard Group.

Fortunately, after Stacey left, Hayden and Audrey stayed there to look after Jeremy, so the boy shouldn't be too lonely.

hey

Hayden drove Stacey to the airport. When they said their goodbyes, he took her hand, lowered his head, and gently kissed the back of it.

Stacey's heart pounded, and she hurriedly withdrew her hand after the kiss. "Umm... I... I'll head back first. See you in two weeks when Jeremy is discharged from the hospital and returns home," she said, stuttering from nervousness.

Nodding with a grin, Hayden replied, "Okay."

Stacey felt her cheeks burning and hurriedly turned to pass through security before queuing for boarding. Only after boarding the plane did her heartbeat slowly stabilize.

+88%1

Back in Hivalis, Lillian and Kevin missed their mother very much. It was the first time they had been apart from Stacey for so long in their entire lives, so they were very anxious.

1 woke

Hence, when they finally received news of Stacey's return, the two up early and went around the house, pestering Debra to pick her up at the airport.

Debra was rarely pestered by the two children. She endured until it took them out.

as almost time and hurriedly

Even so, it was still a little early when they arrived at the airport. Ther

minutes before the plane finally landed.

for more than ten

Lillian and Kevin became even more excited and wanted to dash inside as the crowd flowed out.

Debra had no choice but to instruct Gwen and Marie to pick up the children, as she was worried they might be trampled.

Having lost their freedom after being picked up, Lillian and Kevin couldn't help but make a fuss, but it lasted only a while. Soon, they discovered being carried made their line of

sight higher, and they could see more people. Hence, the two children stopped fussing and glanced anxiously at the emerging crowd to find their mother.

When Stacey came out, Kevin was the first to spot her. He immediately at her and shouting excitedly, "Mommy!"

began struggling, pointing

At this point, Debra hadn't seen Stacey. Hearing Kevin's words, she looked over and instantly saw her daughter.

Stacey also spotted Lillian and Kevin. After all, the children were in someone's arms, which was more conspicuous.

Immediately, Debra walked over. Stacey also quickened her pace as she came toward them.

"Mommy!" Lillian and Kevin yelled in unison. Upon seeing Stacey approaching, the children

reached out like fledglings, wanting to hug their mother.

曲

CHAPTER 228

It was challenging for Gwen to continue carrying the children once they began struggling as they had grown considerably. Thus, Stacey restrained them, forbidding them from squirming at once.

Debra chuckled as well. "Let's head out for now. We'll discuss this further in the car." True enough, the car was parked at the entrance when their entire family headed out. Everyone felt instantly relieved once they got in. Debra had arranged for two vehicles to pick them up; one for Becky, the children, and herself while the other was for Gwen and Marie.

Upon reaching home, Stacey couldn't help inquiring Debra at the thought of Adrian, Isabella, and Damian, "Mom, how are Isabella and Damian? Have you visited them?"

"Oh yes, I have. You have no idea how incredibly adorable Damian is, Becky. He resembles Adrian when he was a child down to a tee. I can't believe a father and son can resemble each other so much!" Debra nodded hurriedly, visibly ecstatic. "Here are the photos I took of them." She excitedly whipped out her phone and showed Stacey the photos she'd secretly taken of Damian and Isabella in her gallery.

Stacey glanced at them. The photos were much more natural than the ones taken by Adrian previously. Debra even intentionally displayed Adrian's childhood photos side by side as a comparison. Stacey was overwhelmed with cuteness as she took them in.

At the same time, Lillian and Kevin scooted closer, their curiosity piqued as they gazed intently at Damian's photos. The sense of fondness they had toward him was growing with each moment.

"Damian is so cute!" Kevin commented sincerely.

"It's a shame he can't play with us yet. If only he could..." Lillian lamented.

The siblings had seen plenty of Damian's photos recently due to Debra's elated state ever since meeting him. She would frequently admire his photos and patiently introduce Damian to the siblings time and again. Lillian and Kevin were astonished at how much Damian resembled Adrian in the photos and would make a fuss to see him.

Alas, the timing wasn't right yet. Debra would always be filled with regret whenever she recalled the incident. It was late by the time Stacey finished looking through the photos, and Debra hurriedly urged her to head upstairs and shower to catch up on some sleep once she came to.

"I'm still not tired, Mom," Stacey replied helplessly.

"Either way, you still need to rest. Do you know how important sufficient rest is for women? Accelerated aging, mood swings, and poor skin condition are just some of the symptoms of over-exhaustion," Debra pointed out seriously. Isabella came to her mind then, and she thought, 'What a miserable life she's living. My heart breaks even further for the sisters the more I come to understand them. Yet, I still can't openly donate money for them to have a better quality of life. It's especially so for Isabella's elder sister...

Carly's tragic state deeply saddened Debra, and she would have cast Carly's scum of a husband aside on her behalf if she could. If a couple couldn't maintain a healthy relationship, they might as

well part ways. It was exhausting watching them torture one another as they refused to divorce and seek better options. Unfortunately, it wouldn't do for her to poke her nose in others' private affairs.

Nonetheless, Debra couldn't help feeling relieved when her thoughts of them inevitably led to Stacey. She was immensely grateful that Stacey wasn't one to shortchange herself and had decisively split with her husband when their relationship was at the end of the road. 'Aren't they much happier, their future so much brighter, now that they've separated? Good thing they didn't remain together for the children's sake,' she mused,

In Debra's opinion, a whole but unharmonious family with parents who argued and fought daily as they refused to put aside their grudges was more traumatizing to a child than being brought up by a single parent.

Since Stacey couldn't refute her mother, she had no choice but to do as told and went upstairs to shower and rest.

Although Lillian and Kevin subsequently planned to go with their mother, Debra held them back. "Lily, Kev, your mom has just reached home and is exhausted. Let's not disturb her and let her rest for her bit, all right?"

"I won't bother Mommy," Kevin promised instantly.

"Me too," Lillian added.

Debra was rendered speechless as she thought, 'Only fools would trust a child's words. Despite that, her attempt at keeping the children away from Stacey failed as they had been apart from her for too long and missed her dearly. Thus, they climbed into bed with Stacey once she was done, whining about wanting to sleep together. Since Stacey happened to be wide awake, she grabbed a storybook and read to them while teaching them to identify the animals in the illustrations.

Debra crept upstairs to sneak a peek at them. Feelings of joy and powerlessness warred within her as she observed Stacey sharing a peaceful moment with her children. 'Perhaps she'd be suffering

through her marriage like Isabella's sister if she hadn't divorced that scumbag for good' Debra pondered, once again relieved at her daughter's choice to separate from her ex-husband.

"Is something wrong, Mom?" Stacey ventured after a moment's hesitation, her hands still holding the storybook. The odd manner in which Debra regarded her the entire day hadn't gone unnoticed by Stacey.

At once, Debra snapped back to herself and shook her head. "It's nothing. Aren't you tired at all?" she queried.

Nonplussed, Stacey uttered, "Nope."

Ultimately, Debra decided to enter the room and sit at Stacey's bedside. She could no longer keep Carly's circumstances to herself and spilled the beans to Stacey. While Stacey had been vaguely aware of what happened in Isabella's household, she was never in on the details. Hence, it came as a surprise for her to hear about Carly's destitute state. Even so, she couldn't intervene when the married couple themselves refused to divorce.

"Becky, you can't possibly get back together with Theodore. Understand?" Debra voiced her

「命 88%

concern after concluding her words. She then gazed toward Lillian and Kevin, regarding them with a hint of sympathy.

"I know." Stacey nodded.

Debra stared at her intently, then advised, "Becky, I believe a loving environment filled with warmth is of more import than an irresponsible father's love. Imagine how much it would hurt a child if their parents stayed together in a loveless marriage, both unable to see past the other's shortcomings. Each day would be filled with arguments and fights as they begrudged one another. A toxic environment like that would be far worse than having a single parent."

Chapter 229

"I get what you're saying," Stacey responded quickly, sensing the underlying concern in her mother's voice.

Debra nodded, her eyes slightly moist as she gazed at her daughter. "All right, I'll let you be then. You and the kids need to rest up," Debra said gently. Turning to Lillian and Kevin, she added, "Lily, Kev, make sure you're both good and don't bother your mom too much. Let her get some good rest."

Lillian, with wide eyes full of seriousness, looked up at Debra and asked, "Granny, does letting Mommy sleep mean she can really rest well?"

Debra, caught slightly off guard by the question, smiled and nodded affirmatively. "That's right," she explained. "Sleeping is the best kind of beauty treatment. If you sleep well, you'll feel refreshed and energized."

"Then let's all go to sleep!" Kevin exclaimed enthusiastically.

In no time, Lillian and Kevin were bubbling with excitement about going to bed, making it difficult for Stacey to finish their bedtime story. Under the cheerful insistence of her children, Stacey had no choice but to abandon the book and join them in rest. Observing how considerate her grandchildren were being, Debra departed with a sense of peace.

Elsewhere, at the Edwards Villa in Maeloria, Theodore was wrestling with troubling developments concerning the company's projects. It was deeply suspicious how several

bids, which were almost guaranteed wins for the Edwards family, were now unexpectedly falling into other hands.

Initially, Theodore had suspected interference from the Carter family. Yet, recently, he had observed some unusual behavior from Jenny. His suspicions were confirmed today when he discovered irrefutable evidence that Jenny was the real saboteur! She had been stealing information from his computer, leading to a series of poor judgments and significant losses for Edwards Group. Theodore was left reeling. 'Why is this happening? I don't understand!' he mused.

Throughout their six-month marriage, Theodore had come to trust Jenny implicitly. She had always been there to support him, providing comfort whenever he was stressed or feeling low. Despite her inability to cook, she had thoughtfully hired an excellent chef who prepared meals exactly to Theodore's liking. On particularly hectic days, she would even personally deliver meals to his office, a gesture that didn't go unnoticed by his colleagues, who often remarked on how blissful his married life appeared.

This care had gradually diminished the pain of his previous divorce from Rebecca. 'All that troubled me were these unexplained setbacks in my career,' Theodore reflected. He had been determined to elevate the Edwards family's status above the Carter family's, partly to make Rebecca regret leaving him. But now, to his dismay, he realized that the person undermining him was the one closest to him.

Jenny had just finished copying a file from Theodore's laptop in his study. After shutting down the computer, she was preparing to leave when she unexpectedly came face-to-face with a tall figure in the doorway. Startled, her face momentarily lost color, but she quickly regained her composure, slipped her phone into her pocket, and greeted Theodore with a calm, sweet smile. "Theodore, you're back early. I was just tidying up your office," she said smoothly.

"Give me your phone!" Theodore demanded, his eyes piercing through her facade.

Jenny, taken aback by his abruptness, managed a strained smile and responded, "Theodore, why are you asking for my phone all of a sudden? I-" "I said, give me your phone!" Theodore interrupted, his voice firm and commanding.

Tears welled up in Jenny's eyes as she looked at him, wounded. "Theodore, do you suspect me of something?" she murmured, her voice quivering. Without indulging in further conversation, Theodore reached out, intent on grabbing her and retrieving the phone himself. Surprisingly, Jenny's demeanor shifted dramatically. She swiftly raised her leg and delivered a forceful kick to his abdomen. Theodore grunted in pain, caught completely off guard by her sudden aggressiveness. Seizing the moment, Jenny broke free from his grasp and fled from the room.

Theodore, in a state of panic, leapt

to his feet to chase after Jenny, but the acute pain from her blow to his abdomen significantly hindered his pace. Jenny's movements were unexpectedly precise and swift, almost as if she had received some

form of training. By the time

Theodore reached the stairwell, he caught a glimpse of Jenny already reaching the ground floor. He

hurried down just in time to see her start the car and speed off, leaving him far behind before he could even approach her.

With a darkened expression, Theodore dashed to the Edwards Villa's extensive garage. Faced with a selection of vehicles, he chose one at random and sped out, only to find that Jenny's car had already disappeared from view. Frustrated, he pulled over and slumped in the driver's seat, his face etched with a grim determination. He took out his phone and attempted to call Jenny multiple times, but to no avail, as each call was met with silence.

Meanwhile, as Jenny drove away, she frequently checked her rearview mirror to ensure that Theodore was not in pursuit. Only when she was confident that she had lost him did she allow herself to relax. Assured of her escape, she then changed her direction and drove toward a predetermined destination with clear intent.

After he failed to reach Jenny by phone, Theodore drove to the police station to report the incident. Coincidentally, the officer on duty was none other than Bryce, the brother of his ex-wife. Theodore's face went through a gamut of emotions as he sat down, but he composed himself enough to formally file a report.

Bryce, despite personally finding the situation slightly amusing given Jenny's clever maneuver against Theodore, remained stoically professional. He processed the paperwork and organized the investigation with a neutral demeanor.

About an hour later, they located

Theodore's car abandoned in a dilapidated neighborhood of

Maeloria, devoid of any surveillance cameras. Although the vehicle was found, Jenny was nowhere to be seen. With no further leads and the case not deemed critical enough to warrant overnight work, the investigation was paused until the next day. After his shift, Bryce couldn't resist sharing this "exciting news" with his family in their Family of Eight group chat.

Over at the Carter Villa, Stacey was roused from her afternoon nap and instinctively reached for her phone, only to be greeted by over 99 notifications from the family group chat. Perplexed, she opened the app and began scrolling through the barrage of

messages. It took her some time to get to the beginning of the conversation, but it became clear that the discussion revolved around Theodore and Jenny. 'So, Jenny has left Theodore? And it seems everyone is quite pleased

about it,' Stacey noted, her

confusion mingling with realization.

As she pieced together the events from the chat, Stacey recalled a previous conversation with Gifford that had prompted her to ask Adrian to look into Jenny's background. 'There was always something peculiar about Jenny. Maybe her interest in Theodore wasn't out of love but driven by some

hidden agenda,' Stacey mused.

Chapter 230

Stacey pondered for a while before finally setting her phone down. In truth, how Theodore was doing now, whether he was doing well or not, and his situation with Jenny seemed not to affect her anymore. She felt indifferent about it all. Lillian and Kevin were still asleep, so she carefully got out of bed without waking them. After tidying up, Stacey went out of the room. As soon as she arrived downstairs, Debra eagerly pulled her aside to share the latest "good news" about Theodore. Stacey was amused. "Mom, I already know. However, how he's doing now has nothing to do with me. I'm no longer interested in his life."

Hearing this, Debra was taken aback. She then looked at Stacey and beamed with joy. "That's right. It's all in the past. We don't need to dwell on it." Debra grew even happier as she said this. Stacey's indifference toward Theodore showed that she had truly moved on from him. "By the way, Christmas is coming soon. You mentioned it to Hay before. How's your plan to invite Mr. Fraley to Zentscape coming along? If the timing works, I think inviting Mr. Fraley to Zentscape during Christmas would be great. It will be so lively then. I'm sure he would fall in love with Zentscape," Debra said with a smile.

Stacey nodded and answered, "Yes, I think so too. But it depends on Mr. Fraley's schedule and also Hayden." Thinking of Hayden, Stacey could not help but think of Jeremy. She wondered how he was doing and hoped he was not making a fuss now that she was gone.

Debra seemed to have thought of something. Smiling, she inquired, "By the way, isn't Jeremy due to be discharged from the hospital in about half a month?"

Stacey nodded. "Yes."

Debra's face brightened as she said, "So, when Jeremy comes back, he'll be able to start practicing speaking and become like a normal child, won't he?"

Speaking of this, Stacey felt happy as well. "It should be. If his recovery goes well, the doctor said there shouldn't be any issues."

"There definitely won't be any problems. Jeremy is such an adorable child. He's bound to be blessed with good luck," Debra remarked cheerfully. Stacey nodded in agreement. Just as she finished speaking with Debra, Charlie called her on video. Excitedly, he shared how Theodore had been set up by Jenny. Stacey found it amusing and listened patiently until he finished, then told Charlie she no longer cared about Theodore's affairs.

Charlie was momentarily stunned but then smiled with satisfaction. He pondered, 'Stacey not caring is a good thing. If she doesn't care about Theodore's situation or has no interest in the drama surrounding him, it means he no longer holds any place in her heart, not even as a source of hatred. That scumbag Theodore doesn't deserve Stacey's time or energy, not even for hatred.' Charlie asked, suddenly shifting to a serious tone as he spoke. "By the way, Stacey, Christmas is approaching. The year-end entertainment ceremony is coming up. Given that you've had two hit shows this year, you'll definitely be invited. If you're lucky, you might even win an award. Do you want to attend?"

Hearing this, Stacey was stunned. She hadn't taken on any projects in the entertainment industry for over half a year, not because she lacked offers, but because she had told Lynn that she wanted to focus on managing Hoggard Technologies. As a result, Lynn hadn't bothered her with matters relating to the entertainment industry during this time.

With the year nearing its end, the

annual entertainment ceremony was just around the corner. It was the most prestigious event in the industry, where artists were ranked and awarded, and winning an award was a major point of pride for many. Charlie was an award-winning actor, and J was an award-winning actress. Both of them had received their accolades from this event.

"Why don't you attend, Stacey? No matter what, you've worked hard for so long, and your two shows were huge hits. If you win an award, you'll get to

go on stage to accept it. Plus, you'll have the chance to promote the L&K Group as well," Charlie said with enthusiasm.

Stacey pondered, 'The L&K Group?' Thinking of Charlie's entertainment company, she felt her heart soften. She agreed, saying, "All right, I'll make some time and attend."

"Great! I'll ask Lynn to arrange it for you," Charlie said immediately.

"Okay," Stacey replied with a smile. After confirming with Charlie and hanging up, Stacey felt unreal. As she recalled the past year, it seemed like time had flown by. She hadn't anticipated the year passing so quickly and wondered, 'Could it be that happiness and a carefree life really make time seem to fly by?' As Stacey pondered this, her mood lifted once more.

Half an hour later, Bryce called to update her on Theodore's situation. Adrian was the last to call. He didn't say much and simply wished her well. Hearing that she no longer cared about Theodore, Adrian felt genuinely happy.

However, toward the end of the call, Stacey heard a child's voice. Adrian quickly lowered his voice and said a few brief words to Stacey before hastily ending the call. Stacey felt both amused and helpless.

However, deep down, she couldn't help but secretly wish for Adrian's happiness, hoping that his and Isabella's relationship would go smoothly and that he would win her affection. Stacey also hoped that Adrian would soon find evidence to clear Carly's name and overturn the case. After hearing Isabella and Carly's story, Stacey could not help but feel deep sympathy for them, knowing they had endured so much suffering.

After hanging up the phone, Stacey

realized the day was starting to break. She hurried back upstairs, remembering that Lillian and Kevin were still asleep. In the second-floor bedroom, Lillian and Kevin had woken up. The two were sticking out their bottoms and struggling to climb down from the bed. Seeing

this, Stacey knew she had arrived just in time and quickly went over. Kevin saw her and was immediately

overjoyed. "Mommy!"

Hearing Kevin call Stacey, Lillian turned around immediately. She was in the process of climbing down the edge of the bed, but as she turned her head, she ended up tumbling down due to her weak strength. However, upon seeing Stacey, Lillian was not upset. She quickly got up and ran toward Stacey, calling, "Mommy."

Stacey picked Lillian up and then pinched Kevin's cheek as he came over. "When did you two wake up?"