

DON'T MESS WITH THE GIRL WITH CANDY

Chapter 1

"Get out!"

The first thing Juniper Sherwin saw as she arrived at the old family home was the somber funeral wreath hanging on the main gate. The next second, a jumble of miscellaneous items mixed with a few old clothes was thrown out, scattering in the muddy water.

"Your grandfather doted on you more than anyone, yet you couldn't even be bothered to show up for his funeral!"

A woman dressed in the mourning clothes, her makeup exquisite and her air aristocratic, stood on the steps, accusing her with haughty indignation. "The Sherwin family took you in until you were eighteen. We've done more than enough! From this day on, you are no longer our daughter!"

At the sound of her voice, the funeral guests turned to follow the gaze of Frigga, the lady of the Sherwin household.

There, standing miserably in the rain, was a girl in a white t-shirt and black pants, covered in mud and scratches. A light breeze swept her messy bangs aside, revealing a delicate face to the crowd. Her brows were perfectly arched, her eyes captivating, and her features were so clean they seemed untouched by the mortal world. She was breathtakingly beautiful.

Even in a city like Eclara, famed for its beauties, a face like hers was a showstopper.

"Whoa..."

The guests gasped as they got a clear look at her. So this was the Sherwin family's infamous fake heiress!

The story was well-known. Years ago, the true heiress, Yolanda Sherwin, had been critically ill. With hospitals giving up and issuing one dire notice after another, the desperate family had listened to a spiritual advisor's suggestion: adopt an orphan of the same age to bring good fortune. That orphan was Juniper Sherwin.

And it worked. Within a few years, Yolanda made a miraculous recovery.

Out of generosity, the Sherwins hadn't sent Juniper away but had raised her as their own for fifteen years. Who would have thought she'd turn out to be a lost cause? Her character and grades were nothing compared to the real daughter's. She was known for brawling and causing trouble, and was even rumored to have tried to seduce her sister's boyfriend.

Now that her biological relatives had been found, she was apparently refusing to leave, clinging to the wealth and luxury she'd grown accustomed to.

So what if she was beautiful? She was just an empty vase, all style and no substance.

The crowd's murmurs filled the air, but the girl seemed not to hear them. She clutched a rare restorative herb she had crossed mountains to find, her bloodshot eyes fixed on the old man's funeral portrait, her pale lips trembling.

"You broke your promise, old man."

He had sworn he would hold on until she returned with the medicine to save him.

"Stop the act. You just want money, don't you?" Frigga sneered, her red lips twisting cruelly. "Yolanda!"

"Here, take this. It's five thousand dollars," Yolanda said, stepping forward and offering a bank card to Juniper. Her gentle voice was laced with condescension. "It's not much, but it's more than your family in Moultilands could save in years."

Moultilands, the most notorious slum in all of Eclara City, if not the entire state of Borealia.

Juniper ignored her, crouching down to sift through the messy pile of clothes, searching for her grandfather's belongings.

"Oh, and one more thing," Yolanda continued, stepping closer. She deliberately flashed a million-dollar ring on her hand, her smile dripping with smugness. "Isn't it beautiful? Jerrold gave it to me. He said he's going to propose as soon as my college entrance exams are over. By then-"

"Yolanda, are you running for office?" Juniper finally spoke, her voice cutting through the air as she carefully wiped her grandfather's photos clean and placed them in her backpack.

"What?" Yolanda froze, caught off guard.

"Because you've got more faces than a politician!" Juniper lifted her gaze, her eyes glacial. In a low, deliberate tone, she said, "Don't make me slap you today."

Her grandfather had just been buried. She didn't want to disturb his peace.

"You " Yolanda's carefully constructed smile shattered, her face turning a mottled red and white as her expression twisted with rage.

"That's enough!" Malcolm Sherwin, her adoptive father, stepped in. He was disgusted with Juniper, but with so many of Eclara City's influential figures present, he had to maintain appearances. He feigned a fatherly tone. "Juniper, we don't want you to go either, but we think it's best for you to be with your real family."

"Don't worry," he added magnanimously. "If you ever need help in the future, we'll do what we can."

The family's display of "kindness" earned them murmurs of approval from the onlookers, which only fueled their condemnation of Juniper.

Yet, the girl at the center of it all remained unfazed, calmly wiping the mud off her grandfather's things. She didn't bother to reply, not even sparing them a glance.

The crowd was baffled. Trying to provoke her was like kicking a pillow.