

Rewritten 181

Chapter 181

In the past, Madelyn had often come here to harass Zach, so she was familiar with the place. Needless to say, the receptionist was terrified when she saw Madelyn, who was notorious for being difficult.

“Are you here to see Mr. Jardin, Ms. Jent? He’s meeting a client right now, so you might have to wait for a bit,” said the receptionist.

“Please get me a glass of water. Thank you.” Madelyn had already asked Yvonne to head to the thirty-fourth floor. She did not want to be the third wheel, so she went to the lounge.

“Al-Alright.”

The receptionist dropped her jaw in shock.

‘Thank you? It’s terrifying to hear such words come out of her mouth. Is there something wrong with my hearing?’ she thought.

Madelyn sat down on the couch. Then, she grabbed a beauty magazine and read it out of boredom.

Meanwhile, Kevin coincidentally had some business on the thirty-second floor. The receptionist stopped him and said, “Mr. Harrison, this document needs to be given to Mr. Jardin.”

Kevin took the document bag. Then, he spotted Madelyn in the lounge from the corner of his

eye.

‘If Madelyn’s here, who’s the person who just went up just now?’ he wondered.

Kevin darkened his gaze.

“What’s she doing here?” he asked.

The receptionist glanced at Madelyn and whispered, “I don’t know. She’s been sitting there since she arrived. Could something have happened, Mr. Harrison?”

“Mind your own business and focus on your work.”

“Alright,” the receptionist did not dare to pry after hearing Kevin’s response. She merely

stared at Kevin with a starstruck look as he walked into the elevator.

Madelyn did not know how much time had passed. She had already had several glasses of water and finished all the test papers she brought. She packed up her pencil case and stared at the dark sky.

‘Zach should have gotten off work a while ago,’ she thought.

She looked at the time. It was half past seven, and she was struggling to stay awake. Madelyn

was not the only person dozing off; Yvonne-who was sitting in the chairman’s designated seat in Zach’s office-was doing the same.

Madelyn waited for another twenty minutes, and it was nearly eight o’clock.

She did not plan on waiting any longer and packed her bag. Then, she stood up and said to the receptionist, “If anyone asks about me, just tell them I’ve left.”

“Yes, Ms. Jent,” the receptionist nodded.

Zach had just finished his meeting and walked out of the chairman's office on the thirty- fourth floor. He glanced at his wristwatch, "Where is she?"

"In your office," replied Kevin.

He opened the door and saw Yvonne sound asleep in his chair. He scanned the room with sharp eyes and realized she was the only person there. Zach's gaze hardened. He turned around, stuck a hand into his pocket, and walked out.

"Wake her up and ask her to wait on the first floor."

"Yes, sir," said Kevin.

"From now on, nobody's allowed to enter the office without my permission," Zach said in a displeased tone.

Kevin replied, "Yes, sir!"

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Meanwhile, Madelyn had already left Skyrise Tower. There were very few buses at this hour, so she stood at the bus stop and shivered in the cold. The arriving bus stopped in front of the traffic light before the zebra crossing.

It was currently peak hour in Ventropolis, and the streets were congested.

Just as she was about to dig for spare change in her bag, she spotted a black car pull up in front. of her from the corner of her eye. She lifted her head and saw its window roll down, revealing Zach's face. He said coldly, "Get in!"

'Why isn't Yvonne in the car? Where is she?' Madelyn wondered.

She pondered for a few moments before going to the back seat and shutting the car door. She always felt suffocated being alone in the car with him.

“How’d you come to know Yvonne Young?” Zach looked at Madelyn through the rearview mirror.

Madelyn answered indifferently, “I switched classes, the two of us are classmates.”

Zach did not ask any more questions. He made a turn, and they arrived back at the entrance of Skyrise Tower. They quickly saw Yvonne appear in a flimsy dress and black leggings.

‘It’s so cold! If I were her, I wouldn’t be able to withstand the weather. Yvonne is really tough,’ she thought.

Madelyn had a weak constitution, so it was normal for her to have ice-cold hands and feet. during the winter.

Yvonne darted over and opened the passenger seat. She quickly got in and said, “I was waiting for you in your office. Why’d you come downstairs this quickly?”

“What’re we having?” Zach turned the steering wheel and ignored her question.

Yvonne had eaten various kinds of delicacies before, and she was already tired of her favorite restaurants. Now that she was being asked, she had no idea what to eat.

However, since she was eating with her crush, anywhere was fine.

“What do you want to eat, Madelyn? Any recommendations?” Yvonne passed the buck to Madelyn.

Madelyn snapped out of her daze after hearing Yvonne's voice, "Let's go to The Deli."

"The Deli? Where's that? Why haven't I heard of it? Why don't we go to Cangrejo? We could warm up our bodies with some wine. I'm freezing."

"What's the address?" asked Zach.

Yvonne told him a location.

"Mister, why don't you be a gentleman and lend me your coat? I'm a little cold."

Zach did not respond to her, instead saying, "Madelyn, there's a throw blanket in the car storage box. Give it to her."

Yvonne was speechless, 'I'm already being so direct and obvious. Does he not understand English or something?'

Fifteen minutes later, they arrived at the crab restaurant Yvonne mentioned. Its design was in the Japanese style. The restaurant also served other seafood dishes other than crab.

The moment they entered the restaurant, they were greeted by a warm breeze.

Madelyn had heard of this restaurant. It was really expensive but also really delicious. Generally, one had to make a reservation a week in advance.

Yvonne was no ordinary person; she was the heir of the Young family. The Young family had several subsidiary companies and substantial investments in the catering industry, and this restaurant was one of them. Besides that, she was a regular at the restaurant, so everyone

knew her.

A waiter quickly came over and said, "Welcome, Ms. Young. Are you here with

"Please get us a private room for three."

your friends?"

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"Alright. Please come with me."

Madelyn walked behind them and gave them some space.

The waiter opened the door, and the room was covered with tatami and floor heating, so it was not cold to sit on the floor.

Madelyn took off the scarf on her neck and hung it on the coat rack at the entrance.

"You guys can order first! I'm going to the washroom."

"Sure! Go ahead," Yvonne replied. She grabbed the menu and moved to Zach's side, "Let's order together. What do you want to eat? I won't go easy on you this time."

"Anything," said Zach.

Yvonne had already subtly sat down next to Zach as they spoke. She ordered a few of the set. meals she usually had.

"How about this? We'll add on the rest of it when she's back."

Madelyn returned from the washroom and noticed that all the private rooms had a dedicated waiter. Since she had yet to order, the waiter by the door handed her a menu. Madelyn did not know what to eat. She did not like seafood and could not eat much, so she ordered a vegetarian

risotto.

Recently, Madelyn did not have much appetite, but her weight had not decreased.

She walked in the door and sat down across the two. The table was not big, and she could touch them if she stretched her legs.

There was a glass of piping hot rose tea in front of her. Madelyn cupped the glass with her hands; her hands were a bit cold after she had washed them.

Yvonne casually chatted with Zach. Her voice filled the room, and Madelyn could tell that she was really excited.

Madelyn occasionally responded to the things Yvonne said. Dull and uninteresting, that was how Madelyn's character was. She preferred being alone most of the time. She would stare at the night sky outside the windows as the dark clouds hung low, and the gloomy skies made it look as if it was about to snow anytime soon.

"It's Christmas tomorrow. Madelyn... Do you have any plans?"

Madelyn turned her head and unintentionally met Zach's eyes. She quickly looked away and said, "Nope. I need to attend extracurricular classes when I'm not studying at night."

"I see! When do you usually finish your classes?"

"Around nine. By the time I get home, it's nearly ten o'clock," replied Madelyn.

"Isn't that really tough? Wouldn't that mean you don't have the time to do your own things?"

“It’s alright,” Madelyn smiled. Even though she had no time to do other things, she was fine with it. She could only keep her mind occupied when she was busy.

“It’s Christmas tomorrow. Our class organizes a Christmas party every year, and we exchange greeting cards. Join us!”

Madelyn lowered her head and stared at the rose tea in the

“It’s alright. I can’t miss my extracurricular classes,

cup.

or else I won’t be able to catch up. It’s

been a few days since I’ve gone to class, and my father will be upset.”

“Your family’s pretty strict.”

Yvonne initially wanted to make Madelyn spend Christmas with her, but she did not say anything else after hearing Madelyn’s words.

Madelyn was actually quite envious of Yvonne.

‘Aside from her unavoidable responsibility as family heir, she doesn’t seem to be restricted by anything else. She has a harmonious family and loving parents. She can act freely and isn’t bound by anything; she’s like those princesses on TV,’ she thought.

Madelyn ate very little. She did not like eating crab because of how tedious it was.

Yvonne had a bottle of wine infused with cinnamon and star anise. Its taste was rich and mellow. While it had low alcohol content, one could easily get drunk from it.

Yvonne was clearly drunk and leaned on Zach in a drunken haze. On the other hand, Madelyn only drank a little and felt tipsy but was still sober.

For some reason, Madelyn ended up in Zach's passenger seat after they left the restaurant the time she realized what was happening, the car door was locked, and it was too late.

"Huh? Where's Yvonne?" asked Madelyn.

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Yvonne was drunk, and Zach had left her in the private room. The restaurant staff would take care of sending her back later. With her status, even staying there overnight would not be a big deal for her.

Madelyn leaned back in the seat, feeling dizzy and drained of energy, 'I only had three drinks, but I'm already this drunk. Initially, I didn't plan on drinking, but the wine was so rich and flavorful that I couldn't resist having a few extra glasses. If I hadn't kept my guard around Zach, I might have been as intoxicated as Yvonne.'

Madelyn cracked the car window open, trying to sober up and let the alcohol smell dissipate from her body. However, the window was closed again after only a short while.

"What are you doing? Open the window, quickly," Madelyn pounded on the window. Her voice was as sweet as honey, exuding both flirtatiousness and softness.

"Stop it and sit properly," said Zach.

"You're so annoying! You won't even let me open the window. You're being so petty! Fine, I won't ride in your car ever again!" Madelyn hugged her legs and curled up, burying her face in her arms. In an instant, she fell silent.

Zach glanced at the person beside him and thought, 'Is she acting out? When did her temper tantrums become so subdued? Where did her previously strong and arrogant temper go?

"It's cold outside. You'll catch a chill from the breeze," Zach's words held a rare touch of gentleness and concern.

Madelyn's muffled voice resounded again, "I won't believe your sweet talk. You only know how to hurt me. You're the person I hate the most. Besides Ethan, no one else will ever treat me well..."

As Madelyn finished speaking, her body leaned forward heavily. She stared dazedly and asked, "Why did you stop?"

"What did you say?" Zach's voice was as cold as ice, and an icy chill surrounded Madelyn. Her mind immediately snapped to attention as she met his piercing eyes. Even though she was heavily intoxicated, she quickly regained her sobriety. Then, Madelyn just realized how dangerous her words were. The car had stopped by the roadside, and she felt surrounded by danger.

"I-I'm sorry. I got drunk..." Madelyn had no idea why she was apologizing. Maybe it was out of fear. Before Zach could make another move, Madelyn quickly added, "It's late. You don't have to take me back. I'll get a taxi myself."

Madelyn attempted to unlock the car door. However, the door remained shut no matter how many times she tried.

"So you've fallen for him so easily? When will you change your habit of falling in love with every guy you meet?" Zach's words hit her with the cold hard truth without showing her ounce of respect.

Madelyn gave up the idea of getting out of the car. Her eyes fluttered, and she lowered her head. She did not know how to respond to his question. 'In his eyes, I'm the type who falls for whoever treats me well. However, Ethan is different. He treats me well without any ulterior motives. It's a genuine liking.'

However, Madelyn's feelings towards Ethan were just friends. It was without any romantic notions. Suddenly, a hand reached over and pulled her back, pressing her against what felt like a wall. Zach's body was warm. Madelyn was scared stiff and was afraid to make a single move.

“What are you doing? Let go of me!” There was unconcealed panic in her voice.

“Answer me,” his warm breath brushed against her neck.

Madelyn said embarrassingly, “You’ve misunderstood! Ethan and I are just friends. It’s not what you’re thinking.”

She resisted the urge to push him away and tightly clenched her hand at her side. After all that had happened, Madelyn’s aversion and resistance toward Zach intensified each day.

“Really? I thought you said you’d moved on already and didn’t like me anymore.” Zach’s hand slid around her waist, pulling her even closer to him.

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Madelyn gripped Zach’s wrist and said with a chilly tone, “Let’s head back quickly. Jadie is still waiting for you at home. I’m tired and want to rest.”

The next moment, Zach pinched both sides of her cheeks and whispered creepily into her ear, “You’re still young and don’t know what love is. If you want to date, I won’t stop you. In fact, I can even help you find someone better.”

Madelyn closed her eyes and held back the anger that had welled up inside her. ‘It’s not the time to argue with him now,’ she thought.

“I-I got it.”

‘It seems like I really can’t have even a drop of alcohol in the future. After three drinks, I might get drunk and say something displeasing to Zach.’ 1

Madelyn was completely sober now. She remained silent and dared not to speak again along the way.

It was almost eleven o'clock when they returned home. The living room was pitch-dark. Madelyn followed Zach slowly as they entered the foyer. She fumbled along the wall for the light switch and turned it on.

Madelyn wanted to hurry upstairs, but behind her, Zach suddenly said, "Go make some pasta."

Madelyn was about to climb the stairs, but heard such a rude request. "I-I'll get Margaret to cook the pasta for you."

"Don't you understand what I'm saying?" Zach sat on the sofa and reclined back. He looked

somewhat unwell.

Madelyn turned around slowly. Looking at how Zach acted, she knew his stomach issue must have flared up again. It was a recurring issue for him. He was sensitive to raw and cold foods, and his habit of drinking on an empty stomach during social occasions often made it worse. Tonight, Zach had consumed a lot of seafood, including crabs.

'No wonder he's in pain.'

Madelyn resigned herself to the situation and turned to walk into the kitchen. She opened the fridge to check the available ingredients. It was already so late, so she refused to waste any time here as she was really exhausted.

'He could have gone back, but he chose to come here. Lately, he's been appearing at home more frequently. I can't understand why he even moved out in the first place.'

Madelyn wished she would not have to meet him for the whole year.

She washed the pot, boiled water, chopped vegetables, and used the remaining handmade

pasta to cook a single serving. Once the pasta was ready, she carried it to the dining table and grabbed a fork to set it down. "The pasta is ready. I'm going to rest now."

Madelyn took her cup of warm milk and wearily returned to her room. Before she had left home earlier, she had asked Margaret to install a new door lock, and it was in place now. She securely fastened the lock on the door from the inside so one could get into her room door from the outside.

Upon entering the walk-in closet, Madelyn opened the wardrobe and discovered her black gown placed inside. She took it out and noticed the smooth fabric and a familiar scent of freshly laundered

fragrance. Thinking about the dirty clothes that Margaret had been holding this morning, she wondered, "Did I misunderstand something?"

However, Madelyn distinctly remembered locking the door from the inside. If Zach was not the one who entered her room, maybe Margaret was the one who had taken her clothes to wash them.

'Actually, it's not entirely my fault for misunderstanding him! Obviously, he's the one who lacks proper boundaries between genders. He casually sneaked into my room and even told me to change my habit of falling in love with every guy I meet. Hmph! Why doesn't he change his annoying habits instead? It's truly repulsive!'

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The next day, Madelyn woke up after a dreamless night's sleep. She locked her room before leaving, preventing anyone from entering. After breakfast, she arrived at the classroom around eight o'clock.

As soon as Yvonne entered the classroom, she found Madelyn and asked, "Madelyn, why'd you and Zach leave so early yesterday? When I got home, my mom was furious. I got a headache. from her nagging, and she even set a curfew for me."

Yvonne had a severe headache, likely from drinking too much last night and waking up early today. She had not slept well, with dark circles under her eyes. She felt light-headed, as if not fully awake yet.

Madelyn said flatly, "I also drank too much yesterday. I don't remember what happened, but my brother specifically instructed them to take you home safely before leaving. Did anything happen on your way back?"

Yvonne shook her dizzy head. "Nothing happened, but how could he just leave me alone at the restaurant? He's gone too far! He only cares about you and completely ignores me! What if something really happened to me? What would I do? Damn! He doesn't act gentlemanly at all."

Madelyn also did not expect Zach to leave her alone. However, she tried to defend him, "My brother has always been like this. He's quite straightforward and all about work. Besides, it was also quite late at the time. If he had personally taken you back, it might have led to rumors, and if the media catches wind of it because you two were alone, it wouldn't be good. for your reputation."

Yvonne found Madelyn's words sensible and nodded, "That's true. If that's what he was thinking of, then it's fine, I guess. I won't forgive him when I see him next time, though."

The class bell rang, and Yvonne quickly returned to her seat. The morning passed quickly, and the last class had an additional 45 minutes for the exam. After they finished, they had only 15 minutes for lunch and needed to head to the Applied Learning Center in the following hour.

Madelyn would also go along with them. The Olympiad Mathematics results from yesterday were going to be released. She sat with Yvonne in the first row. Yvonne comforted her, "Relax, believe in yourself. You definitely did well."

Wearing a red windbreaker, Albert walked in from outside with a thermos in one hand and a textbook in the other. "Oh, you're all here pretty early."

He walked to the podium and handed Madelyn a textbook directly. "Try to work on these problems yourself when you get home. If you have any questions, come and ask me. I've already taught them the earlier topics, so I won't repeat it to you individually. Alright. Today, we'll learn a new topic..."

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Madelyn was still a little stunned. She looked at Yvonne beside her and does this mean!

Yvonne told her, "Mr. Newton allowed you to join the Olympiad Mathematics team. See, I told you! With me here, you're definitely going to make it in. Congratulations! From now on, we can attend classes together."

'With her here? What did that mean? Didn't I get in based on my grades?'

Madelyn was absent-minded, showing little emotion on her face. She even had trouble feeling happy. Her gaze drifted to the empty seat beside her, which used to be Danny's seat. His absence meant he was out. She felt a sense of guilt for some reason.

An hour went by. Albert spent the first 45 minutes on his lecture and the remaining 15 minutes assigning new homework. Madelyn glanced at it and found that it was indeed quite

challenging.

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Albert had already packed up and left the classroom at the last minute. Madelyn quickly picked up her books and said to Yvonne hurriedly, "You go ahead. I have something to take care of."

Yvonne was about to say something but shrugged when she saw Madelyn leave in a rush.

Madelyn quickly caught up with Albert, saying, "Mr. Newton, hold on, please."

Albert stopped, "M-Madelyn?"

"It's me, Mr. Newton. I'd like to ask about the results of the last exam."

Albert smiled and said, "You attended the classes, so why are you still worried about the results? It's quite obvious that you've earned your spot."

Madelyn still insisted, "Can I look at my scores?"

"What's there to look at? I don't have your test paper with me right now, but you did very well. Especially in the final major question, you used three different methods. The second method involved university-level calculus knowledge. Honestly, I was quite surprised that were able to write out that formula," Albert's eyes filled with contentment as he spoke.

"However..."

you

"Albert!" Before Madelyn could finish her sentence, a teacher walking down from the other side called for him. "We'll talk about this later."

The more Albert acted like this the more uncertain Madelyn felt. She worried that the only reason she had gotten in was because Yvonne had used her connections to secure the her.

spot for

'If that's the case, isn't it really unfair to Danny? This girl... it's not like I really need to join.'

Madelyn returned to the classroom. She wanted to talk to Danny and clear things up. However, Madelyn did not see him there, so she asked his desk mate, Alexander Stewart.

"He didn't come this morning. He's probably on leave," said Alexander.

Yvonne took Madelyn to the restroom. Yvonne washed her hands at the sink and looked at herself in the mirror. Then, she turned to Madelyn beside her. "What's wrong? You've been looking unhappy all day."

“Tell me. Why didn’t Mr. Newton announce my scores? Did you say something to him to help me join the team? That’s why I…” Madelyn looked at her, trying to discern something from her subtle expression.

Yvonne shook the water off her hands. “I don’t know about that. However, I did personally recommend you and submitted your previous exam results to Mr. Newton. After he reviewed them, he seemed satisfied. I don’t know why he didn’t announce your and Danny’s scores

either. Girl, why are you thinking so much, anyway? The process is over, so you don’t have to dwell on it. You’ve achieved your goal, and that’s that. Relax!”

Madelyn was sensitive. “Could Danny be angry because I took his spot? No wonder he’s been giving me hostile looks for the past few days.”

Madelyn had learned about his family situation. His family was not well off, and his mother was sick. He had gotten into Ventrcloud High School based on his academic abilities and by working really hard in his studies. However, he had ranked sixth in the entrance exam for the Olympiad Mathematics team, which was why Albert had made him compete with her for the spot. Madelyn felt uneasy as she saw the result.

Back in the classroom, Madelyn noticed her phone light up in her drawer. She unlocked her phone and saw dozens of messages from Ethan. Madelyn had not been checking her phone much these days, but to her surprise, Ethan had been messaging her even more frequently. She did not dare to try and read every message he sent

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The time passed quickly as everyone was busy studying. In the last academic session, other classes had meetings or arranged their own activities like watching movies and playing games. However, Class One still had two evening self-study sessions, lasting until 9:30 p.m.

The top-performing class rarely enjoyed any recreational activities. Most students focused on their study plans, but there were also surprises, such as each of them receiving a Christmas fruit.

Madelyn could not attend the evening self-study sessions. The homework consisted of two test papers, which she could only take home and complete later. After packing her things, she had to rush to her piano and dance classes.

Class One was on the sixth floor. After Madelyn took the elevator, she happened to pass by Class Six. They had just finished their activities. Jadie was tidying his belongings and

happened to catch sight of her.

“Madelyn.”

Madelyn stopped, “Jadie.”

They were talking through a window. Jadie smiled, “Today is Christmas, and I was going to look for you, but I found you here. Here’s a greeting card I made for you. Merry Christmas.”

Madelyn glanced at the classroom and noticed a massive Christmas tree adorned with ribbons, balloons, and others, creating a festive Christmas atmosphere. Everyone had gifts in their hands, presumably exchanged among themselves.

“And here’s mine.” Serena took a greeting card and a gift from her drawer, handing them to Madelyn.

Madelyn accepted them and felt embarrassed for not preparing anything. Thinking about it, she took two beautifully wrapped Christmas fruits from her bag. They were packaged in boxes with two golden bells hanging on top. The bells were pure gold, making them quite valuable.

“I don’t have much to give either, so consider this a gift from me.” Madelyn happened to have two gifts. Except for the gift for Class One students, the other was from Yvonne and came with a beautiful greeting card. So, she gave one gift each to Jadie and Serena.

It was the first time Serena had received a gift from Madelyn. “Wow, this is so beautiful! Thank you, I really like it.”

Jadie glanced down and spotted the Olympiad Mathematics workbook in Madelyn's backpack. Then, she said, "Today is a holiday, and Zach will be home for dinner too. Let's head back together later!"

Madelyn looked at her wristwatch and realized she was running late. "I'm not going back. I

still have other classes. I have to go now."

"Is that so? Well, I'll let Zach know later," Jadie said with a hint of disappointment.

Madelyn nodded and left.

Serena looked at the Christmas fruit in her hand. "I remember Class One receives this Christmas fruit every year. It must be quite expensive!"

Timothy overheard their conversation, "Wait. How could she, with a grade obtained through cheating, have stayed in Class One for such a long time? I lost a few hundred dollars in the last bet because of her."

"Cheating? Did you see it? Or did you catch her in the act?" Adrian asked.

With a tsk sound, Timothy continued, "I'm just surprised. She used to be the second last, but she managed to get into Class One somehow. If it weren't for cheating, I wouldn't believe it. Who knows what tricks she used."

Serena retorted, "That's not true! You guys have no idea how hard Madelyn works. She used to be the last one to leave the classroom and always do extra homework. I saw the Olympiad Mathematics workbook in her bag just now. She must have gotten into the Olympiad Mathematics class. With Madelyn's grades, she might even become the top scorer in this year's college entrance examination in Ventropolis."

Timothy laughed, "If she becomes the top scorer in the college entrance examination this year, I'll be a monkey's uncle."

“Jadie, do you hear this idiot?”

Jadie smiled, but was not amused. “They’re just biased against Madelyn and don’t know her well, but someone will recognize her efforts someday.”

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Serena agreed, “That’s right! You guys are just jealous.”

“Jealous of Madelyn? That’s ridiculous!” Timothy sneered.

Even the usually quiet Adrian said unexpectedly, “Just because you can’t do it, stop putting others down. Madelyn has changed. At least she’s not as annoying as before.”

“What do you think, Forry?”

Forrest tossed the apple in his hand. He was still dressed in a black short-sleeved shirt, revealing the green tattoos on his arms gave him a mysterious and wild appearance. “Stop mentioning her in front of me. It’s disgusting!”

No one dared to speak any more, and a strange vibe gradually spread among them.

Madelyn walked out of the school gate, and Jordan happened to arrive as well. The traffic on the road was relatively smooth, but Madelyn was still a few minutes late when she arrived at the practice room.

After two hours of piano lessons, the following two hours were the most difficult for Madelyn. She had not practiced for the past few days. When she warmed up and stretched her legs, she felt her previous efforts had all gone.

Halfway through the dance routine, Madelyn suddenly felt a sharp pain in her lower abdomen. She sensed a warm flow gradually seeping between her legs. A familiar feeling returned, accompanied by a faint smell of blood.

Madelyn rushed to the restroom and took off her pants. Seeing the bloodstains, she reluctantly put them back on. She went to the changing room, grabbed a clean outfit and a sanitary pad, then

hastened back to the restroom.

After cleaning up, Madelyn sat on the toilet seat absentmindedly. Girls generally experience their first period between the ages of thirteen and fifteen. Madelyn was well aware of that. In her previous life, she had her first period shortly after starting college.

At the time, Madelyn had thought something was wrong with her body and had undergone a comprehensive medical examination in the hospital. However, the results had revealed that everything was normal. The doctor had reassured her that everyone's body develops differently, and later onset of menstruation was also considered normal.

So, Madelyn had been taking medicine to regulate her health without thinking much of it. However, she had developed uterine abnormalities that eventually led to cancer later on. The cancer had spread to her stomach, and she had been diagnosed with advanced-stage gastric cancer before passing away not long afterward.

Now Madelyn knew that it had all been a lie. The medical reports and the medicine had all been

fake. Taking it would only worsen her health in the long run, and what Zach wanted was to kill her. Her late period was due to the abnormal reaction caused by uterine malformation.

Every time Madelyn had her period, she needed painkillers to ease the pain. The most severe incident had happened at home when the pain caused her to faint. If it was not for Rosario discovering her that day, she might have died from the illness without anyone noticing.

Madelyn did not attend the rest of the classes. She sat in the car, curled up, and her face turned pale from the pain. The air conditioning had been set to its warmest temperature, but she still shivered.

Jordan could not bear to see her like this, so he found a nurse to get Madelyn onto a medical stretcher and take her to the emergency room.

Madelyn broke out in a cold sweat from the pain. She lay on the bed with an intravenous drip attached to the back of her hand. Jordan swiftly followed the nurse's instructions and brought two hot-water bottles. With the painkillers she had just taken, her pain was somewhat relieved compared to before.

The thing Madelyn dreaded most was her menstrual period. Taking painkillers had become routine for her, but her body had developed resistance over time, rendering them less effective. She had to take two or three times the usual dose, which resulted in negative side effects.

Jordan made a call back home and reported Madelyn's hospitalization. All he got was a cold and dismissive response from Hayson.

Margaret hurried to the hospital late at night, bringing freshly brewed ginger tea. Madelyn disliked anything with ginger. The taste was too strong, and she had to spit out even the few sips she managed to take.

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The intense reaction caused Madelyn to vomit everything she had eaten that night. Her lower abdomen throbbed even more painfully, and she clutched the bedsheets while the needle came out of her vein. Margaret was shocked and quickly called for a nurse. Seeing the situation, the nurse had no choice but to switch to the other hand to administer the intravenous drip for Madelyn.

Margaret asked worriedly, "Miss, she'll be fine, right? She's in so much pain. Is there any other way to help her?"

The nurse adjusted the speed of the intravenous drip and said helplessly, "A strong reaction like this during a period is something we encounter in the hospital every day. We have done all we can. The only thing we can suggest is to drink more ginger tea or massage her lower abdomen. It might help alleviate the symptoms."

After the nurse left, Margaret said melancholy, "Should I buy some ginger tea?"

Madelyn wanted to reach for water, and Margaret quickly handed it to her. Madelyn rinsed her mouth with water and then collapsed onto the bed, feeling utterly exhausted and weak. "Don't bother. You should get some rest in the next room for a while. It's almost dawn, and you'll still have a busy day. Don't tire yourself out."

"Oh my. How can I sleep with you like this? Let me massage your lower stomach." Margaret reached her hand into the quilt, and her slightly rough hand gently massaged Madelyn's lower stomach through her clothes. "Does it feel any better?"

Madelyn closed her eyes and nodded, "It's better."

"You should rest now. When you wake up, you won't feel the pain anymore."

"Okay." Margaret massaged her abdomen as comfortably as Rosario did. So, Madelyn fell asleep soon.

The ordeal continued until five in the morning, and the sun was almost up. Looking at the sleeping girl, Margaret withdrew her hand, flexed her tingling fingers, and stood up. However, the person on the bed frowned in pain as soon as she stopped. There was no room for breaks.

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'If this continues, I'll end up with a broken hand, but this child has already gone through so much pain.'

Just then, Margaret saw someone appear at the door. She felt like she had seen a savior. The man walked in with a thermos flask. He placed it by the bedside table with something inside, though she had no idea what it was.

"Mr. Jardin, why are you here?" Margaret's eyes quickly sized him up.

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"This guy doesn't seem like a nice person at all. I can totally see through his shady character.'

Zach's sharp gaze fell on Madelyn, who was sleeping restlessly on the bed. "What did the doctor say?"

Margaret walked over and whispered, "Oh, let's not talk about it. Ms. Jent has suffered a lot! She's in so much pain that she fainted, and the painkillers aren't working. She took a few extra pills, but she's suffering from the side effects and there's nothing we can do. I just massaged her lower abdomen, and it took a lot of effort to get her asleep."

The man's gaze dimmed even further. He looked at the intravenous drip on the rack, noticing three bottles still needing administration. It would take at least another hour or two to finish. "Go and get some rest. I'll watch over her."

Margaret was delighted and almost clapped her hands. "Alright, Mr. Jardin. You have to watch over her carefully. The intravenous drip is about to run out."

"Okay," said Zach.

Margaret left in a hurry. However, she could not help but take another look at the man before she left. 'Something is off about the way he looks at Ms. Jent!'

Madelyn slept fitfully until midnight. She was in a half-awake, half-asleep state, experiencing occasional sharp pains. However, as time went on, the pain gradually disappeared. She felt like she was lying on soft, giant cotton. It was warm and snug, making her sleep soundly until she heard the phone ring. The ringing lasted for two seconds before being cut off.

Madelyn regained consciousness and felt someone was massaging her lower abdomen. The previous pain had disappeared. She smelled the scent of hospital disinfectant and slowly opened her eyes. She saw the person who sat beside her. When their eyes met, her heart skipped a beat.

"Are you

awake?" The man withdrew his hand from under the blanket and flexed his wrist.

'She's really dramatic. Whenever I stopped, she became extremely restless, so I had to massage her all night.'