

The Mocked Miss's Hidden Crowns – Chapter 61

"Save the money for your own brain treatment."

Charlotte tossed out the words without a second glance and disappeared at the top of the stairs.

"You... you ungrateful child..."

Steven nearly lost his breath, his face turning pale with anger.

"Dad, it's my fault," Olivia said softly, steadying him with gentle hands. "I should have watched Charlotte more closely at school. She wouldn't have gotten into trouble otherwise."

Her voice soothed him. The tension in his features eased, and he squeezed Olivia's hand with gratitude. "You're a good girl. I don't blame you for any of this."

Thank goodness for Olivia, his thoughtful, well-behaved daughter. If it weren't for her... well, with someone like Charlotte in the family, he would barely have the courage to face their neighbors.

"Olivia, make sure you practice hard for the piano competition next week. Make me proud."

"I will, Dad," Olivia replied, her smile obedient and sweet.

Watching Olivia's graceful composure only made Steven's disappointment in Charlotte run deeper. He was starting to regret ever bringing her home.

In her bedroom, Charlotte lounged against the headboard, scrolling through the apartment listings Adonis sent her. With every swipe, her frown deepened. None of these places were right. She could only wonder if Adonis was letting dollar signs cloud his judgment.

She texted him. [Forget the apartment. Why did you only send me three days' worth of meds?]

Adonis replied almost instantly. [We're short an ingredient. Jackson is searching everywhere. Just hold out for two days.]

Charlotte pressed her lips together, her eyes turning cold. Two days? If she ran out, she'd have to sleep under a bridge just to avoid causing trouble.

Charlotte: [Hurry. If I don't have enough, I can't even think straight at school.]

Adonis: [Why are you even bothering with school?]

Charlotte: [College. I want my degree. I want a real life.]

She hit send and tossed her phone aside, in no mood to deal with whatever

string of shocked emojis Adonis would send next.

With a sigh, she grabbed a pill bottle from her bag, shook out two capsules, and swallowed them. Only two left for tomorrow. The bitterness lingered on her tongue. Holding the bottle, her mind drifted to that night at Anthony's place. She hadn't taken her medication, but for some reason, she still slept straight through till morning. No insomnia, no nightmares. It made no sense. She set her water glass down and was just about to crawl under the covers when her phone buzzed.

Glancing at the screen, she couldn't help but smile.

Blair: [Hey kid, when are you coming to pick up your stuff from my place?]

Charlotte frowned a little and muttered to herself, "You old fox." Still, she replied: [Up to you, uncle.]

Uncle...

Anthony chuckled as he read the message. She wasn't easy to trick.

Blair: [How about tomorrow afternoon?]

Charlotte: [Can't. I'm busy then.]

Her reply was short, cool, and stubbornly proud.

Blair: [Then the day after tomorrow?]

Charlotte thought for a second. [That works.]

A small smile appeared on his lips, his dark, fox-like eyes glinting with a mix of mischief and charm. The look made him even more irresistible.

Blair: [You haven't felt off these last few days, have you?]

Charlotte blinked at the question, a little confused. [Nope. All good.]

Blair: [Glad those thugs didn't hurt you.]

He really wanted to ask if she was hurt from jumping out the third-story window, but

from the sound of it, she was fine.

Blair: [Get some sleep. Good night.]

The last line made Charlotte's heart skip. She felt a gentle warmth in her palm as she set her phone on the nightstand and slid under the blanket.

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For a few quiet seconds, nothing happened. Then a slender, pale arm slipped out from under the covers, scooped up the phone, and set it beside the pillow. Only then did she shut her eyes, finally able to sleep. That night, not a single nightmare came.

The next morning, sunlight poured into the grand, luxurious villa, filling the hall with a warm, golden glow.

Charlotte tossed all her stuff into her backpack in one go, slung it over her shoulder, and headed downstairs. She didn't even glance at the family of three sitting at the dining table. Her face was unreadable as she walked straight toward the door.

"Charlotte, aren't you going to eat breakfast?" Elizabeth called out gently.

"Just seeing you all ruins my appetite."

Elizabeth's smile froze.

"Dad arranged a car for us," Olivia tried. "We can go together."

Charlotte barely looked at her. "You still haven't learned your lesson from last time? Still eager to get in my way?"

Olivia flinched, remembering the welts from the last fight. The memory made her skin prickle.

Steven's face darkened. He slammed his chopsticks down on the table. "If you walk out that door, don't bother coming back. I won't pay a cent for your allowance or your tuition."

Charlotte paused, her hand on the doorknob.

Steven's tense expression eased a little. He thought he had her cornered. Did she really think a few years in the countryside meant she could do whatever she wanted?

Charlotte turned around, her lips curling into a smirk. "If I remember right, the Main Family's money has nothing to do with you."

Steven's eyes widened. He knew it was true. The business had started with her mother's money, and the Main Group's success was built on her connections. But her mom died when Charlotte was only five. How could she possibly know any of that?

"What are you saying, Charlotte?"

Olivia shot back, swirling her lemon water. If the Main Family's money isn't

Dad's, is it yours? You just want the inheritance and wish he'd die, don't you?" Steven's face went white.

Charlotte smiled, her eyes sharp. "With the little money this family has, if I really wanted it, do you think I'd wait around for him to drop dead?"

The arrogance in her voice was almost shocking.

"Charlotte!" Steven exploded, pushing back from the table and standing up, red with rage. "I don't have a daughter like you. Get out!"

Charlotte raised an eyebrow, her beautiful face cool and proud. "Anyone who claims me is just embarrassing themselves."

Steven clutched his chest, looking like he might throw up from anger. Olivia and Elizabeth exchanged a quick glance, putting on a show of comforting Steven but inside they were celebrating. Soon, there'd be no more Charlotte to ruin their perfect little world.

Their celebration barely lasted a heartbeat before a scream rang out from upstairs.

"Ahhh!"

"What is it now? Why are you screaming?" Elizabeth snapped, her mood instantly sour.

The maid's voice shook as she answered. "It's... Charlotte's room. It's full of cockroaches."

Olivia peeked in, then shrieked and stumbled back, her face ghost-pale. It wasn't just a few bugs. Hundreds maybe thousands, crawled all over the floor, the walls, inside the closet, even in the air conditioner. The sight made her skin crawl.

She screamed again. "That psycho did this on purpose!"

Looking at the disgusting swarm, Olivia felt sick. There was no way she'd ever want to move back in there.

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Bald Lee's apology to Charlotte was all over the school forum, the video shared and reshared until it felt like everyone had seen it. The moment Charlotte stepped onto campus, she was hit by a wave of stares. Some were full of awe, others just plain shocked, and she even caught a couple of guys

trying to sneak photos of her when they thought she wasn't looking.

She frowned a little but kept walking. As soon as she entered the classroom, the usual chaos faded into silence. Every single person in the room stared straight at her.

"Morning, Charlotte," Parrish called out, tossing a carton of milk her way.

"Here, this is for you."

She barely glanced at it before tossing it right back. "Thanks, but I don't like milk."

Parrish looked confused, like he couldn't believe what he'd just heard. Was he seeing things? He could have sworn he saw her drinking milk at her desk just yesterday.

Charlotte dropped her backpack into her cubby and noticed a test paper sitting on her desk.

Physics, from yesterday.

Her head had been pounding during the test. She'd planned to rest for a bit, but when she opened her eyes again, the class was already over. She hadn't even finished half the questions. And now, looking at her score... a seven. Ouch.

"Congrats," Andrew said from the next desk, grinning at her with his chin propped on his hand. "You just set a new record for the lowest score in Vanguard High School history."

Charlotte frowned and glanced at his score.

Twenty-eight.

Honestly, not that much better.

She didn't even bother to respond at first.

Andrew tried to sound encouraging. "Don't feel too bad. According to Ms. Adams, we're both full of potential. If we put in a little effort, our improvement is going to look amazing."

Parrish almost lost it, trying to hold back a laugh. The guy who was second-to-last was comforting the one who came in dead last.

Charlotte gave a half-hearted laugh. "Wow, thanks. I feel so much better now."

Andrew froze, the corners of his mouth twitching. She'd just gotten a seven but somehow she didn't

seem upset at all

College's teaching really that bad?

Charlotte sat down and took out her books, but before she could settle in, the class president walked in looking stressed.

"Charlotte," he said quietly, "Ms. Adams wants to see you in her office."

She frowned and stood up.

"Wait," the president added, noticing how relaxed she looked, "the Dean and Bald

Lee are there too. I think it's about your record-breaking physics score."

So Bald Lee was there. She figured he'd probably found another excuse to make things hard for Ms. Adams. If she'd known, she would have pushed herself to answer a few more questions. Maybe she could have at least beaten Andrew.

She barely made it to the door when the class president called out again.

"Oh, and Andrew, you're supposed to go too."

If Charlotte hadn't scored a seven, Andrew would have been the one making history

for all the wrong reasons.

Nater, the two of them

A few minutes!

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stood side by side in the office. Andrew leaned back against the wall, looking totally at home, like he'd done this a hundred times before. Charlotte stood with her legs together and her hands behind her back, the picture of someone ready for a lecture, though her posture had the confidence of someone in charge.

"Do you know why you're here?" Eleanor hadn't even spoken yet when Bald Lee jumped in, grinning so wide his yellow teeth were on full display.

"No idea," Andrew replied, rocking on his heels, not even trying to act serious.

Bald Lee shot him a look. No point in trying to save this one.

He turned to Charlotte. "What about you?"

Charlotte lifted her head, her pale face almost glowing under the office lights. She

looked more like a straight-A student than a troublemaker.

"Yeah, I know," she answered, her voice ringing out clear and bright.

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"Mr. Baker, Mr. Lee, Charlotte just transferred here from another school. She hasn't learned the material we tested on, so it makes sense that her score wasn't great this time," Eleanor said, her voice gentle.

Bald Lee let out a sharp laugh. "That's not what I heard from the principal. Supposedly, she was recommended by a professor. A science prodigy, they said, admitted because she's so gifted." He stabbed a finger at the grade sheet. "Seven points. In all my years of teaching, I have never seen a student get a seven."

"She single-handedly dropped our school's average with that score," he added, looking straight at Eleanor. "And you expect me to believe this is the student we bent the rules for? It's embarrassing for Vanguard High."

Eleanor's face went a little pale.

"One bad test doesn't mean everything. I'm her teacher. I'll make sure she gets extra help and catches up," she replied.

"Ms. Adams..." Bald Lee cut her off, his tone dripping with condescension. "You can't fix intelligence with extra lessons. Some kids just aren't smart enough. No matter how hard you work with them, nothing changes."

Eleanor hated hearing that. She'd seen plenty of students who started out weak but managed to shine later, just by working hard. Why judge someone for a single test, or worse, attack them personally?

"Mr. Lee, this is the first time any of us have taught Charlotte. We can't decide her future just because of one score," Eleanor said, her voice tight with frustration. "And I don't agree with tearing down students like this."

Bald Lee straightened up from his chair, glaring at the new teacher who kept challenging him. "Let me ask you. If a student scores in the single digits, how much can you really expect her to improve? Twenty points? Thirty? Maybe forty?" He pressed on. "This isn't an attack. It's just obvious she got in through connections, and this is where her ability stops. You could tutor her for years and she still might not pass."

Eleanor was silent, her heart aching for Charlotte, even though the test results were right there in black and white.

Andrew had been listening, and he was getting annoyed too. He wanted to go

over and say something reassuring, but when he glanced at Charlotte, she was just staring at the floor, idly kicking the toe of her shoe, looking completely unbothered.

Seriously? He felt his own cheeks heat up with embarrassment just being in the same room, but Charlotte looked like she couldn't care less.

Bald Lee turned to the dean. "Mr. Baker, you saw the scores. This student has attitude problems and doesn't care about her work. Are we really keeping her here?"

Eleanor frowned, determined. "Mr. Baker, I promise her grades will go up by the next exam."

"Oh yeah? And how are you going to guarantee that?" Bald Lee shot back.

Charlotte finally lifted her head, her eyes cold and clear as she stared straight at Bald Lee didn't do well last time because I wasn't feeling great. Next test, I'll get second place in the whole grade. How about that?"

Second in the grade?

Not just Bald Lee, even Eleanor thought she must have heard wrong. Did Charlotte really mean second in the whole grade? Not just twenty more points. Not top twenty in the class. Second.

This was the same girl who just scored seven points.

Andrew glanced over at her, his lips twitching. "Are you out of your mind?" he muttered. Was she serious? Did she really think saying it would make it true?

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Second in the grade?

A girl who barely scraped together a passing score was now saying she could rank second in the whole year. Bald Lee let out a sharp laugh, like he'd just heard the wildest joke. "You really are from the middle of nowhere," he said, his tone full of mockery. "No clue how the world works, just talking big. Do you even know what kind of score you need to get second in physics?"

Eleanor's brows drew together, clearly upset. The top twenty students in the graduating class were all in Class A, and they basically swept the top spots in every subject. For anyone from another class, just beating one of them was nearly impossible. Aiming for the top was downright crazy.

Charlotte, what are you thinking?

"Mr. Baker, Mr. Lee..."

"If I can get second place, you'll hand over your department head position to Ms. Adams, right in front of the whole school," Charlotte said, her voice cool and even. She cut off Eleanor before she could finish pleading.

Every eye in the room landed on her. Charlotte stood there, her skin pale and flawless, her expression perfectly calm. There was something about her, a quiet strength that didn't fit her age.

Eleanor turned even paler. She grabbed Charlotte's hand, lowering her voice. "Don't do this," she pleaded.

Charlotte didn't break eye contact with Bald Lee, staring straight at his smug, greasy face. "And if I don't do it, I'll accept whatever punishment or arrangement you decide."

Bald Lee narrowed his eyes, sizing her up. Last time, she'd gotten the better of him because she was some country girl who knew a few odd tricks. But physics was different. Physics was about brains. There was no way a failing student from a rural school could beat the city's best.

"You said it yourself," Bald Lee said right away, looking over at the dean. "Mr. Baker, you'll be our witness, won't you?"

Mr. Baker glanced at Charlotte. With her lips pressed tight and that icy look in her eyes, she seemed like the kind of student who was impossible to teach. With scores like that, she really didn't belong at Vanguard High. But the principal had recommended her, so if they wanted her out, they needed a good reason. The chances of her getting second were basically zero. Typical country kid, he thought. No self-awareness at all.

"Alright, I'll be the witness," Mr. Baker agreed.

Eleanor opened her mouth, but nothing came out. It was already settled.

Back in her office, Eleanor slumped

at her desk glaring at the two students standing in front of her. She took a long drink of water, trying to calm herself down. Dealing with Andrew was trouble enough, but Charlotte was turning out to be even more of a handful.
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"Do you know what will happen if you don't get second place?" Eleanor asked, her voice tight with frustration.

"I know," Charlotte replied.

Andrew glanced over, frowning. Charlotte just stood there, hands behind her back, answering every question like a perfect little lamb.

"Mr. Lee doesn't like you. He'll take this chance to kick you out for sure," Eleanor said, setting down her cupz with a thud. Her cheeks were flushed with anger. "You went through so much in the countryside just to get this shot at a better education in the city. If you don't study hard, what kind of future will you have? Do you think you can just go back and inherit a billion-dollar fortune like Andrew?"

She'd heard the rumors about Charlotte being the Main family's illegitimate daughter. Even if that family had money, none of it would ever go to her.

At that, Andrew's head snapped up.

"Am I wrong?" Eleanor pressed.

Andrew thought about it but didn't argue. It wasn't like being rich was his fault.

Charlotte listened quietly and nodded, "Ms. Adams, my family doesn't have billions for me to inherit. So you don't have to worry. do my best on the exam content Belongs