

But Jeremy, since when have you fulfilled any of the promises you made me? And since when did you make up for those you could not keep?

'You disregarded me when I told you how we met when we were young and trampled over the promise you made.'

"I'm sorry, I'm afraid I cannot do that." Madeline smiled lightly, her eyes staring straight ahead. "Everyone must face the consequences of their actions."

"Didn't you say you want to thank me for saving you the other day? You can thank me by not pressing charges," Jeremy replied in a heartbeat. Madeline's eyes widened in shock as a cold and ironic scoff laid at the tip of her tongue. Her eyes settled on the rather attractive features in front of her.

'Oh, Eveline Montgomery.

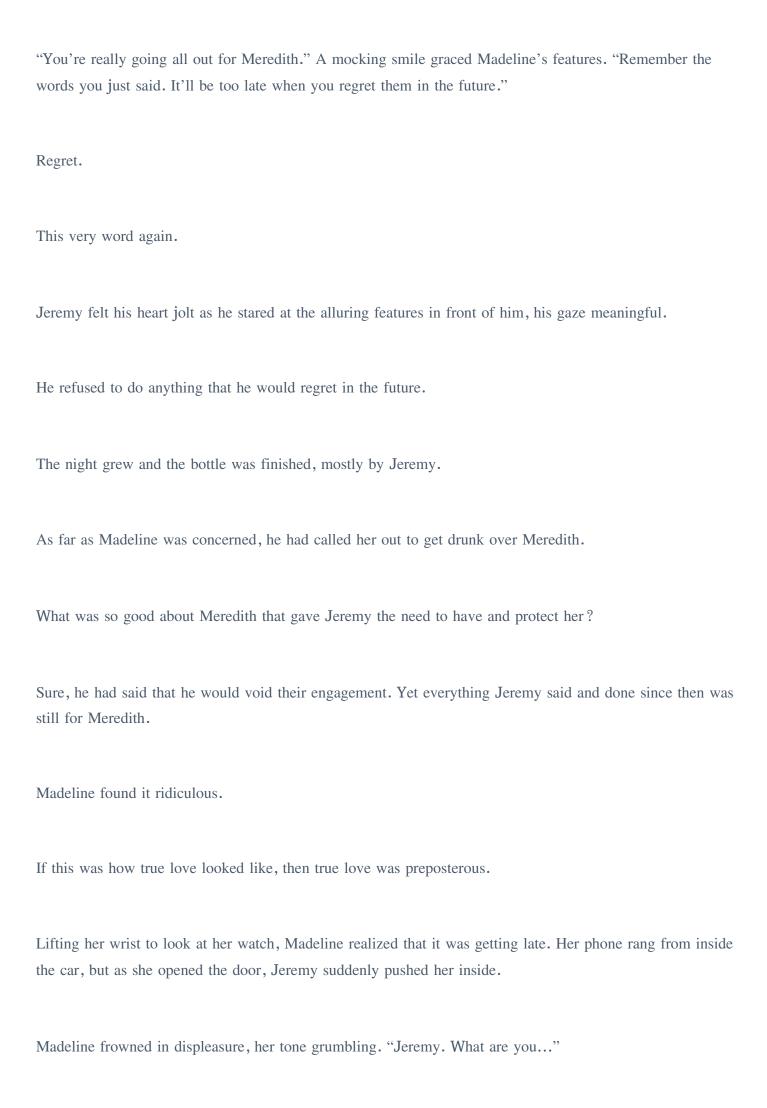
'This is the man you fell and yearned for the past dozen years? This very man who cannot even tell right from wrong?'

"You must love Meredith Crawford a great deal to go to such lengths for her. So stop beating around the bush and get married already. The two of you surely are a 'match made in heaven'!"

She made sure that her tone when she said 'match made in heaven' was dripped with irony.

Madeline turned around coolly after and made her way to leave, only to have Jeremy pull her back by her wrist.

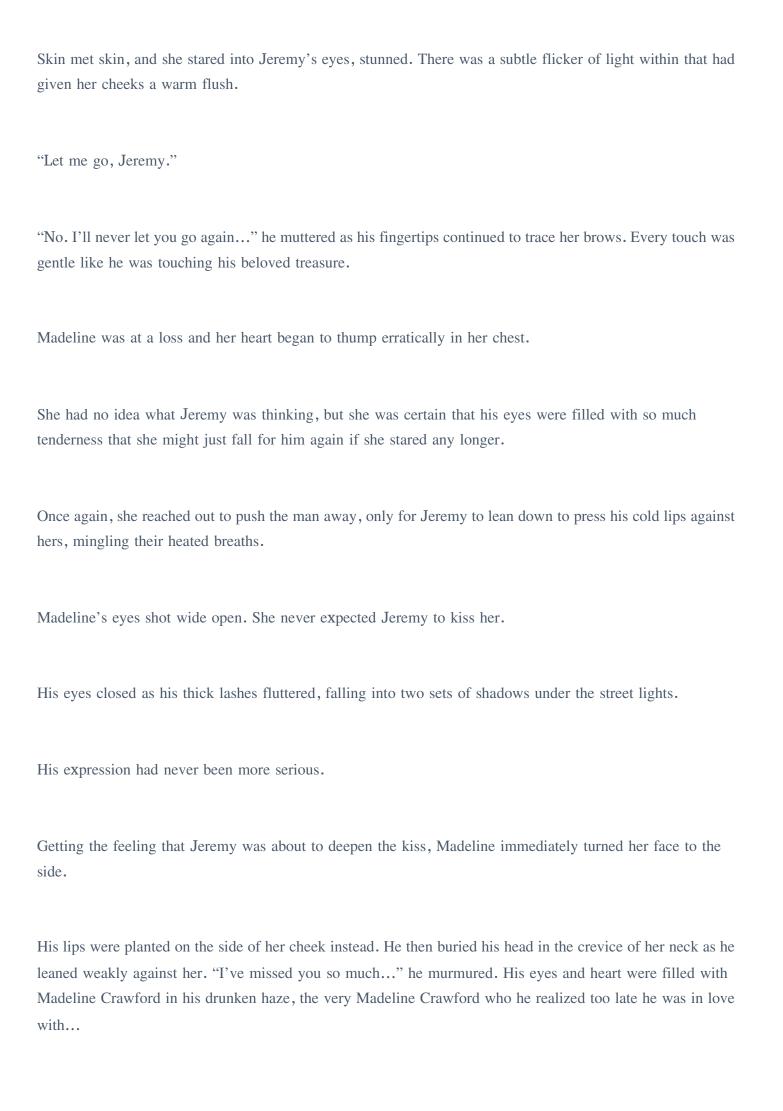
"I won't let your sacrifice be for naught." His deep voice drifted warmly by her ear. "Anything you ask for in the future, Vera, I'll do it with no questions asked."



She paused suddenly as she was met with Jeremy's deep eyes mere inches away just as she turned around. The influence of alcohol was potent in them. He was most certainly drunk.

The distance between them was almost non-existent, and she found herself unable to escape as he pressed her between himself and the car.

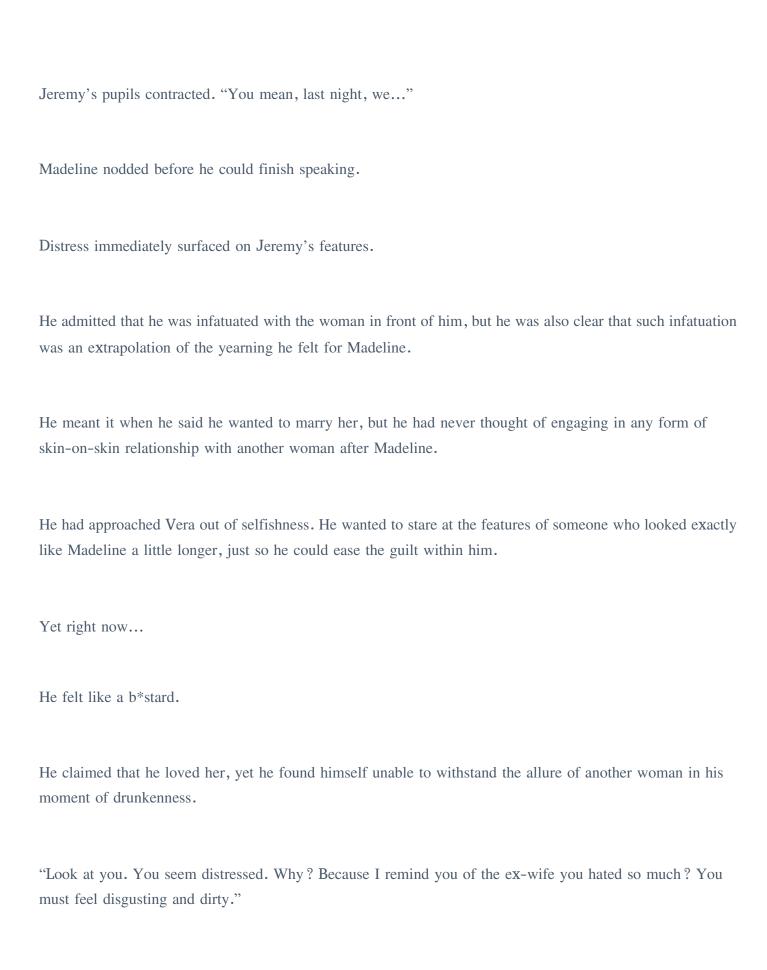
"You fancy me, don't you?" His seductive tone drifted into her ear with warmth. "I can feel it."
His tone was decisive, and confidence was the only thing in his peach blossom eyes that had glazed over.
Madeline found herself slightly at a loss with how close they were and the words he was saying.
"You're drunk," Madeline responded calmly, though doubt was flashing in her eyes.
Was he actually drunk, or was he just pretending?
"It's nice being drunk. At least then I get to see her" He smiled, the 'her' spoken so quietly that she almost missed it.
The night wind blew past them, ruffling the wisps of his bangs. His eyes were gentle, tinted with fondness and adoration under the hazy colors of the night that Madeline had never seen before.
He stared at her, then closed their distance even more. The scent of wine tickled her face with every breath o his.
"I missed you so much" he suddenly proclaimed, staring at her.
Madeline's heart shook and she was about to push him away. However, the man only reached over to cares her face.



Madeline felt that she would have fallen had it not been for the car behind her supporting her up. A person's weight doubled when they were drunk, and Jeremy had just drifted off to sleep during the absurdity of the situation. The autumn wind began to blow, clearing the flush and warmth on her face. The first light of dawn broke through the horizon, waking Jermey from his dream. Opening his eyes, memories of the night before slowly surfaced in his mind. Madeline had felt so real, and the warmth of their kiss seared in the back of his head. He took a look at his surroundings and realized that he had fallen asleep in his car. His clothes were unkempt, and Vera was nowhere to be found. Alighting the car, he was met with a familiar silhouette meeting the morning wisps of autumn wind just as he turned around. Barefoot on the sand, the woman's flushed cheeks and fair elegance was a replica of the woman in his dreams. 'Madeline.' He muttered the name internally and made his way toward her. Seeing Jeremy make his way over, Madeline turned her back against the sea and smiled at him. "Awake?" Jeremy nodded, his eyes slightly apologetic. "Did I... accidentally do something improper to you last night?" Madeline furrowed her brows in distress. "I suppose the phrase 'alcohol is a precursor to sex' isn't entirely wrong."

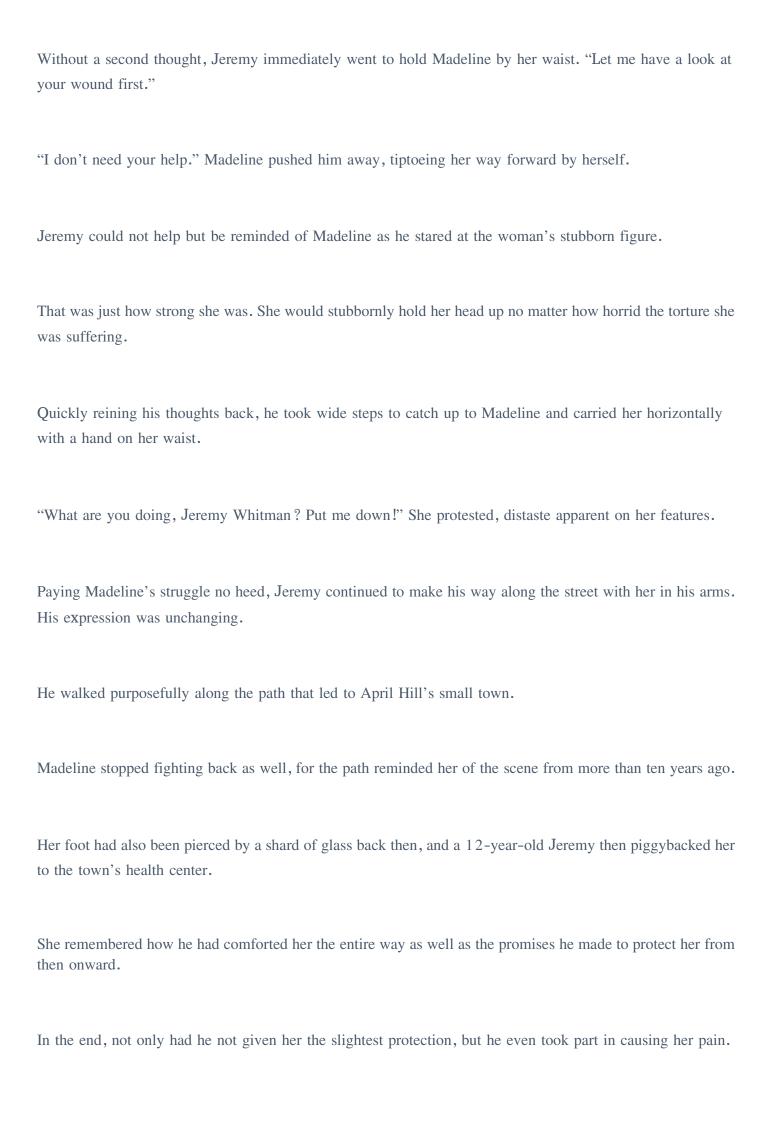
Jeremy's expression immediately changed. "You mean..."

"How do you plan to take responsibility, Jeremy?"



Madeline's frigid words brought him back to reality. Staring at her innocent features that were glowing under the morning light, she looked just like 'her'. He found himself unable to describe such angelic beauty with the word 'dirty'. While he could not remember every detail of the night before, Jeremy admitted that he had a nice dream last night—one that involved the warmth of Madeline's body. Staring at the complex feelings swimming in Jeremy's eyes, Madeline's lips quirked into a smile before they were pressed into a cold line. "I get it. Please don't look for me ever again, Mr. Whitman. Our relationship ends here." She brushed past him just as her cold tone fell. Jeremy immediately snapped back from his thoughts. "Vera." He ran after her in big steps to pull the woman who did not even spare a glance behind her back. Madeline pulled her arm out of his grasp and continued to make her way forward. She must have stepped on something, for she felt a sharp stab of pain shoot up from the bottom of her feet, causing her to bend forward instinctively. Chupse! "What's wrong?" Jeremy reached out to support Madeline's arm in concern. Seeing the frown on her face and how she was tiptoeing on her right foot, he immediately held her foot and squatted to take a look.

Amidst the white sand was a sharp shard of glass, its tip tinted with blood.



Her eyes reddened without her noticing. She never expected such details of the past to still mean so much to her.

Jeremy lowered his gaze to find Madeline's eyes brimming with tears. He was confused and stunned. His heart was clenching inexplicably at the sight.

For a moment, Jeremy found himself unsure whether the pain in his heart was for the Madeline he had loved a little too late or for the woman currently in his arms.

The two fell silent and the atmosphere around them turned inexplicably weird, though not uncomfortable.
The center was over 500 yards away. It took Jeremy about three minutes to carry Madeline over.
It had almost been 20 years and the health center was still there, albeit renovated.
The two never expected to see the very same doctor, who despite being at the age of retirement now and having a head full of white hair, she remained at her station out of a passion for her work.
She recognized Jeremy the moment he carried Madeline into the clinic.
"I remember you, young man. Your features are very distinctive." The doctor smiled warmly as she treated Madeline's wound, dressing it in no time.
Madeline smiled gratefully. "Thank you, Doctor."
"You're welcome." She squinted and readjusted her reading glasses as she analyzed Madeline. "I knew that the two of you would end up together."
Madeline was stunned. Pushing the gloom down, she wore a confused expression instead. "You knew?"

"Yeah! This young man had piggybacked you over so nervously back then too. You could see the worry on his face. He was sweating all over since he ran all the way under the scorching summer sun! I always thought the

two of you looked good together when you were young. It's been years now but you two left quite the

impression on me!"

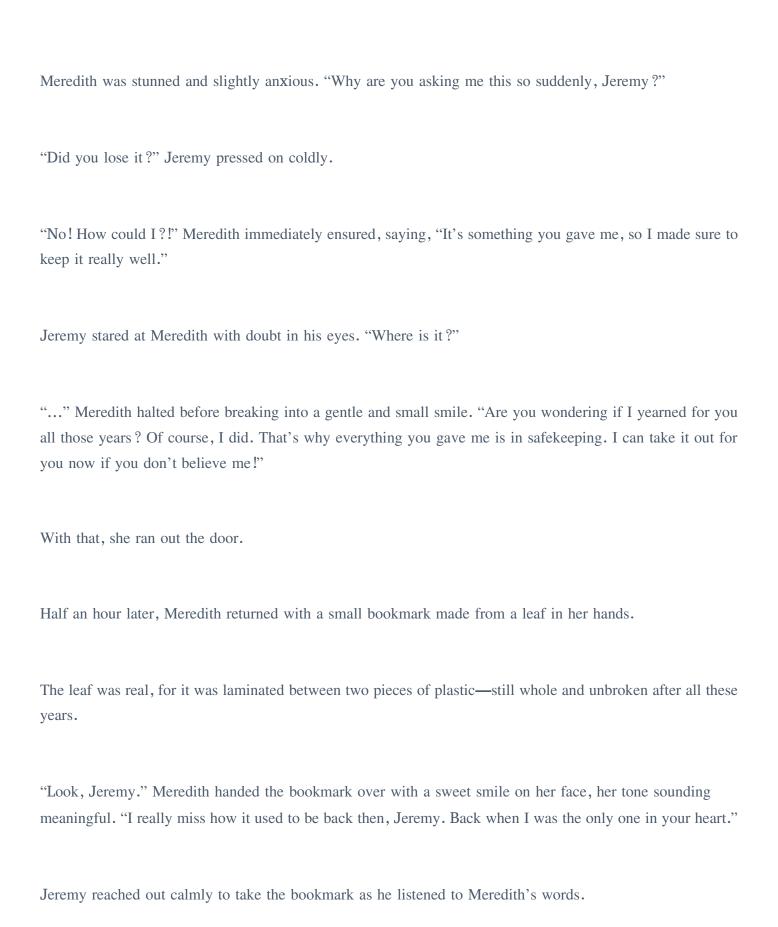


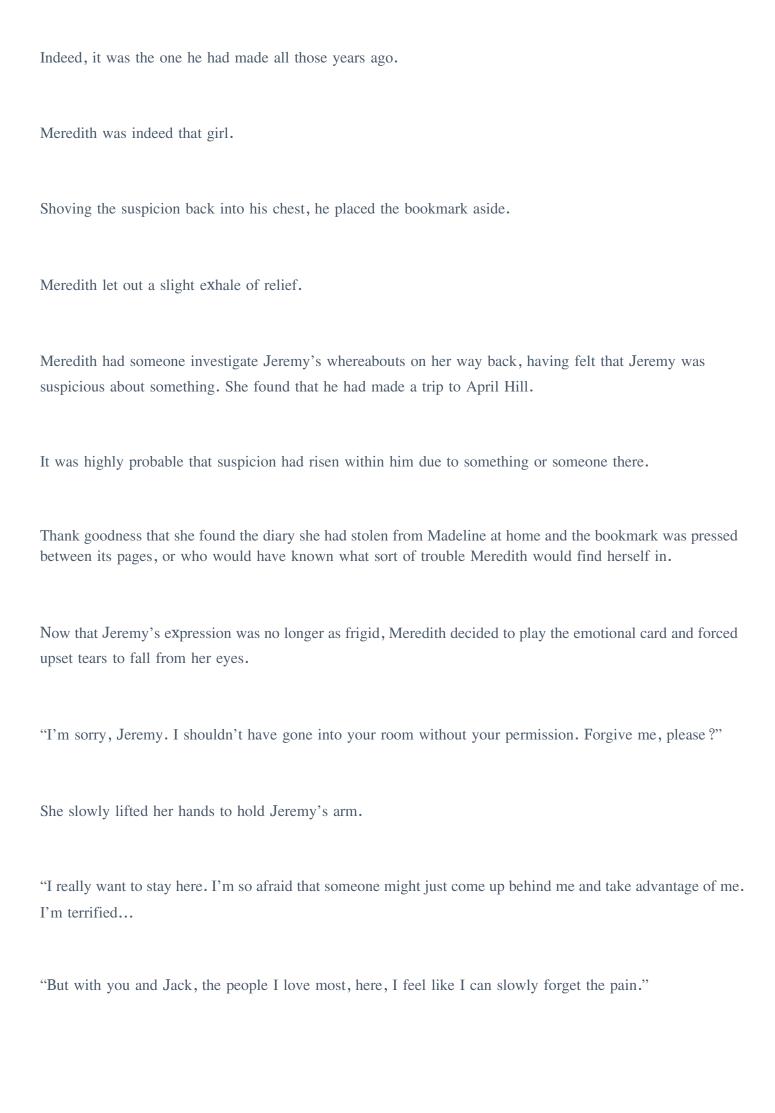
The doctor's words echoed in his mind.
The doctor was right. He was indeed the boy years ago, but the girl back then should have been Meredith, no?
Could the doctor have misrecognized Madeline for Meredith since they looked alike? That had to be it.
"You can put me down now. I'll hail a ride back from here," Madeline spoke lightly, "Let's just pretend last night never happened."
Jeremy stopped mid-step and turned to Madeline with a complicated look in his eyes. "I've already told you I want to marry you. That's not going to change, even if last night never happened."
Jeremy was determined. "Your wedding with Felipe won't be held as planned, because I'll make you my wife before that can happen."
His tone allowed no protests, and his aura held a dominance that oozed from between his brows.
He then sent Madeline back to her apartment and even carried her upstairs in all unscrupulousness.
Madeline took a bath after he left. Standing in front of the misty mirror, she wiped it to stare at herself. Her angelic and carefree eyes were now tinted with newfound complexity and scheming.
She smiled, knowing that she was one step closer to getting her revenge.
Jeremy's heart calmed when he returned home and found that everything had now reverted back to how they originally were. The things that were thrown away earlier in the day were restored as well.

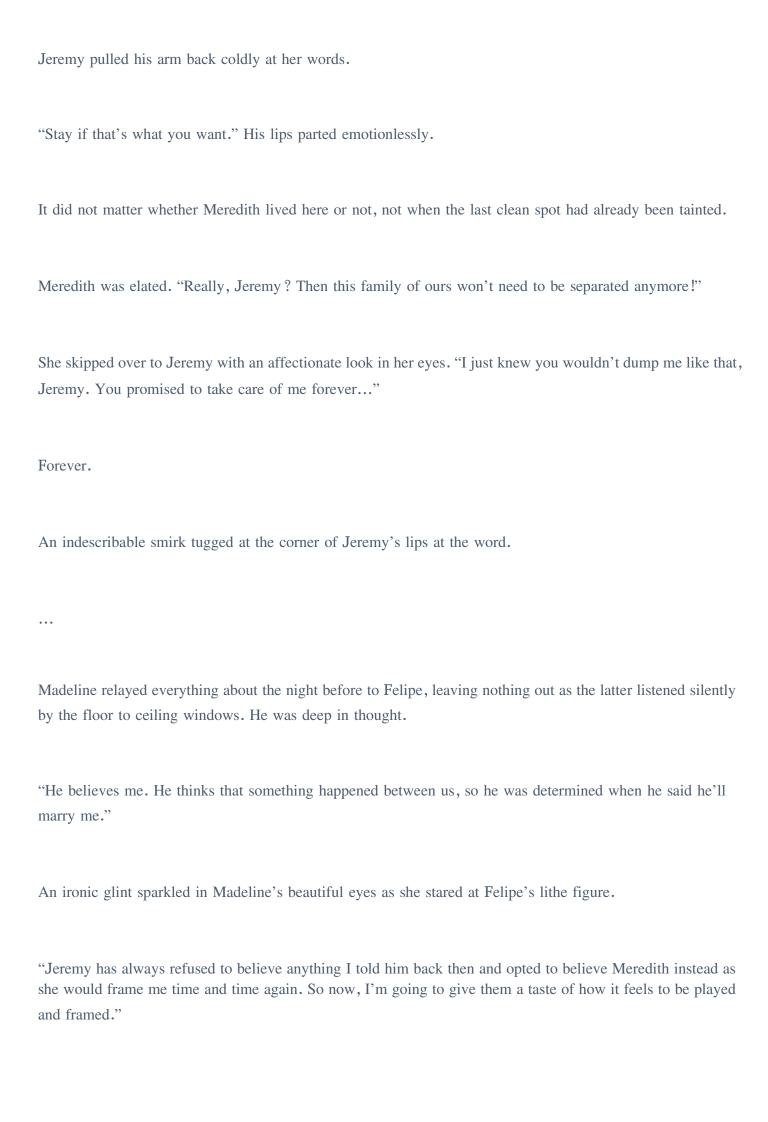
The only thing that brought him displeasure was the fact that Meredith was still sitting expectantly in the room.

Realizing he had returned, Meredith approached him softly to greet him, her gaze full of hurt. "Where did you go last night, Jeremy? You must think that I'm tainted now, right? Do you not want to see me anymore?"

Jeremy stared indifferently at Meredith's face, suspicion growing in his eyes as the doctor's words echoed in his mind. "When we first met years ago, you gave me a rainbow seashell. I remember giving you something back. Do you still have it?"







Her words fell, bringing the duo into a short lapse of silen	ce.

Felipe turned around a few	seconds later,	concern	tinting the	gentleness	on his	chiseled	features	that	were
enhanced by the warm rays	of the setting	sun.							

"I just want to ask you one last time, Vera. Are you sure that this is what you want? It wasn't easy escaping the claws of a monster. Are you sure you want to be caged by him again?" His tone was warm like the winds of spring, but in his eyes held a fierce glint.

Madeline hesitated for a confused moment before a revengeful flare shone in her eyes.

"I can take the pain and humiliation they gave me, but I'll never forgive the two of them for teaming up to destroy the ashes of my precious child. The death of my child is something I must avenge!"

Madeline balled her fists as hatred imprinted itself deeply onto her gentle features. There was a sharp and strong-willed look swimming in her eyes.

After being gifted with rebirth, taking revenge was the top goal that gave her the determination to continue living!

Felipe did not persuade further as he took in the determination in her eyes.

Instead, he raised her hands to place a gentlemanly and loving peck at the back of them.

"Promise me that you'll take care of yourself no matter what. Should any problem arise, I want you to look for me."

Madeline was stunned for a moment and the cold anger in her eyes slowly melted away under Felipe's gentle warmth.
She broke into a smile, locking gazes with the glistening eyes in front of her.
"Thank you, Felipe. I promise I'll come back to you after I take my revenge, then we'll go back to F Country with Lillian where we'll live simply and happily together."
"Alright." Felipe smiled faintly, pulling Madeline gently into his embrace.
With her warm figure held close, the corners of Felipe's lips lifted vaguely. He was hiding a dark secret within.
•••
Satisfied, Meredith began to live in Jeremy's villa. Her attitude toward Jackson had undergone a complete 180 change to persuade Jeremy into marrying her. She would go to great lengths to pretend and fake how close and intimate their mother-son relationship was.
She would wake up early on weekdays to make breakfast for Jackson before sending him to school herself.
Jackson, however, did not like Meredith's fake pleasantries. They only made him dislike her more.
Meredith would not stop searching for topics to engage Jackson in as they rode to the kindergarten while the latter remained silent the entire time.
Meredith spared the baby face a displeased glance.
Oh, how Meredith wished to strangle this bstard son of a btch.

She should have killed him all those years ago. Now, he was the eyesore he was today. Meredith rolled her eyes in distaste when she saw Jackson looking at the display on his phone. The boy tapped on an app that listed a bunch of figures that Meredith could not understand before the screen showed a small moving red dot in the end. She found that the appearance of the red dot brought along a hint of a smile on Jackson's expressionless face. The car pulled to a stop just as Meredith wondered what it was all about. Meredith looked out to realize they had already reached the kindergarten. "We're here, Jack. Come on, Mommy's going to send you..." Meredith smiled before turning her head only to realize that Jackson had already alighted the car himself. She glared at him, feeling pissed. When she followed after him, she realized that there stood Madeline by the kindergarten gates. As surprised as she was to find that Jackson was walking toward Madeline, she was baffled to find that his reticent baby face was smiling widely because of that woman. Meredith immediately ran over to pull Jackson back. At that moment, a car began to speed uncontrollably toward the kindergarten gates. Someone shouted and Madeline turned to look in that direction. The first thing she saw was Jackson's

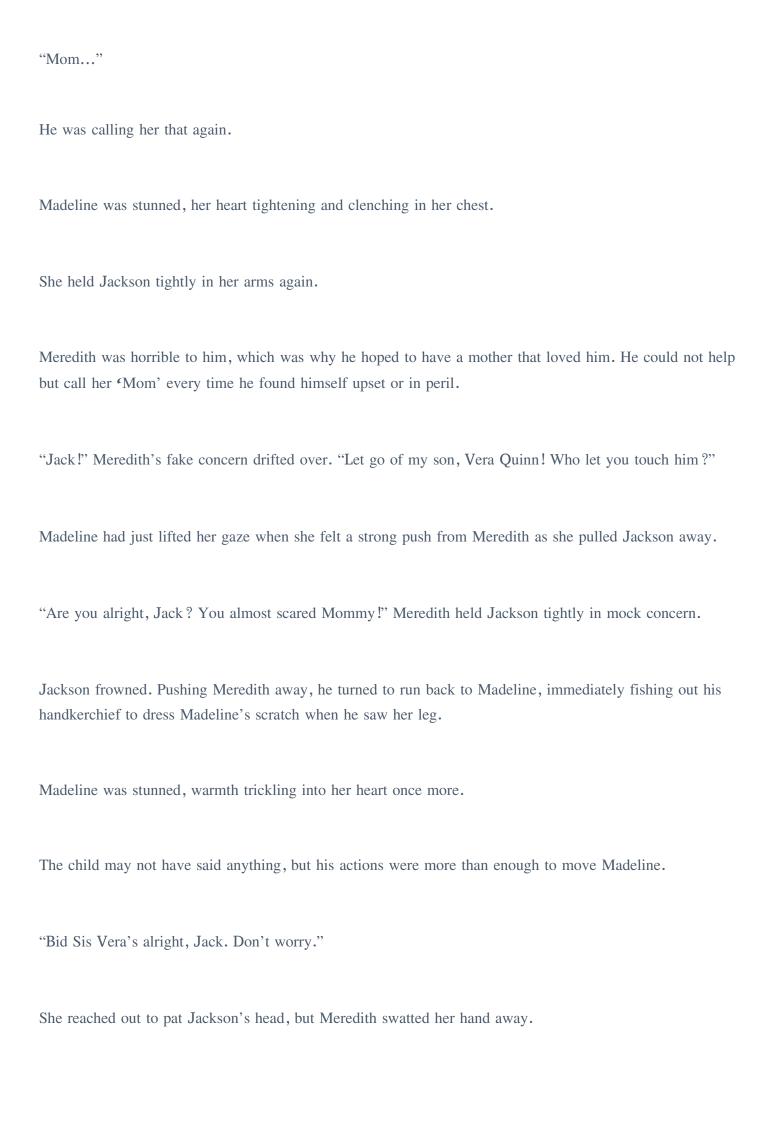
crescent-eyed smile that warmed her heart. Madeline was about to greet him when she realized the

uncontrolled car was currently making its way to where Jackson was.

"Ah!" Meredith exclaimed. Her first reaction was to throw Jackson away and turn back to hide.
The car was about to hit Jackson. Madeline felt her heart drop as she ran instinctively to the boy. "Jack!"

Madeline ran toward Jackson without care, completely disregarding the danger of the situation. Her body made the instinctive decision to protect Jackson, even if it meant getting hurt in the process.
Holding Jackson in her arms, Madeline had not the time to run. She prepared herself to get hurt as she felt the car coming into contact with her body.
In the nick of time, someone shrieked, thinking that a horrible accident was about to occur. However, the car suddenly came to a stop.
Meredith swore as she stared at the scene from afar.
Oh, how she had hoped the car would rid her eyesores, both Vera and Jackson, from her life with this accident!
The car braked, and Madeline felt the world around her grow silent.
Carefully, she opened her arms to stare at the little boy buried in her embrace. She could not help the sudden burn around the corner of her eyes.
"It's alright now, Jack. Big Sis Vera promised you, didn't she? I promised to protect you, so I will."
Madeline raised a hand to pat Jackson's small head affectionately.

The little boy lifted his innocent orbs that were glistening with complicated emotions within.

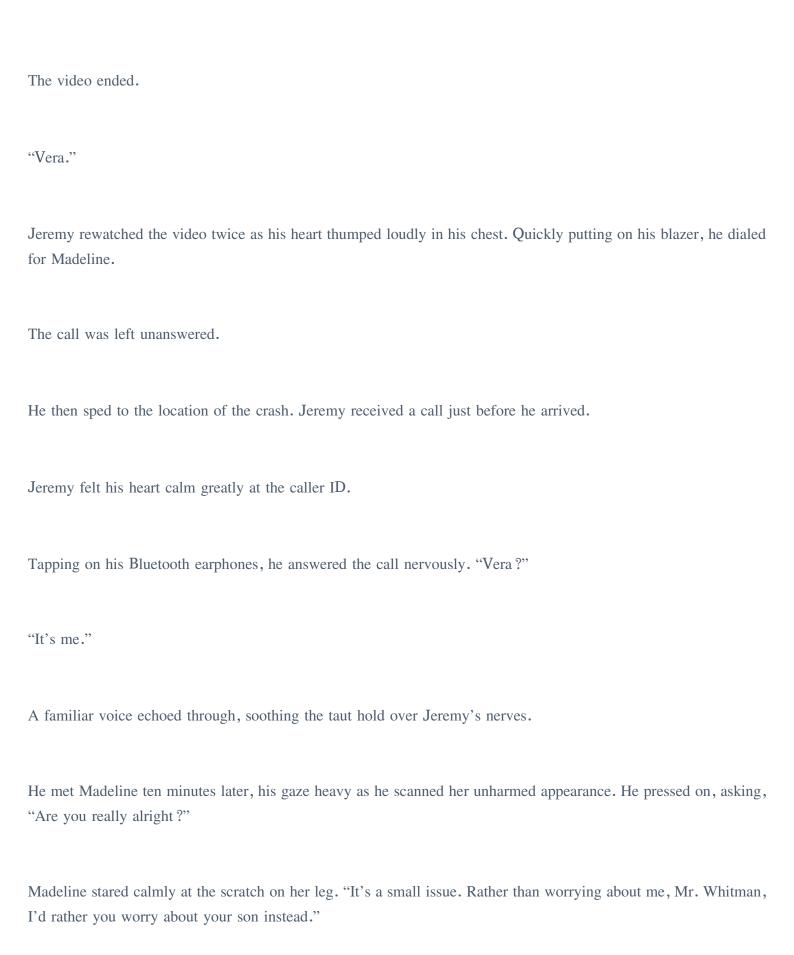


"Don't touch my son!" Meredith warned fiercely. "Did you think I wouldn't know how you're trying to use Jack to get closer to Jeremy? I won't let you!"
Bracing through the pain of the scratch, Madeline slowly stood.
Standing on her feet, she stared elegantly at Meredith whose aura was slowly weakening.
"You disregarded your son's life just to save your own. Wow, Miss Crawford, I never expected people like you to exist in this world."
Meredith's expression shifted into mortification as she pulled Jackson's hand and changed the subject. "I'll bring you to the hospital, okay, Jackson?"
Jackson frowned as he was dragged away, evidently not wanting to go with Meredith.
Madeline was about to stop them, but the traffic police had just arrived.
The main culprits of the accident were a young couple who had been quarreling over a petty matter. It was thanks to the girlfriend taking the steering wheel and stepping on the brakes did the accident end before lives were taken.
The couple apologized repetitively to Madeline, regretful of their preposterous actions.
Regret always came a little too late.
Jeremy had just arrived at the company when he saw the news about a horrible car accident at the gates of a kindergarten.

He had never cared much about the happenings on the news, but for some reason today, he could not help but click in to understand more.

Reaching his eyes was the scene right before the car crashed. He watched how a familiar-looking figure had run without care toward a small boy in uniform with a small yellow hat perched on his head.

The body of the car promptly covered the figure, making it seem like a collision occurred.



Jeremy's brows furrowed. "Jackson?"
"Yeah. I have to ask you, is Jackson really Meredith's son?" Madeline inquired confusedly.
"I was shocked to see her leaving her son to be hit by a car and make a run in the face of danger."
Jeremy's sharp brows furrowed deeper. Remembering the video he watched, it dawned on him that Jackson was the boy Madeline had risked her life to protect.
He did not remember seeing Meredith in the video, though.
"Let me send you home." Jeremy walked up to help Madeline, reaching around her shoulders naturally.
"I'd like you to bring me with you instead if that's alright? Meredith just brought Jackson away. I'd like to know if he's alright."
Jeremy stared at the attractive side profile in front of him and nodded. "Alright, I'll bring you over to my place."
Jeremy kept glancing at the rearview mirror the entire ride, suddenly interested in whether she was actually doing alright.
In a way, she meant differently to him than others.
Madeline entered the villa again. Walking through the doors, she could not help but be reminded of how Meredith had framed her for pushing her down the stairs and how Jeremy forced her to kneel an entire night in the rain after a violent beating in prison.
How cold he had been to the child she was pregnant with, and how limitlessly he had allowed this wicked woman to do whatever she wanted.



"It's you again, Vera Quinn. You're the one spreading rumors about me in front of Jeremy!" Meredith sounded wronged. "I wouldn't have twisted my ankle if you hadn't pushed me! I would never have let the car hit Jack! You have to believe me, Jeremy! Don't let yourself be fooled by this woman's lies!"

Meredith looked at Jeremy with her charming almond-shaped eyes that were filled with grievances as she said angrily, "Jeremy, Jack is our precious son. I wouldn't allow him to be hurt at all as if my life depended on it. How could I have abandoned him?"

Just then, Eloise slowly walked over with Jackson. Her contemptuous gaze was directed at Meredith. "Miss Quinn, I heard that you're about to marry Jeremy's uncle, so why are you still hanging around here all day long with my daughter's fiancé? Have your parents never told you that it's shameless for you to do this?"

Faced with Eloise's sarcasm, Madeline merely gave a tranquil and composed smile. "You've asked a good question, Mrs. Montgomery. My parents didn't teach me this because not long after I was born, they brought someone else's child home and abandoned their biological daughter due to their moment of negligence."

When Madeline mentioned her life experience all of a sudden, Jeremy looked at her unexpectedly.

Seeing the elegant smile on her beautiful face, he felt a prick in his heart for some reason.

Eloise and Meredith were respectively taken aback.

'It's actually so similar to Madeline's life experience?' Meredith thought silently.

However, Eloise was a little lost, and her face no longer carried the contemptuous smile.

Sensing the changes in Eloise's expression and Meredith's face, Madeline's pretty lips twitched.

"Although my biological parents didn't teach me this, the person who raised me later on did, so now it's my turn to question you, Mrs. Montgomery. Since you're so accomplished, why was this daughter of yours brought up to be so despicable, indecent, and so indifferent toward family affection that during a dangerous moment, she would abandon her own son to escape alone? It seems that your upbringing isn't much better, Mrs. Montgomery."

"You, what nonsense are you talking about here?!" Eloise said angrily, "You dare slander my daughter like this? You'd better apologize to Meredith immediately. Otherwise, I will have to look into it till the end!"

"Mom..." Meredith's eyes reddened as tears of grievances started to pool. "Jeremy, did you hear that? I've tolerated this Miss Quinn time and time again, but she provokes and vilifies me non-stop. She continues to slander me to this day. The reason why I have suffered so much harm is all because of her. Why is my life so bitter..."

Listening to Meredith's crying voice, Eloise comforted her distressingly, then pointed a finger at Madeline.

"Vera Quinn, you planned for my daughter's humiliation! You shameless woman! You'll do everything possible to interfere with Jeremy and Meredith's relationship just to get him, you..."

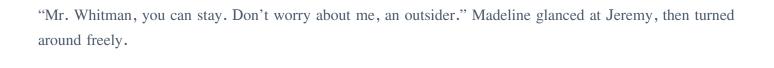
"The one who has been pestering isn't Vera. It's me."

Suddenly, Jeremy's low and cold voice interrupted Eloise intensely.

His eyebrows were tightly furrowed while his face was stained with frost.

"This matter ends here. No one is allowed to mention it again."

"What? This woman asked someone to kidnap Meredith and you just want to forget it?" Of course, Eloise could not accept it. Her eyes were full of anger as she said, "I will never let Meredith be bullied in vain! Meredith, don't worry. I will definitely seek justice for you!"



"Hmph, consider her an acquaintance!" Eloise rolled her eyes.

Meredith was also very satisfied, but she was only happy for a few seconds as she soon saw Jeremy quickly walking toward Madeline.

"Jeremy!" she shouted, but Jeremy completely ignored her.

Madeline, who had not gone far, smiled quietly.
This action of retreating to advance was very successful, and sure enough, it was her who Jeremy cared more for now.
Jeremy kindly opened the car door for Madeline.
Madeline got into the car and saw Meredith bursting from anger in the rearview mirror. She felt happy thinking about it.
After the car started up, Madeline said while looking embarrassed, "Although I've promised you to no longe pursue the kidnapping case, it seems that they're going to sue me instead? A robber acting like a cop. I can't bear this kind of grievance."
"I won't allow this to happen." Jeremy promised.
Madeline looked at him with interest. "You're really working hard for Meredith."
Jeremy's eyes sank when he heard the words. He wanted to deny it, but in the end, he did not say anything
After a moment of silence, he seemed to have thought of something. "You told me just now that you have good news to tell me. What good news is it?"
Madeline raised her delicate eyebrows and smiled carefreely. "This matter" she said faintly, looking at Jeremy's profile with beautiful, clear eyes.

"I want to go to your house tonight and have another taste of the candlelight dinner you made me back then. Then, I'll tell you what the good news is."
Jeremy's eyes flickered when he heard her words. When he saw the red light in front of him, he almost rushed past it.
Lifting his eyes to meet Madeline's crooked smile, his heartbeat was inexplicably fast for some reason.
Jeremy brought Madelene around and finally went to the supermarket. The two were like newlyweds. She picked out vegetables while he carried the shopping basket for her.
After they were done shopping, Jeremy returned to the villa with Madeline.
Once they had put away the purchased ingredients, Jeremy received a call from the company and had to head back for a bit. He offered to let Madeline into his room to wait for him to return.
Madeline went.
Upon entering the bedroom, an unspeakable ambivalence sprang up in her heart the moment she stepped in.
She should hate it here.
However, seeing the furnishings and displays in the room looking almost exactly the same as three years ago, she was in a daze.
The outdated but simple dresses were still hung in the closet while the sheets had not been changed. She had bought them herself, but the color was much lighter now.

She had been full of joy then, but in the end, the day when he could gently and peacefully hold her to sleep on their wedding bed did not come...

Suddenly, there was movement downstairs, interrupting Madeline's thoughts.

She went out to look downstairs and saw Meredith opening up the ingredients she and Jeremy had bought with a smile on her face. Then, she started to fiddle with them.

When it was becoming dusk, Meredith was almost done preparing all the dishes. She had also set up a candlestick on the table. It looked like she was going to have a candlelight dinner with Jeremy.

Madeline then heard Meredith calling Jeremy, but the phone call did not get through and she switched to leaving a voicemail instead. Meredith suppressed her voice and said in a pretentious tone, "Jeremy, it's Meredith. I've prepared a candlelight dinner for us. When are you coming back? We haven't had dinner together for a long time. I'll wait for you to come back. You need to have dinner with me tonight no matter what."

Meredith hung up after speaking shyly. Then, she ran back to the guest room.

Madeline walked downstairs slowly. She walked into the kitchen, looked at the sumptuous dinner table, and smiled.

Not long after, Meredith came.

Seeing Madeline sitting in the kitchen, Meredith's expression suddenly changed. "Why are you here? Who allowed you to sit here?!"

Madeline raised her eyes leisurely and saw that Meredith was wearing a sexy dress that exposed some of her chest. It was obvious that she wanted to seduce Jeremy.

She was also obviously wearing very expensive perfume, but because she had sprayed on too much, it smelled pungent and cheap.

Madeline raised her eyebrows proudly and looked at Meredith with a gloomy expression. "I will be the mistress of this house soon, so why can't I be here? What about you? Why do you keep loitering here? Do you want me to drive you off personally?"

Hearing that, Meredith did not feel angry this time but smiled instead.

"Vera Quinn, I think you've finally gone mad. You dare say this to me without any embarrassment?"

"I wouldn't be crazy even when you've become crazy," Madeline retorted without being surprised, "Things have already reached this point. Do you still think Jeremy will want you?"

"Bah! Stop dreaming! Do you think that Jeremy will want you even if he doesn't want me?" Meredith folded her arms and sneered proudly, her eyes full of confidence, "Vera Quinn, let me tell you this. No matter how much you change your appearance, the woman Jeremy loves the most will always be me. I'm irreplaceable!"

Seeing Meredith's confident and arrogant appearance, Madeline smiled. "Irreplaceable?" she repeated the word meaningfully. She smiled and picked up the expensive red wine, pouring a little to half of it into the glass in front of her.

"A mean, dirty, snake-hearted woman like you is indeed rare in the world. You can indeed be regarded as an 'irreplaceable' wonder," Madeline said leisurely, holding up the wine glass and swaying it gently. She then took a sip.

"B\*tch! How dare you say that to me?!" Meredith's face turned dark in an instant. Hearing Madeline cursing her and then seeing her drinking the wine so leisurely, she was even more annoyed. "I prepared that for my candlelight dinner with Jeremy. How dare you drink it?!"

All of a sudden, Meredith stretched out her hand fiercely and pushed Madeline's hand that was holding the wine glass. A little of the red liquid spilled out, and a few drops splashed onto Madeline's magnolia-white dress.

Seeing that Madeline's skirt was dirtied, Meredith let out a smirking laugh.

"Hmph, Vera Quinn. I advise you to save your time. With your face looking exactly like that slt Madeline, you're destined to be trampled under my feet just like how she was! You're the same as that btch. You aren't worthy of being my opponent. You're not even worthy to lift my shoes... Ah!"

Meredith had not finished her words of triumph when suddenly, a cold liquid was poured on her face.

She screamed before opening her eyes wide in shock, only to realize that Madeline had poured all the red wine in the glass on her face!

"You..." Meredith became angry all of a sudden. Her chest was rising and falling sharply.

Her evil face was covered with red wine and the liquid ran down her cheeks across her unhealed wound, dripping drop by drop onto her body and dress.

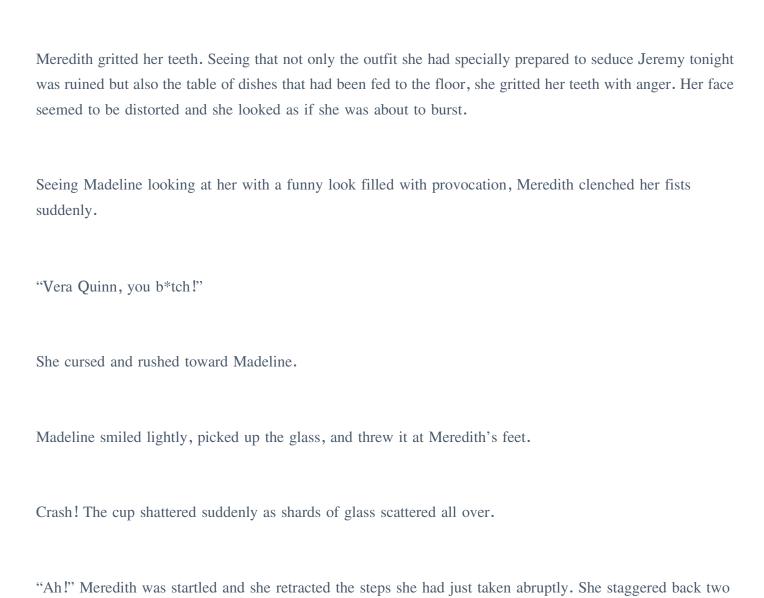
"This wine tastes good. Have you tasted it properly? If not, I can pour you another glass." Madeline smiled leisurely, holding the bottle of red wine with her slender and fair hands. Then, she tipped the mouth of the bottle right above Meredith's feet.

Meredith quickly took a few steps back while looking incredulously at Madeline who was 'pouring her wine' with a smile on her face.

"What's wrong? Don't you like red wine? Then, you should be satisfied with your own dishes, right?"

Seeing Meredith looking at her dumbfoundedly, Madeline quirked her eyebrows. She picked up a few of the dishes that had been carefully made by Meredith and poured them all in front of the woman.

"What about these? Do you like them?"



"You! How dare you dare throw it at me?!" Meredith was incoherent and acting violently. "Vera Quinn, I think you're becoming really tired of life! Alright, since you want to die, I will then fulfill it for you and have

you suffer the misery of being neither able to live or die like that b\*tch Madeline!"

steps and ran into the cabinet behind her.

She never expected that Madeline would throw the glass at her!

Meredith's eyes suddenly surged with strong killing inter	t. The look in her eyes was as if she wished she
could slash Madeline with a thousand swords.	

She grabbed the pair of scissors from the cabinet, pointed the sharp end toward Madeline, and rushed at Madeline murderously.

Meredith was full of anger and was trying her best to teach Madeline a bloody lesson.

However, Madeline was not afraid. She even tried to dodge.

She stretched out her hand calmly, seizing the opportunity to grasp Meredith's hand that was waving the scissors around.

Meredith's almond eyes widened. She raised her other hand to sneak an attack on Madeline, but Madeline saw through it in a glance. While stopping Meredith, she unceremoniously raised her hand toward Meredith's face and sent a loud slap.

With a slap, Meredith then exclaimed in pain.

The knife wound on her face had not even healed yet and she was also drenched in red wine. After getting slapped, a fiery pain burned within her flesh.

"My face!" she exclaimed, suddenly raising her angry eyes.

She did not want to meet Meredith's arrogant and cold eyes at this moment after raising her head. She could not help her trembling body.

"What's wrong? Finally tasted the ache of having salt sprinkled on your wound?" Madeline chuckled.

"You... Vera Quinn, you'd better let go!" Meredith was angry, annoyed, and eager to break free. "Vera Quinn, you listen here. You'd better let go of me immediately. Otherwise... Otherwise, I'll definitely make you regret this!"

"Regret?" Madeline quirked her lips as she smiled, but not only did she not let go, she even tightened her grip around Meredith's wrist.

From those beautiful eyes suddenly burst forth sharp, piercing rays of light. "Meredith, you should listen to me clearly. I'm not the Madeline who would allow herself to be trampled on or taken advantage of.

"I already know about everything you did to Madeline. I may look the same as Madeline, but that doesn't mean you can succeed with me through the same means!"

Madeline raised her beautiful eyes coldly and arrogantly. With a sharp tone, she said, "Meredith, look at how you are now. Whether it's your appearance or your heart, everything about you is dirty and ugly. Do you think Jeremy would still want you like this?"

She sneered, her eyes full of ridicule.

"Let's not talk about the throne of being the young lady of the Whitman family. You don't even have the qualifications to enter the Whitmans' gate!" Madeline sneered, shaking off Meredith's wrist.

Meredith took two steps back in a daze. Her originally murderous aura and anger were completely crushed by Madeline's own aura.

She touched her stinging cheek while staring at Madeline. She gritted her teeth fiercely but could not refute with a single word.

Just then, from the entrance hall came the sound of the doorbell. Meredith raised her head abruptly to see that it was Jeremy. She immediately put away all her hostility, put on a mask of weakness from having been humiliated, and ran toward him crying.

Jeremy was puzzled when he saw Meredith running toward him.

She seemed to be well dressed but was somehow covered with red wine stains. Her hair was messy as well. She looked particularly embarrassed.

"Jeremy..." As soon as Meredith came over, she threw herself directly into Jeremy's arms and hugged him tightly.

Jeremy's eyebrows narrowed. He felt dissatisfied, and when he was about to push Meredith away, she started crying in his arms.

"Jeremy, why? I'm already like this, so why does Miss Quinn still want to trouble me? She had already set me up to be kidnapped from the hospital before, asking those men to insult and humiliate me! She said that I'm dirty and not worthy of you. She even tossed the dishes that I had made specially for you to the ground and made fun of me for not being worthy to cook for you. Moreover, she hit me. Huhuhu... Miss Quinn is terrifying, Jeremy..."

As soon as Meredith's accusation sounded, Jeremy caught a figure in the light.

He raised his deep eyes and saw Madeline not far away, but his eyes were suddenly filled with worry. He pushed Meredith, who was holding him tightly, away and strode toward Madeline.

"Vera, what happened to you?"

Meredith did not expect that Jeremy would push her away so simply.	She was dumbfounded!
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She heard Jeremy calling out Vera's name nervously. The worry and concern in his tone clearly belonged to her alone!

Now, however, he was giving it to another woman.

What made Meredith even more astounded was that she was actually seeing Madeline sitting on the ground at this moment with a helpless and weak expression, as if she had been pushed down by someone.

"Why are you sitting on the floor?" Jeremy walked quickly toward Madeline before kneeling down. The corners of his eyes and eyebrows were dyed with sadness and a rare tenderness.

Madeline slowly raised her beautiful eyes and glanced at Meredith who was behind Jeremy.

"If I said that this noble Miss Crawford pushed me down, would you believe me?" She looked at Jeremy's deep eyes innocently.

When Meredith heard this, she clenched her fists violently and defended herself angrily. "Vera, what are you talking about? How could I have pushed you? It was you who provoked me and destroyed the dinner I prepared for Jeremy. You even hit me!"

She then said in a frail tone while crouching next to Jeremy and holding onto his arm, "Jeremy, don't be fooled by this woman. She bullied me! I didn't even lay a finger on her, Jeremy. Don't you believe me?"

Meredith looked at Jeremy deeply, looking forward to his satisfactory response to her.
However, instead of paying attention to Meredith, Jeremy stretched out his hand and gently lifted Madeline up.
"Ow!" Madeline frowned.
Jeremy looked at the area where she had been bruised in the morning because of the car accident. "Does it hurt?"
"A little."
"I'll take care of it for you," Jeremy said as he put his arms around Madeline's shoulders. He helped her sit down on the sofa tenderly and with so much care.
Meredith could not believe what she was seeing. Her eyes were filled with envy, jealousy, and burning hatred.
Seeing that Jeremy had brought out a small medicine box and was preparing to treat Madeline's wounds personally, Meredith could no longer maintain her always soft, dignified, and gentle demeanor.
"Jeremy, do you really not believe me but instead believe this demon of a girl?" Meredith pointed at Madeline angrily. "Can't you tell that she's acting?!"
Jeremy's long fingers that were holding the alcohol pads paused. "Acting? The car accident in the morning was an act? Vera's desperate effort to save Jackson was also an act? Is the wound on her foot also an act?" he asked in a cold voice. His indifferent tone was like the cold winter wind in Meredith's ears.
Meredith opened her mouth but was speechless.

Madeline raised her delicate eyebrows as her mouth formed a dimpled smile. "Miss Crawford, I know you always think that I want to steal Jeremy from you, which is why you're always targeting me. Whatever one does, the heavens are watching. What wicked things you have done, surely you know it in your heart. Jeremy knows it too. You cannot just simply tarnish my name with just a few words."

"You..." Meredith was so angry that she almost jumped to her feet.

Her eye sockets were splitting, but she could not choke out a word.

She had always been the one setting others up. Since when was it the others' turn to set her up and make her the one to feel aggrieved instead?!

'How dare you, Vera Quinn?!'

Meredith gritted her teeth and stared at Madeline's smiling face, wishing to bore through her face!

"You should go and reflect on what you have done," came Jeremy's order of chasing away his guests.

Meredith clenched her fists unwillingly. Her heart was full of anger, but in the end, she could not release it. Instead, she wept while feeling aggrieved. "Jeremy, we've been together for so many years, yet you actually refuse to believe me. I'm heartbroken!" she said before covering her face and running away crying.

Unmoved, Jeremy continued to treat Madeline's wounds without even sparing a glance for Meredith.

Madeline had been watching, however. Watching Meredith's resentful yet aggrieved figure running away really made her feel so happy.

Meredith, finally you know what it's like to not be trusted by the man you love.
Everything that I've done today is nothing compared to the humiliation and set-ups you imposed on me in the first place.
*Of course, what I want to give back to you is much more than that.'
"I always seem to hurt you lately." Jeremy's low, husky voice sounded softly. "But I promise that this situation will never happen again."
Madeline turned her head to look over and he happened to look up.
Their two pairs of eyes met inadvertently. He had eyes as deep as the sea that looked as if they were rippling with dizzying vortexes. All of Madeline's attention was drawn to him at once.
Madeline's heartbeat quickened somehow. She even felt a warmth slowly spreading from her ears to her cheeks.
She looked at the unmatched, handsome face in front of her in a slight daze as her heartbeat accelerated. Soft ripples gradually dispersed from her initially clear and charming eyes, making her look coquettish for a moment.

Seeing Madeline looking at him obsessively with blushing cheeks and droopy eyes, the rhythm of Jeremy's

heart also began to beat irregularly.

The face in front of him was exactly the same as that woman's in his memory. He felt so moved at the moment.
However, he recalled clearly that these were two different people. He would not be moved. Yet, the change in rhythm made him delusional and dazzled.
He seemed to really be harboring a subtle affection for the person in front of him.
"Why do you keep looking at me like that?" he asked in a low tone.
Madeline was startled. She felt that her breathing and heartbeat were all messed up. She was almost overwhelmed by that once familiar fervor.
Then, she remembered something.
"I had a sip of the red wine that Meredith had prepared for you earlier. I think she might have drugged the wine in order to keep you for the night. I'm feeling dizzy now."
Madeline relied on her tenacious will to express clearly the suspicion in her heart.
Upon hearing this, Jeremy seemed to instantly have thought of something. A touch of sorrow suddenly revealed itself on his handsome face, and unpleasantness spread between his brows.
Six years ago, he believed that Madeline had used drugs to fabricate a relationship with him. No matter how Madeline explained and told him that Meredith was actually the instigator, he did not believe a single word.
Now, he realized that he was wrong yet again.
Deeply oppressed by a strong sense of guilt, Jeremy suddenly felt his breathing becoming difficult.

What exactly did he wrong her for? Could he count all the evil deeds he had committed against her?
Even if he could count them, how could he atone for them?
As Jeremy was in a trance, he saw that Madeline had stood up unsteadily.
Her footsteps were clumsy as if she was drunk.
Jeremy hurriedly got up and embraced her in his arms.
Falling into the familiar yet unfamiliar embrace, Madeline suddenly felt even more fervor. His unique scent that lingered around the tip of her nose was like feathers falling into her heart, tickling it.
"Let me go. I have to go back"
"Do you think I'll send you back to Felipe in your current state?" His husky voice drifted into her ears with an unspeakable numbness.
Madeline looked up with her eyes as gentle as a pool of water. "What do you mean? Don't tell me you want me to stay with you like this if you're not going to let me go back?"
Hearing this, Jeremy's voice was slightly muted. "We already did it once, so why not do it again? What's important is that it'll ease your current situation."
"
Without waiting for Madeline's answer, Jeremy quickly picked her up and walked toward the bedroom

Looking at Jeremy, he really did not seem to be joking, but Madeline did not think about really having another
relationship with Jeremy again. On that night spent in April Hill, she had simply used his drunken state to
deceive him.

She would not allow herself to be played by this cold-blooded man again.

Madeline wanted to break free, but her consciousness was slowly slipping away. She even felt her body gradually changing.

The drug had dampened her senses, making her lean unconsciously into Jeremy's chest.

She was about to lose control of her gradually slipping consciousness as she took in the cold fragrance and the warm feeling of his body.

Meredith had really gone all in. She had only taken a sip and did not expect the drug to be so effective.

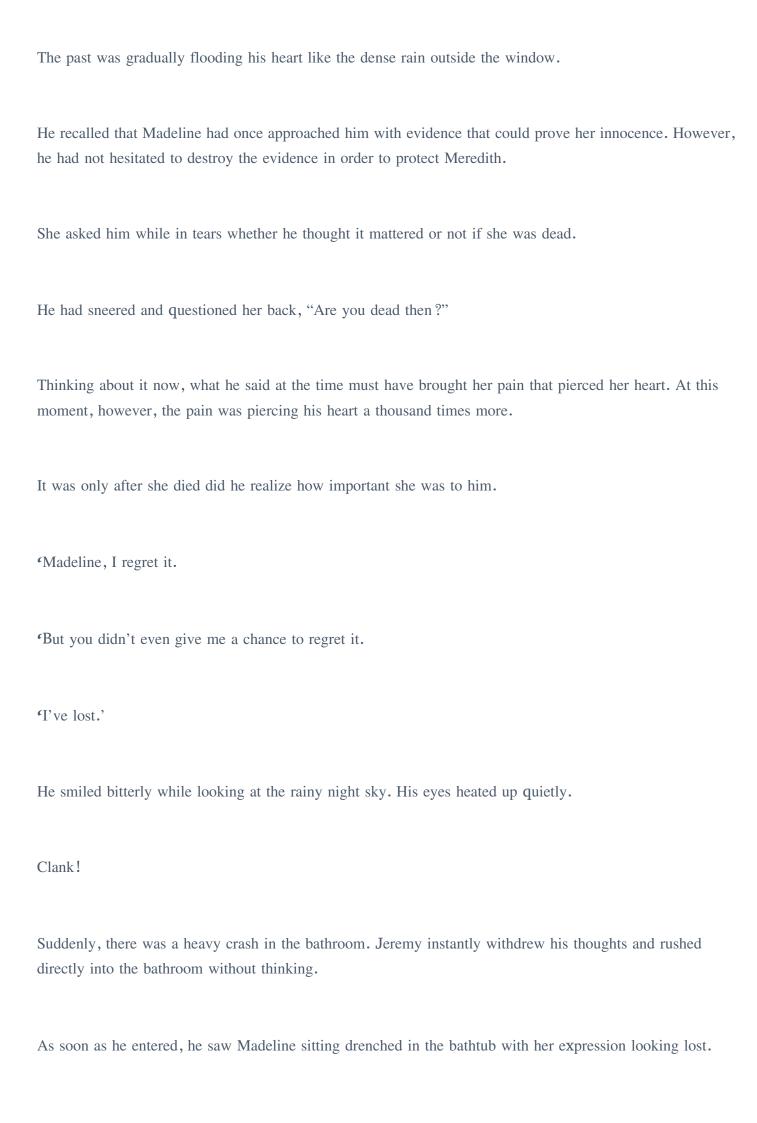
Sensing Jeremy carrying her into the room, Madeline, with the last traces of her clear-headed willpower, grabbed his collar firmly. "Jeremy, let me go..."

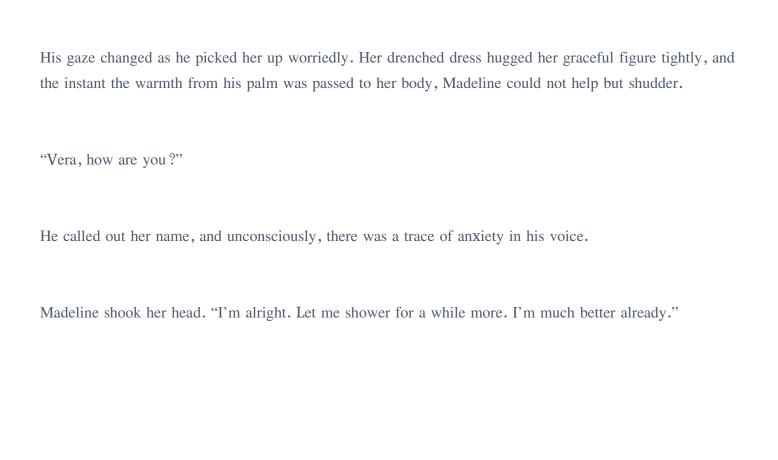
She had said, but she found her voice to have become unusually charming. She was obviously trying to reject, but the tone made it sound like an invitation instead.

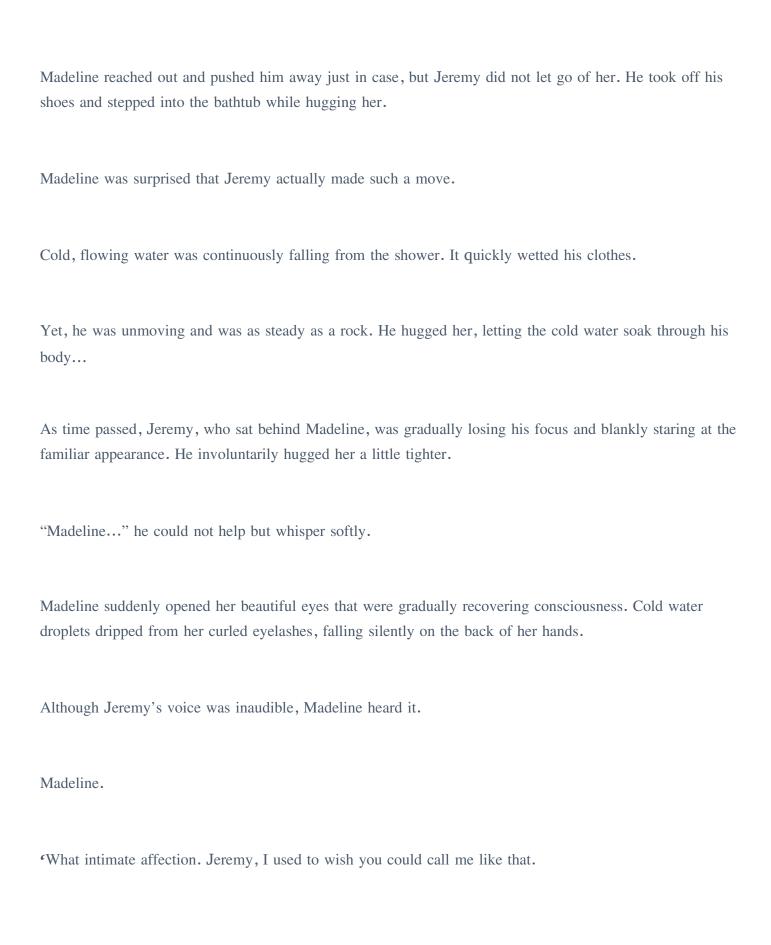
Jeremy glanced at the ever more charming girl in his arms and continued to move forward.

"Quickly put me down! Jeremy, you can't..."

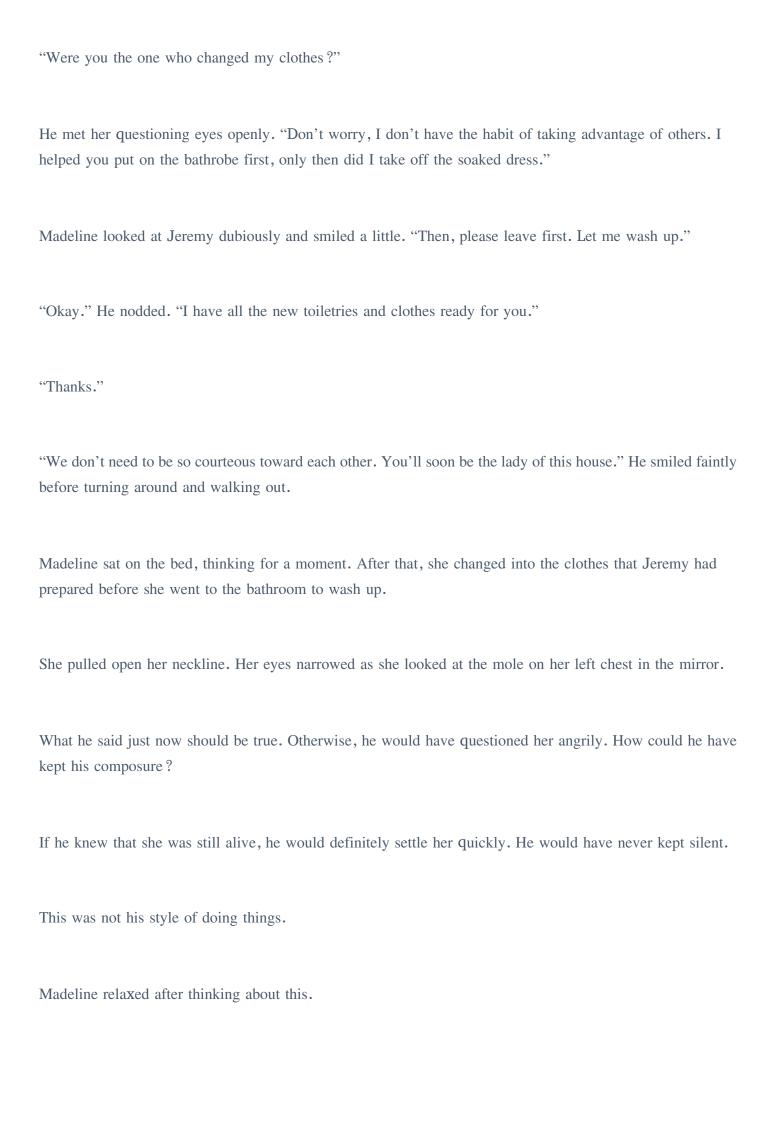












After washing up, Madeline went downstairs and found that breakfast was ready.

The dining hall had already been tidied and cleaned up. There was none of the red wine or dishes that were spilled on the ground from last night.

Jeremy pulled the chair for her chivalrously and both of them sat down facing each other.

He took a sip of milk gracefully. Seeing Madeline eating her breakfast calmly, he opened his mouth slightly and said, "Although I've already tried to avoid the possibility of offending you last night, I still inadvertently saw a mark on a certain part of your body."

Madeline suddenly stopped in the middle of picking up the milk as her heart skipped a beat.

What did he mean? Was he implying that he had actually seen the mole on her chest? Did he know she was his damned ex-wife?

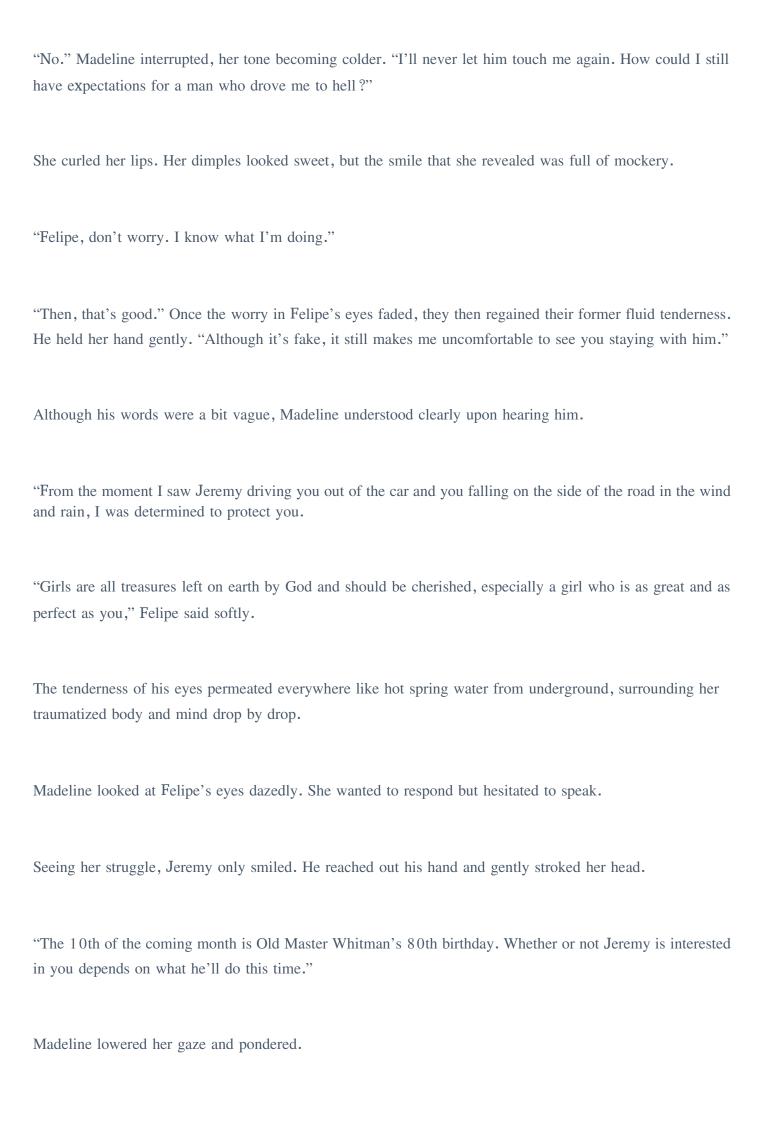
Despite feeling surprised on the inside, Madeline still maintained an elegant and calm smile.
She lifted her picturesque brows and showed a slightly confused expression. "Is there a special mark on my body? How come I don't know of it? So, what did you see?" she asked calmly, but her heartbeat had started to become tense.
His deep black eyes were looking at her own as his lips curled up slightly. "There's a pale pink butterfly at the back of your left waist."
His low, husky voice carried the languidness and casualness of the early morning hours.
"I think it should be a birthmark."
Madeline quietly heaved a sigh of relief upon hearing his answer. She curled her lips and smiled faintly. "It's a birthmark."
"A very special birthmark."
"So what if it's special? I was still abandoned by my biological parents." Madeline lowered her gaze and atcher breakfast quietly.

The morning halo shone through the glass window and scattered on her sweet, elegant face. Her dense

deep in her flowy and beautiful eyes.

eyelashes fluttered gently with the blinking of her eyes. There was an unspeakable sense of loneliness hidden

For some reason, Jeremy could not help but feel a pang of pain in his chest as he watched the woman in front of him looking down silently.
The smile on his face disappeared while his expression became much more solemn. "You said previously that your parents lost you due to their neglect and took in the wrong child. Have you looked for them over the years?"
"I found them," Madeline replied without looking up, "But they much prefer that phony now. As for me"
Madeline laughed a little sarcastically. "As for me, they don't even want to see me, let alone acknowledge me."
There was a long silence after her voice fell.
After breakfast, Jeremy sent Madeline back to her apartment.
Felipe had waited for Madeline all night. Seeing that she was finally back, he quietly let go of the worry in his heart.
Madeline did not tell Felipe that she had been drugged last night, for fear that he would worry.
However, Felipe still noticed that the outfit Madeline was wearing was not the same one she wore when she went out yesterday.
"Did you stay with him all night?" Felipe asked tentatively.
Madeline made an excuse, saying, "I stayed there to piss Meredith off."
"You slept in his room? You two—"



This was an amazing opportunity.
Perhaps, it was about time.
Madeline still had lingering fears thinking of what happened last night.
Fortunately, what Jeremy saw was just the butterfly-shaped birthmark on the back of her waist. If he had seen her chest at that time, her identity would be exposed.

On the other side, Meredith had hired people to keep an eye on Jeremy's villa all night. Knowing that Madeline had been in Jeremy's bedroom all night, the more she thought about it, the angrier she got!

She had gotten rid of Madeline completely after all the trouble three years ago, but who knew there would be a woman who looked so much like Madeline.

The main thing was that this woman was not as easy to deal with as Madeline.

Meredith stood in front of her mirror. Looking at the unhealed scar on her face, she became more upset.

She had almost used up all the methods available, yet Jeremy was instead becoming colder toward her. She also knew that only by continuing to play the role of 'Little Linnie' would it be possible to snatch Jeremy back.

Firstly, she needed to treat the wound on her face.

Madeline was thinking when she suddenly felt a little itch on the back of her left waist. She scratched it a little but realized it was getting itchier, so she took a look in the mirror and found a red patch.

In order to pretend to be Madeline and become the daughter of the Montgomeries in the first place, she had not forgotten to tattoo a fake, butterfly-shaped birthmark on this part of her body.

However, as she had been too impatient back then, she randomly searched for a tattoo shop. Who knew that after only three years, not only had the color faded, but she was also suffering from itchiness due to her allergy.

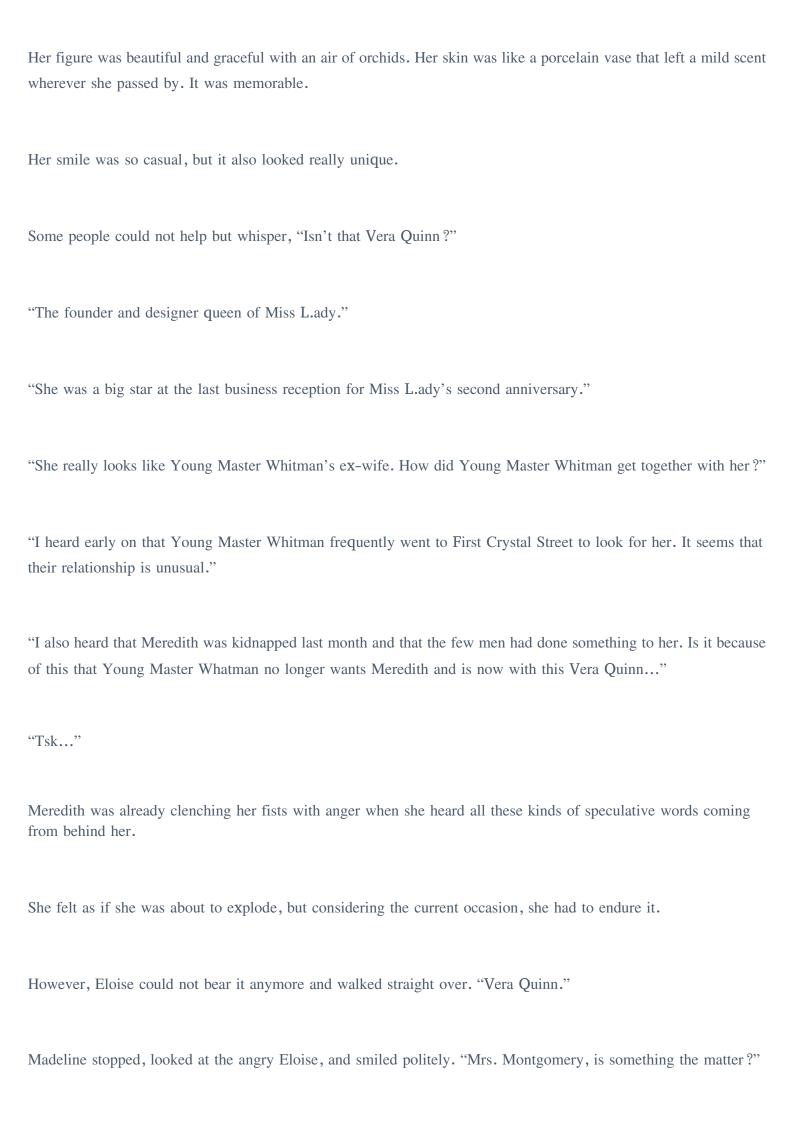
Meredith desperately scratched it in distraught when she suddenly heard the sound of the door opening.
"Meredith, are you in the bathroom?" Eloise's voice was approaching.
Meredith put down her dress hurriedly and came out of the bathroom casually.
"Mom," she called out obediently, but her mood showed dejection.
"Meredith." Eloise patted her shoulder, feeling sorry for her. "Silly girl, don't think about the unhappy things.  Those aren't your fault."
Meredith bit her lip, feeling aggrieved. "That Vera Quinn got so many rascals to bully me but nothing is happening to her. I didn't think Jeremy would not look into this matter just to protect her. The more I think about it, the more heartbroken I am."
"I'll definitely pursue this matter for you!" Eloise assured. "I think Jeremy might just be confused for the moment. Just now, the manager of D.W called me and said that Jeremy went to order an evening dress. The size of the dress is the size you usually wear!"
Meredith was a little surprised upon hearing it. "Jeremy ordered an evening dress for me?"
Eloise smiled cheerfully. "The 10th day of the coming month is Old Master Whitman's 80th birthday. I think Jeremy ordered that dress for you to wear on the day. He wants you to be his companion to the birthday banquet."
"Is it true?" Meredith said with surprise. All her worries and dissatisfaction from before were wiped out in an instant.

Eloise nodded affirmatively. "Of course, it's true. You've also said it before that you've been together with him for so many years now and even given birth to a child for him. He's just been throwing tantrums with you these days, but the person he actually loves most has always been you!"
Listening to these words, Meredith gradually regained her confidence. The more she realized it, the more reasonable she felt it to be.
"So, just be happy these days and take care of your injury first."
Meredith nodded repeatedly with sparkly eyes.
She seemed to be seeing herself wearing the evening dress that Jeremy had personally ordered himself. She imagined walking beside him radiantly and enjoying everyone's envious eyes.
She would never miss the great opportunity to announce her marriage to him when the time came!
Meredith's mood improved a lot. After the scar on her face had scabbed off, she hurriedly went to the beauty salon for a laser treatment. After applying foundation, the scar was basically invisible.
The day before Old Master Whitman's birthday, the service assistant at D.W reported to her that Jeremy had personally picked up the evening dress and it should be given to her today.
Meredith looked at the photo. No matter the design or tailoring, the evening dress had quite a lasting charm. She could not wait to wear it right away.
Meredith waited and waited till it was dark, but Jeremy never contacted her.

She really could not wait any longer, so she called Jeremy, but no one answered.

She went to the villa to look for Jeremy, but he was not there either. Meredith was anxious and annoyed. She had hired people to obtain Jeremy's whereabouts, but nothing could be found. Early the next morning, Meredith put on heavy makeup with dark circles under her eyes and went to Whitman Manor with Eloise. Many guests had already entered the yard one after another, talking and laughing with each other. The atmosphere was harmonious. Meredith looked around, but she still did not see Jeremy. Seeing Mrs. Whitman coming out, she immediately ran over to ask her. Mrs. Whitman saw her and was a little confused. "Jeremy called in the morning and said that he'd be bringing an important girl to meet his parents. I thought he was joking around and actually talking about you. But then, how could it be that he wasn't talking about you? Then, who is Jeremy bringing?" Mrs. Whitman was puzzled and so was Eloise. Meredith's expression changed instantly. She had a bad feeling all of a sudden. As she was being apprehensive, there was movement at the gate. She looked up subconsciously, her eyes about to pop out the instant she saw the scene not far away. Her raging anger shot up to her throat!

Jeremy was dressed in a well-tailored black suit, his tall and stylish figure perfectly outlined.
His countenance was golden while his noble and elegant temperament was revealed in his gestures.
It was this side of Jeremy that Meredith had wanted to seize when she first saw him!
She had seized him with conspiracy and tricks for many years, but she did not expect this perfect man to be holding another woman's hand today.
Meredith angrily looked at Vera who was walking beside Jeremy. What was even more unacceptable was that she had thought that the evening dress Vera was wearing was one that Jeremy ordered for her, but it turned out that he bought it for Vera!
She had been looking forward to it for so long for naught!
In the end, reality hit her with a resounding slap!
Jeremy had always been a shining spot in the crowd. The guests in the garden noticed his appearance, and at the same time, they saw Madeline who was next to him arm in arm.
The woman in their eyes was not that devastatingly beautiful, but their eyes were still drawn to her involuntarily.
The dress was beautiful, but when worn on Madeline's body, it was just a foil.





"Mom, Mom, are you okay?" she said worriedly, tears coming to her eyes as she said, "Mom, forget it. Don't worry about me anymore. I'm the one who is no longer in a relationship with Jeremy, so just let him and Miss Vera be together. It's enough that I get hurt. I don't want you to get hurt too."

Eloise had always been willing to do anything for her daughter, but she felt even more distressed when Meredith said this.
"Meredith, don't worry. Your mother will never allow you to be bullied so simply! I want everyone here toda to take a clear look at Young Master Whitman who's the richest and most powerful man in Glendale but trul an indifferent scumbag. And this one named Vera Quinn who's also a despicable and shameless vixen!"
Gasp!
The guests were all shocked to hear Eloise's words.
Hearing this, it seemed that Vera Quinn was meddling in between Jeremy and Meredith's relationship, causing Meredith to be abandoned.
"Mom, don't say it, don't say it! It's all my fault. It has nothing to do with Jeremy and Miss Vera. Let's go! Meredith burst into tears, her weak and weeping appearance looking pitiful.
Many people had begun to side with her. After all, they knew little about the history of the relationship between Meredith and Jeremy while Vera looked like a third party.
Most of the guests gradually felt distressed for Meredith and cast their contempt and disgust at Madeline.

"Are you all right?" He raised his hand and brushed her cheek lightly with his fingers.

concern.

Jeremy observed the change in the atmosphere around him. He looked back, looking at Madeline with

Madeline smiled gracefully and calmly. "How could I not be fine just because of this slap? I'm not that weak." She smiled, looking at Eloise and Meredith, and at the same time, feeling the others' contemptuous gazes on her whole body.

"Mrs. Montgomery, everyone has to be responsible for what they do and say. You've hit me in front of so many people for no reason and you also called me as a vixen. Shouldn't you give a reasonable explanation?"

She smiled lightly, her proud eyes sweeping across the hostile and questioning eyes around her while her tone changed. "The most annoying thing in my life has been being accused wrongly."

She uttered the last few words very profoundly.

"Accused wrongly?" Eloise smiled contemptuously. "Have I wronged you? You are a vixen! And you're cruel, mean, and shameless!"

"Mom, don't speak anymore. Let's go. We really can't afford to provoke this young lady. I don't want to suffer from a disaster like before. When I close my eyes now and think of it, they had each bullied me one by one. I'm so sad..." Meredith cried and stopped in her speech, but she was smiling in her heart while hoping that Eloise would continue to make things worse.

Eloise became even more distressed and hugged Meredith tightly, patting her back and comforting her.

Hearing Meredith's words that were laced with implication, the people around them began to feel dissatisfied.

"It seems that the previous rumors about Meredith being bullied by several men by turns were true. If that's the case, then she is really miserable."

"Listen to Meredith's implication. Did Vera ask someone to do it?"

"It must be. I didn't expect this Vera to have the beauty of a goddess but a poisonous heart. She is really vicious!"

"Not to mention how Young Master Whitman would abandon Meredith for this kind of woman."

There was a lot of discussion going around. Meredith leaned in Eloise's arms and cried while laughing secretly. She was going to ruin Vera here today! She was going to take her revenge!

However, at this moment, she felt a cold current around her.

"I've said not to mention the matter again. Why are you still bringing it up on this occasion?" Jeremy's voice reached her ears coldly.

Meredith's heart trembled and she was a little scared.

"Jeremy, are you blaming Meredith? How can you actually say this? Things have already reached this point and yet you still defend this vixen! If it wasn't for the vixen's plan, how could Meredith have been bullied? Meredith is obviously a victim. Not only do you not feel sorry for her and refuse to seek justice for her, but you're still protecting this witch!"

Eloise glared at Jeremy angrily, disappointment and resentment clear in her gaze.

"What a waste of Meredith's love for you! Jeremy, where is your conscience?"

Jeremy's brows furrowed. His handsome face was already covered with frost and there was a stream of coldness shooting out from his eyes. "This matter has nothing to do with Vera, so don't put any unnecessary charges on her head," he spoke with a cold tone. Glancing at Meredith who was full of grievances and tears, he suppressed the anger in his heart.

"I'll say it again, this matter ends here. No one is allowed to mention it again."

"Jeremy, what are you doing? How can you treat Meredith like this? This vixen really instigated the matter, so how can I just let it go? I'll call the police and have her arrested now! I'll let her pay the tragic price!"
Mrs. Whitman rushed forward, defending Meredith righteously. "Vera, you can't just forget it!"
"Yes, you really can't do that."

After a long silence, Madeline opened her mouth. She met those scornful eyes and looked at Jeremy distressedly.

"Jeremy, I really don't want so many people to be fooled by Meredith and I don't want you to be accused of being a scumbag because of a woman like her, so I'll have to violate my agreement with you and speak the truth of this matter."



"Jeremy, listen to this. Up to this point, Meredith still cares about you, but you!" Eloise hugged Meredith distressedly while fiercely shooting an accusatory gaze at Jeremy and Madeline. "For this vixen, you've allowed Meredith to be wrongly accused and haven't even shown any concern for her. You're not worthy of my daughter at all!"

"Jeremy, our future relatives are right. In any case, you can't ignore Meredith. This matter must be investigated to the end!"

Mrs. Whitman seemed to be siding with Meredith.

On the other hand, Meredith cried whilst becoming more excited at this moment. "Mrs. Whitman, Mom, it's enough that you both support me. Although I'm a victim, I really don't intend to pursue this."

Meredith swallowed twice and looked at Madeline.

"Miss Vera, the fault is mine. I made you unhappy. I was unlucky for what happened before. I won't pursue this, so I also hope that you don't anger my mother. Please..."

She cried, then looked at Jeremy again. "Jeremy, it's my fault. It's all my fault. Please don't be angry with me. I promise you, I'll never mention it again. Please don't get angry with me, alright?"

With her humble request, her tears sparkled in her eyes as her appearance at the moment was as desolate as she was.

If it were not for Meredith's true colors which she had already seen through, Madeline felt that she would become like the people around her—impressed by Meredith's acting skills.

"Meredith, you're in the right, so why did you apologize?" Eloise tried her best to defend her. "They are the ones who are wrong. You're the victim!"



She looked at the guests around her with pitiful tears.	

"I know all of you heard that I was kidnapped a while ago. Yes, I was kidnapped and humiliated by a few men. The mastermind of this incident is this Miss Vera Quinn. I didn't want to look into this initially, but she has now turned the tables and is slandering me like this. I really can't bear it."
Meredith bit her lip and pointed at Madeline quickly.
"Vera Quinn, I want to denounce you!"
As her voice fell, the guests unanimously chose to stand on Meredith's side.
"Miss Crawford, we all support you."
"Vera Quinn, you're so damnable!"
"Miss Meredith, don't worry. All of us here support you in denouncing this woman!"
"Vera Quinn, with your character, don't think that we will ever patronize Miss L.ady again in the future. I believe it will not be long before Miss L.ady will go bankrupt!"
"Shut up all of you!"
In the crowd, a cold voice struck out strongly and violently, interrupting the angry words that were being thrown at Madeline.

Everyone could not help but be stunned. They raised their eyes to see the expression and gaze of Jeremy who was next to Madeline at the moment.

Jeremy was standing beside Madeline, his sharp and treacherous eyes like a sharp sword that was sweeping coldly past those people who were against Madeline before finally falling on Meredith's tearful face.

Meredith's heart started to beat violently all of a sudden as her breathing became tense.

"Why do you have to humiliate yourself? I said before not to mention it anymore yet you still want to expose those scars again and again on such occasions."

"Jeremy, I didn't. I was forced. I don't want the person who harmed me to continue to get away with it." Meredith explained, feeling aggrieved. "Alright, I won't talk about it anymore. I won't speak of it again and I won't pursue it anymore."

She emphasized this, but internally, of course she did not actually want anyone to really pursue this matter either.

If they really were to look into it, they would only find out the truth of her being the mastermind behind the scenes.

"How can we not pursue it? Of course we must investigate it to the end!" Eloise said resolutely.

Jeremy sneered, his chilly eyes making Meredith more flustered. She deliberately pulled on Eloise's hand. "Mom, forget it. I don't want to pursue it—"

"Do you think it's still possible at this point not to do so? It's impossible." Jeremy interrupted coldly. He looked over at Meredith with that insipid gaze from head to toe till she felt chills all over.

"Seeing that we're in the presence of acquaintances, I never planned on speaking the truth about this matter I don't care what outsiders may think or say about me," Jeremy said as he glanced at Madeline.
"But you shouldn't point your fingers at the person I care about." He paused before glancing at Meredith with disappointed eyes. "Neither can you."
"" Meredith's face turned pale for a moment, and she was completely panicking! "Jeremy—"
"I have investigated this matter clearly and the police have explained the situation to me early this morning. The four prisoners have already confessed to you instructing them to kidnap Vera, but later on, it was because you had refused to pay that the four b*stards became angry and dealt you the humiliation."
"" Meredith's face became pale as she became more embarrassed. She did not expect Jeremy to already know of it!
Eloise listened with shock as she shook her head again and again. "Impossible! Meredith is the victim!"
"She's the perpetrator," Jeremy answered affirmatively without hesitation, "Vera is the real victim. I asked Vera not to pursue this matter to save your daughter's reputation."
"" Eloise was tongue-tied and speechless. "How could this be possible? Why would Meredith do this? No"
"Mom, please believe me. Of course, I wouldn't do this!" Meredith struggled to quibble. "Jeremy, you've been deceived by Vera. She must've bought off those four people! If it really was me, the police would have come to arrest me long ago but they have no evidence to prove that I did it!"

"Do you want evidence? The evidence is here."

Madeline spoke unhurriedly as she took out her mobile phone and showed a phone number on the screen.
Everyone looked over, and Meredith was stunned when she saw a string of numbers displayed on the screen.
She did not understand it at first, but after watching for a few seconds, her face went green as her eyes flickered.
Seeing her panicking and shirking, Madeline smiled comfortably.
"Miss Crawford, why aren't you speaking? Do you find this number familiar? Of course, you're familiar with it, because this is your foster mother, Rose Tanner's, phone number."
Madeline smiled and walked gracefully to Meredith. Her elegant and proud temperament had crushed Meredith in seconds.
"Miss Crawford, you're indeed very smart. You were afraid that if the incident was exposed, you would draw fire to yourself, so you used your foster mother's mobile phone to contact the four hoodlums. Now, the phone still retains the call records from the time. Even if they've been cleared, one can just go to the telecommunications company to check the records and it'll be clear at a glance.
"Oh, there's one more thing. Those hoodlums also have the habit of recording every time they make a transaction. So, do you want me to play the recording now for everyone present?"
"" Meredith widened her eyes in shock, her face looking pale.

The guests who had just said they would support Meredith in denouncing Madeline were already staring at her

angrily.

Who would have thought that plot would reverse like this!
They had said they wanted to support Meredith, but this was really a slap in the face. They had almost wronged the innocent.
Madeline looked at the scene around her with satisfaction and chuckled. "Meredith, do you still dare say that you're the victim?"
"
"For the sake of your relationship, Jeremy was willing to sacrifice his friend, me, by wanting to help you. But you just don't know what's good or bad for you. You just had to unite with your good mother to condemn me and Jeremy on such an occasion. Are you satisfied with the result?"
As Madeline spoke, she looked at Eloise and Mrs. Whitman who looked embarrassed and shocked.
"Mrs. Montgomery, Mrs. Whitman, what now? Do you still want to look into this? Do you want to call the police? Or do you want me to call the police for you?"
«
"
Meredith never expected things to develop like this.
She pressed her lips together as she stared at Madeline fiercely with her eyes.  Feeling the suspicious and angry gazes around her, Meredith was panicking, but she did not know how to step down.
"Young Master Whitman, Miss Vera, please don't accuse Meredith. She's innocent!"

Suddenly, Rose emerged from who knew where.
She cried and ran over to Madeline while kneeling down. She pulled on Madeline's long skirt with both hands.
"I did it all, I did it all. It has nothing to do with Meredith. She doesn't know anything!"
Rose was crying, still clutching onto Madeline's skirt desperately.
The skirt was a one-shoulder and it was pulled on by Rose until it had almost fallen off.
Madeline subconsciously covered her chest with her handbag and said coldly, "Let go."
However, Rose did not listen and kept crying. "Miss Vera, if you have to blame someone, blame me. It was all my own idea. I hired the four hoodlums to kidnap you! Meredith wanted to stop me and that's why she went to the waste paper factory. I'm the one who harmed you and also Meredith. If you want to blame someone, please blame me!"
While Rose was crying, she gave Madeline's dress a vehement tug. With a swish, Rose tore down Madeline's skirt.
Jeremy took off his suit jacket with lightning speed and put it over Madeline's body.
His cold, dark eyes pierced through Rose. "Did you not hear her when she told you to let go? Get lost."
Jeremy kicked Rose's hand away unhappily, and in the next second, he hugged Madeline in front of everyone.
Meredith watched this scene in shock, unable to believe that Jeremy was treating Vera like this.

How could this be tolerated?

He had never gotten so angry in front of others before, but today, he did it for Vera. He was breaking his usually regal and noble visage.
"Jeremy, you heard what Rose said. Meredith is the victim. She's innocent!" Eloise suddenly emphasized. She would rather believe Rose's explanation than Meredith's despicableness.
"Aren't you going to hurry up and let go of that woman? Where is Meredith's place in this?"
Of course, Jeremy would not let Madeline go. Instead, he hugged her even tighter and glanced at the woma in his arms softly.
"I will never let go of this woman in my life. As for your daughter, I've already canceled my engagement wit her. Don't make me repeat it."
As Jeremy spoke with such a leisurely tone, he hugged Madeline and turned directly into the house.
Eloise watched this scene dumbly, gritting her teeth with anger.
This scene was so offending, hateful, and embarrassing for Meredith!
Jeremy had completely denied their marriage in front of so many people, even publicly announcing his determination for Vera.

Jeremy hugged Madeline as they went directly to his room here. Although he rarely came back to live here, there was always someone who cleaned the room. Madeline smelled a familiar fragrance as soon as she entered. It was the aromatherapy kit she had personally blended. It had the effect of calming and aiding with sleep. Mr. Whitman had gotten someone to buy two boxes for Jeremy as he experienced problems sleeping. Madeline put on her dress again in the bathroom. When she returned to the bedroom, she saw Jeremy standing in front of the windowsill. He was wearing a clean and pressed white shirt. The warm autumn sun was shining on his handsome face. His quiet appearance at the moment reminded her of the first time she had seen him in college. However, he was no longer the man of the past. "Do you blame me for what transpired just now?" Madeline walked behind him, saying with difficulty. Jeremy turned his head. His alluring, slender eyes were softened by the autumn wind. "Perhaps I shouldn't have allowed you to suffer this grievance from the beginning. Otherwise, there would've been no such thing as what happened just now." Madeline smiled. "What are you saying? That you feel bad for me?" The man looked at her eyes deeply. "Didn't you feel sorry for me just now as well?" His voice was very low and the magnetic sound slipped into her ears in an ambiguous manner.

Looking at her picturesque face in the sun, Jeremy could not help but stretch out his hand and brush his fingertips across the corners of her eyebrows. The person in front of him was Vera, but as he looked into her eyes and deep into his heart, it was completely Madeline. "I've stated my position just now. Do you have anything you want to say to me now?" Madeline smiled as she looked at him. "Do you really want to marry me?" "Are you willing to now?" he asked, his gaze looking lost. She smiled and shook her head slightly. "I won't marry a man who doesn't love me." Jeremy got back to his sense and the smile between his eyebrows disappeared. "Will you still marry Felipe?" "Have you forgotten about the good news that I wanted to tell you the other day? The good news is that my marriage with Felipe has been canceled."

Jeremy's sword-like eyebrows scrunched. "If you're not marrying Felipe and you don't want to marry me, what exactly are you planning?"

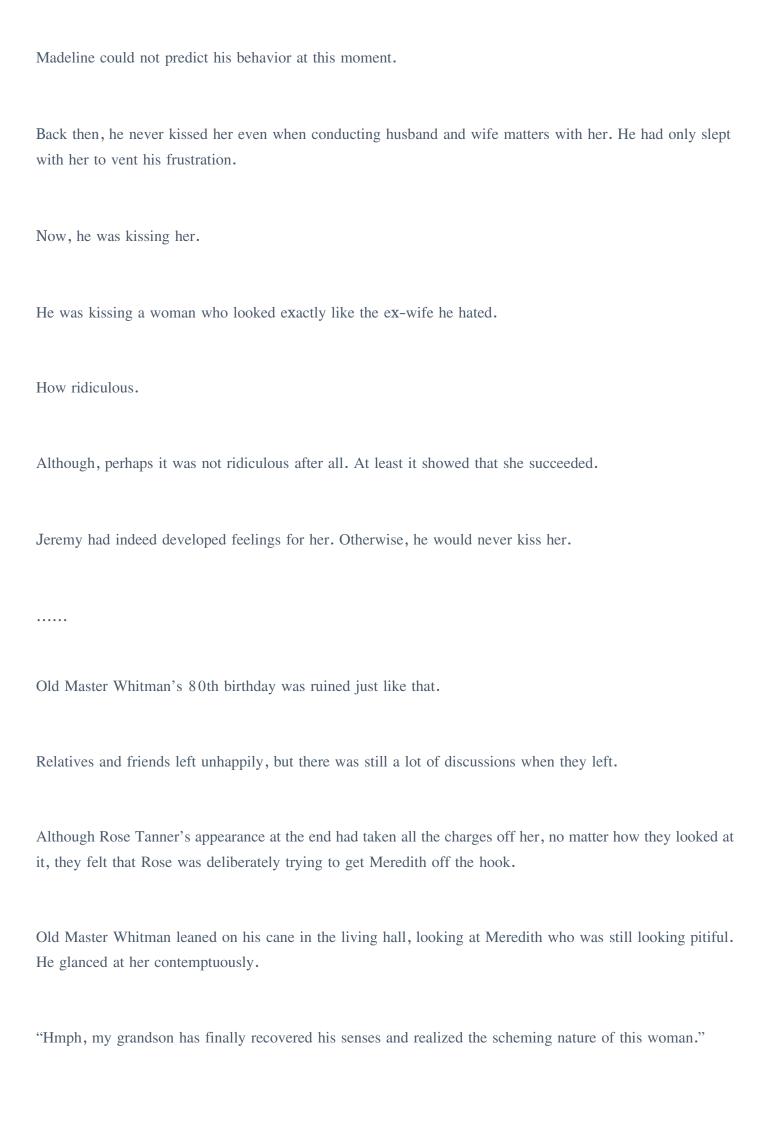
Madeline smiled with her eyebrows curved. In the corner of her vision, she caught a glimpse of a figure who was standing in the corner of the yard. She smiled and stretched out her hand to grab Jeremy's slightly loose tie. Lifting up her beautiful face, her smile was bright and spirited. "I'm thinking if it's because I grew up to look the same as Madeline which is why I'm also destined to fall in love with the same man as her."

Her soft voice fell into his heart gently like cotton.

Jeremy's eyes lit up. As he looked into those beautiful eyes that were as clear as water, his heartbeat sped up a little unconsciously. "Vera, are you really in love with me?"

Madeline pursed her lips and smiled, her intoxicating dimples blooming on the sides of her lips.
"Don't you want me to fall in love with you? The truth is, you still love Meredith, right?" She pulled on his necktie with a hint of grievance in her eyes. "If this is the case, I'll leave now and never see you again."
Madeline pretended to be disappointed and let go of Jeremy's necktie.
As soon as his neckline was loosened, Jeremy felt the warmth flowing away from his heart.
Seeing her turning around with disappointment in front of his eyes, he froze in a trance. It felt as if his hear was suddenly stabbed by an invisible needle.
"Don't go."
Jeremy grabbed Madeline's wrist.
Madeline, who had not taken more than a step, stopped abruptly. At the back where Jeremy could not see, she quietly raised a triumphant smile.
It was just that she had not even enjoyed this victory for more than a few seconds before Jeremy suddenly used his force to bring her into his arms.
Madeline crashed into his chest unexpectedly. The familiar fragrance quickly surrounded her breath.

She used to like the smell on him and even longed to hug him to sleep every night. However, she had waited and waited until her heart sank like a stone. It was a hopeless ending
Madeline curled her lips and laughed in mockery before looking up.
She did not expect Jeremy to be looking down at her. Madeline was a little perplexed when she inadvertently met his eyes that were as deep and blurry as the night.
She realized that Jeremy was looking at her very affectionately. Having seen his cold and ruthless appearance, his appearance at this moment made her feel lightheaded.
However, she noticed that the figure was still in the corner by the wall downstairs, looking at Jeremy and her.
She subconsciously thought that it was Meredith.
Only she would do such a sneaky thing.
She felt something cold on her cheek as she was thinking. It was Jeremy stroking her face.
Before she could react, she saw Jeremy's handsome face inching closer toward her. Suddenly, he pressed his lips onto hers in the next second.
····
Madeline suddenly clenched her fists, wanting to push him away. She wanted to resist but thinking of Meredith who was peeping at them, she forced herself to endure it.
He could have said that he was drunk the other day, but now, Jeremy had not drunk at all but still kissed her all of a sudden.



Meredith was taken aback. She understood that Old Master Whitman was calling her a two-faced bitch.
She gritted her teeth secretly, but her face was full of innocence.

"Old Master Whitman, I know you have a deep misunderstanding toward me, but"
"There's no need to explain anything to me. You know very well what you've done."
"" Meredith was speechless.
Just then, Rose knelt down in front of Old Master Whitman with a plop. "Old Master Whitman, I did it all omy own. Meredith didn't know about it at all. When she knew, she deliberately ran over to stop me. That's why Meredith got into the accident. It was me. I was the one who caused Meredith trouble."
She blamed herself whilst in tears.
"Old Master Whitman, if you want someone to blame, blame me. It doesn't matter even if you send me to the police station, but Meredith is a good girl. I really don't want Jeremy to misunderstand her. She has already suffered so much. Jeremy shouldn't break her heart this time."
"In fact, all of these mistakes are Vera Quinn's fault!" Eloise pushed all the blame onto Madeline.
However, as soon as her voice fell, two intimate figures appeared by the stairs. Madeline's sweet voice sounded leisurely.
"Mrs. Montgomery, you're really a good mother. The facts and evidence have all been displayed clearly in front of you, yet you still want to deceive yourself and defend your good daughter who's two-faced."

Eloise's expression changed upon hearing this. Looking up to see Madeline walking beside Jeremy with a bright smile, she was angrier.

"Vera Quinn, if it isn't for you, a third party who's trying to steal Meredith's fiancé, why would her foster mother hire people to kidnap you? It's all because of you that Meredith had the accident. You really are despicable!"

"Despicable?" Madeline chuckled and walked toward Eloise. "On the contrary, I think Mrs. Montgomery is very pitiful."

"What... What did you say? I'm pitiful?" Eloise's eyes widened while her face, contorted by anger, no longer looked noble.

"Vera, whatever you want to do, do it to me. Don't hurt my mom." Meredith hurriedly went up to protect Eloise, putting on a good show to match her good daughter persona.

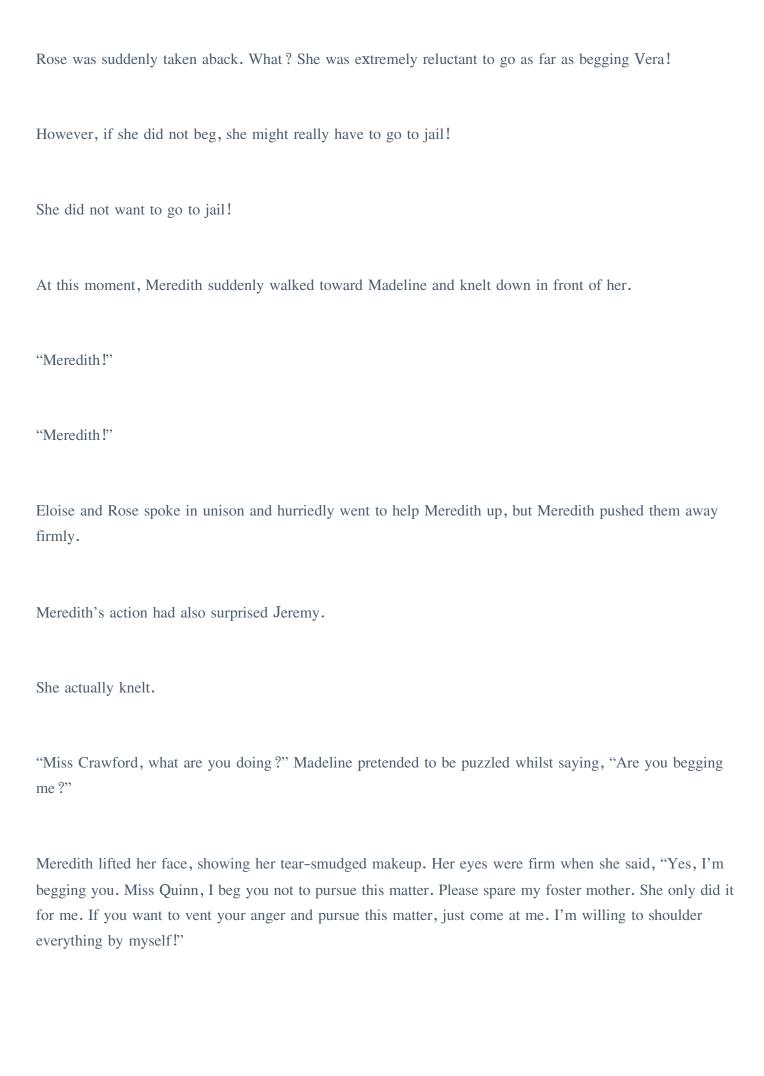
She quickly turned her weak gaze to Jeremy.

"Jeremy, I know you'll never believe me no matter how I explain it, so just assume that it's me. Please don't blame my mom. She did it for me too."

Meredith begged for mercy on behalf of Rose while Rose slapped herself twice, seemingly regretful. "Meredith, I've caused you trouble. Jeremy, you have to believe in Meredith. She has been kind-hearted since she was a child and has never done anything immoral. She—"

"Shut up." Jeremy interrupted out of annoyance. He lifted his handsome but unfeeling face to look at Meredith. "I've told you not to mention this matter again. It's your own fault that it escalated to this now. You don't need to beg me. If you want to beg, then beg Vera. Whether or not we're looking into it all depends on her."

Hearing this, Meredith's expression froze and her eyes were almost overflowing with unwillingness.



"Gee." Madeline sighed emotionally. "Miss Crawford, you really are filial. Your foster mother has led you to be humiliated by several men, yet at this moment, you're still willing to kneel down and beg me on her behalf. I'm really touched."

When Meredith heard this, happiness suddenly appeared on her face. Presumably, these people should also think that she was a loving and filial daughter.

She suddenly felt so smart. Not only would Rose not go to jail, but she had also sold a good persona.

"Then, does it mean you won't pursue it anymore, Miss Quinn?" Meredith could not wait to ask.

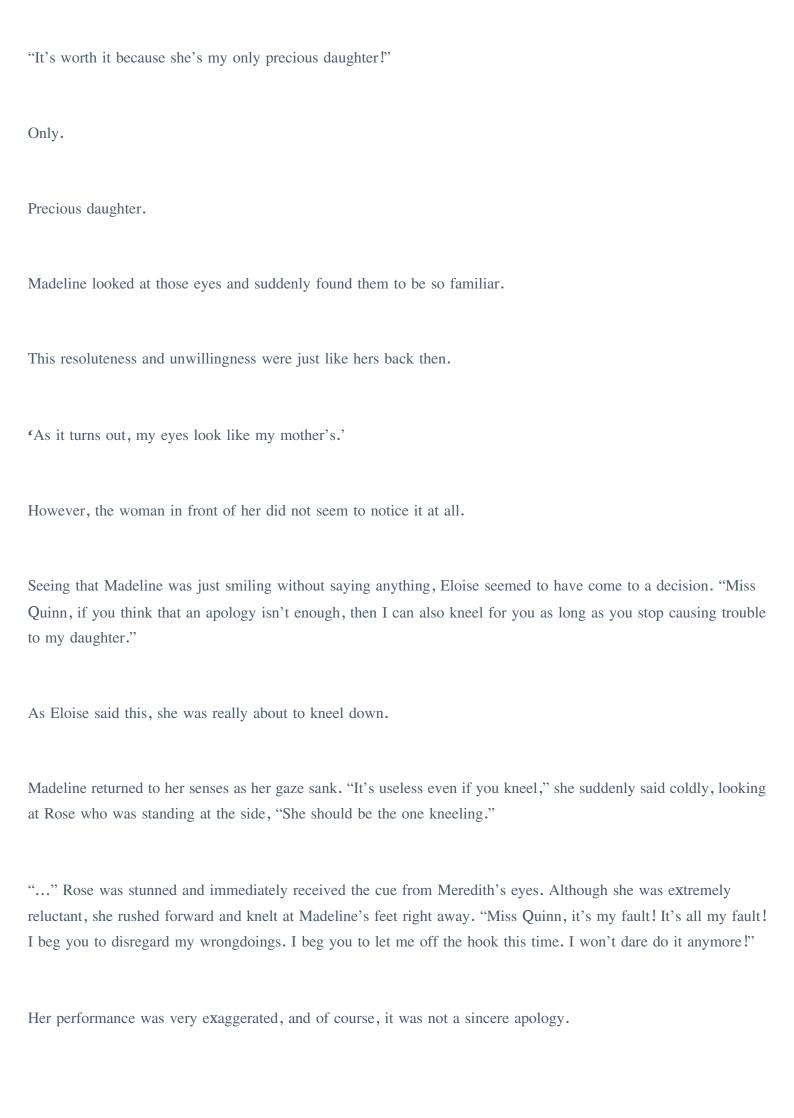
Madeline nodded with a deep smile. "Since you're so righteous, Miss Crawford, then I'll help you. I won't pursue your foster mother. You'll shoulder this matter by yourself!"

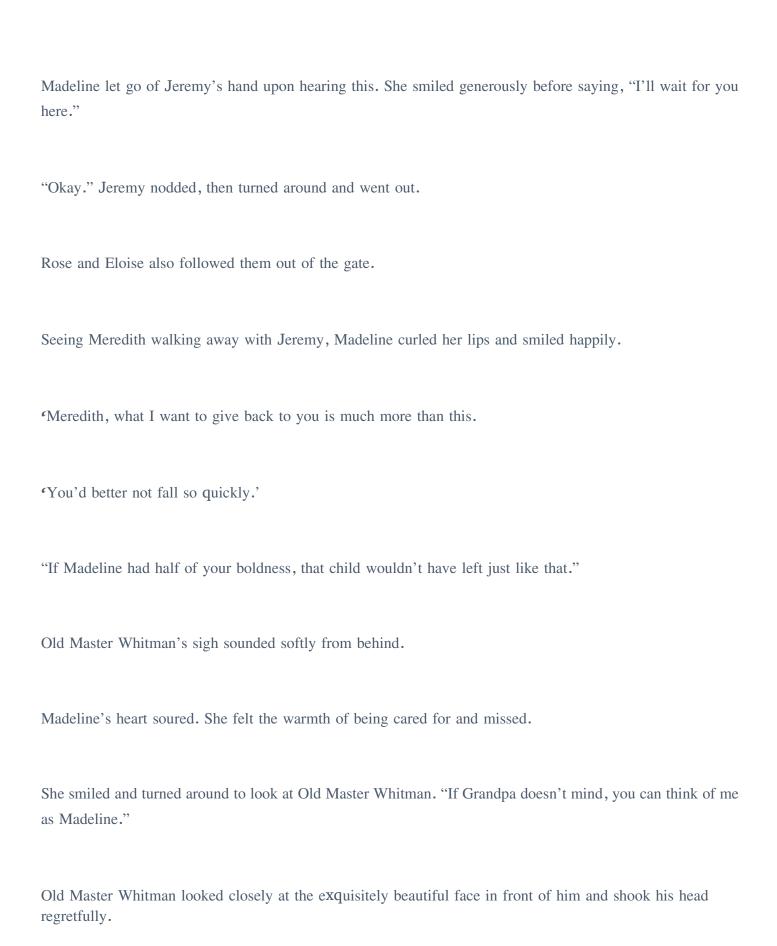
Following Madeline's words, the smile on Meredith's expression suddenly cracked. Her entire face became completely stiff.
What?
Did she hear wrongly? What was Vera talking about?
She just wanted to pretend and play a loving, righteous role in front of Jeremy and Old Master Whitman. She did not want to bear the blame on Rose's behalf!
She was just pretending!
Rose and Eloise were also dumbfounded. They did not expect Vera to be a ruthless character.
Seeing Meredith's surprised expression, Madeline smiled leisurely at Jeremy. "Jeremy, in that case, you can accompany me to the police station now."
Jeremy glanced at Meredith who was kneeling on the ground with a complicated look and nodded lightly. "Okay, I'll accompany you."
Madeline smiled happily and stretched out her hand to hold Jeremy's arm. Her arrogant, beautiful eyes swept across Meredith who was still kneeling by her feet.

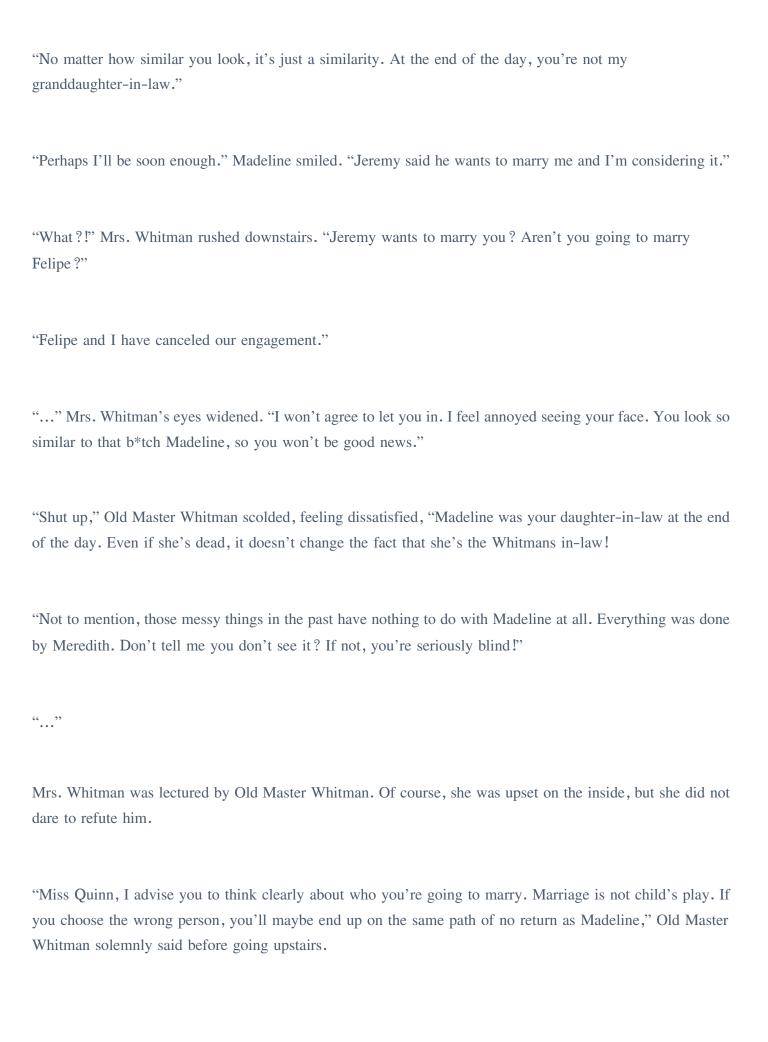
"Kidnapping for extortion, intention to harm others... If sentenced for these crimes, it should garner a few years in

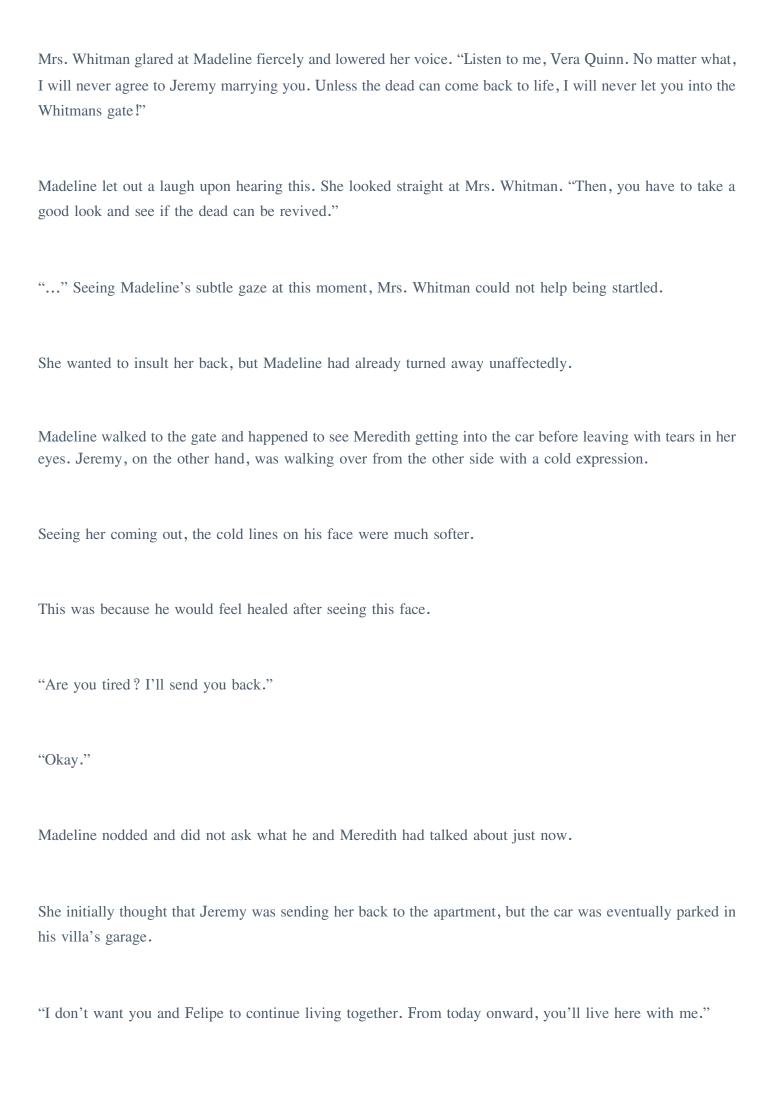
prison, am I right? Miss Crawford, you must have never gone to jail before, right? Then, you can go in and







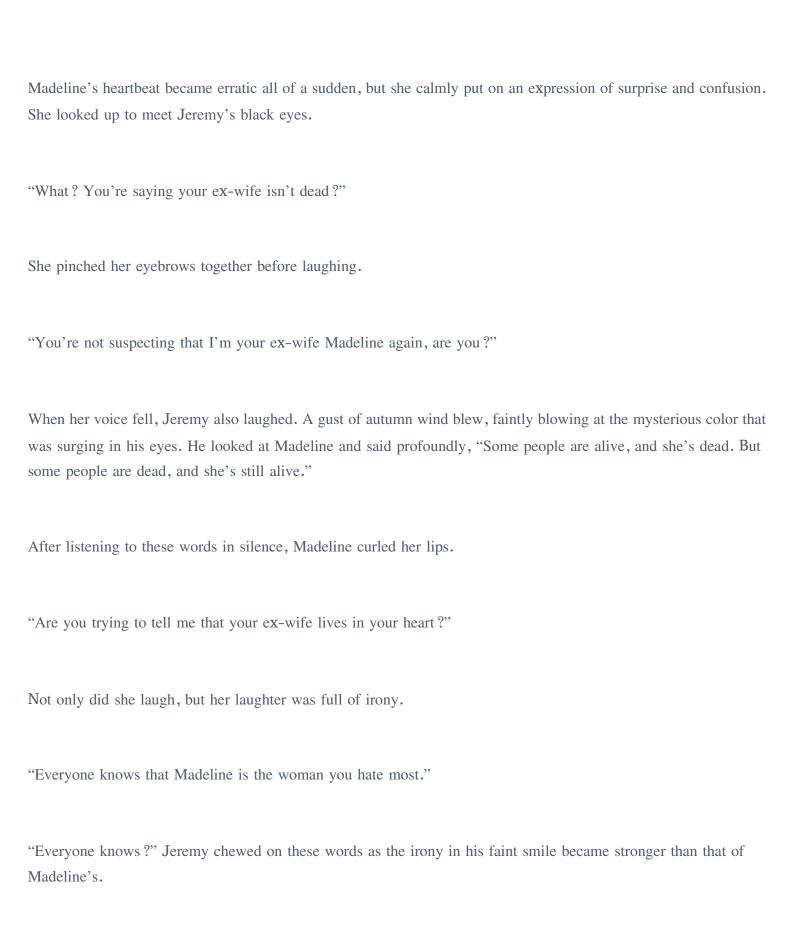


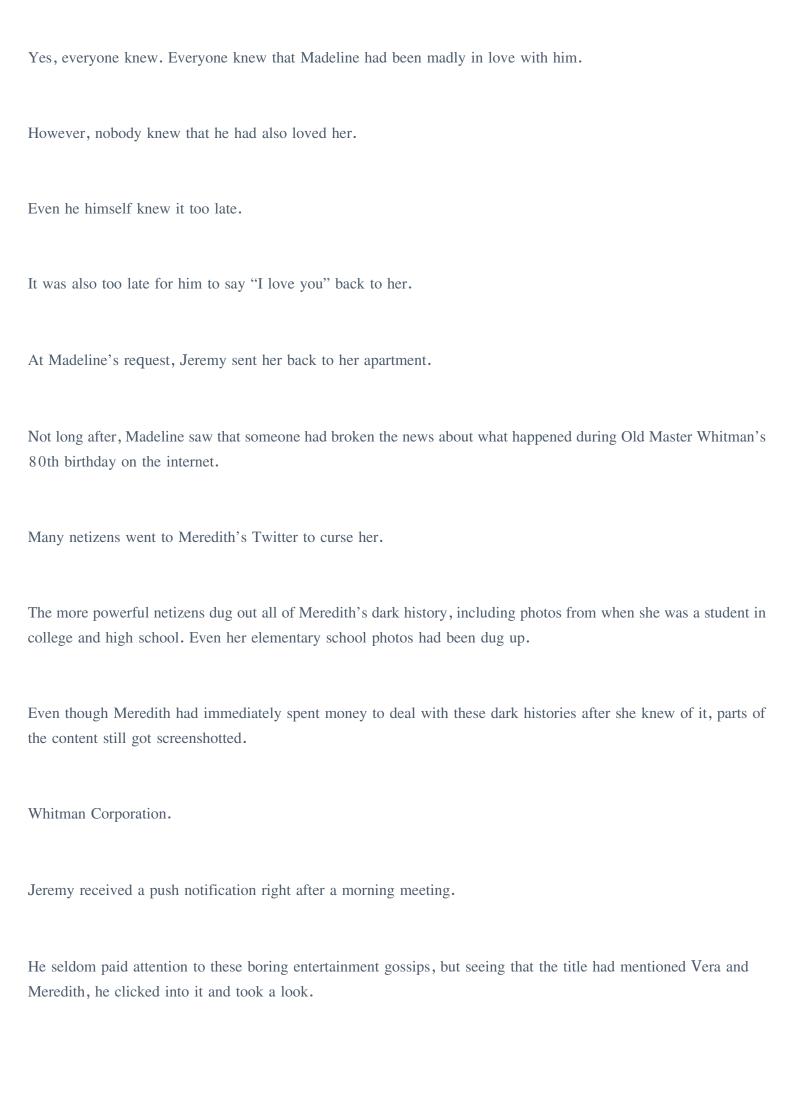


Madeline leaned against the car. She glanced at the villa and pretended to be disgusted.

"This is your and your ex-wife's house. If you sincerely want to marry me, shouldn't you prepare a new house? I don't want to live in a house where someone has died."

Upon hearing the word 'died', Jeremy knitted his eyebrows. He suddenly stared deeply at Madeline. "She's not dead."





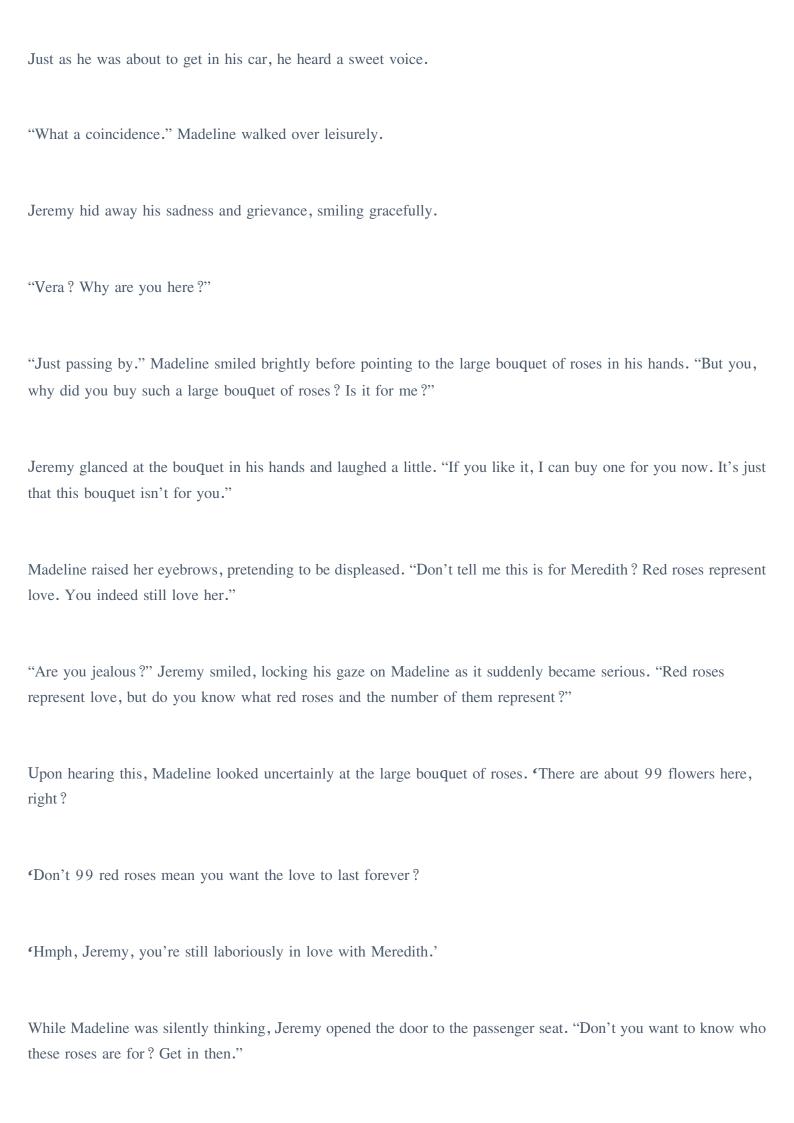
He saw the photos of Meredith when she was a student, one of which was taken with him.
However, other than the photos with him, there were also a few photos of Meredith with other men. Two of which were intimate photos of her and Tanner Long.
In the photos, Meredith and Tanner were very close. There was even one of Meredith kissing Tanner's cheek.
Jeremy was stunned when he saw that photo.
A burst of physical disgust that was accompanied by shock arose.
His finger quivered as his thoughts were suddenly pulled to a faraway place
It was raining heavily that day. She was sitting in his car, telling him that Meredith had actually dated Tanner and that Meredith had a baby with him.
She also said that Meredith was not carrying his child at all and that her miscarriage was just an act plotted by herself.
Yet, at that time, he had strangled her neck and warned her not to slander Meredith again.
He still remembered that at the time, she did not even struggle at all but merely smiled with tears in her eyes before saying to him, "Jeremy Whitman, if I told half a lie, then I might as well die."
He cursed her mercilessly in response, saying, "Then go and die."
In the end, he chased her out of the car and drove away, leaving her in the heavy rain, letting the wind blow and the rain fall

After that, she really died.
He regretted it.
Jeremy opened his sore, red eyes, which were now on the brink of tears.
The heavy rain from that day seemed to be falling in his heart at this moment, drowning his heartbeat.
He laughed at himself and felt that both Madeline and Ava were right. He was deaf and blind.

Whitman Corporation's board of directors."

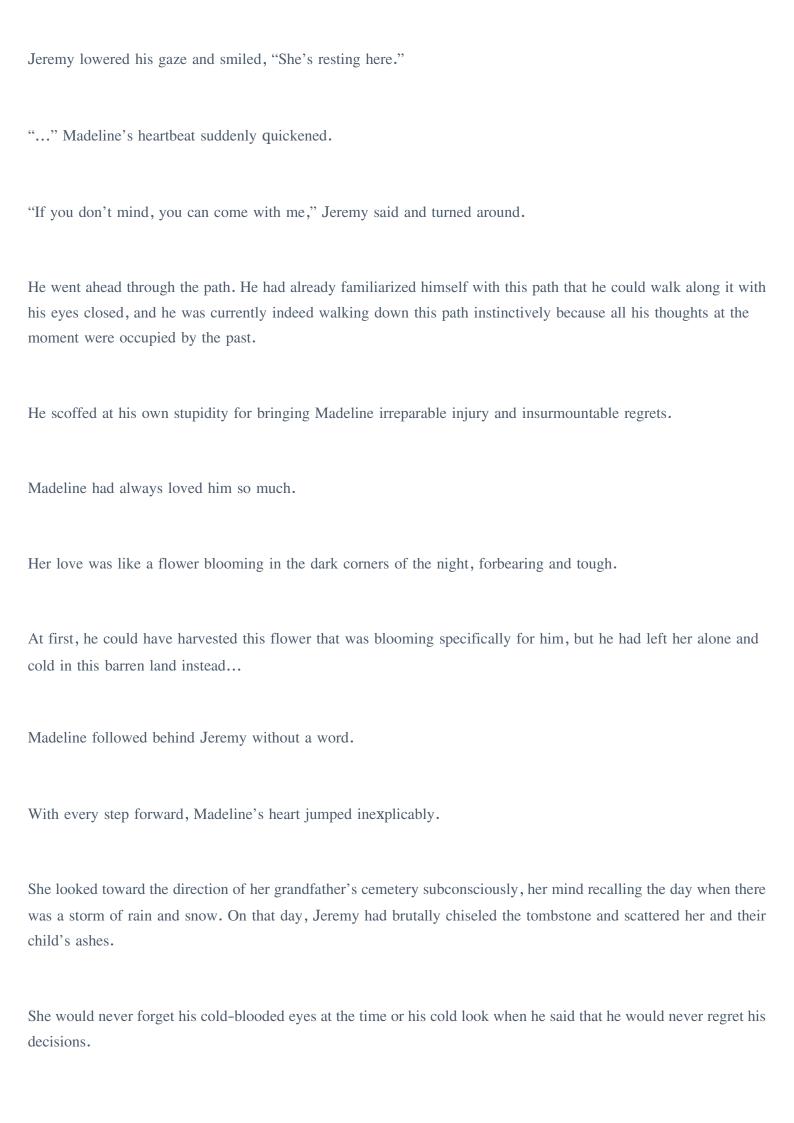
Just because of a promise made when he was young, he protected a woman who had long gone bad like a fool. Meanwhile, he cut the flesh off the woman he loved piece by piece.
Jeremy picked up his phone again and saw the contents on the screen. There was a post that had photos of Mereditle from when she was a child.
When he and Meredith reunited, he had asked to see photos of her from her childhood days. However, Meredith said that the photos were lost because she had moved houses.
Now, some netizens had actually dug up photos of her when she was a child.
Jeremy stretched out his fingers and tapped lightly at the title.
Thump, thump.
There was a knocking on the office glass door.
Jeremy looked up and saw that it was Ken Baker. "Come in."
He put down his phone and hid his emotions from a moment ago. They would continue to remain unknown to anyone.
Ken walked toward the office desk and gave a straightforward report, saying, "Mr. Whitman, I've kept a close eye on Felipe for a while now. He hasn't been acting strange, but yesterday, he quietly met with two veterans from

"Felipe has always gone his own way since young and never bothered to rely on the Whitmans' money and power. He's not even willing to get involved with the Whitman family, so why would he suddenly contact people from Whitman Corporation's board of directors?" Jeremy said lightly, pondering for a few seconds.	
He always felt that Felipe definitely had a secret and that Old Master Whitman knew this secret really well. Yet, Old Master Whitman never wanted to bring it up.	
He only knew that Old Master Whitman was always avoiding Felipe.	
Although Felipe always looked like a gentleman, underneath his gentle eyes, it was hard to guarantee that there would not be a torrent.	
"This is the birth certificate of Vera's daughter, Lilian, and the information of the local hospital. It took so long to get an answer because the investigation was a little difficult." Ken handed over another folder.	
Jeremy paused for two seconds before receiving the folder.	
The DNA test was already done. This report came in too late.	
"You can leave. Continue to keep an eye on Felipe."	
"Okay, I got it," Ken responded and left.	
Jeremy held the folder but did not open it.	
He could not calm down. On the path of Madeline's slow journey toward death, he had cruelly aggravated her physical and mental pain, catalyzing her withering.	
He walked into a flower shop in a daze and bought a bouquet of red roses as usual.	



Madeline was dumbfounded. With a generous smile, she got into the car nimbly.
After a 20 minutes' drive, they finally arrived at the destination.
Madeline could not help but freeze while looking at the familiar scenery outside the window.
It turned out to be a cemetery.

Madeline did not forget the time she had previously stumbled upon Jeremy buying a large bouquet of red roses. She had thought that he was seeing other women apart from Meredith.
After tailing him, however, she found that he had gone to the cemetery with that bouquet of roses.
It was inconvenient for her to continue following him at the time, so she did not know the reason why Jeremy brought roses to the cemetery. She could not find out even though she had tried researching it.
She also did not pass by here coincidentally today. Instead, she had always been observing his every move in secret.
After discovering that he had gone to the flower shop again, she then deliberately showed up to make it seem that it was a coincidental encounter.
As she was in the midst of her thoughts, Jeremy opened the car door for her.
Madeline quickly came back to her senses and got out of the car.
She pretended to appear curious by looking around. It was then she saw Jeremy already holding the bouquet of roses in his hands the moment she turned her head toward him.
It turned out that he had really been planning to give flowers to someone in this cemetery.
"Does the person you want to give flowers to work around this area?" Madeline asked with confusion.



Madeline could not help but clench her fists. She was currently feeling as if the blood in her entire body had been ignited by hatred.
Seeing his tall and good looking back ahead of her, her fingertips trembled. There were already flames set in her eyes.
'Jeremy, all I did was love you. Why did you have to treat me so cruelly?
You can hurt and insult me, but why didn't you at least let our child off the hook?
Are you really that heartless?
*Or is there only that evil woman Meredith in your heart? Is that why you've lost even your most basic humanity?"
Madeline was feeling full of hatred, and without noticing that Jeremy had stopped, she knocked into him.
After she regained her balance, she raised her eyes to find that Jeremy was somehow looking shocked. That face of his had tensed up with a scary aura.
Right when she looked toward his line of sight, she saw Jeremy striding toward a particular grave in Quick steps.
Madeline caught up, only to see that the cemetery in front of him had been severely damaged. The tomb was chiseled open and the once complete tombstone was smashed to pieces, making it impossible to recognize the owner of the grave.
Just as she was about to question him, Jeremy threw away the roses in his hand and started looking around for something in the desecrated grave. It was as if he had suddenly lost his mind.

His expression was extremely awful. The anxiety and panic between his eyebrows were something Madeline had never seen before.
Madeline's heart hurt slightly as she looked at the man who was going almost insane.
She was certain that the owner of this grave had to be a woman.
From Jeremy's reaction right now, she could conclude more so that he really cared about the person who was resting here.
She could not help but laugh, and there was a hint of bitterness and mocking in it.

Married by Mistake Mr. Whitman's Sinner Wife [Sixteenth Child] Chapter 332

It turned out that Meredith was not Jeremy's favorite.

It turned out that his favorite was already dead...

"What are you looking for? Do you want me to help you look for it?" Madeline opened her mouth and said calmly. She saw Jeremy's movements pausing momentarily as if he had only just realized the existence of another living person here.

He stood up slowly, his good-looking appearance covered with indescribable grief and sadness along with a trace of fear while his eyes were filled with a fierce, terrifying light and murderous intent. He looked as if he was afraid that he might not be able to recover something again.

Madeline became even more confused and she asked again while she walked toward him, "Are you alright? What's going on here?"

"I'll send you home first." He finally spoke, and there was no warmth nor emotions that could be sensed from his tone, only the horrifying chill that radiated from him.

Madeline was sent back to the apartment. In the past, Jeremy would usually wait for her to enter the building before he left. Today, however, he drove away immediately after Madeline got out of the car.

She stood in her spot with confusion. Looking at the leaving car, her gaze narrowed.

Who was the woman resting in that grave? She was so important to him that he almost went crazy when he saw that the grave had been destroyed.

On the other side, Jeremy was speeding as he drove straight through the Whitmans' gates.

Before the housekeeper could make an announcement, Jeremy had already rushed into the living room with a hostile aura.

At the same time, Meredith was drinking afternoon tea and looking at jewelry with Eloise leisurely. When they saw Jeremy appear all of a sudden, both of them were taken aback.

"Jeremy." Meredith was shocked and ran up to him with a face full of surprise. "Jeremy, you're here to look for me, right?"

Jeremy looked at the face in front of him, his eyes filled with coldness. "You did it, didn't you?"

"..." Meredith looked bamboozled with an innocent expression. "Jeremy, what are you talking about? What did I do? I've been with my mother these days and haven't been anywhere else."

"Jeremy, what do you mean by this? Rushing here all of a sudden to throw accusations. Is it because Vera has said something again? That b\*tch really likes to cause trouble!"

"I wasn't talking to you. You'd better shut your mouth and don't let me hear any more slander toward Vera." Jeremy did not even look at Eloise, his sharp and cold eyes glaring only at Meredith. "I'll give you a chance to confess.

Were you the one who had someone carry out that matter at No. 97, Peace Street?"

He said the address straightforwardly, which was the location of the cemetery.

Meredith's eyes widened, filled with confusion. "What No. 97, Peace Street? Jeremy, I really don't know what you're talking about."

Jeremy's cold eyes were then filled with disappointment. He then sneered, "Looks like you aren't going to admit it, hm?"

"I... I really don't know anything, Jeremy..."

"If you don't confess the truth to me before the night ends, you'll have to consider the consequences carefully."

After Jeremy dropped these words, he then turned away coldly.

"Jeremy, Jeremy!" Meredith chased after him as he went out, but Jeremy was still walking away decisively. Madeline's grave had been destroyed. Her urn and the wedding ring he had placed behind the tombstone were also missing as well.

He really could not think of anyone else who would hate Madeline so much apart from Meredith.

Madeline was already dead and her ashes had become his only memory of her. Now, however, even that was missing.

The sky had started to turn gray without his realization after he returned to the villa.

He was fidgeting, his thoughts being violently tugged in all different directions. He seemed to be looking a lot more haggard once the afternoon passed.

He looked at the kitchen and it was as if he could still see Madeline cooking there while wearing an apron. She turned around suddenly, smiling as she said to him, "Jeremy, dinner is ready."

Her smile was really beautiful with her sweet dimples and curved eyebrows, but as he reached out his hands, she disappeared.

That was merely his fantasy.

His eyes reddened, and his thoughts went back to the moment they first met—the moment when their gazes collided. In fact, every small action of hers had already marked themselves in his heart ever since the beginning.

However, she no longer existed and everything was a luxurious dream of his in the dark night.

Suddenly, some movement was heard from the entrance. Jeremy raised his red but cold eyes.

He had not closed the door because he knew that someone would come.

Sure enough, she came before dark.

Meredith had a heavy expression on her face, and when she saw the handsome but gloomy man sitting on the sofa, she walked to him step by step with a quickened heartbeat. After taking a deep breath, she threw caution to the wind and said, "You're right, I was the one who had someone do it. I instructed someone to destroy that b\*tch Madeline's grave!"

As soon as Meredith said what she said, she felt a chilling, violent wave envelop her entire body in an instant. She felt cold and could not help but shiver.

While she was still thinking about what Jeremy would do to her, she suddenly felt a tight grip around her neck. In the next second, she lost the ability to breathe freely.

"Je... Jeremy..."

Meredith widened her eyes in shock, looking at the man who was choking her neck in disbelief.

How could it be?

How could he treat her this way?

He was actually strangling her for that b\*tch Madeline!

"Do you know what you've done? Do you think that you can just do whatever you want because of my liking and my spoiling you?" His cold voice swept toward her like a cold wind, his gaze full of murderous intentions. Meredith felt that she was about to be strangled to death. She was feeling highly discomforted as she could not breathe.

However, no matter what she said, Jeremy would not let go. Instead, he even tightened his fingers one by one. His eyes were dark and treacherous at the moment, looking as if he was Satan who was about to engulf her entirety. His ice-cold aura was fear-inducing.

"Jeremy, I... It hurts, please let me go. Jeremy, Jez..."

Jeremy only let go of Meredith the moment she had almost lost her last breath.

She sat weakly on the ground, greedily breathing in the fresh air.

Unexpectedly, the phrase 'Jez' was the word that moved him the most in the end.

Sure enough, he was very emotionally attached to Madeline.

As Meredith thought about it silently, tears welled up in her eyes.

She was feeling fear, panic, jealousy, and even more hatred!

She hated that Madeline occupied Jeremy's heart, whether it was at the beginning or even now.

In fact, there had only ever been Madeline in Jeremy's heart from beginning to end.

"Give her back to me, then I won't pursue this issue further." Jeremy's voice came from above Meredith's head without any warmth.

Meredith gasped for a while, pretending to be in pain. Her superficial tears accompanied her performance as she said, "Why... Why are you treating me like this?"

She stretched out her hand to hold onto Jeremy's trousers as she cried.

"Jeremy, the woman you love has always been me! Why are you treating me this way now?"

Jeremy then frowned in annoyance and said, "I don't want to repeat these words again. I've said that I had only a muddled interest toward you since childhood, but that's not love."

"That is love!" Meredith cried heartbreakingly. She stood up as she grabbed Jeremy's trousers, saying,

"Jeremy, can we start again? I will listen to you about everything in the future. Let's let the past be the past." "Jeremy, you won't fall in love with others, let alone Madeline. You hated her the most. She was unchaste, despicable, and shameless. She crawled into your bed through any means in order to get to you, so how could you fall in love with her? It's just because she's now dead that you're only feeling a little sympathetic. How can sympathy be regarded as love? The one you've always loved is me!"

Meredith held Jeremy's arm tightly as if she was possessed, desperately emphasizing that the one Jeremy loved was her.

Jeremy's anger had already been ignited upon listening to her slandering Madeline.

It was just that he did not want to throw his tantrum at this time.

He suppressed his anger and said coldly again, "Give me back her ashes and the ring. Otherwise, you'll handle the consequences at your own risk."

He warned her again. His patience was already long lost from his dark eyes.

Meredith stopped her tears after hearing his sentence.

"Jeremy, are you really going to treat me so coldly? Do you really not have even a single ounce of feelings for me at all?"

Jeremy sneered softly, "It's better to ask yourself about whatever you've done. The fact that you can stand here now is already my greatest tolerance toward you. If it weren't for us being acquainted since our young age, you would already be in jail."

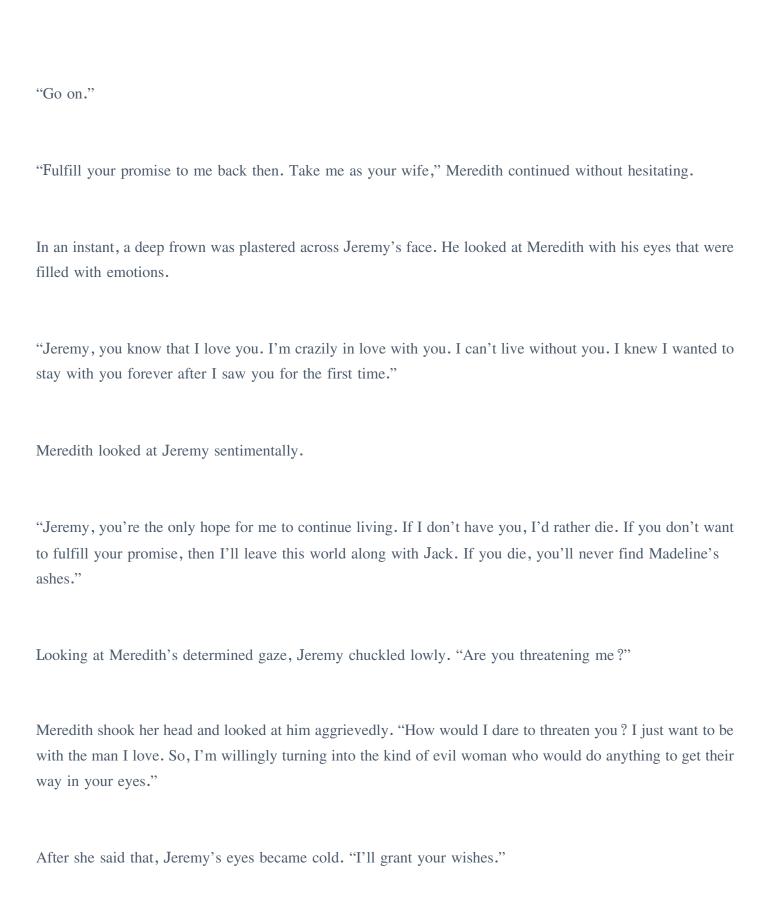
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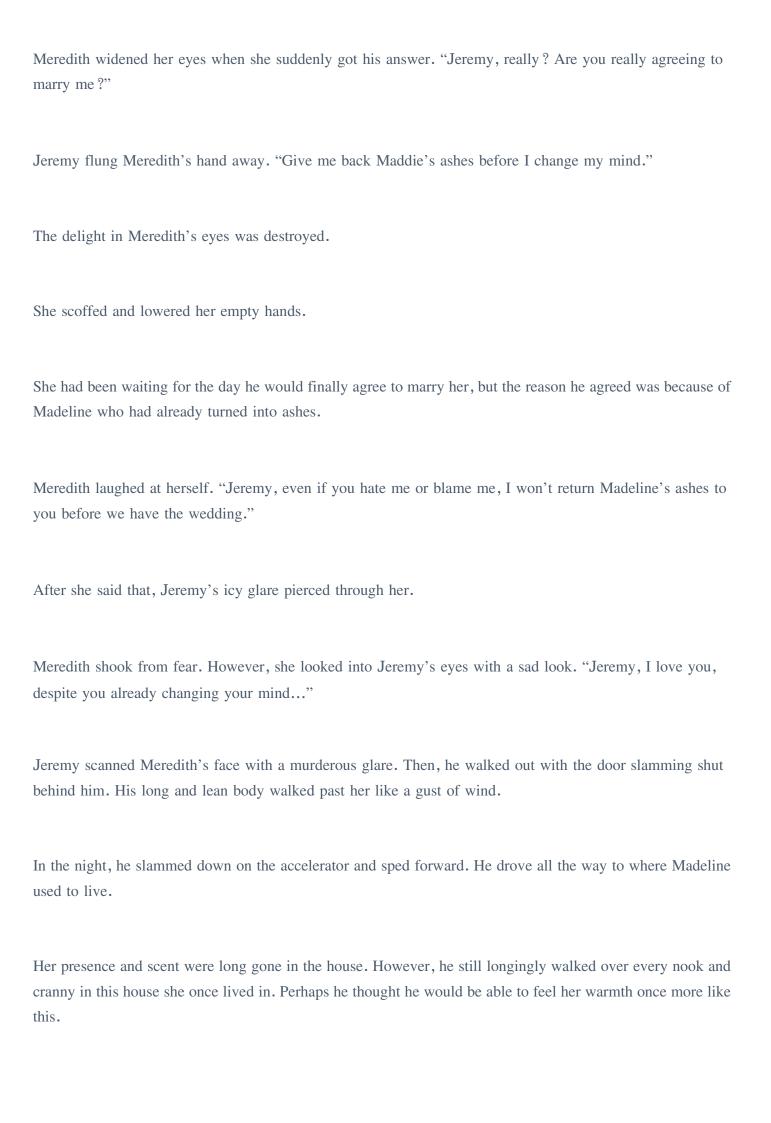
Hearing this, Meredith suddenly felt like a deflating ball. She felt completely numb.

After a while, she laughed with a sorrowful smile. "Well, I can return Madeline's ashes to you, but I have a request."

Seeing Meredith's desolate look at this moment, Jeremy suddenly recalled scenes of their childhood friendship.

Thinking of the girl's innocent smiling face back then, his heart softened again for no apparent reason.





He flipped through Madeline's diary and was delighted at the love and determination she had for him shown through her words. After a few seconds of joy, tears started welling up in his eyes.
He looked at the neon lights outside the bustling city and felt his heart getting colder
Madeline stood in front of the french window at night, unable to forget the crazy thing Jeremy did in the morning.
She did not look into who the person sleeping forever in the grave was. She also did not know what Jeremy meant by those roses.
At this moment, her phone rang.
She looked at the caller ID and saw that it was Jeremy.
Madeline hesitated for a while before picking up. When she was about to say something, she heard Jeremy's deep and drunken voice. "Maddie"
Her eyes darkened as her grip on the phone tightened as well.
"Where are you? Where did she hide you" Jeremy continued. He sounded like he was drunk.
Madeline recomposed herself and said calmly, "Jeremy, are you drunk? Where are you?"
After she said that, she was only greeted with silence.
Madeline looked at the screen of her phone in confusion. Was he really drunk?

No.
Even if he was drunk, it would be impossible for him to call her name.
She would never appear in his drunken dreams.
She hung up the phone and contacted Felipe who was not home yet to find Jeremy's location.
After a while, she received Felipe's text.
Looking at the address on the screen, Madeline was in disbelief.
He was there!
How was it possible?
She ran out of the door and headed to the destination. Standing in front of the apartment and looking at the closed door, Madeline lifted her trembling hand slowly before pushing the door open.

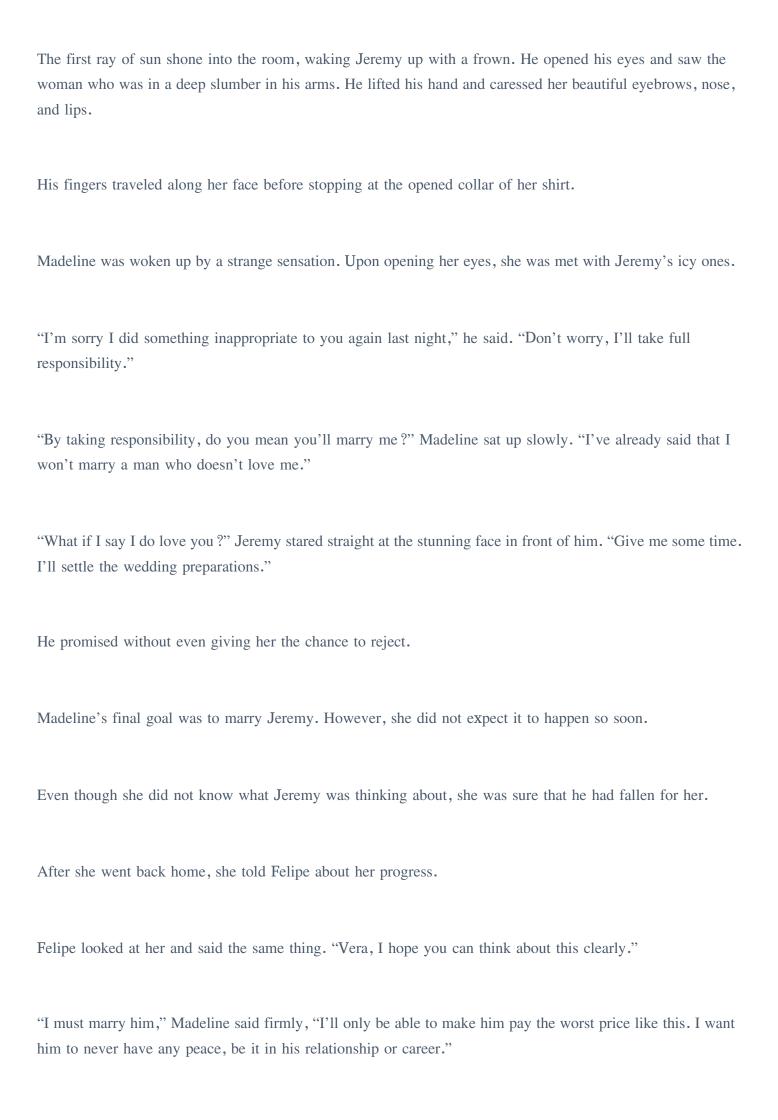
After Madeline pushed the door open, she could smell the stench of alcohol.
It had been three years. She never thought that she would come back to this place. What shocked her even more was when she pushed the door open, the decorations and renovation were still the same a back then.
Everything in front of her eyes was the same as three years ago. There were not many changes.
Madeline walked forward slowly with puzzlement. The apartment was not big, so when she walked in she spotted Jeremy right away.
He was leaning against the sofa while sitting on the floor. His eyes were closed, making him look lazy and carefree.
The collar of his white shirt was opened and his collarbone was showing.
His cheeks were red while his pale lips were wet. It seemed as if he had just drunk some wine. On the coffee table in front of him were two bottles of opened wine.
Madeline looked curiously at the man who appeared drunk.
'Jeremy, what the hell are you doing?
'Are you here to drink your sorrows away?'

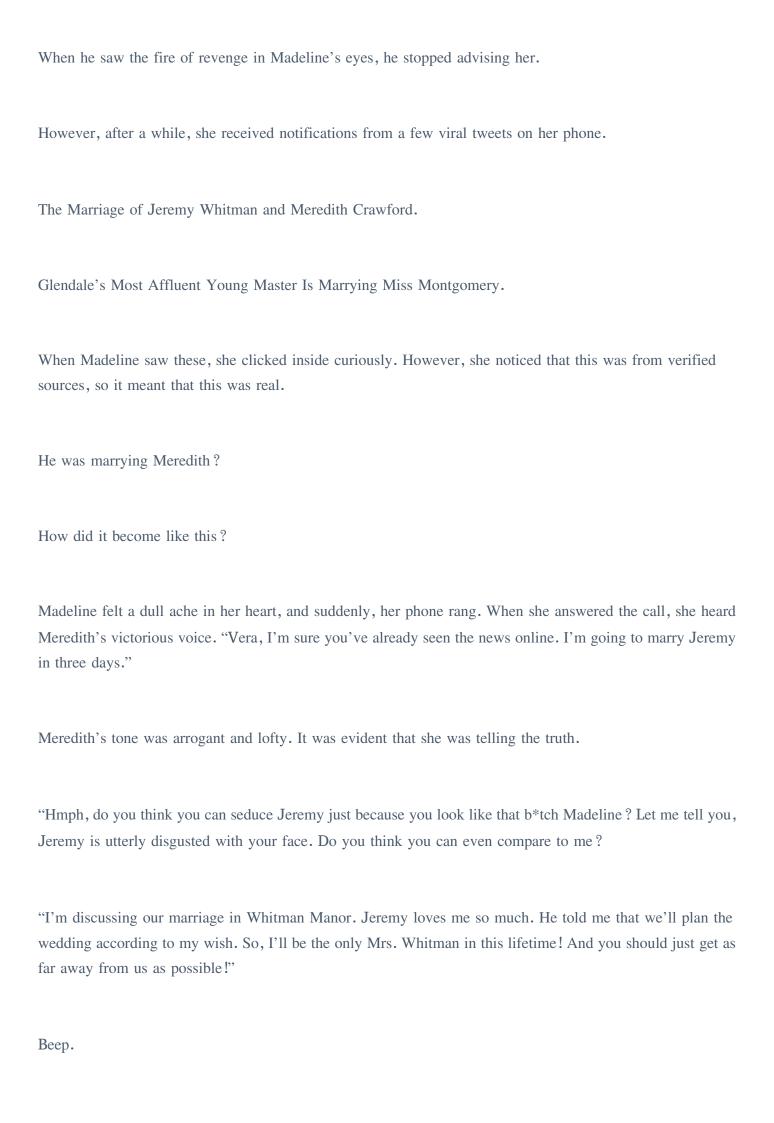
Madeline walked over with caution. "Jeremy."
She called out softly, "This is Vera. Why are you drunk here?"
Jeremy opened his dazed eyes when he heard her voice.
However, when he looked at the smiling face through his dazed eyes, the alcohol in his eyes evaporated immediately. They became crystal clear in an instant.
He sat up immediately and pulled Madeline into his arms.
Madeline was caught off guard and got pulled into his embrace. He was holding her tightly.
His body temperature was high, almost burning her through his shirt.
Madeline wanted to escape from him but Jeremy only tightened his grip on her. It was as if he was trying to melt her into his body.
"You're back. It's good now that you're back. It's good" he muttered in her ear, his cheek pressing up against hers tightly. He nuzzled against her as he muttered his longing for her.
"Please don't leave me again, okay?"
His low and gentle voice was filled with pleas.
Madeline lifted her eyebrow, and she was sure that Jeremy was mistaking her for another woman.

It was either Meredith or the woman Jeremy wanted to give the roses to.
"I'm sorry. It's all my fault. Please give me another chance. Give me another chance to love you, okay?"
Jeremy's apologies lingered in her ear. He was holding her with his fingers in her hair. His warm hand was caressing her head softly.
While they were intertwined in each other's arms, he buried his head in her neck like he was longing for her, or perhaps, he was lusting for her. He had a satisfied grin on his face now.
"I never had the chance to tell you this, but I finally have the chance now."
When Madeline was about to push Jeremy away and stand up, she heard him saying that.
She stopped in her tracks, and then, she heard Jeremy's deep voice gliding into her ears.
"I love you."
These three words traveled into Madeline's core clearly
These three words traveled into Madeline's ears clearly.  She froze as her heart skipped a beat.
For some reason, she felt tears stinging the corner of her eyes.
To some reactions and teams at the corner of their eyes.

He said the words 'I love you'.
Madeline curled the corners of her lips in amusement. As she was smiling, her eyes were wet with tears.
She remembered back when she was blind, Jeremy had pressed her roughly against the floor right here before grabbing her hand and forcing her to sign the divorce papers.
She would never forget what he had said to her. He said, "Are you still so naive to think that I have feelings for you even until now?"
He had also said, "Madeline, listen here. I've never liked you, let alone loved. Not even a little bit."
Tears blurred her vision just like back then.
However, she did not let the tears flow down her face.
Madeline made up her mind and pushed Jeremy away.
Jeremy could not fight back at all. He collapsed on the floor after Madeline pushed him away.
She looked at the man who looked like he had fallen asleep. There was resentment and hatred in her eyes as she clenched her fists tightly.
She was about to leave when she saw something next to Jeremy's hand.

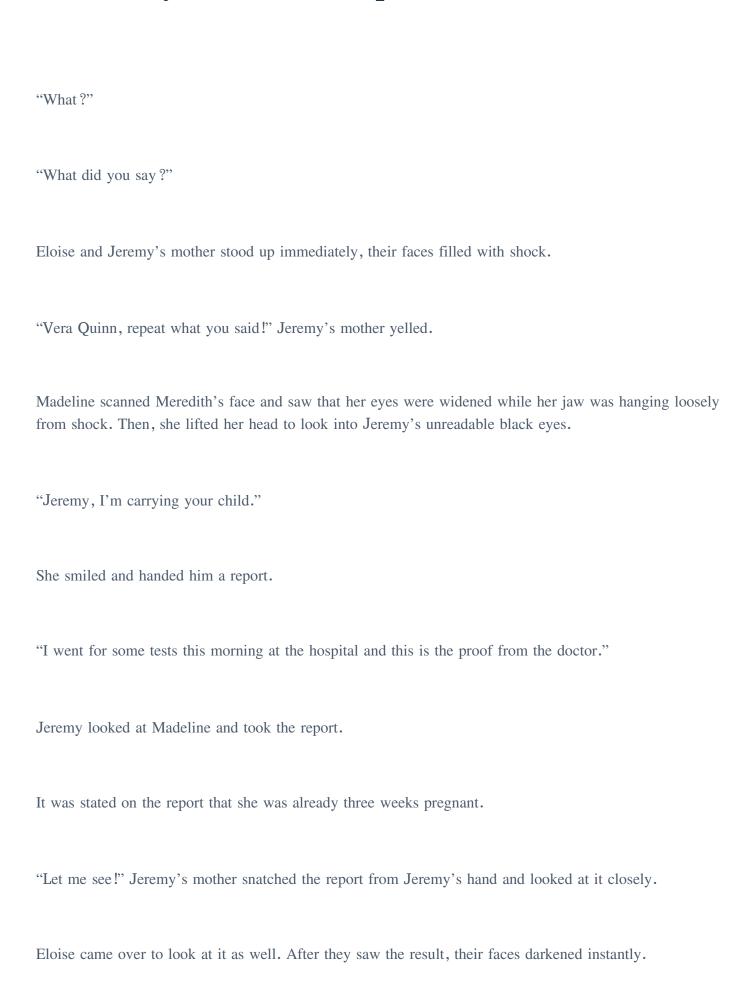
She walked over to take a look and saw that it was her diary. The page where it was on was filled with her past love and determination for him.
Madeline scoffed when she recalled herself back in the days. She was so stupid and dumb.
She grabbed the diary before turning around to leave. However, Jeremy pulled her back again.
Madeline stumbled and fell on the floor, crashing into Jeremy's firm chest.
His eyes were dazed, but he was still looking at her emotionally.
"Don't go, okay? Don't leave me again."
"Jeremy, let me go. I'm not the person you're thinking of." Madeline struggled to escape, but Jeremy simply smiled and stared straight at her. He was hugging her even tighter now.
Madeline could not escape from his grip no matter how much she struggled.
He was pressed up against her lovingly before eventually falling asleep.
Madeline was sweating from all her struggling. However, she still did not manage to escape from him. In the end, she also closed her eyes and fell asleep in exhaustion.

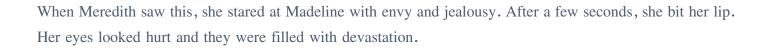




Before Madeline could say anything, Meredith hung up the phone.
Madeline held the phone in her hand, her mind filled with Meredith's victorious and provoking words. She narrowed her eyes as a sinister glint appeared in them.
Everyone in Whitman Manor was making wedding preparations happily.
Madeline just got out of the car when she received Jeremy's call. His voice was deep. "Vera, I have something to tell you. Where are you now?"
"I have something to tell you as well," Madeline said slowly, "I'm in front of Whitman Manor."
She hung up the phone and walked in.
Jeremy was being pestered by Meredith to choose a wedding gown. When he heard that, he stood up and looked out of the door.
"Jeremy, what's wrong?" Meredith blinked and looked at him. After she said that, she saw someone at the entrance.
Eloise and Jeremy's mother were happily discussing the wedding. However, when they saw Vera, their faces fell.
"What are you doing here?" Jeremy's mother asked angrily.
"Vera, you're not welcomed here. Get out now!" Eloise chased her away.
Meredith stood up as well. She was not as arrogant as she was on the phone and looked super vulnerable now. "Miss Quinn, Jeremy and I are getting married soon. I hope you can stop harassing us."

Madeline looked coldly at the three women in front of her. Then, she walked straight to Jeremy. "Jeremy, I'm pregnant."





"How is that possible?" Her voice was soft. "How..."

When Eloise saw Meredith sobbing sadly, she crumpled the report in her hand angrily and threw it on the floor.

"Vera Quinn, you vixen! You.."

"Shut up." Jeremy interrupted coldly. He looked at Eloise, his gaze like sharp knives. He reached out his hand to hold Madeline's hand. "Let's go."

Madeline smiled and looked at Meredith who was scowling at her. Then, she chuckled softly. "Okay."

When Jeremy's mother saw this, she ran forward to stop them. "Jeremy, what are you doing? You're going to marry Meredith soon. How can you leave with this woman now?"

"Jeremy, one second you're calling off the wedding with Mer, then you're marrying her again. Now, you're still entangled with this woman. What do you think of Meredith?" Eloise's face was green from anger. "You have to give Mer an explanation today!"

"I don't have the obligation to explain anything to you," Jeremy said coldly. He looked at Madeline with his bottomless eyes and held her hand before walking forward.

"You..." Eloise was tongue-tied from anger. "How could my daughter fall head over heels in love with a man like this?"

Jeremy's mother was embarrassed. She shifted the blame away hurriedly. "This Vera Quinn is even more despicable than Madeline! Mer, don't worry. I'll always side with you."

Meredith's eyes were red from her pretentious grievances. Then, she ran out and saw Jeremy opening the car door for Vera before driving away.
She clenched her fists and gritted her teeth. Then, she smirked sinisterly.
"Vera Quinn, do you think you can defeat me by doing this? Hmph, just you wait. My wedding with Jeremy will definitely go on in three days!"
•••
Jeremy drove for a while with Madeline with neither of them saying anything.
Jeremy saw Madeline's dispirited gaze from the rearview mirror. He braked slowly and stopped the car at the side of the road.
"Give me some time. I'll give you a complete family." Jeremy looked at Madeline who had been quiet the entire time.
"You mean you'll definitely marry Meredith in three days?" Madeline asked flatly. "You said you'll take responsibility. Is this how you're going to take responsibility?"
She deliberately looked at him in agitation. Then, she turned around and got out of the car.
Jeremy got out of the car hurriedly as well. "Vera."
Madeline ignored him and kept walking forward.
Jeremy chased after her, grabbing Madeline's wrist. Then, he pulled her in front of him.

Her beautiful eyes appeared in his vision again, making his heart beat erratically. His usual icy gaze had become softer all of a sudden.

"Vera, I genuinely want to marry you." His eyes looked serious. "Give me some time to take care of this."

"Really?" Madeline chuckled softly. "Mr. Whitman, it's not like no one else wants me. I don't need you to marry me as if you're giving me alms. Since you love Meredith so much, then I shall help you accomplish your aim. As for the child in my stomach, I'll take care of it.

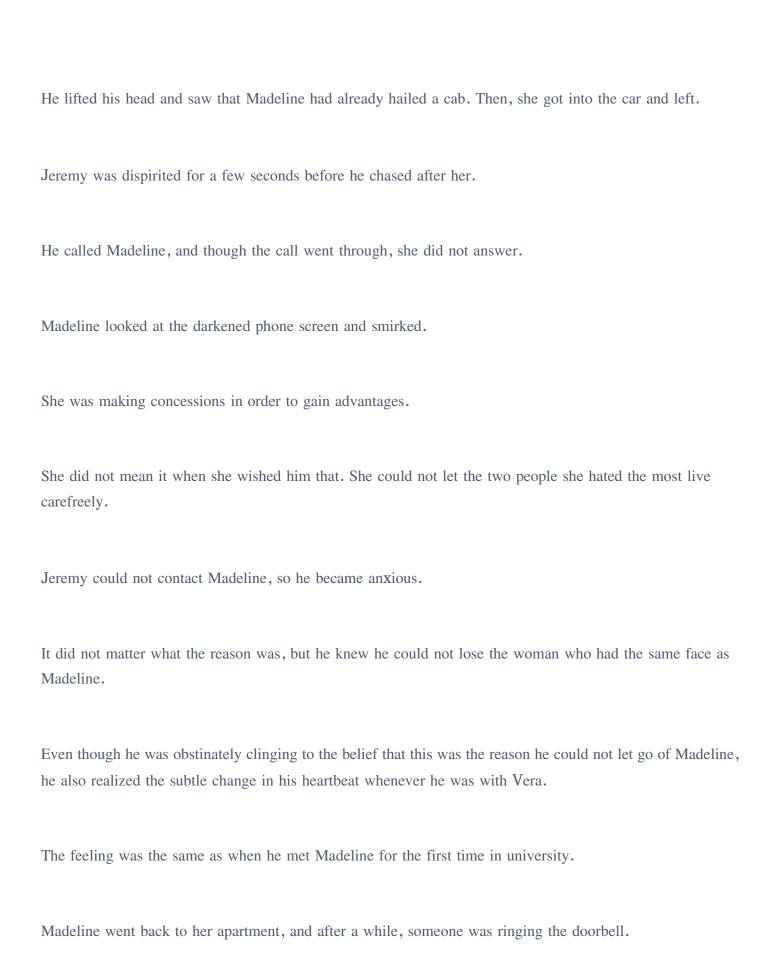
"I'm happy to know you. It's my fault that I have the same face as Madeline. It's not your fault that you resent this face so much."

She smiled unaffectedly before lifting her hand to tidy Jeremy's collar. Suddenly, she stood on tiptoe and got closer to his face.

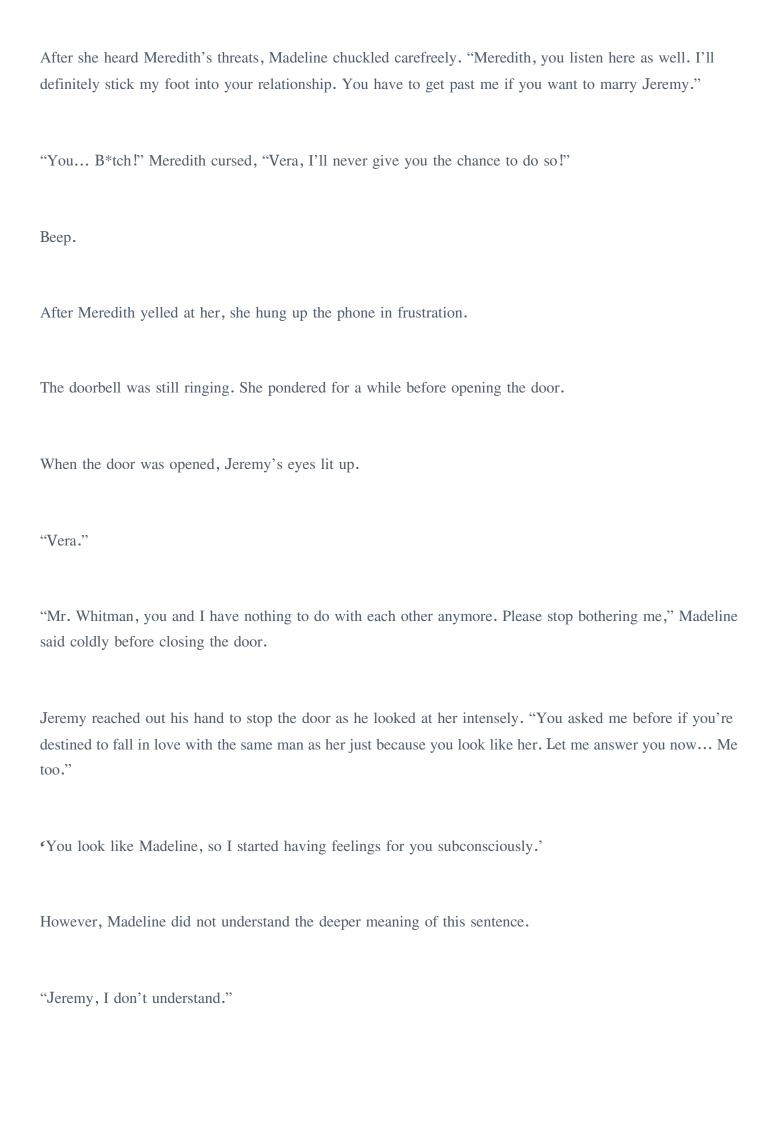
"I hope you're happy. Forever."

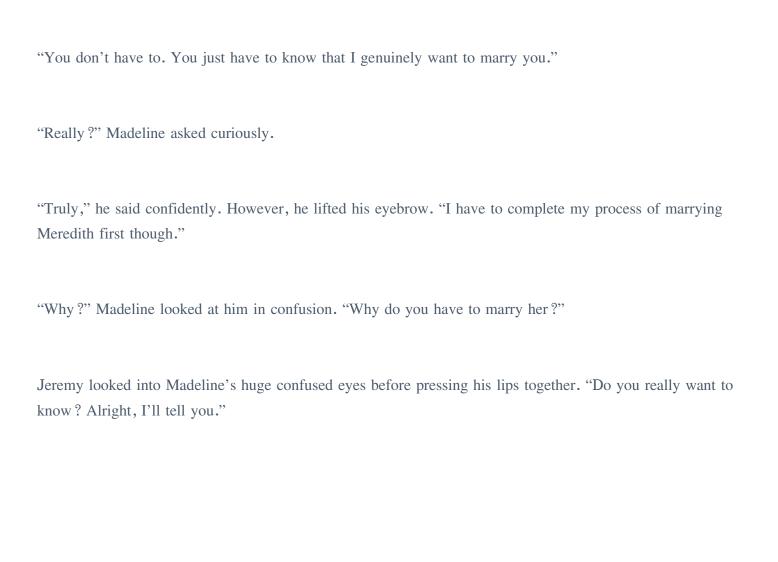
Her sweet voice sounded like it was drenched with honey, her words flowing into his ears like the spring water in the mountain. Then, it landed right on his heart.

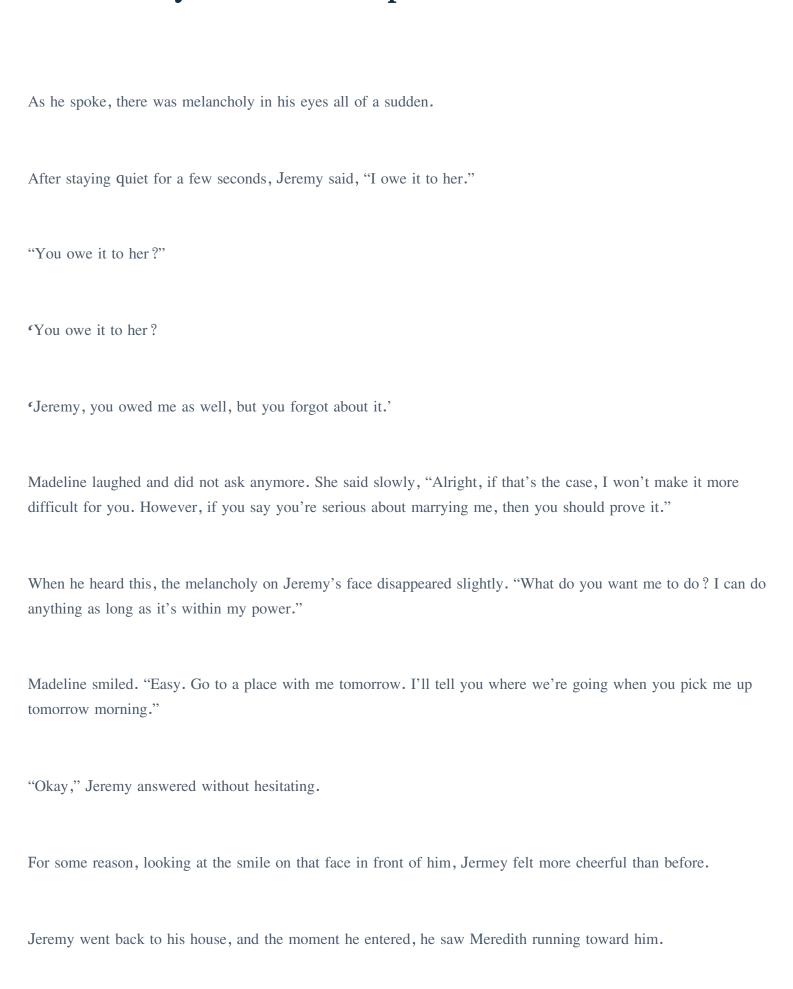
Jeremy was taken aback, then his heart sped up.



Madeline saw Jeremy through the peephole.
His handsome face was magnified through the peephole—still as handsome as ever.
Madeline was satisfied when she saw the anxiousness in his eyes.
She did not open the door. She listened to the doorbell ringing continuously as she sat on the bar table quietly to enjoy her coffee.
Madeline knew very well that Jeremy cared about her more than Meredith at the moment.
However, why did he suddenly agree to marry Meredith?
There had to be a reason for that.
When she was contemplating it, the screen of her phone lit up again. It was from an unknown number.
Madeline walked to the french window and answered the phone. Then, Meredith's cold and arrogant voice sounded.
"Vera, don't think I don't know what you're doing. You want to use your pregnancy to stop my marriage with Jeremy, huh? Let me tell you now that there's no f*cking way!
"Jeremy will go to the wedding dress fitting with me tomorrow. That dress is worth about seven digits and Jeremy made that especially for me! As long as I want something, Jeremy will definitely give it to me!
"Don't even think about having a chance to stick your foot into our relationship. Listen closely, Jeremy is my man. I'll end whoever dares to steal him away from me!"



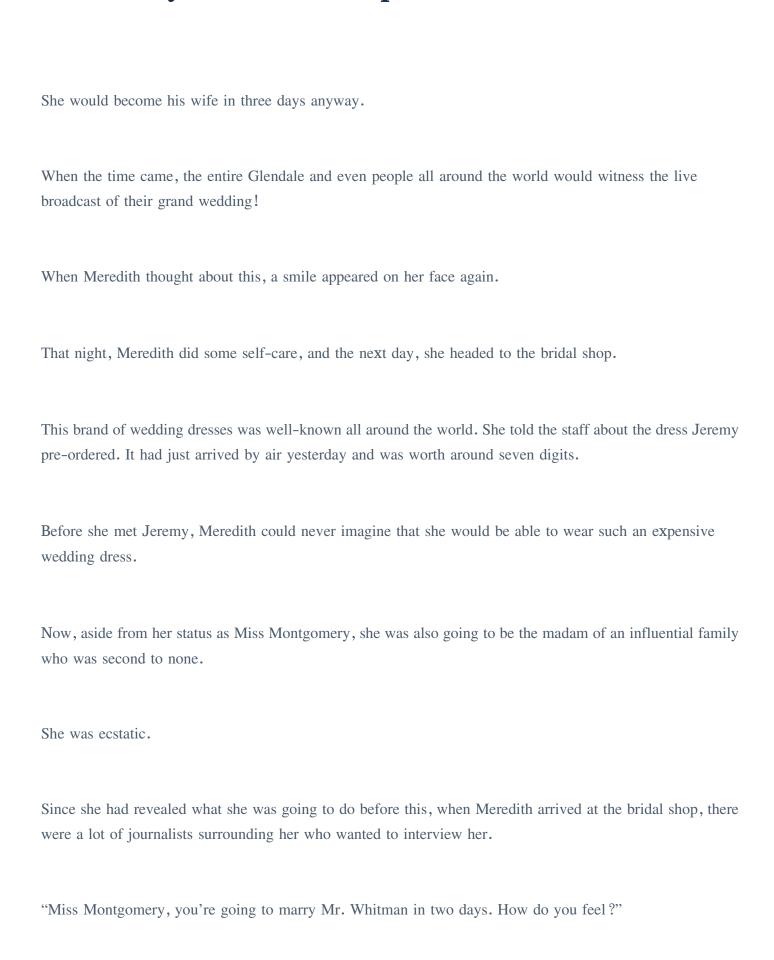




"Jeremy, you're finally home." Her face was filled with worry and she was evidently flustered. "I was so scared that you wouldn't come back."
Jeremy walked around her coldly as he spoke in a sarcastic tone, "Why aren't you preparing for the wedding? Why are you here?"
"You're my groom. Who will I go to if I don't come to you?" Meredith walked in front of Jeremy shyly. "Jeremy, I'm finally going to become your bride. I'm so happy."
Jeremy looked at her and smiled superficially. "As long as you're happy. If you're done being happy, remember to give me back what belongs to me."
"" The smile on Meredith's face froze while her shy look from earlier had disappeared as well. She knew that Jeremy was talking about Madeline's ashes.
He was very concerned about Madeline indeed.
Thankfully, he did not have a clue that Madeline was the little girl he had been thinking about for the past ten years.
If he knew about that, he would be crazily in love with Madeline.
Meredith was secretly relieved. Then, she smiled flatteringly.
"Jeremy, I know you're still blaming me. It's fine. As long as I can marry you and become your wife, I'm willing to be misunderstood," she said understandably before frowning.
"However, Jeremy, don't get fooled by that Vera Quinn. She's not a good person. She's in a relationship with your uncle one second, and in the next second, she claims to be pregnant with your child. It's fine if she looks the same as Maddie, but they're also equally fickle."



Meredith wanted to keep pestering him, but looking at his cold figure. She chose silence.
She clenched her fists and gritted her teeth. Her heart was filled with dissatisfaction and anger.
However, she managed to suppress them.
It was fine. If he did not want to go to the fitting with her, then she would go herself.



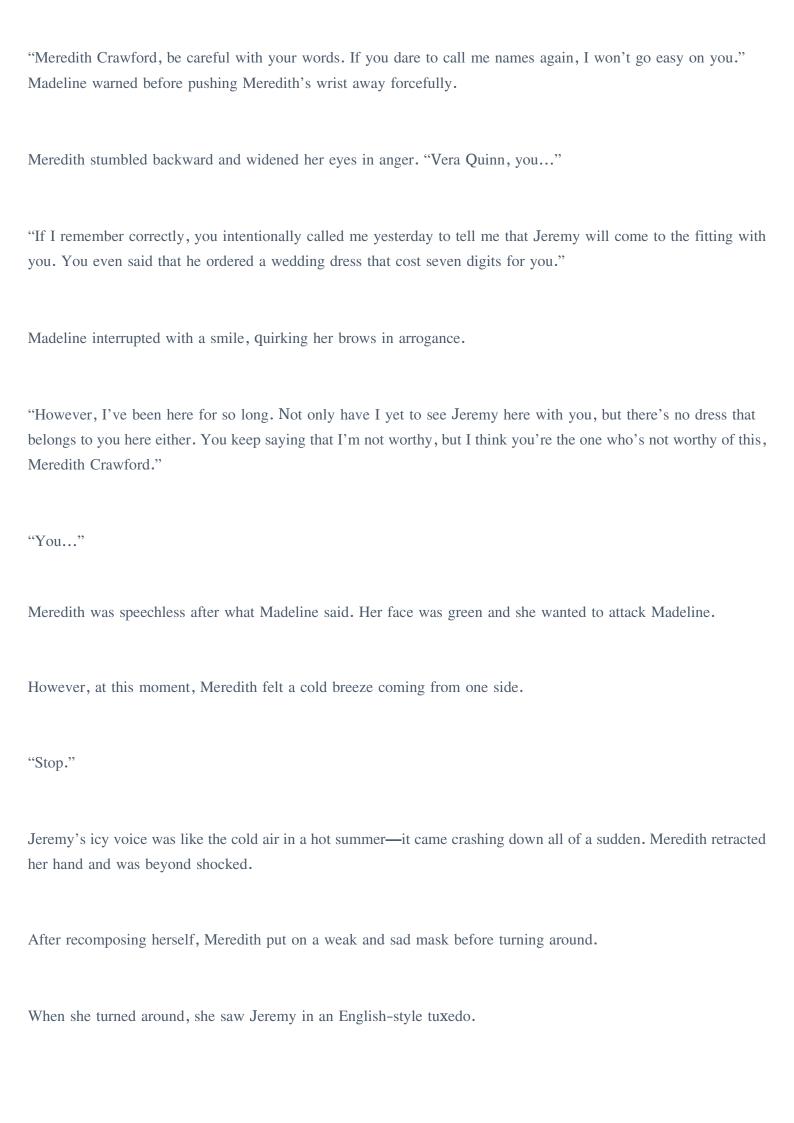
"I heard you're going to try on a wedding dress that cost seven digits, is that true?" Meredith looked into the camera happily. "Jeremy ordered the dress for me. The rhinestones on it are all real." Why didn't Mr. Whitman come to the fitting with you?" "You guys know that Jeremy is busy. He has to manage such a huge transnational corporation. I won't occupy his time for something as minor as a wedding dress fitting. Men's work centers around the world outside while women's work centers around the home, so I don't mind." When Meredith said this, the journalists and passersby all praised her for being understanding. Meredith listened to those praises happily. Then, she turned around and entered the shop with her assistant. "Miss Montgomery, when you walk out in the dress later, the journalists will definitely snap a lot of pictures of you. They'll all report this without restraint," said Meredith's assistant, Amy. Meredith raised her eyes arrogantly and considered herself unexcelled in the world. Her gentle and kind image had disappeared at this moment. "Of course. Those people have never seen such an expensive wedding dress before. Even after working to death for an entire year, they won't even be able to make enough money for one rhinestone on my dress!" "Yes, of course." Amy agreed. She had worked with Meredith for some time already, so she knew Meredith's temper and personality. Meredith was not the dignified and easy-mannered Miss Montgomery in front of everyone. She was more like a common character behind everyone's back. She was narrow-minded and loved to be pretentious.

If it was not for the hefty salary, Amy would have stopped working for her a long time ago.
At this moment, Meredith sauntered into the shop. When the staff saw her, there were awkward expressions on their faces.
"M-Miss Crawford, why are you here?"
Meredith's face fell. "What are you talking about? Of course, I'm here for the fitting."
"But"
"No buts. Where's the dress? I want to try it on now." Meredith barked her order.
After she said that, the curtain in front of her was pulled open with a 'woosh'.
Meredith and her assistant, Amy, looked over at the same time. A graceful figure of a woman appeared in their vision.
The dress on the woman was sparkling with brilliant lights and vibrant colors under the lights of the chandelier.
Meredith widened her eyes in shock. "Why is this dress on another person? Were you people dropped on the head when you were born? That's my dress! How dare you let another woman try on my dress that cost seven digits? Do you not want to work here anymore?"
The staff looked at each other in dismay after they heard that. "Miss Crawford, this"
"And you! How dare you wear my dress?! Take it off now, if not"

"Your dress?" Suddenly, the woman in the dress said slowly.
When Meredith heard her voice, she was taken aback.
She widened her eyes in disbelief. When she saw the woman turning around slowly, her eyes were about to start bleeding when she saw the gorgeous face appearing in her vision.



However, Madeline smiled calmly. "Speaking of mistresses, how can I compare to you, Miss Crawford?"
Meredith's face fell when she heard that. When she was about to fight back, she heard Madeline say, "The entire Glendale knows that Jeremy divorced his ex-wife, Madeline, three years ago. However, you already have a two-year-old child with Jeremy. Isn't this the solid evidence of you being a shameless mistress?"
After she finished saying that, Meredith's face fell. Then, she saw the staff around her gossiping about her. She could not contain her emotions anymore.
"You! Vera, shut up! I want you to take that dress off right now! Immediately!"
Meredith changed the topic angrily and barked out her orders.
"You lot! Go and get that dress off of her now! You should know that Jeremy was the one who ordered this dress for me and this b*tch has no business wearing it!"
The staff looked at each other and frowned in awkwardness.
"Miss Crawford, actually, this dress"
"You useless good-for-nothings! I'm asking you to do something and you're being so finicky. If you're not going to do it, then I will!"
Meredith reached out her hand in anger, wanting to rip the dress away from Madeline's body.
However, the moment she reached out her hand, Madeline grabbed her wrist.
Meredith was taken aback. Then, her eyes met Madeline's arrogant eyes. She was grinning!



His elegant and self-restraining aura was emitting from every pore on his body. His flawless face was even more handsome now.
Meredith finally came back to her senses after a few seconds of staring.
"Jeremy, you're here!" Meredith exclaimed happily while smiling victoriously. "I knew you'd come. How could you let me try on the wedding dresses myself?"
As she said that, she looked at Meredith provokingly.
"Miss Quinn, do you see this? Jeremy's here to accompany me to try on my wedding gown! Can you take off the wedding dress that doesn't belong to you now? I can stop pursuing this matter for Jeremy's sake."



Madeline faked being scared and leaned against Jeremy, her frightened expression eliciting Jeremy's anger and urge to protect her.
He grabbed Madeline's wrist, his eyes looking frigid. "You even dare to bully Vera in front of me, so just how many times did you threaten Vera when I wasn't around?"
Meredith was stunned. She was unconvinced no matter what.
"Jeremy, I didn't! I've never bullied her. She gave me no choice. Ever since her appearance, she's been targeting me. She even wants to steal you from me. Now, she stole the dress that's rightfully mine. How can Just let this happen?"
"I'm not an object. No one can steal me away just as they wish."
These icy words escaped his thin lips. Then, he spread out his arms.
"I bought this dress for Vera. I didn't even know you'd be coming today. Stop making a fuss."
"What? Jeremy, what did you say? You gave her this dress?"
Meredith was completely dumbfounded, and at the same time, she could feel a fire burning in her chest.
She looked at the woman in Jeremy's arms in resentment. However, she saw Vera smiling at her.
Meredith took a deep breath. She was going to explode!
"Jeremy, don't be mad. You said we'll take our wedding photo happily today. Stop caring about irrelevant people." Madeline smiled and grabbed Jeremy's arm. Her arrogant eyes scanned across Meredith who was

about to vomit blood from anger.

"Alright, let's go take our photos." Jeremy nodded. His gaze softened when it landed on Madeline's face.
He let Madeline grab his arm as they then turned around at the same time. The staff quickly went over to carry the dress for Madeline.
"Miss Crawford, so what now? There are so many journalists out there waiting for your fitting, but now"
Meredith's assistant, Amy, reminded her worriedly.
Meredith's pupils constricted. There were so many journalists out there. If Jeremy walked out with Vera, she would become the joke of the century!
She clenched her fists and narrowed her eyes. It was as if she was bracing herself.
"Jeremy!"
Meredith chased after them and stopped in front of Madeline and Jeremy.
Jeremy knitted his brows together. "Don't force me to get someone to pull you away."
He sounded impatient.
Madeline smiled and watched. She wanted to see what Meredith had up her sleeves.
However, Meredith only glared at Madeline furiously. Then, she looked into Jeremy's cold eyes.
"Jeremy, I won't allow you to take wedding pictures with this b*tch!" Meredith's tone was firm. She was not begging at all.

Jeremy looked at her coldly. Then, he grabbed Madeline's hand and walked past her.
When Meredith realized that she was being ignored, she was frantic.
"Jeremy, if you walk out with this woman right now, then don't even think about finding Madeline's ashes!"





•••
After Madeline got home, she kept replaying what Meredith said in her head.
Three years ago, she was pronounced dead. Then, Felipe faked the evidence of her death skillfully.
She also knew about Jeremy snatching her 'ashes' from Ava.
However, what else could he do with her ashes aside from releasing his anger with it?
He despised her so much.
When she was alive, he hated her body. After she died, he would definitely hate her 'ashes'.
However, based on what Meredith said, it seemed that her 'ashes' was currently with Meredith?
On the other hand, Jeremy's reaction just now was also pretty thought-provoking.
He was compromising because of that?
What was going on?
On the other side, despite successfully stopping Jeremy and Madeline from taking their wedding pictures, Meredith knew this would definitely infuriate Jeremy.
Even if they were to break up or struggle for life and death, she would not allow Vera to get close to Jeremy!

The next day, Madeline went to her shop as usual.
When she got there, she received an urgent parcel from a delivery guy.
When she opened it, she saw that it was a wedding invitation from Meredith.
Madeline smiled when she looked at this.
This woman was so unbridled. She never learned.
At this moment, her phone rang.
Madeline figured it was from Meredith, and it was indeed her when Madeline answered.
"Vera, did you get the invitation? Remember to get here on time. I'm expecting your presence."
Meredith's tone was strange. It was evident that she was feeling pleased with herself.
Madeline said slowly, "Miss Crawford, you're inviting me to your wedding so sincerely, but I just hope you won't regret it when the time comes."

Meredith woke up early on the day of her wedding.

"Regret? Hmph, the only person who's going to regret is you! Vera, I warned you before. You're not my competition at all. So what if you're carrying Jeremy's child? He won't care! I have a trump card in my hand so how will you compete with me? Hahaha"
Meredith's savage cackle lingered in Madeline's ear.
Madeline hung up the phone without saying anything. She looked at the name of the bride on the invitation card as she narrowed her charming eyes.
She would be there on time tomorrow.
Three days went by quickly, but these three days were extremely tormenting to Meredith.
The internet was filled with headlines about her and Jeremy. After all, she was the one who exposed the time and location of her wedding to the media with a fake identity. She was hoping she could blow up news of this as much as possible.
The reason was that she had been waiting for this day for too long.
As long as she got married to Jeremy and became Mrs. Whitman, she believed that with her tactics, Jeremy would never divorce her.
It would be impossible!

The weather report said that today would be sunny, but it was drizzling.
Meredith was unhappy at first. However, when she thought about how she was going to marry Jeremy soon, she felt better.
The stylist styled her perfectly according to her wishes.
Meredith was clearly dissatisfied with the dress she bought at the last minute.
She wanted that dress that cost seven digits. However, as long as Jeremy did not nod his head, she would not be able to wear it.
After she got dressed, Meredith got into the car and drove to the hotel impatiently.
'Hmph, Madeline, Vera, who are you to go against me?
'At the end of the day, Jeremy still belongs to me.'
Meredith thought about this deviously as her smile became wider and wider.
It was supposed to be a clear and refreshing fall, but it started raining all of a sudden. Madeline looked at the raindrops on the car window and smiled.
The car stopped in front of the hotel. Madeline held up an umbrella and sashayed forward elegantly.
She did not intentionally dress up. She was wearing something simple. It was just that her elegance came from within.

It was not the time for the ceremony yet, so Madeline walked in alone with the invitation card.
She looked at the hall that was luxuriously decorated and recalled her wedding with Jeremy back then.
Even though he was reluctant to marry her, she had fantasized and longed for their sweet future together.
She still remembered how his cold fingers had lifted her hand when they were exchanging rings. She still remembered the warm throbbing of her heart until now
'Jeremy
I loved you so much, so why did it end in this way?'
As her mind wandered, Madeline felt someone tugging her clothes.
She came back to her senses and lowered her head. Then, she was met with a pair of beautiful eyes.
"Jack."
Madeline exclaimed happily. The little guy was wearing a branded little tuxedo. It seemed as if he was going to be the flower boy.
However, he did not seem happy. There was no smile on his beautiful face. On the other hand, there was more sadness and melancholy.
"Vera, can I stay with you?" The little guy looked at her expectantly.



Madeline's heart ached. When she looked into Eloise's resentful gaze, she smiled. "Since you're so happy, then let me give you a present. However, it's not an item. It's just a statement."

She stopped and looked at Eloise seriously. "Meredith Crawford is not your biological daughter. She's an impostor."

Madeline told her the truth immediately.
When Eloise heard that, she did not get angry. On the contrary, she smiled.
"Vera Quinn, I know what you're trying to do. You're trying to incite disharmony between me and Mer. I'm her mother, so I know very well whether she's my daughter or not. Don't even think about inciting disharmony between us!"
After Eloise said that firmly, she grabbed Jackson's hand to walk away.
"Sometimes what you see is not necessarily the truth," Madeline said to Eloise's back. "Mrs. Montgomery, if you don't want to regret it in the future, then you should think about what similarities that person who died three years ago had with you."
Eloise stopped in her tracks. Then, she heard Madeline's voice loud and clear.
"When I was outside Meredith's hospital room, I indeed heard Rose saying that your real daughter is already dead."
"Shut up!"
Eloise turned around furiously, her eyes looking at Madeline with animosity.
"Vera Quinn, today is my daughter's wedding day, so I don't want to curse you. However, if you continue to slander my daughter, I'll never forgive you!"



"Do you think everything will end when you're married to Jeremy?" Madeline asked slowly. When she saw Meredith's expression changing, she smirked. "Back then, Madeline also married Jeremy, but I think you know better than anyone what happened in the end."

"Hmph, how dare you compare me to that b\*tch? She's not even worthy to kiss my foot!" Meredith rolled her eyes. "Jeremy hates Madeline, so she deserved to die, unlike me. Jeremy has been in love with me for more than ten years! He wanted to marry me a long time ago!"

After Meredith finished saying that, her assistant, Amy, ran over and announced.

"Miss Crawford, Mr. Whitman is here."

Meredith's eyes lit up. "Got it. Go prepare."

"Alright," Amy answered and looked at Madeline before walking away.

Meredith displayed her best smile and peered at Madeline while feeling pleased with herself. "I'm going to marry Jeremy soon. You should watch closely, Vera Quinn."

After she finished saying that, she heard footsteps behind her as she turned around.

"Jeremy," Meredith called out sweetly. Then, she lifted her dress and walked over to Jeremy.

Madeline lifted her gaze nonchalantly. "Jeremy."

She smiled bashfully and looked at the handsome, elegant man in front of her.

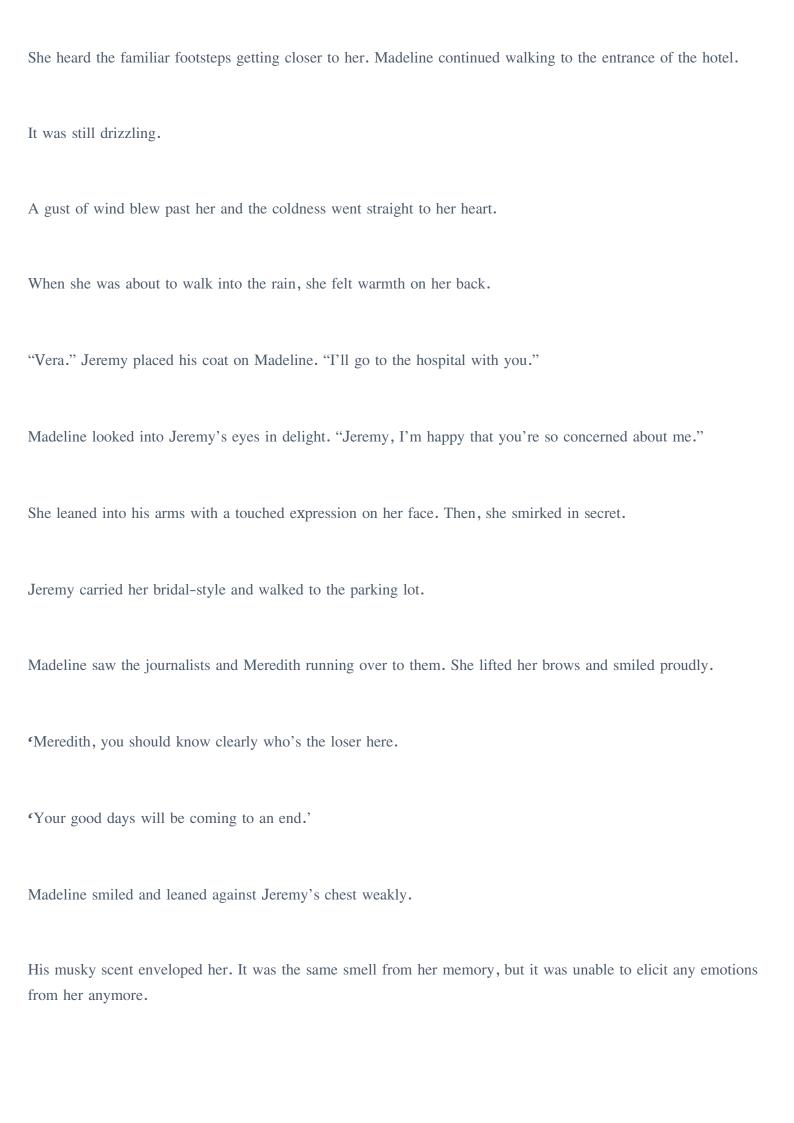
Jeremy looked at Madeline. Then, under Meredith's expectant gaze, he walked past her and went straight to Madeline.
Meredith stood on the red carpet, dumbfounded. She was frozen in place.
"Why are you here?" Jeremy walked toward Madeline, her beautiful face reflected in his gentle eyes.
"Miss Crawford invited me," Madeline answered with a smile. She lifted her hand to straighten Jeremy's tie. "Miss Crawford told me that you've been waiting for this day. She also said that you'll be her man soon, so I shouldn't have any more wishful thinking and should get lost as soon as possible. However, I love you so much, so how would I be willing to let you go?"
"" Meredith's face darkened after she heard that.
When she saw Jeremy lifting his eyebrow coldly, she quickly explained herself. "Jeremy, don't listen to her. I never said those things."
"You're so irresponsible, Miss Crawford. If you can say it, why can't you admit it?"
"You"
"I'm not like you. I said I love Jeremy, so I won't give up so easily."
"" Meredith widened her eyes while feeling lost. She could not believe that Madeline would say something like

Madeline smiled and looked at Jeremy again. He did not say anything and was just looking at her intensely.
She accepted his inquisitive yet complicated gaze confidently. Then, she stood on tiptoe and pressed her lips gently on his cheek.
When the kiss landed, Jeremy felt his heart tighten as an unknown feeling enveloped his heart.
"Go fulfill your promise with her. I'll wait for you."
After Madeline said that, she pulled her hand that was on Jeremy's tie away.
Meredith was completely dumbfounded when she saw that.
She would never imagine that Madeline was able to do this.
Then, Madeline walked over carefreely to Meredith. "Why are you so shocked? Aren't you the one who knows how I feel the best, Miss Crawford? Didn't you get between Jeremy and his ex-wife's marriage in the name of love? You even forced Madeline to her death. I'm just learning from you now."
"" Meredith felt as if her mouth was filled with blood. She could not say a single word.
She wanted to strangle Madeline to death now. However, at this moment, she could only grip her dress tightly and swallow this rage.
The most important thing right now was to get married to Jeremy!
The room was almost filled with guests by now. The journalists were also surrounding the scene.

Madeline made her way to the last row and sat down alone.
After a while, she saw Jeremy appearing at the place where he would read his vows later on.
He was very good-looking and tall, undoubtedly the most perfect man in everyone's eyes.
However, Madeline would not be moved by him anymore.
Her heart had already been smashed by him. She would be in pain whenever she thought about the feeling of loving someone deeply.
In a blink of an eye, the master of the ceremony appeared and announced the bride's arrival.
Madeline saw Meredith holding Sean's arm with a sweet smile on her face as she walked toward Jeremy slowly.
That was her biological father, yet he was spoiling such a devil.
When she walked past Madeline, Meredith did not forget to look at her with a proud look. It was as if she was saying, 'Vera, I'm going to be Mrs. Whitman soon. Who are you to compete with me?'
Madeline smiled. She watched as Meredith walked in front of Jeremy shyly, her eyes filled with deep passion.
The master of the ceremony asked, "Mr. Whitman, do you take this bride as your wife, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish her as long as you both shall live?"

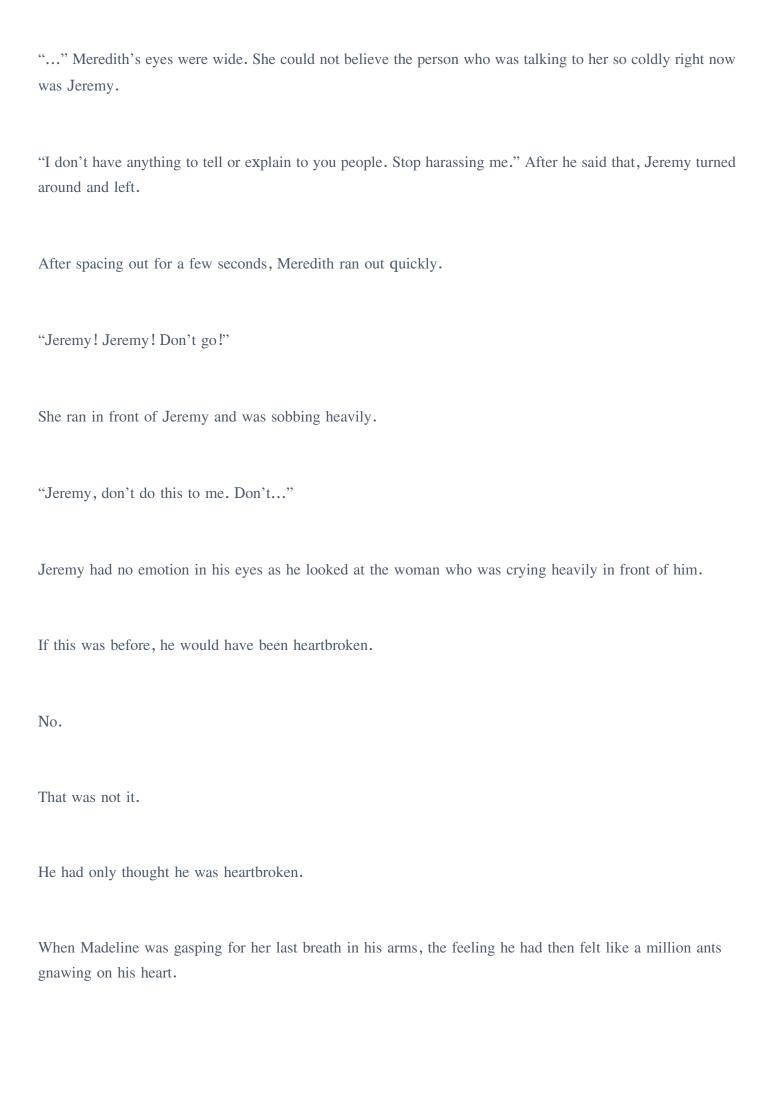


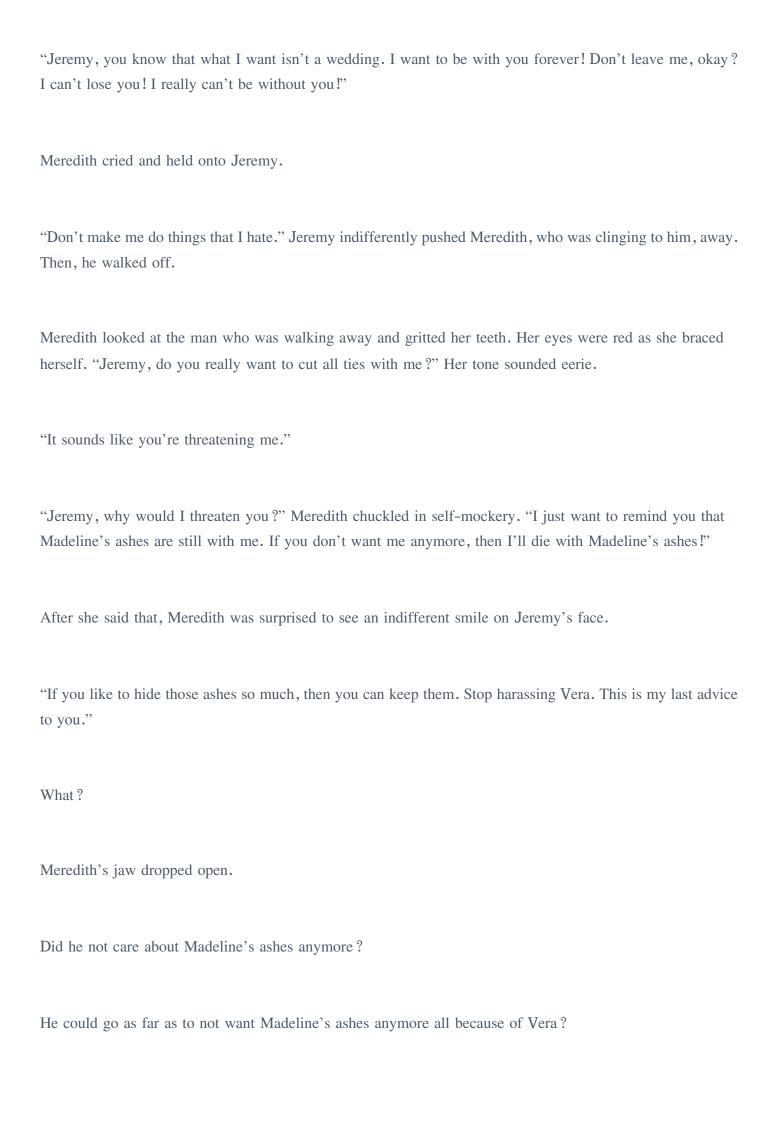
Madeline's voice sounded very despondent from the other end of the phone.
Meredith was standing next to Jeremy. Although the others could not hear it, she could hear everything that was being said on the phone clearly.
She saw Madeline getting up and leaving from the corner of her eyes. At the same time, Jeremy turned around.
"Jeremy!" Meredith grabbed him frantically. "Jeremy, the ceremony isn't over yet, don't"
Before Meredith could finish, Jeremy pushed her hand away.
He frowned and strode in the direction where Madeline left in.
"Jeremy! Where are you going?" Jeremy's mother was shocked.
"Jeremy!" Meredith called out to him frantically. She was about to vomit blood from anger.
"W-What's going on?"
"Based on Mr. Whitman's expression, I guess something serious has happened."
The guests were all confused.
Those journalists Quickly ran over to get some exclusive news.
Madeline deliberately slowed down at this time as she wanted to let Jeremy catch up to her.

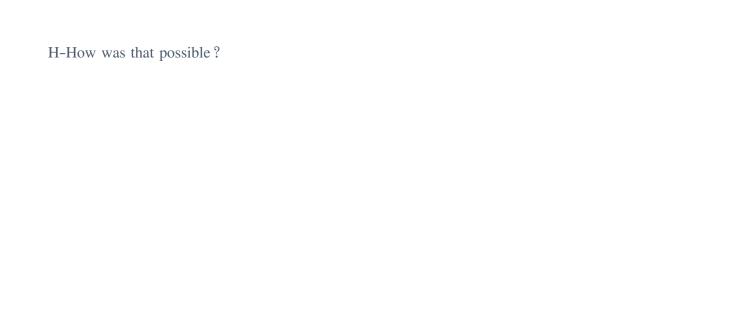


The viral tweet of Jeremy abandoning Meredith at the wedding and leaving with another mysterious woman in his arms quickly made headlines.
Everyone was guessing who this mysterious woman was.
However, some reliable sources exposed that the woman was Vera Quinn.
After a while, Vera's Twitter page blew up.
Meredith bought a bunch of haters to curse and swear at Vera on her profile.
However, after a while, everything about this news could not be found anymore.
After Jeremy asked Ken to remove the trending tweets, he handed a glass of warm water to Madeline.
"Are you sure you don't want to go to the hospital?" Jeremy asked worriedly.
Madeline smiled and shook her head. "I think it's because I didn't want to see you marrying another woman, that's why I started to feel unwell. I didn't want to hear you say I do'."

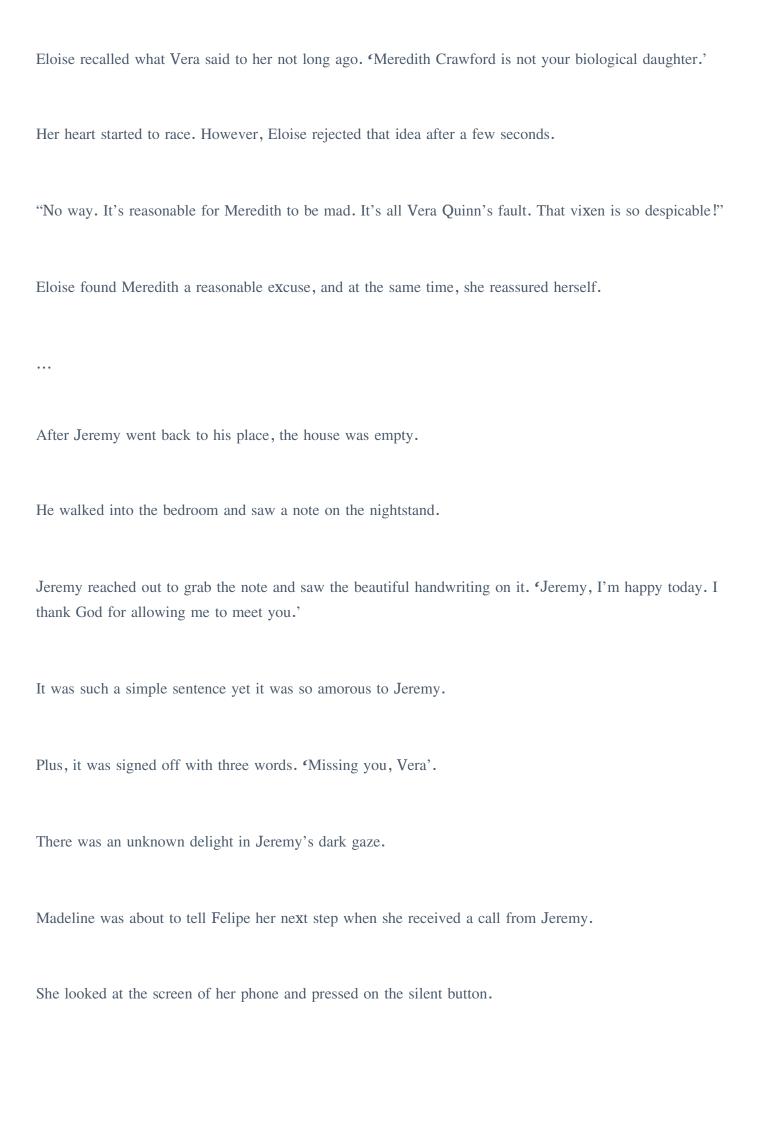


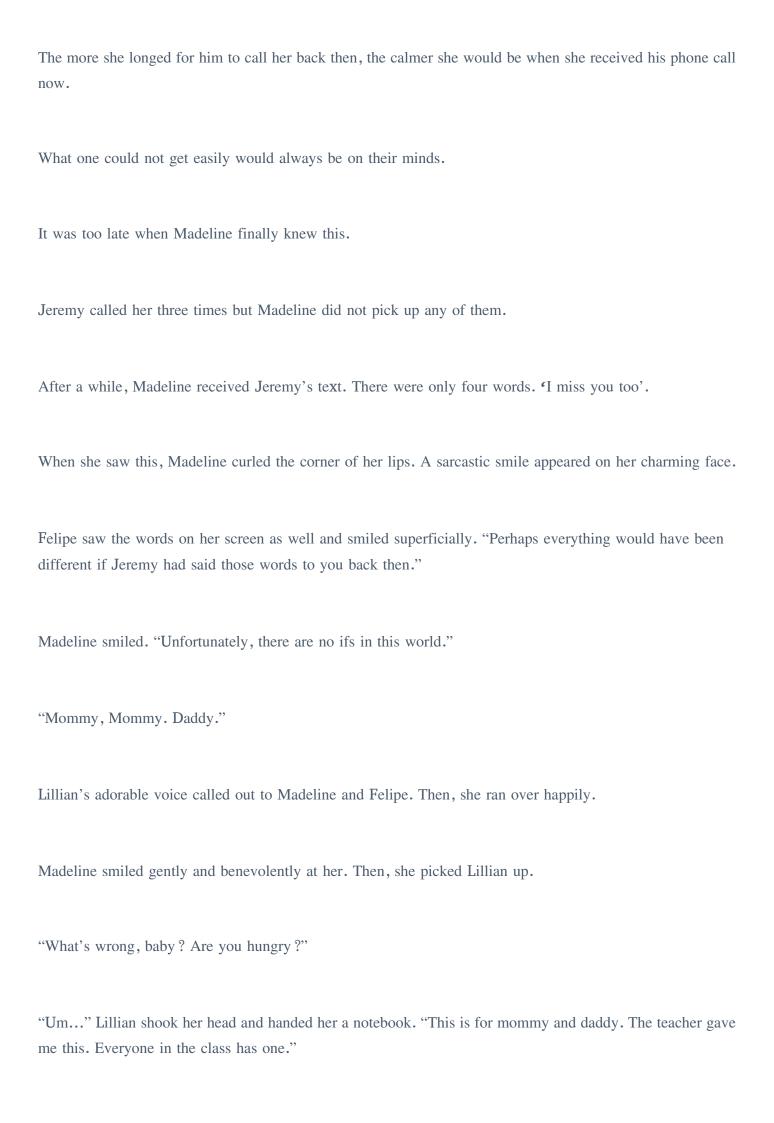




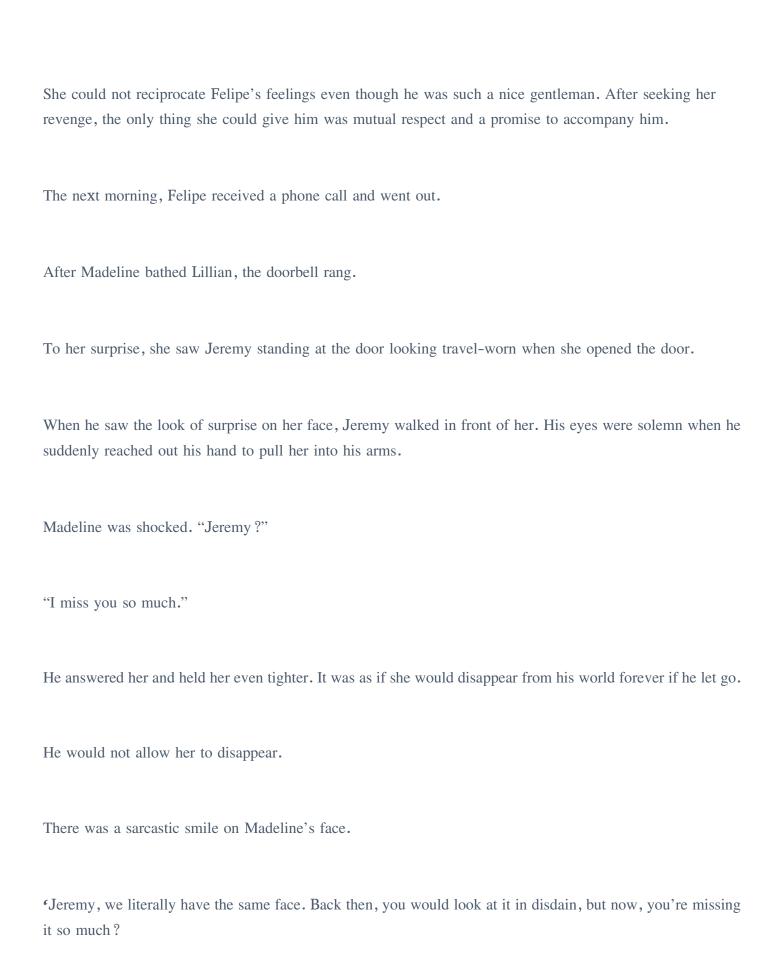


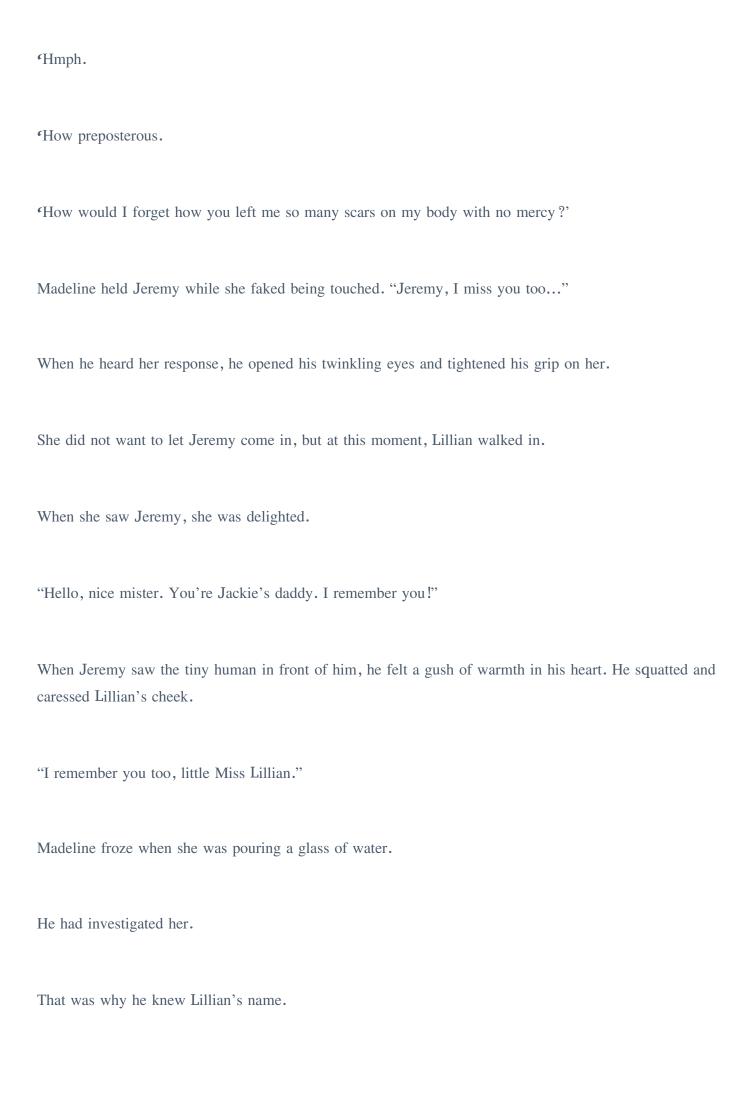






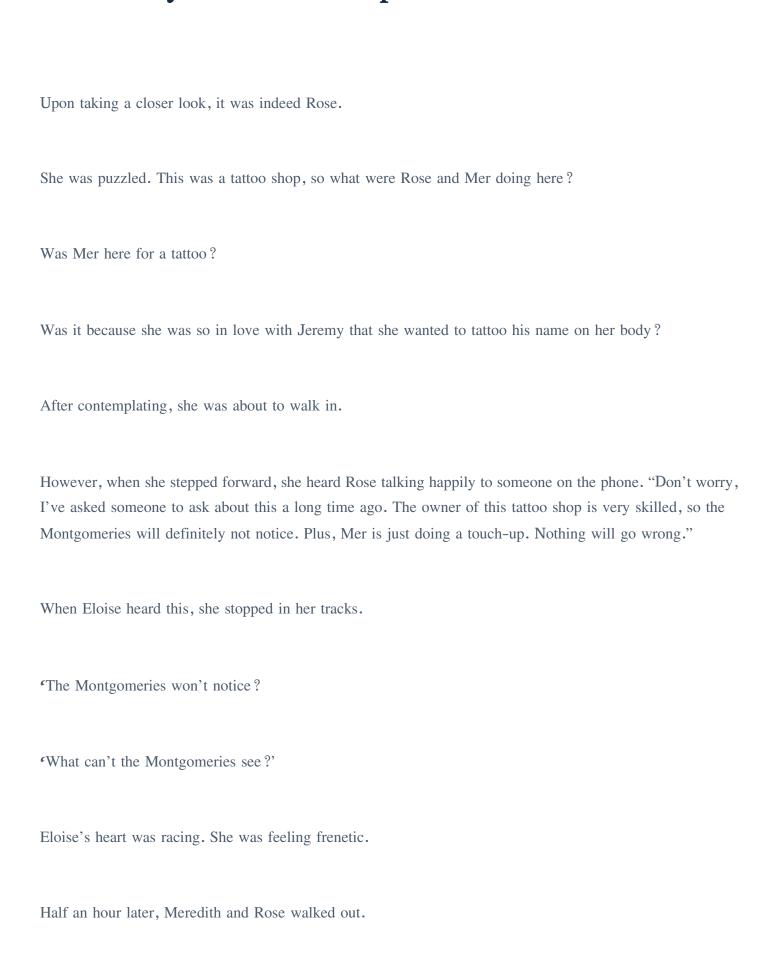
Madeline looked at it. "It's a parent-child activity. It's happening this Saturday."
"The teacher said everyone's daddies and mommies will be there." Lillian looked at Madeline with her crystal-like eyes.
Felipe reached out his hand and caressed Lillian's head. "Mommy and Daddy will go with Lillian as well."
"Yay!" Lillian clapped in delight. She turned around and kissed Madeline. Then, she reached out her arms toward Felipe. "Daddy, hold me. I want to kiss Daddy too."
Felipe smiled warmly and took Lillian into his arms.
Lillian then planted a kiss on Felipe's face.
Felipe's eyes were filled with love. He had always treated the little girl in his arms as if she was his daughter.
Madeline felt warm when she saw this scene.
However, whenever this happened, aside from gratitude and thankfulness toward Felipe, Madeline would also feel apologetic.





However, the fortunate thing was Felipe had made some changes to the DNA report. That was why Jerems got rid of his suspicion toward her.	<b>√</b>
As she pondered, she saw Jeremy picking Lillian up.	
He was a cold person and was unapproachable. However, there was a warm smile on his cold and resolute fact at this moment.	e
On the other hand, Lillian had always resisted strangers. However, she was only so close to Jeremy.	
Was it because they were connected by blood?	
If it's really because of blood relation, then why can't my birth mother feel my presence?"	
Madeline spaced out, and the hot water burned her.	
At the same time, Eloise's finger was also cut by the metallic part of the jewelry when she was choosing accessories for Meredith in a shop. There was a thin bloody line on her finger.	
The manager kept apologizing to her and took care of her wound for her.	
After a while, Eloise left the shop with two jewelry boxes.	
Eloise knew that Meredith was feeling down these few days. Her groom had left with another woman durir her wedding ceremony.	g
She wanted to invite Meredith to come with her so that she would feel better. However, Meredith said she wanted in the mood. As her mother, Eloise understood. As such, she came out alone to buy some jewelry to surprise her.	ıs

As long as her daughter was happy, she would not mind a wound on her finger. However, when she was about to call the driver to drive her home, she saw Meredith and Rose walking to the elevator while holding hands. She wanted to call out to Meredith, but it would look bad to yell in public, so she decided to call her instead. The call went through, and she saw Meredith taking out her phone. She thought Meredith would pick up the phone, but she saw her looking at the caller ID with disdain instead. Then, Meredith tossed her phone back into her bag and continued walking into the elevator with Rose. They were chatting happily in the process. Eloise was stunned when she saw that. She could not even react as she was holding her phone. However, she quickly found an excuse for Meredith. It was because she was not in the mood. It was because Meredith was raised by Rose, so that was why they were so close to each other. Despite that, Eloise still felt uneasy. She saw the elevator stopping on the third floor. She followed them to the third floor as well. However, she eventually lost Meredith and Rose. She looked for them in every shop. Finally, when she walked past a tattoo shop, she heard Rose's voice.



Eloise was hiding at one side. When she saw Meredith, she only saw that she was in high spirits. There was no trace of sadness on her face.
She watched in disbelief as Meredith walked further away. Then, she came back to her senses and walked into the tattoo shop.
Eloise found a photo of Meredith on her phone and asked the staff there. "What did this woman do just now?"
The staff rejected her with a serious look on his face. "We can't reveal our customers' confidential information to protect their privacy."
Then, Eloise generously took out 500 dollars in cash. The staff's eyes lit up as he took the money. "Oh, that woman. The color on her tattoo has faded, so she's just here for a touch-up."
Tattoo? Touch-up?
Eloise was confused.
*Does Mer have a tattoo?'
She had never seen any tattoos on Meredith in all these years of interacting with her.
Was it on some intimate part of her body? Was that why Meredith did not want her to find out because she was worried they would lecture her?
When she thought about this, Eloise felt that it was reasonable. However, she felt slightly devastated.
"You stupid child, so what if you have a tattoo? How would I blame you?"

Eloise let out a sigh of relief. She did not think too much about it and was not bothered about why Meredith had purposely not answered her phone just now.

Half an hour later, Meredith and Eloise went back to Montgomery Manor together.

Eloise went to Meredith's room like nothing ever happened. She gave her the expensive jewelry that she bought just now.

Even though Meredith had been living the life of a rich young lady, she was still as avaricious as before. She could not hide her joy.

"Mom, you're so good to me." She played her part as an obedient daughter.

Eloise patted her shoulder to comfort her, saying, "You're my only daughter. So no matter what you do, I'll always support you and protect you."

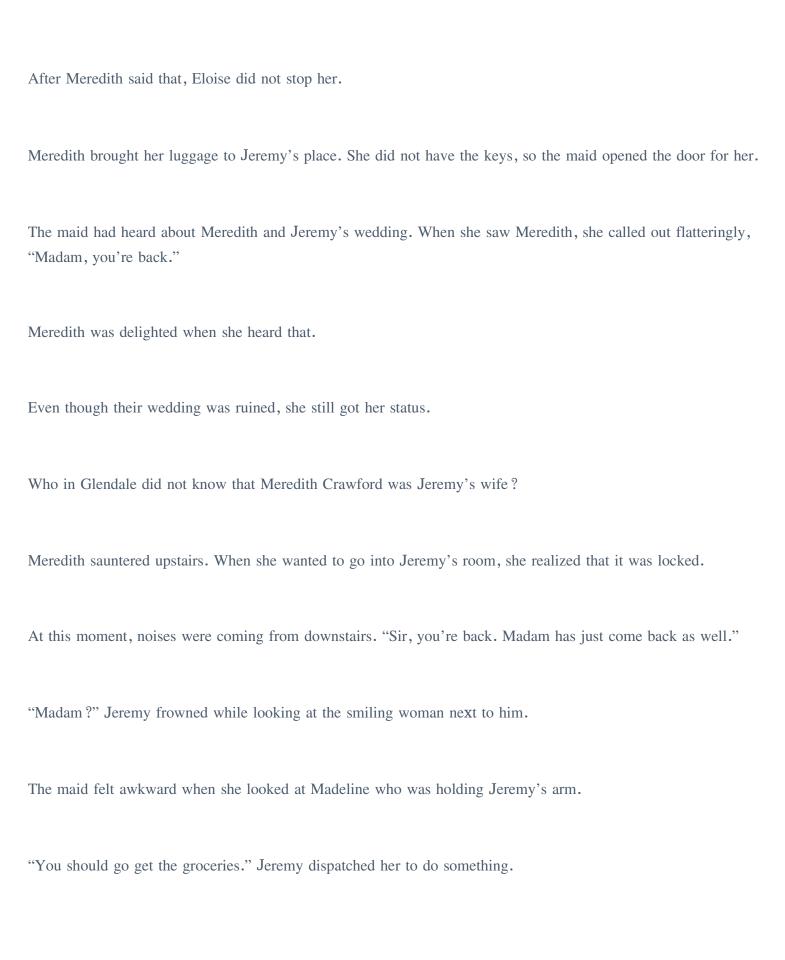
Eloise was hinting at her. She was hoping that Meredith would tell her about her tattoo and not just depend on her adoptive mother, Rose.

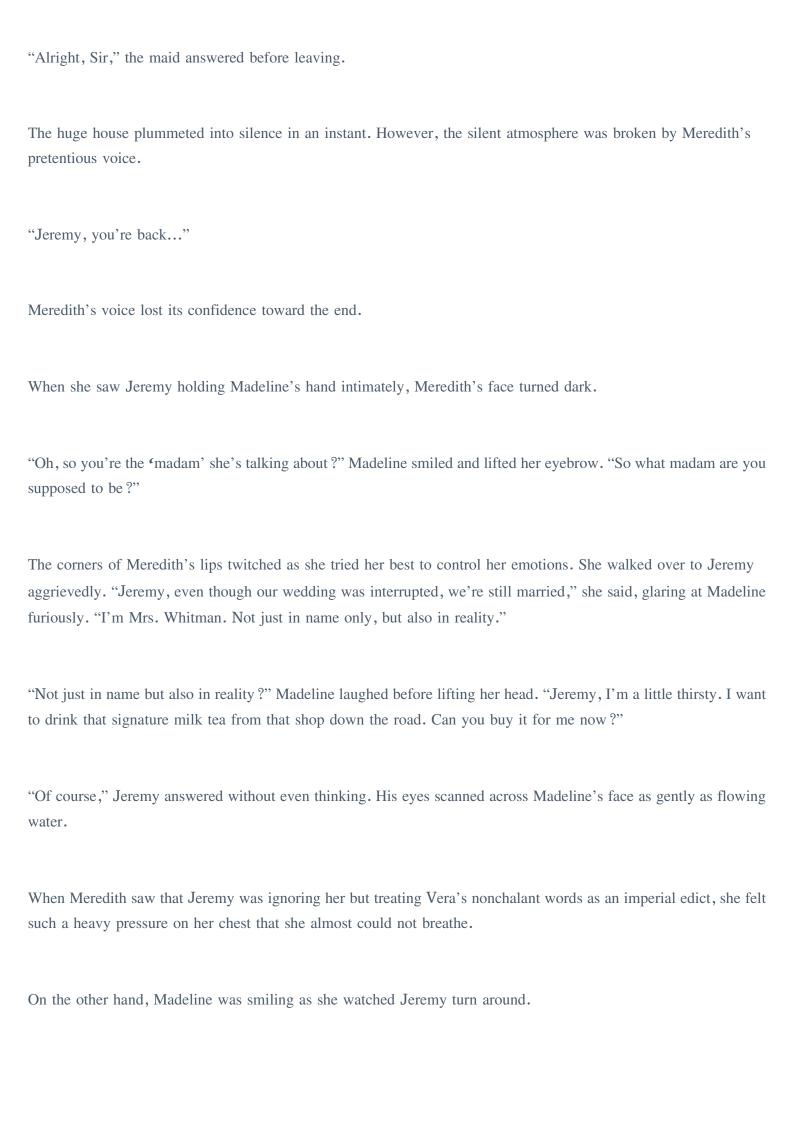
Of course, Meredith would not understand the hidden meaning of this sentence. She put on her gorgeous jewelry and packed a few sets of clothes.

"Mom, I've thought about it. Even though my wedding with Jeremy was cut short, everyone still knows that we're married. So, from this day onward, I'll be moving in with him."

Eloise's expression changed. "Mer, do you truly like Jeremy so much? He's not worthy of you."

"Jeremy is the man I love the most in this lifetime. He's amazing. He's just confused by that Vera Quinn. One day, Jeremy will finally realize that I'm the woman who deserves his love the most," Meredith said sensibly, "Plus, I want to give Jack a complete family."





"Vera Quinn!"
After Jeremy left, Meredith finally exploded without holding herself back.
"Vera Quinn, you absolute b*tch! How shameless can you be? How dare you seduce my husband so brazenly?"
Madeline turned around indifferently when she heard Meredith's desperate shrieks. "So what if I'm brazen? It's much better than being a two-sided b*tch like you. You're doing one thing in front of people but doing the complete opposite behind their backs. The most important thing is that Jeremy likes me like this."
"You" Meredith was trembling with anger. "You b*tch! You seduce my husband like it's the inevitable and right thing to do! You witch!"
"If I'm a witch, then what kind of beast are you, Meredith?" Madeline asked. "I reminded you over the phone that day. I told you you'd regret it if you want me to show up at your wedding. However, you proudly insisted that I can't compete with you. Can you see the results now?"
Meredith widened her eyes as she came to a realization. "I knew it! Vera, I knew all about it. You already had a plan! You already had a plan to ruin my wedding with Jeremy. You had planned to steal Jeremy away from me! Why do you have to steal my man away from me? You b*tch! Why do you want to steal my man?"
Meredith was furious, and she yelled as she tried to hit Madeline.
However, the moment she lifted her hand, it was stopped mid-air. In a flash, Madeline flicked her wrist away and slapped Meredith across the face loudly.
Madeline grabbed Meredith's wrist forcefully as a sharp glint appeared in her eyes. She looked extremely overbearing. "Why? You're seriously asking me why? Meredith, did you already forget what you did back then?"

Meredith widened her eyes as she looked at the woman in front of her while at a loss. She was beyond shocked when she saw the piercing and proud gaze staring back at her.
"You Vera, what do you mean? What does my past have to do with you?"
"Does it not?" Madeline put her face closer to hers. "Look at my face. Without going against your conscience, can you say that what you've done in the past has nothing to do with me?"
"
Meredith's heart was racing.
The face in front of Meredith reminded her of Madeline, the woman she had forced to her death.
Her eyes widened, and she was petrified.
"Y-You Madeline"
Madeline smirked when she saw Meredith's horrified expression.
"Why? Do you finally remember what you did? Do you remember how you shamelessly stuck your foot into Madeline and Jeremy's marriage? Do you remember how you harmed Madeline with all your ruses and caused her to carry all those burdens even until the day she died?"

Madeline's spirited eyes were filled with icy rage. Hatred was burning in her heart and it was slowly burning its way to Meredith's body. "So, there's no need for you to feel so aggrieved now. You destroyed someone else's marriage back then, so you should've known that it'll come back to bite you in the \*ss." When she heard those words and saw that face, Meredith went from frenetic to seething with anger. She pulled her hand back, her eyes looking sinister. "Vera, you indeed came prepared. You even looked into my past!" Meredith ground her teeth. "If I hadn't seen how you seduced Jeremy with my own two eyes, I would have thought that you're that penniless and wretched b\*tch Madeline Crawford who deserved to die!" She scoffed and rolled her eyes. Then, she looked at Madeline with a wretched look. "Hmph, so what do you want to do now? Are you going to scare me with that face? Do you think I'm scared of you? Even if that btch isn't dead yet, I have the power to make her die one more time! And you will be the same! If you dare to go against me, I'll strangle you to death just like how I strangled Madeline's bstard child!" It turned out that Meredith was the one who killed her child. Madeline felt debilitating pain in her heart. That indescribable hatred made her want to strangle this devil in front of her right now. At this moment, the door was pushed open with a loud bang. Meredith's heart skipped a beat. She felt a gust of frigid air crashing against her. She turned around quickly, and when she saw Jeremy's furious face, coldness started creeping up from the bottom of her feet.

"J-Jeremy," Meredith stammered, "W-Why are you back so soon?"
Jeremy's face did not carry a hint of warmth. He walked over slowly with seething anger and an icy aura. An invisible storm was also following behind him. Meredith's face lost its color gradually.
"What did you say just now?" Jeremy said slowly.
Meredith felt herself shaking. She felt that this was the calm before the storm.
"I T-This b*tch slapped me just now!" Meredith changed the topic and touched her face aggrievedly. "Jeremy, you have to stand up for me." Meredith complained while looking weak. However, she noticed that Jeremy was only staring at her with a cold look. Meredith became frenetic.
"J-Jeremy, I was just babbling. This woman was trying to infuriate me and that's why I made it all up! I just wanted to scare her! I was hoping she'd know her place and leave you."
"Your way of scaring someone is so unique, Miss Crawford. Back then, you wanted to disfigure me just like how you disfigured Madeline with a knife. Just earlier, you said you wanted to strangle me to death like how you strangled Madeline's child. Jeremy, I'm so scared."
Madeline ran over to Jeremy and leaned against him in fear.
Her intense aura before this became soft in an instant.
Meredith was beyond shocked when she saw Madeline's sudden change in attitude.
This Vera Quinn was even more of an expert than she was!



If Jeremy asked her about the child he had with Madeline back then, she would not know how to answer him. Back then, she had hired someone to induce labor on Madeline. Then, she kept that premature child that she stole as her own. After Madeline was released from prison, she lied to her that Jeremy was the one who killed the child. After Jeremy knew about Madeline's delivery in prison, Meredith hired someone to fake a report to make him believe that the child died from some complications during the birth. Only Rose, Jon, and she knew about this secret. She would not allow a fourth person to know about this! Madeline had an anxious expression on her face downstairs. "Jeremy, I've sacrificed so much just to be with you. I'm so scared that Meredith will do something extreme to hurt me. Did she really strangle your child with Madeline to death back then?" Jeremy felt a pang of pain in his heart. He looked into her suspicious yet concerned eyes with an intense gaze. "If I tell you I'm not sure, will you believe me?" he asked her back. On the surface, Madeline looked curious, but there was already a sarcastic smile in her heart. 'Jeremy Whitman, how dare you tell me you're not sure?! I saw with my own two eyes how you had asked someone to break open the tombstone and crush the child that I carried for ten months into dust. You didn't even leave the child's ashes alone and now you're telling me so nonchalantly that you're not sure?' "You should live with me from now. Don't leave my sight. I'll protect you."

The man's gentle voice caressed her ear.
Madeline recalled that particular memory that was filled with hatred. She looked at the second floor. "Will Meredith stay here as well?"
Jeremy smiled gently at Madeline. "Trust me, you'll become the only matriarch of this house soon. In addition to that, you'll also become my only wife."
The only matriarch and wife?
Madeline laughed. She found it ironic, and at the same time, pathetic. However, she would still put on this act until the very end. "Okay, I believe you."
'No, Jeremy, the only person I believe is myself.
I believe that soon enough, I'll let you and Meredith get the punishment and retribution you deserve!
She looked at him as she swore in her heart. Then, he grabbed her hand.
"I want to take you to a place now."

The moment Madeline came back to her senses, Jeremy led her out of the door.

Madeline was curious when she looked at his profound gaze.

Where was he taking her?

Meredith stayed in the guest room for some time before she heard the sound of a car engine.

She looked out from the balcony and saw Jeremy driving Madeline away.

She grabbed her bag while mumbling curses. Then, she called a car to go back to the Crawford family home to discuss her next move.

After getting more information from Meredith, Rose and Jon started screaming profanities at Vera. Then, there were looks of worry on their faces.

"How dare that btch slap you?! She even barged into the house to steal Jeremy from you! She's even more despicable than Madeline! Trust that I'll rip her into pieces with my bare hands!" Rose glared and clenched her fists angrily. "Mer, is that woman carrying Jeremy's child? If it's true, then you should kill that bstard child immediately!"

"Of course, I know that!" Meredith already had a plan for this. "But it's like Jeremy's been possessed. He'll listen to everything that b\*tch says!"

"Why?" Jon was curious.

Meredith gritted her teeth and said reluctantly, "That b\*tch Madeline is dead, so he has placed all of his longing and love on Vera instead!

"Jeremy only cared about me the most this entire time. However, now that the b\*tch is dead, he told me that he has never loved me. He only has the innocent fondness of when he first met me when we were kids toward me. Hmph, fondness? That fondness is also toward Madeline and not me!"

When Rose saw Meredith shaking from anger, she came up with a plan. "Mer, don't be mad. Don't you have another bargaining chip at hand?" She lifted her eyebrow. "That brat Jackson is the best bargaining chip now."

"That b\*stard child?" Meredith asked in disdain. "I should've strangled him to death back then! He's just a sore sight now."

"If he's such a sore sight, you should make him disappear! However, you have to push all the blame on that wh\*re. That way, you'll be killing two birds with one stone!"

When Meredith heard that, there was an extremely sinister glint in her eyes.

"Mom, you're so smart. There's a parent-child hike this afternoon. That b\*tch Vera will definitely show up. That'll be such a good opportunity!"

There was an evil smirk on her face.

She was an expert in shifting the blame to others after killing someone!

. . .

Madeline did not expect Jeremy to bring her to that familiar cemetery when he said he wanted to take her somewhere.

He bought another bouquet of fiery red roses. However, this time, he gave the flowers to Madeline.

Madeline did not count how many there were. She glanced at it and guessed that there were about 99 roses like last time.

She held the roses while leaning against the side of the car. She smiled and said, "Jeremy, are you taking me on a date here?"

Jeremy looked at her and said, "I never thought that this place was scary. Until that day three years ago when a woman stood in front of me and told me that she'd give everything back to me, including her ashes. It was then I finally realized that a person's death is the scariest thing in this world."

Madeline's heart started racing after she heard that.

'Is he talking about me?

'Did he realize the terror of 'death' from my death?

'Hmph.

'Jeremy, are you afraid of death?

'Then, have you ever thought that my child would also be scared when you killed it?'

She lifted her gaze with a pejorative smile.

Under the glow of the sunset, the man's eyes looked dazed and deep.

"Vera, you truly love me, right?"

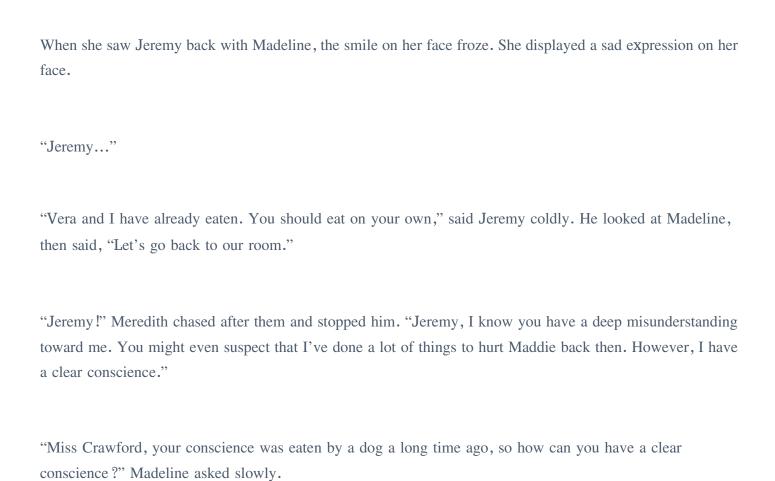
Madeline smiled bashfully and answered without thinking, "Of course. Of course, I flove' you."

Jeremy smiled. He looked at the breathtaking beauty in front of him. Then, a glint appeared in his eyes. "That's enough for me."

The evening mist hung low when Jeremy brought Madeline back to his place.

When he opened the door, the smell of food spilled out from the kitchen.

"Jeremy, you're back. I made dinner." Meredith smiled and walked out.



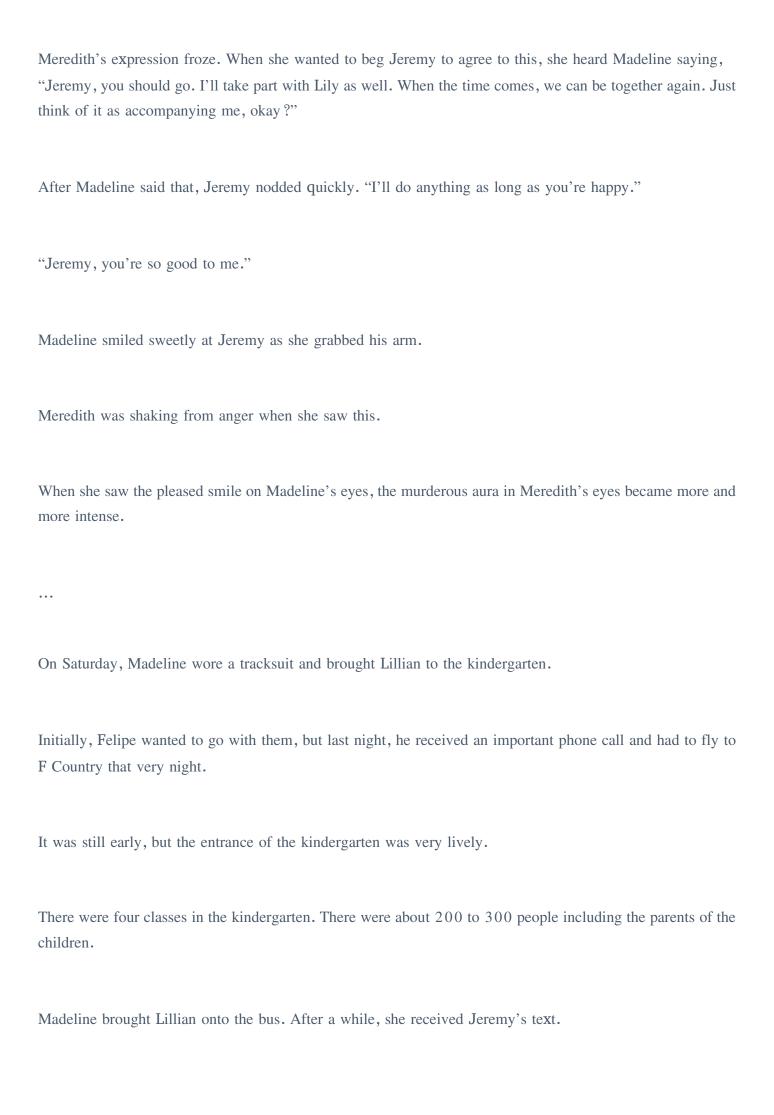
Meredith frowned as a fire of rage burned in her heart. However, she had to endure this for the sake of

"Jeremy, there's a parent-child hike in Jack's kindergarten this Saturday. It requires the parents to take part with the children. No matter what misunderstanding you have with me now, at the end of the day, Jack is still

our child. I hope you can take part in that activity with me and Jack."

"You can just go by yourself." Jeremy rejected straightforwardly.

carrying out her plan.



She turned around and saw Meredith and Jackson. They were standing next to Jeremy sweetly as they were in line to get onto the bus.
However, Jackson looked dispirited. His hand was being tightly held by Meredith. He even looked kind of down.
This child did not like noisy places and would only lock himself in a dark corner somewhere to nurse his wounded little heart.
Madeline felt a pang of pain in her heart. Suddenly, she had an urge to run down the bus to hug Jackson. However, the bus had already started moving.
Half an hour later, the bus stopped in the outskirts of the town that was famed for having the most spectacular view in Glendale.
This place was suitable for family activities like picnics and tracking.
It was the middle of fall, and the air was refreshing. It was the perfect time for activities.
Looking at Lillian's happy smile, Madeline suddenly felt as if she was not a good mother.
She had been neglecting her daughter for the sake of revenge.
Even though she hated her daughter's father, she could not deny the fact that Lillian was her only hope to continue living. Furthermore, she came to be because of Jeremy.
"Ew, Lillian, so it's true that you don't have a daddy!" Suddenly, a little boy pointed at Lillian and laughed with a smug look on his face. That little brat even placed his hands on his hips while targeting Lillian with his words. "Lillian, you liar. You said your daddy is handsome but you don't even have one!" The little boy stuck

out his tongue at her in a mocking manner. "Look at my daddy. He's the most handsome man!" He pointed in one direction.

Lillian frowned with wide eyes. "I'm not lying. I have a daddy. My daddy is super duper handsome!"

"You don't! You don't have a daddy. If you do, where is he? You liar! I only pulled your braid last time and you lied to me that your daddy is strong. You even told me to stop bullying you, but in reality, you don't have a daddy!" The little boy stuck out his tongue at her again.

The little brat was saying such words arrogantly. After he said that, he reached out to grab Lillian's braid again. Madeline quickly ran over to stop him, but then, she felt something warm behind her. Then, a hand stopped the brat's hand that was reaching toward Lillian before Madeline could act on it.

"Ouch, it hurts!" the little brat yelled in exaggeration. He lifted his head to take a look and was horrified by the man in front of him.

"F\*ck! Who are you? How dare you touch my son?!" The brat's father came over while cursing.

Jeremy lifted his handsome face and carried Lillian into his arms. "I'm Lillian's father, Jeremy Whitman."

When Madeline heard Jeremy's introduction, she was taken aback. She lifted her gaze and saw Jeremy holding Lillian. His angry eyes were staring straight at the man who was charging over.

"Daddy! It's him! He bullied me!" That brat ran behind the man hurriedly. Then, he pointed at Jeremy and started complaining about him.

The man rubbed his hands together as if he was about to start fighting Jeremy. However, when he saw Jeremy's face, he wilted instantly. "M-Mr. Whitman! It's you!"

Jeremy was indifferent toward the man in front of him. Plus, he also had no memory of him. However, the man started introducing himself with a flattering smile. "Mr. Whitman, I-I'm an employee of the engineering department on the 16th floor in your company. You must have no idea who I am, but I've seen you before. I didn't think that we'll be brought together by fate!

"Oh, is this little girl your daughter? No wonder she's so pretty. She inherited all of your excellent genes. Just look at her nose and mouth, they're the same as yours..."

When she heard that, Madeline interrupted angrily. "Sir, your eloquence is horrible. Why don't you teach your son the most basic manners instead?" Madeline scolded the man. When the man was about to fight back, he saw Madeline walking next to Jeremy and taking Lillian into her arms.

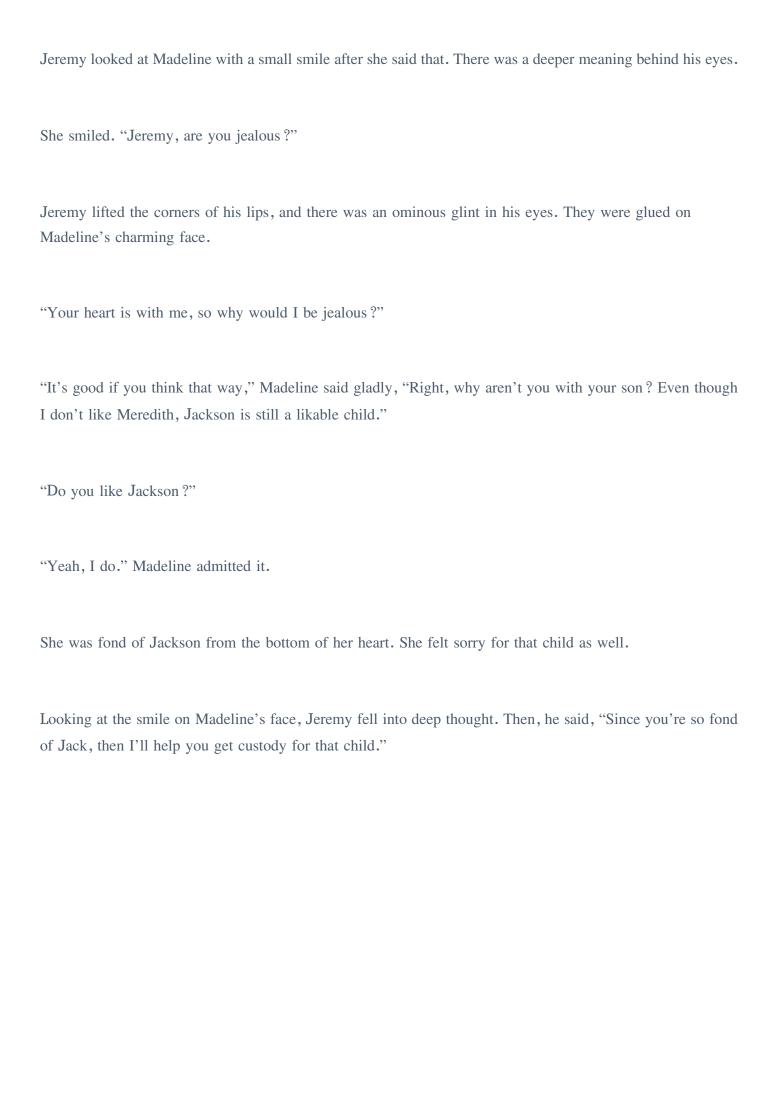
"Oh, is this your wife, Mr. Whitman? How dignified and easy-mannered. You're right to lecture me, Mrs. Whitman. I'll teach my little brat a lesson when I go back!"

The man smacked the brat's head and darkened his face.

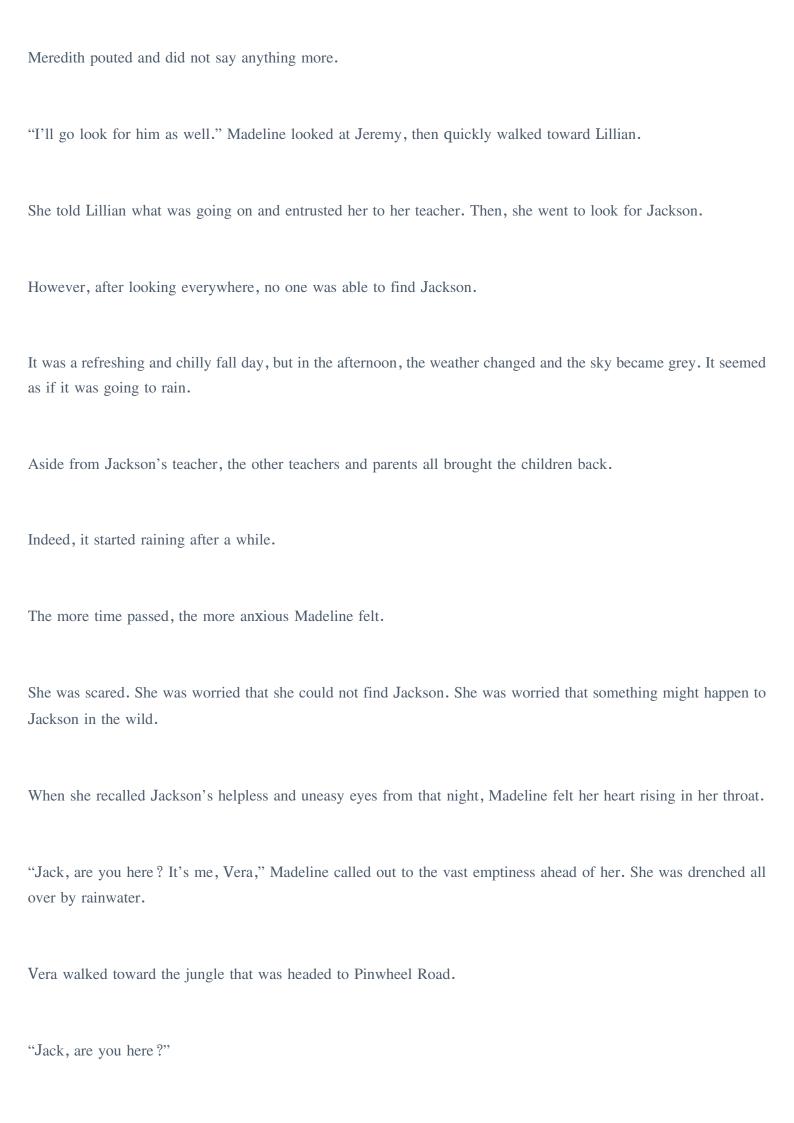
"You scoundrel, hurry up and apologize to that little girl. If you bully her again, I'll spank you until your butt falls off!" At this moment, the brat was not as arrogant. He lifted his anxious gaze and stammered, "I-I'm sorry, I won't do it again..." "Mr. Whitman, a-are you satisfied?" The man smiled flatteringly. Jeremy glanced at him with an icy glare. "Spare the rod, spoil the child. I'm blaming this on you. You'll receive a warning letter next week. If you receive two of them, you should just hand in your resignation letter." The man's face went white. He suddenly felt like an idiot for exposing his identity and causing himself trouble. "M-Mr. Whitman, let me explain..." Jeremy turned around indifferently and walked toward Madeline. When he got near to her, he heard Lillian's cute voice asking, "Mommy, the handsome mister said that he's Lily's daddy. Do I have two daddies now?" Madeline's expression changed. Then, she smiled. "Of course not. Remember, Lily, you only have one daddy. His name is—" "His name is Jeremy Whitman." When Madeline was interrupted, she lifted her gaze. She saw Jeremy walking over to her with a gentle look on his face.

He was also wearing a tracksuit today. His elegance and temperament did not lessen at all. The autumn wind blew on the hair in front of his face. In that instant, he looked like a teenager.







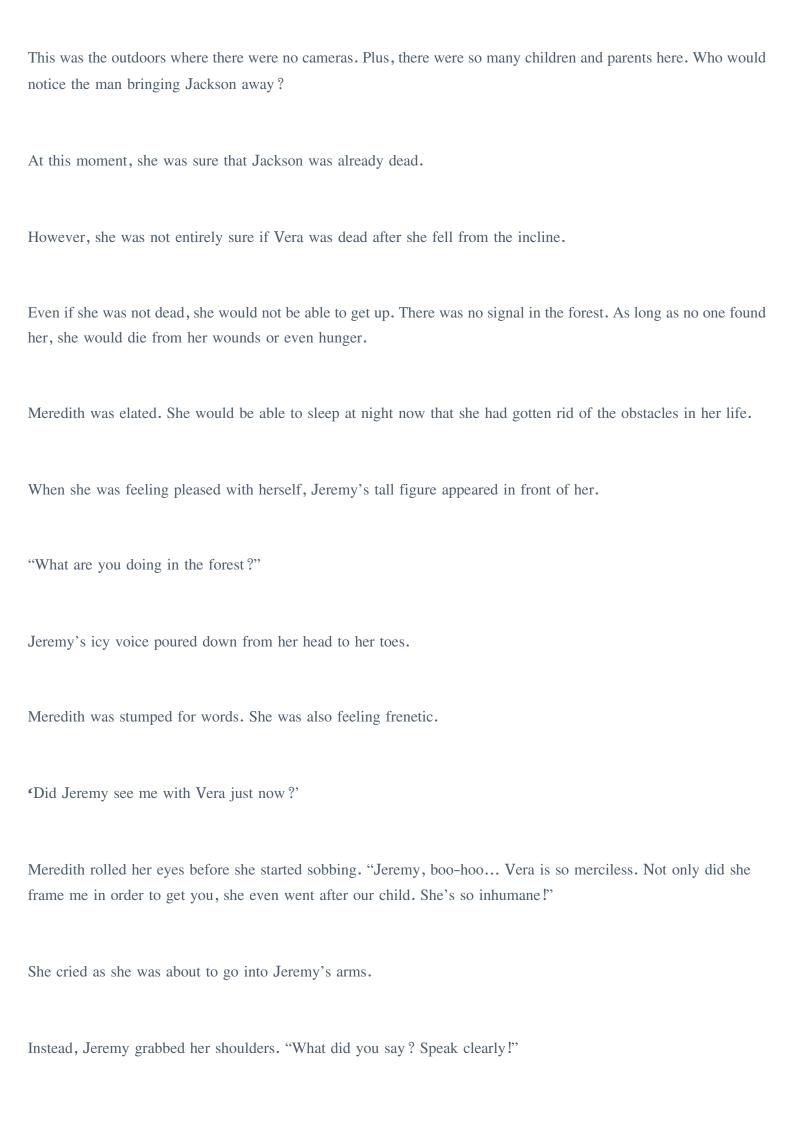




After a string of her evil laugh, Meredith pushed Madeline forcefully into the steep incline.

Madeline realized that this was just a ruse, so she grabbed Meredith's arm. However, since it was raining and the ground was wet, Madeline slipped and fell after losing her balance.





He lifted his sharp gaze that felt like arrows.

Meredith hid her franticness and started making up a story. "Jeremy, it's all Vera's fault! No wonder she asked you to join this activity. It's because she planned to use this opportunity to ask someone to kidnap Jack. Vera must've already harmed Jackson by now!"

Meredith sobbed and continued, "I noticed there was something amiss with Vera, so I followed her. I saw her talking to a man in the forest. She even gave the man a large sum of money. Then, I went over to question her. I didn't expect her to admit it so fast. She even wanted to shut me up forever by pushing me down that steep incline. In the end..."

Meredith pretended to look terrified as tears rolled down her cheeks uncontrollably.

Jeremy could feel his temples throbbing. He even felt that it was getting hard to breathe.

"What happened in the end? Tell me!" He roared. His eyebrows were already twisted into a knot.

Meredith shook and said, "In the end, she accidentally fell down the incline!"

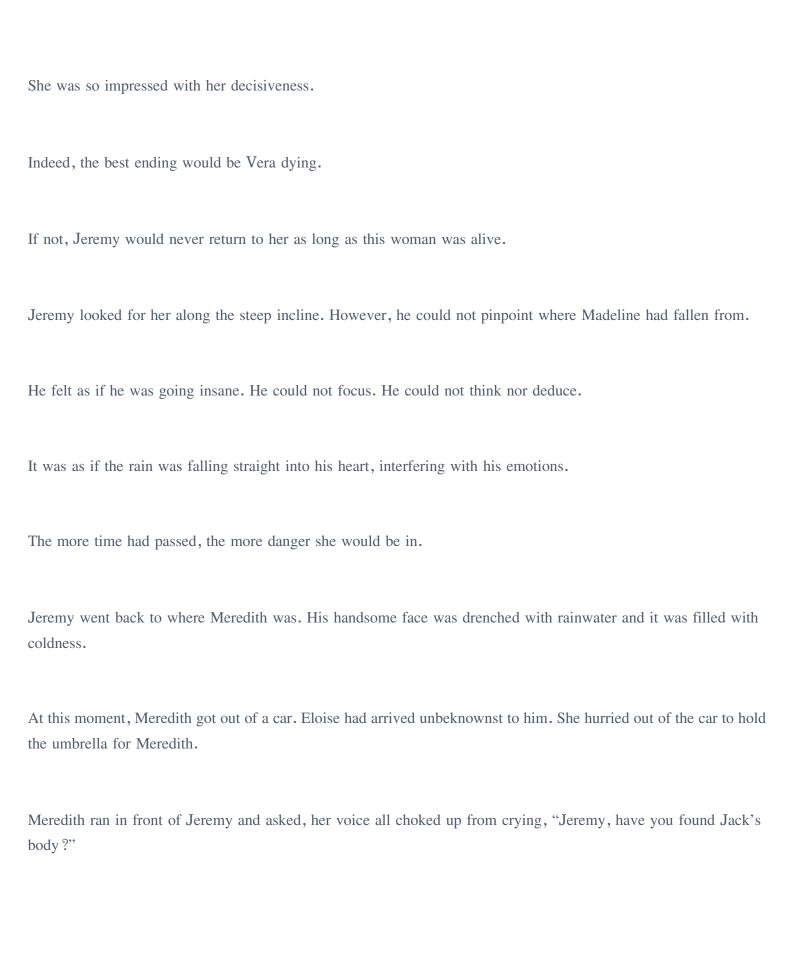
What did you say? She fell?" Jeremy's hands that were on Meredith's shoulders fell lifelessly. There was a storm in his charming eyes.

He turned around and went straight into the autumn rain that was getting heavier and heavier.

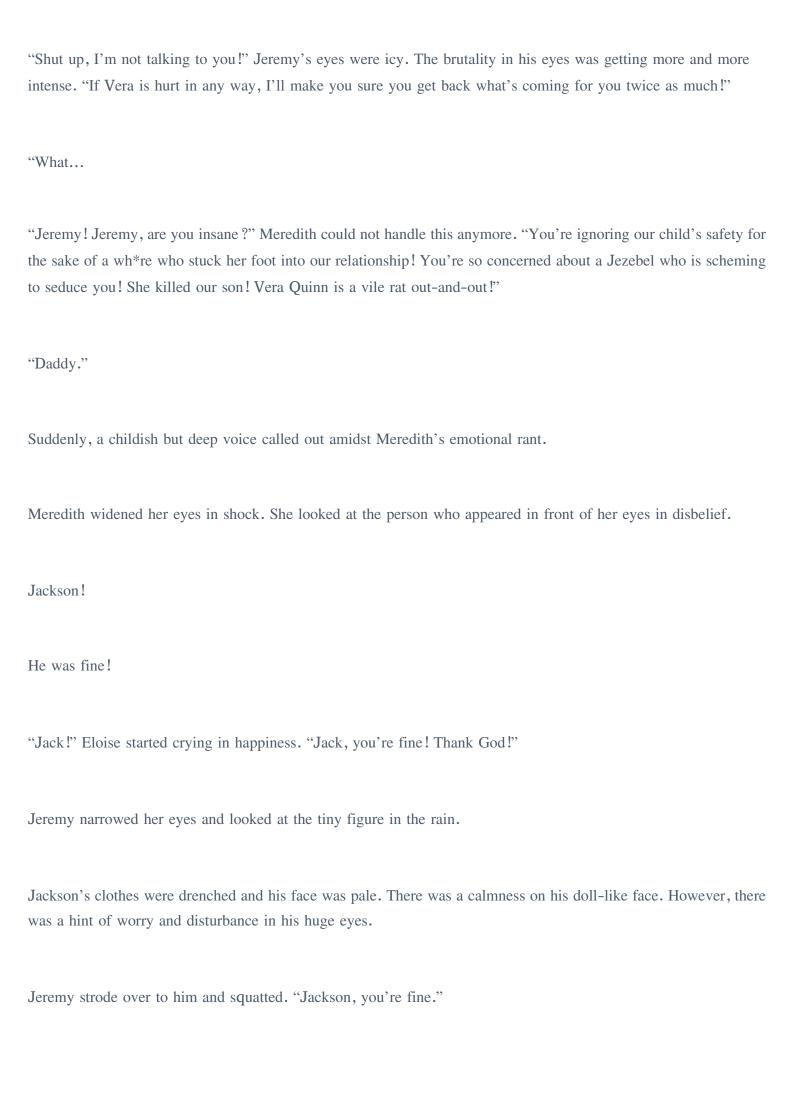
His heart was empty all of a sudden. The feeling of when he lost Madeline three years ago appeared in the bottom of his heart again. It felt as if his heart had plunged into a bottomless abyss.

Meredith clenched her fists as she watched Jeremy leave.

She did not expect Jeremy to care about Vera until this extent. He even ignored the safety of his own son so that he could go inside the forest to look for Vera.
"Hmph, it's good that she's dead." Meredith gritted her teeth. Then, a sinister smile appeared on her face.



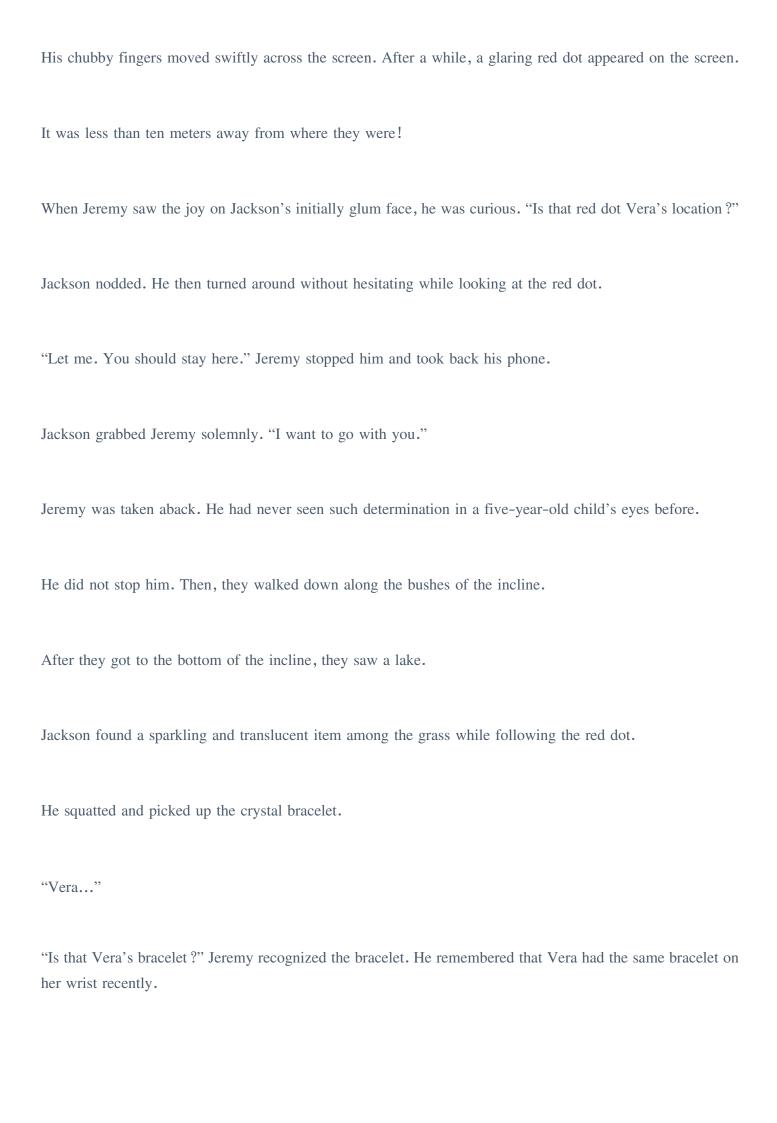
Jeremy's eyes darkened. There was a fit of intense anger in his eyes. "Body? How are you so sure that Jackson's dead?"
"V-Vera was the one who admitted this! She told me that she wanted to kill me and Jack so that she'll be able to have you all to herself," Meredith said confidently, "I didn't expect her to be so vicious. However, perhaps she has to suffer the consequences of her bad deeds, so that's why she fell."
"Jeremy, are you happy now? You killed your own son for a heartless wh*re!" Eloise accused Jeremy with her eyes red from crying. "My poor nephew. He's just five and he's been killed. Jack"
Jeremy scanned Eloise's face with a grim expression on his face. Then, he looked at Meredith's devastated face. "Do you think that I'll still believe your one-sided story?"
"" Meredith stopped crying as she lifted her stumped face.
Eloise was livid. "Jeremy! You're too much! How can you say that to Mer?! Do you think Mer's the one who killed Jack?"
Meredith's heartbeat accelerated as she cursed in her heart.
She was indeed the one who killed him.
When she thought about that in secret, Meredith received a bone-chilling gaze from Jeremy.
"Tell me. Where did Vera fall from?" he asked furiously. The patience in his eyes was diminishing gradually.
"Jeremy, y-you're still concerned about that wh*re at this moment!"

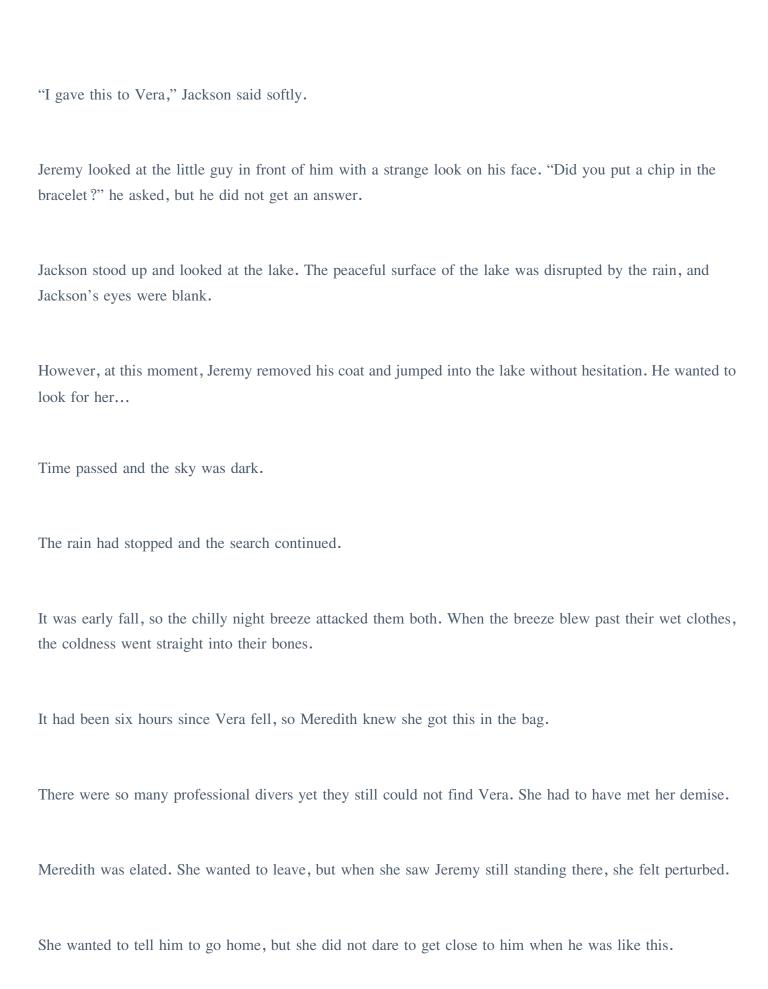


When he looked into his father's narrow eyes, Jackson said, "Please save Vera."
Jeremy's eyes lit up. "You know where Vera is?"
Jackson nodded. He looked at Meredith who was looking frantic at one side. "I saw Mommy pushing Vera down the incline with my own two eyes."



Jeremy scanned Meredith's face with a biting cold gaze. There were flames of anger in his eyes, making him look as if he was going to burn Meredith alive.
Then, she followed Jeremy and Jackson into the forest. The father and son duo had the same expressions on their faces. They were both worried about Vera.
How was this possible?
Why was that brat okay?
Meredith was distraught. However, Eloise was next to her, so she was unable to leave to find out what happened.
She could only curse viciously in her heart. She cursed that Vera was dead after falling down the incline.
A lot of time had passed. Jeremy and Jackson found the spot where Madeline had fallen from, but they could not pinpoint where exactly she was.
"Daddy, give me your phone."
When Jeremy was feeling agitated, he heard Jackson saying that to him.
He lowered his head and saw that the little guy had a serious look on his face. His eyes held the same worry and anxiety that were in his eyes.
Jeremy naturally trusted Jackson, so he handed over his phone.
After Jackson got the phone, he turned on the GPS and started operating it expertly.





When she looked at his cold eyes, she could feel a bone-chilling coldness. However, after thinking about it, she still made the first move timidly. "Jeremy, you've been in the rain this whole time and you're drenched. You should go back first. If not, you'll get sick." Her voice was soft as she expressed her concern. Jeremy turned a deaf ear. There were no emotions on his handsome face. Meredith put on an act of a saint. "Jeremy, please believe me. I didn't push Vera. She wanted to frame me, so she's now suffering the consequences of her own actions." After she finished saying that, she saw Jeremy glaring at her. Meredith's heart skipped a beat. She could not look into Jeremy's eyes any longer. That was the look he had when he was waiting outside the door after Madeline was rushed to the emergency room. Back then, his eyes were also horrifying. They were so dark that they looked like they would devour everything in their path. They looked so scary as if just his gaze alone would slice her into a million pieces. "You best pray that she's safe and sound." His words were icy while his eyes were like sharp knives. "If anything happens to her, I'll bury the person who harmed her next to her." He was not joking. At this moment, his heart felt as if it had plunged into a bottomless abyss, and that feeling

"..." Meredith took in a sharp breath, her face turning white from fear. "Jeremy, it's not me. I didn't..." She

sobbed shakily. "Jack, do you know you're going to kill me with what you said? How can you say that I was the one who pushed Vera? You're just five and you're already lying. What'll happen to you when you grow

was telling him just how much he cared about that missing woman.

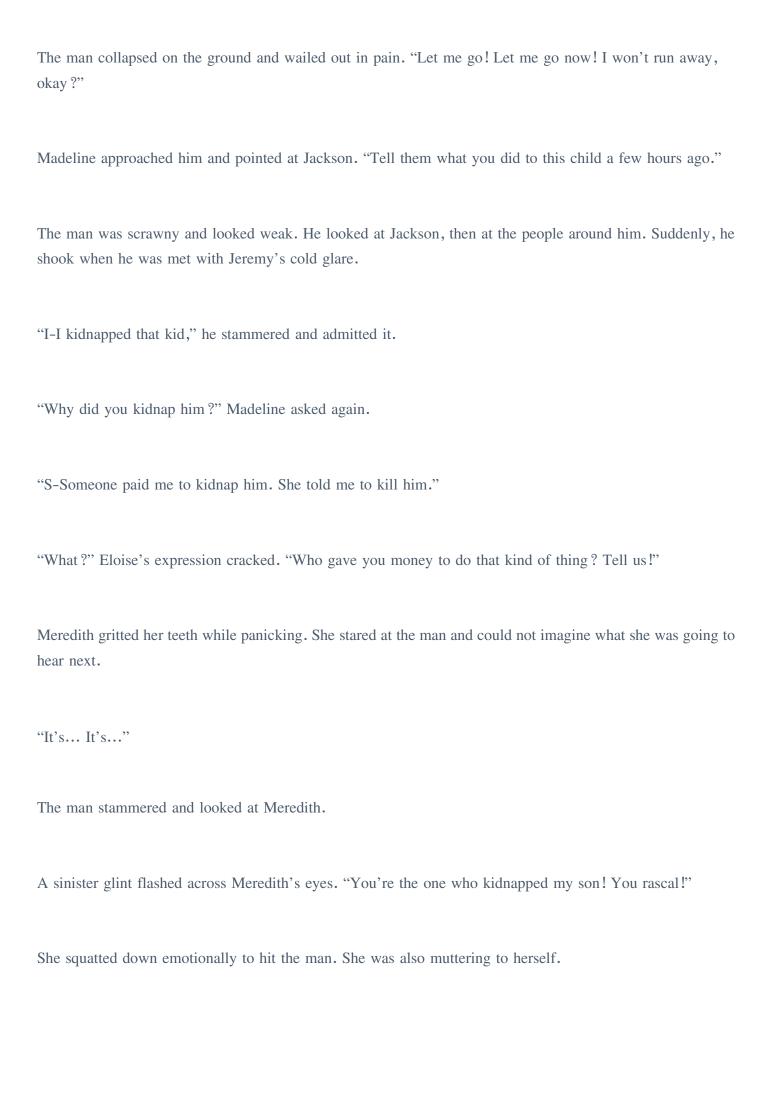
older?"

Jackson looked at Meredith who was blaming him with an indifferent look on his face. "I didn't lie."
"Jack, you're still spewing nonsense! What kind of drug did that Vera feed you? How can you side with her?" Eloise said in devastation, "Mer is your mother. Will you only be happy if you see your parents fighting?"
"Vera is a good person," Jackson said slowly, "Mommy hates me, so she wanted to throw me away, but I escaped. I saw with my own two eyes that Mommy pushed Vera."
After Jeremy heard this, he lifted his icy gaze. "You even wanted to throw this child away?"
"No! I didn't!" Meredith shook her head and denied hurriedly.
"How is that possible?" Eloise denied. "Mer gave birth to Jack after carrying him for ten months. How could she do something like that? Jack, are you crazy? How can you slander your mother like this?"
Meredith cried aggrievedly. "Jack, why are you doing this to me? Why are you making up such lies to falsely accuse me?"
"The liar isn't Jackson. It's you, Meredith."
In the night, a soft voice sounded all of a sudden.
Jeremy's silent heart soared instantly. He lifted his eyebrows and saw a poised figure appearing in the quiet night.
"Vera!" he called out. His voice sounded like he had found something he lost.
Her beautiful face was reflected in his dark black eyes while his heart slowly found its initial rhythm.

Meredith lifted her frozen face in disbelief. Her legs almost gave out when she saw the owner of the voice getting closer and closer.

What shocked her the most was the person Vera was holding captive. When Meredith saw that person, she felt as if she was done for.

When Jackson saw that Madeline was safe and sound, his large eyes shone brightly.
He did not say anything. However, the relief he felt was written on his face.
"Vera Quinn, you did so many cruel things and you're still safe and sound! You even have the guts to saunte back here!" Eloise pointed at Madeline and shouted, "What crimes do you want to accuse my daughter of now?"
Madeline lifted her crystal-like eyes. "Mrs. Montgomery, do you want me to die so much?" she asked with a smile. Her eyes looked bottomless as she continued, "I'm afraid that you'll never feel peace again if I did die Mrs. Montgomery."
"Hmph, a woman like you will not be remembered even if you're dead. Why would I feel uneasy if you're dead?" Eloise peered at her coldly. "Vera, I advise you to stop what you're doing. Persisting in evil brings about self-destruction!"
"You should tell that to your precious daughter, Meredith," Madeline said, throwing the man she was holding captive to Meredith's feet.
The man yelled out in pain before trying to get up and leave.
"Jeremy, don't let him run away."
After Jeremy heard that, he extended his long leg and tripped the man effortlessly.



Madeline watched quietly as Meredith put on a show. "Meredith, stop acting. You're the one who bribed this person. You made an excuse saying that Jack was missing, but in reality, you're the one who asked this man to kidnap Jack."

"Vera Quinn, God is always watching! You'll get your retribution for falsely accusing me like that!" Meredith stood up quickly and stared at the man on the ground like she had a clear conscience. "A straight foot has no fear of a crooked shoe! Alright, tell us. Tell everyone who was the one who asked you to kidnap my son!"

After she said that, the man was stunned for a few seconds. Then, he lifted his head and looked at Madeline.

"I-It's her. She's the one who asked me to do all those things. She gave me money so that I'll accuse this woman. However, if I really did those immoral things, I'd get struck by lightning and split into two halves!"

After the man said those sternly out of a sense of justice, he took out an envelope and tossed it to Madeline's feet.

"I'm giving you your money back!"

Madeline did not expect the sudden plot twist. However, she was not worried.

"You're so despicable! I'm going to call the police right now and make you repent for your sins in prison! Don't even think about getting out!"

"Jeremy, did you hear that? It's all a trap set by Vera. Even the person who she bribed couldn't take this anymore." Meredith continued pursuing.

Jeremy turned his head coldly. "Really?" he asked in an icy tone. There was a sharp glint in his narrow eyes.

Meredith was slightly taken aback as her conscience was guilty. "Jeremy, do you still not believe me?"

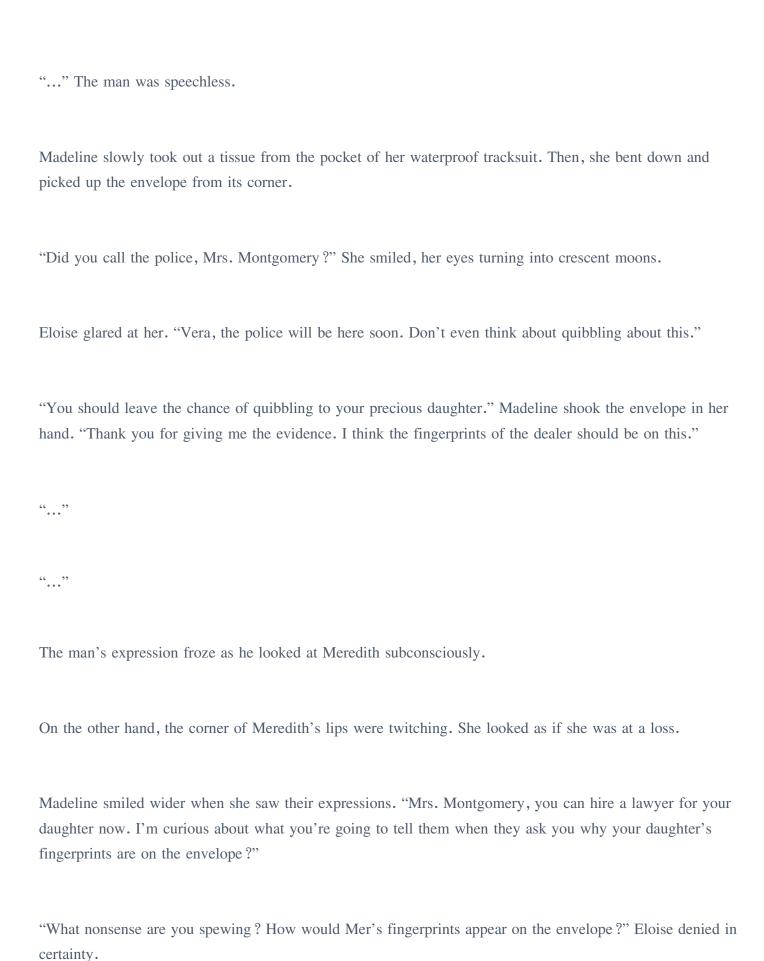
"It's indeed pretty hard to believe," said Madeline slowly.

Meredith and Eloise glared at her. "Vera, we're at this stage already and you're still..."

"You said that this is the money that I bribed you with, correct?" Madeline interrupted calmly. She pointed at the thick envelope at the side of her foot. Then, she asked the man, "And I was the one who gave it to you?"

"Yes!" The man asserted arbitrarily. "It's you! You're the one who asked me to kill that child! However, I thought that the child was too cute, so I couldn't do it. That's why I let him go. I thought this would end here, but you still want me to slander an innocent person. I really can't do it."

"You're so kindhearted," Meredith said sarcastically, "However, why would someone so kindhearted take someone's money to do that kind of thing?"



"You'll know if it is soon enough." Madeline did not want to argue with her anymore. She handed the envelope to Jeremy. "Jeremy, I feel safest if you're the one who's holding on to this."
She looked at him with gentleness in her eyes. "When I fell from the incline, I was so scared that I won't be able to see you again."
Jeremy looked at her with a gentle gaze. There was an unreadable profoundness rippling in his eyes. "No, I won't let you disappear from my life."
Meredith's eyes almost fell out of her sockets when she watched Madeline and Jeremy bill and coo at each other.
After a while, the police arrived.
After they were updated on the situation, the police told everyone that they had to go into the station to make statements.
Madeline got into the car without hesitating. On the other hand, in order to show that she had nothing to hide, Meredith also quickly got into the police car.
When she got into the place that gave her the most nightmares, Madeline felt oddly calmer.
She was not the weak and helpless Madeline Crawford anymore.
Even if someone decided to harm her today and push her down a cliff, she would still be able to climb up from the abyss.
After taking her statement, the moment Madeline got out of the room, Jeremy took a clean coat from his car and draped it across her shoulder. At this moment, Eloise and Meredith also came out from another room.

She was setting when Meredith saw that Jeremy was about to leave while holding Madeline's hand, but in order to make Eloise stand up for her, she pretended to be sad and lowered her head.

Eloise pulled Meredith over when she saw that. "Jeremy, Mer is your wife and you're billing and cooing with this woman so brazenly. Who do you think Mer is?"

Madeline stopped in her tracks when she heard that. "If Jeremy doesn't take me away, then should he take your precious daughter away?" she smiled and asked. Then, she lifted her gaze. "Meredith, do you still think that you can leave tonight?"

"Vera, what do you mean?"

After Eloise said that, two police officers walked in front of Meredith.

"Meredith Crawford, you're involved in an attempted murder. Please cooperate with our investigation."

Meredith made a surprised expression. "Officer, did you make a mistake? I didn't do such a thing!"

"My daughter would never do that! Did you investigate it thoroughly? You can't arrest someone because of someone's one-sided story!"

"Madam, you're slandering us and questioning our abilities by saying that. Of course, we'll only arrest someone after we have sufficient evidence," the officer said seriously.

"Evidence? What evidence? That envelope?"

"Of course, it's not just the fingerprints on the envelope," Madeline said slowly. She took out a phone from her pocket and opened a video. Then, Madeline and Meredith's voices from the forest sounded from the speaker of the phone.

Meredith's eyes were wide when she heard the conversation as her expression froze. Eloise's expression also started changing rapidly.

Madeline lifted her gaze, her eyes looking stern. "Meredith, you didn't expect this, right? I recorded everything!"

" "

"I knew you wouldn't be so kind, so I came prepared. If I wasn't worried about Jack, do you think you would have had the chance to push me down the incline? You're so heartless. It's understandable why you would want to kill me, but you didn't even want to spare your son!"

Meredith's sinister and malicious words... How she had called Jackson 'that damned child'...

"No! It's impossible! That's not Mer's voice!" Eloise denied in certainty. "Vera Quinn, how dare you fake evidence?! You must've had someone pretend to be Meredith!"

Meredith came back to her senses. She did not expect that when Vera got close to her, she had already started recording.

However, she would not admit to her dirty deeds with just this.

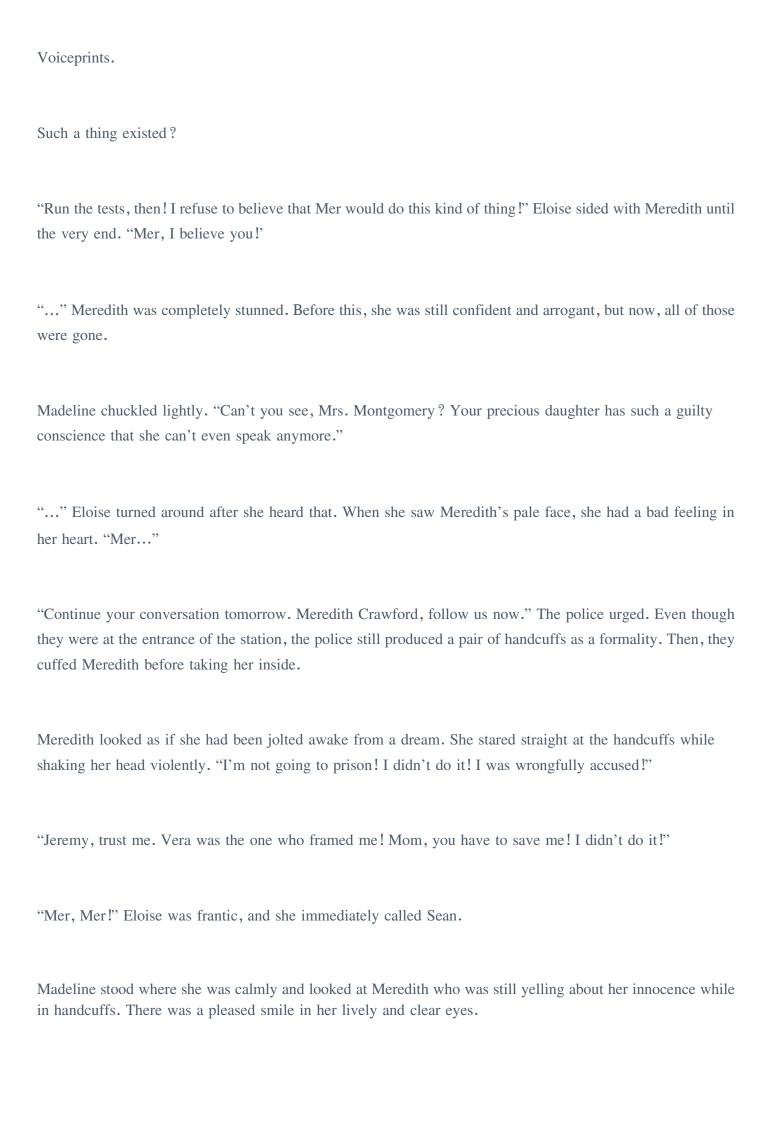
"Mom, you have to believe me. That's not me. That person in the video is not me!" Meredith denied. "Jeremy, someone must be trying to harm me. That video must be fake! Why would I want to harm Jack? He's our flesh and blood!"

Meredith turned around and looked at Madeline with tears in her eyes.

"Vera Quinn, you really can do anything just to get Jeremy. That man has already pointed you out and you still want to twist the truth to blame me. The woman who's talking in the video isn't me!"

"I knew you'd say that," Madeline said calmly, "However, maybe you don't know about voiceprints that like fingerprints, everyone's voiceprints are unique. Everything will come to light after we run some tests on the video."

After Madeline said that, Meredith's tears stopped. Her jaw dropped, and she had no comebacks.



Meredith was taken to custody quickly as all of the evidence that they gathered were against her.

Even the short man was starting to accuse Meredith of being the true mastermind behind Jackson's kidnapping.

Eloise refused to believe that her precious daughter was a merciless vile woman who would even harm her own child.

"There must be some misunderstanding! That wh\*re Vera must've pulled some strings!" Eloise was still insisting that Meredith was innocent. She was sure that Madeline was the one who framed Meredith.

"Sean, Mer is our daughter. We made a mistake when we took home the wrong child back then and caused her to miss out on more than 20 years of motherly and fatherly love. You have to get her out of there no matter what!"

Sean patted Eloise's shoulder to comfort her. His aged but handsome face was filled with melancholy.

"I've asked my friends in the station and they told me there's irrefutable evidence of this. Mer really premeditated Vera's murder. She also bribed someone to kidnap Jack."

Eloise widened her eyes in disbelief. "No, that's impossible! Our daughter won't do such a thing!"

"Maybe it's our fault." Sean blamed himself. "If Mer had grown up next to us in the past 20 years, she wouldn't have wandered onto the wrong path. Her adoptive mother kidnapped Vera before and caused Mer to suffer so much. Perhaps this time, it was her idea as well."

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Eloise started crying when she heard that. "It's all my fault. My body was in a horrible condition after I gave birth to Mer. You were busy taking care of me and that's why we neglected Mer..."

Sean grabbed Eloise's shoulders in devastation and said, "Don't cry, Ellie. Don't worry, Mer is our only daughter. I'll make sure she gets home safe and sound."

Jon and Rose hurried to the police station to visit Meredith after knowing that something had happened to her.

When Rose saw Meredith in a prisoner's outfit while looking unkempt in the conjugal room, she was utterly stunned.

It was as if she saw that her money tree was about to fall.

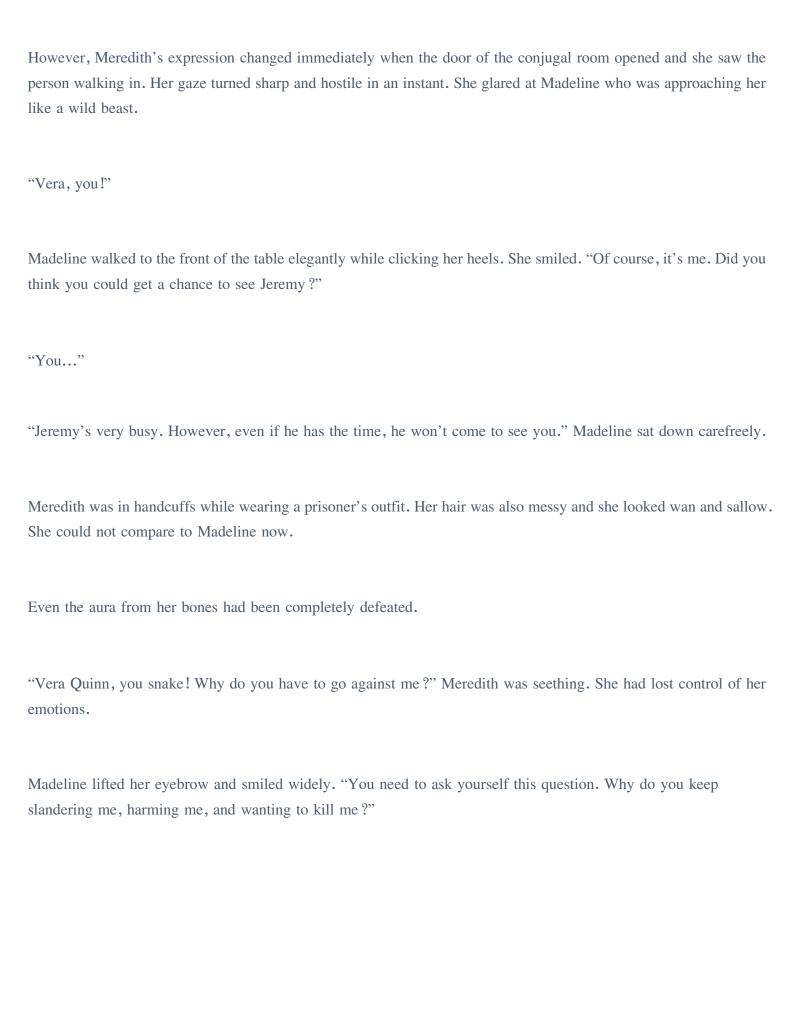
"Mer, Mer, how are you? What happened?"

Meredith looked at Jon and Rose impatiently. She said with a clear train of thought, "There's no use saying anything now. Eloise and Sean are the only ones who can save me now."

Jon and Rose looked at each other. "Mer, did that b\*tch Vera do this?"

When Meredith heard Vera's name, she clenched her fists and slammed them down on the table. She growled, saying, "That b\*tch! I'll make sure to make her life a living hell when I get out."

"How dare she do this to you? I'll make her life a living hell as well!" Rose rolled up her sleeves aggressively. "Mer don't worry. I'll definitely avenge you."
"You're not her opponent. That woman is smarter than Madeline." Meredith gritted her teeth as an ominous glint appeared in her eyes. "No matter what method you use, you have to get Jeremy to see me!"
Rose nodded and agreed.
After they left the station, they went to see Jeremy instantly. However, they could not find him.
On the other hand, news of Meredith's attempted murder went viral and it started trending immediately.
Meredith's magnanimous and kind image was completely crumbled.
What infuriated the netizens the most was how Meredith could even do that to her child.
Jackson was such a cute and good-looking child. How cruel could a person be to do such a merciless act?
Especially when Meredith was still showing off her child on her Twitter to gain followers.
Meredith's Twitter page blew up with all of the comments screaming at her.
As Meredith had been taken to custody, she could not hire paid posters to side with her.
In the police station, Meredith was waiting for Jeremy to come to see her while feeling frantic. Finally, when someone from the station told her that someone was here to see her, Meredith deliberately tidied her hair and clothes. Her eyes were filled with longing.



Meredith scoffed in disdain. "What bullsh*t is that? When did I do all those things to you? You're	the one
who's seducing Jeremy with this face of yours. You're the one who did all of these things. So even	if I want
to harm you in the future, you have only yourself to blame."	

"Myself to blame?"

"You were the one who brought trouble upon yourself! You btch! You're as cheap as that btch Madeline. Both of your deaths would not be regretted!"

After Meredith's shrieks, Madeline did not hesitate to slap Meredith across the face.

Meredith was stunned for two seconds. When she was about to curse at Madeline, Madeline yanked her collar, and in that instant, she found that it was difficult to breathe.

Meredith lifted her head and was met with Madeline's sharp eyes. Then, there was a cold glint flashing in them. Meredith could not help but tremble.

"I brought trouble upon myself? My death won't be regretted? How can you say these inhumane words until this day?"

Madeline's words were as cold as ice while her eyes were as sharp as knives.

"Six years ago, you drugged Jeremy and accused me of those inexistent crimes. You made everyone think that I shamelessly climbed into his bed because I wanted to get my hands on him.

"Because of your one-sided story and countless meticulously planned traps, I was wrongfully imprisoned for three years. I was locked up for more than a thousand days where I was tortured mercilessly by those people you hired. You even inhumanely induced labor on my unborn child! In the end, I didn't even get a chance to see my child before she was killed by you adulterous pigs!

"And do you think I don't know about you killing my grandfather?"

Madeline yanked Meredith on her collar. Her eyes were red and it was as if sharp knives were shooting out from them. They were stabbing mercilessly at Meredith who was already stunned.

"All of my pain came from you and Jeremy, and you have the nerve to tell me that I brought them upon myself?"

Madeline scoffed mockingly before letting go of Meredith's collar. "Meredith, you're the one bringing trouble upon yourself that you're now faced with such an ending."

",

After she finished saying that, the conjugal room plunged into silence.

Meredith was speechless and dumbfounded.

After Madeline's invulnerable condemnations and questionings, Meredith's face looked like a neon light. The colors on her face changed continuously. In the end, the light went out and her face was pale and lifeless. She looked like she was in the doldrums and had wilted completely.

"How is this possible... That b\*tch Madeline is already dead. Impossible. I disfigured her. Your skin can't have recovered so perfectly. It's impossible..."

Meredith was in disbelief. She could not accept the powerful, classy, and gorgeous woman who was standing in front of her.
She kept denying it. However, looking at those unique and spirited eyes in front of her, Meredith had to believe what was going on.
"You M-Madeline Are you really Madeline?"
Madeline smirked as she lifted her arrogant eyes. "That's right. I'm your good sister Madeline Crawford. You ruined my marriage, stole my husband, and killed my grandfather as well as my child."
!!!
Meredith's body shook as her shocked eyes grew wide again.
She could not believe the fact that Madeline was still alive.
What she could not accept the most was that not only was Madeline stunning, but she was also rich and had her own company and career!
Meredith could never compare to that!
Meredith finally understood why after Vera appeared, she had been hanging around her and Jeremy.
She came back with a purpose and it was revenge!
"Madeline, don't feel so pleased with yourself! Who do you think you are? So what if you're alive? If I could kill you once, I can kill you again!" Meredith's eyes were red as she screeched. It was as if she would be stronger than Madeline this way.

"But I didn't die. So, this means that you don't have the power to kill me." Madeline smiled nonchalantly.

"Y-You..." Meredith was shaking from anger. Then, she started stammering, "Madeline, do you think you can destroy me like this? If Jeremy knows you're the person he despises and resents the most, he'll never forgive you!"

"Go and tell him then." Madeline scoffed. "Do you think he'll believe you or me?"

"..." Meredith's eyes became lifeless. She had nothing to say to that.

She did not dare, or rather, she would never tell Jeremy the truth!

If Jeremy knew that Vera was Madeline, not only would he not believe Madeline, but he would even be happy and surprised. He would use all of his power to pamper her, love her, and dote on her.

Jeremy loved Madeline, especially after she 'died'. His love for her had always been prejudiced and he had kept it in the deepest part of his heart.

When she saw that Meredith was speechless, Madeline smiled. "Or perhaps you can tell your current parents. You can tell them that I'm Madeline. However, do you have the guts to do that?"

"..." The corners of Meredith's lips twitched. The aggressive glint in her eyes wanted so badly to crush Madeline into fine dust, but to be honest, she did not have the power to do so.

Plus, she could not tell Eloise and Sean that Vera was, in fact, Madeline.

Meredith did not forget that three years ago, Madeline had already known she was the real Miss Montgomery.

#### Smack!

While Meredith was spacing out, Madeline tossed a phone in front of her.

"Have you seen this? The internet is filled with scoops about you and your dark past. Jeremy also announced on his official Twitter page that your marriage with him is ineffective. He said that you two never even got a marriage certificate. You're not his wife. So from the looks of it, he doesn't love you that much as well."

"Madeline, you she-devil!" Meredith was fuming. She wanted to attack Madeline, but her movements were limited.

Madeline took back her phone carefreely and stood up gracefully. "Yell at me. Go on. I'm not Madeline Crawford anymore anyway."

She smirked. Then, all ten of her long and slender fingers pressed down on the table. Her strong aura was suffocating Meredith.

"Meredith, your 'good' days are starting soon. The last step of your complete fall from grace is the verdict from the judge."

" "

Madeline said with a grin before turning around calmly.

"Madeline, you witch! What do you want? What the hell do you want?"

When she heard the shrieks behind her, Madeline felt it sounded like the last struggle of a person who was about to die.

She turned her pretty face around slightly and smiled. "I'll get you back for what you did to me before. However, you'll have to experience double of it all."

Madeline sashayed away carefreely after she said that.

Meredith glared at her back with a wretched look on her face. The blood in her body felt like it had been frozen. Her face was white and she looked dispirited. She was also mumbling to herself.

"Madeline... It really is you..."

Madeline walked out of the detention center. The sky after the rain was exceptionally blue and clear.

She had carried too much pain and hatred in her heart for the past six years. She could finally release some of them today.

'Grandpa, your Linnie will avenge you soon.

Darling, Mommy will execute everyone who was involved in your murder.

'And Jeremy, you're next,' Madeline thought. When she was about to leave, a familiar sports car stopped in front of her.

When the door of the car opened, an elegant and stoic man walked toward her slowly.

Madeline curled the corners of her lips. Speak of the devil.

'Jeremy Whitman, it's your turn now.'

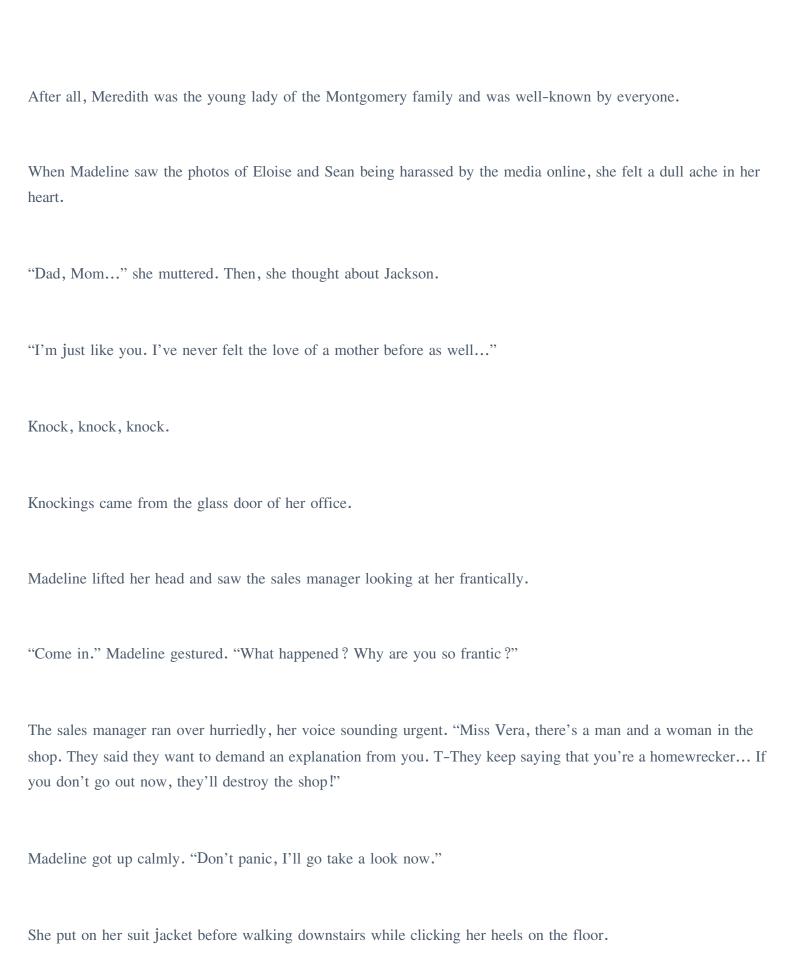
Madeline gave him a half-hearted smile. "Jeremy, are you here to visit Meredith? Are you still unable to let go of her?"
Jeremy walked in front of her, his charming eyes looking into her exquisite ones. "The person I can't let go of now is you."
"Really?" Madeline looked into Jeremy's eyes as if she was surprised. "If that's the case, I'm so happy."
"Of course, it's true." Jeremy reached out his hand. "As long as you're willing, I'll be responsible for you from now on."
Madeline looked at Jeremy's outstretched hand. The joints of his fingers were evident. They were long and fair, looking pleasing to the eyes. She used to long for the warmth of his palm so much back then.
When he saw Madeline staying quiet and looking at his hand, a hint of undetectable uneasiness appeared on his face. "Are you not willing?"
Madeline looked at him and smiled. She placed her hand into Jeremy's and said profoundly, "Why would I not? I've been waiting for this day for so long."
Yes, so long.
Jeremy then brought Madeline back to his place.

When she saw Jackson who was having his meal, Madeline could not help but feel relieved.

She walked over to him. "Jack."
Jackson lifted his crystal-clear eyes all of a sudden. "Vera."
"Jack, thank you for testifying for me so bravely." Madeline smiled and caressed the little guy's head.  Looking at his pinkish face, she could not help but feel heartbroken.
Meredith was able to give birth to such a beautiful and sensible child, but she was not even the least bit grateful for him.
"Vera, you have to be safe and sound." Jackson's tone was solemn. After he said that, he took out a crystal bracelet from his pocket.
Madeline's eyes lit up and she was a little surprised. "I thought I lost this bracelet."
Perhaps he was influenced by her smile, so the little guy smiled for the first time in forever. Two of his little canine teeth were showing.
He reached out his hand and grabbed Madeline's wrist. "Let me help you put it on."
"Okay." Madeline lifted her hand cooperatively.
She looked at Jackson with a gentle gaze. The little guy lowered his head and had a serious look on his face. His long and thick eyelashes moved along with his eyelids, looking so lovable.
Madeline could not help but reach out her hand to place it on Jackson's cheek. "Jack, if I do something that upsets your daddy in the future, will you be mad at me?"
Jackson finished putting on her bracelet for her the moment she finished saying that.

The little guy lifted his head. There was amusement in his pristine and huge eyes.
When he was about to say something, Jeremy walked over. When he saw Jackson and Madeline interacting intimately, he interrupted abruptly. "Jackson, do you like Vera? Do you want Vera to be your mother?"
Madeline was shocked. However, she saw Jackson nodding. "Yes, Mommy."
She heard Jackson calling her 'Mommy' again from his tiny lips. It felt as if a stream of spring water was flowing across her heart—it was so sweet.
She knew she liked this child from the bottom of her heart.
However, she did not expect this child to like her so much as well.
Perhaps he had never felt any motherly love from Meredith while Madeline was able to give him just that.
···
Meredith was charged instantly. The court had scheduled a time for a hearing.
Even though the judge had not come up with a verdict yet, Meredith's reputation was already ruined.
The stocks and shares of Montgomery Enterprise were also affected because of her.
Madeline sat in her office and read about the news on Montgomery Enterprise. Her eyebrows were tightly knitted together.

She knew that when Madeline was officially convicted, Montgomery Enterprise's reputation and stocks would be affected again.



From a distance, Madeline could hear the familiar voice of a woman screeching in the shop. "Vera Quinn, you homewrecker! Get out now!
"You shameless wh*re! You seduced my daughter's husband and even wrongfully sent my daughter to prison! I need to teach you a lesson today! Do you really think my daughter will just stand there and let you bully her?
"Vera Quinn, get out now!"
"I'm here."
Madeline strode into the shop, her tall and slender figure standing at one side.
The staff, the customers, and also some passersby who just wanted to watch what was going on all looked toward the source of the voice. Then, they saw Madeline walking over in an overbearing manner while in a dress and a white suit jacket.
Her face was stunning. Even though she looked poised and alluring, there was also a tyrannical aura on her face. She looked valiant and domineering.
When Rose and Jon saw Madeline, they were shocked. She had the same face as Madeline, but even they had to admit that Vera was more charming and daring than Madeline.
"Are you the people who are calling me a homewrecker and a wh*re while claiming that you'll destroy my shop?" Madeline asked calmly.
From the way they insulted her, Madeline was sure that these two still did not know that she was the same Madeline who they used to step under their feet and humiliate.
Perhaps they had not visited Meredith after she went to see her. If not, Meredith would have told them.

"It's us!" Rose glared arrogantly while rolling up her sleeves. "You shameless wh\*re. I'm going to stand up for my daughter, Meredith."

When everyone heard that, they finally understood that they came because of Meredith.

However, was Meredith not Miss Montgomery? Was this Mrs. Montgomery? No, Mrs. Montgomery was graceful and noble, so how could she look like this? These must be Meredith's adoptive parents.

The people watching started gossiping among themselves. Rose used this opportunity to add fuel to the fire.

"Everyone, I'm Meredith's adoptive mother. I want to tell everyone the truth! Actually, those statements and exposé on the internet are not real! My daughter was framed by this homewrecker!"

Jon also started fanning the flames. "My wife is telling the truth. This homewrecker is the real culprit!"

"You guys know Jeremy Whitman, right? He's the young master of the richest family in Glendale and the president of Whitman Corporation. He was in love with my daughter until this wh\*re's appearance!"

Rose was getting more and more emotional as she went on. Her spit was flying all over the place.

"In order to get her hands on Jeremy, this wh\*re framed my daughter countless times. She even caused Mer to be tarnished by a group of thugs! Not only that, but Mer is also stuck in the detention center right now because of her. So tell me, do you think this homewrecker deserves to be yelled at? Even if I lose my life today, I'll definitely avenge Mer!"

As Rose was saying that, she wiped away her tears as if she was devastated. When those people started pointing and accusing Madeline, she felt even more confident.

"Everyone, you have eyes, so you must denounce this homewrecker with me today!"

Jon pointed at Madeline while feeling indignant at the injustice. "Vera Quinn, there are so many people here, so I'm curious to see how you're going to explain yourself!"

Madeline finished listening to Rose and Jon's insults. Then, she lifted her intense and piercing gaze. "Are you done? If you're done, then it's my turn."

After Rose and Jon were taken aback by Madeline's sharp gaze, they scoffed.

"Vera, what else do you have to say?" Do you think everyone here is an idiot and will be fooled by just a few words from you?"

After Madeline heard that, she smiled. "Since everyone isn't an idiot, do you think you can pin those crimes on me based on your one-sided statement?"

Rose was stunned. Suddenly, she felt as if what she said had come back to bite her in the bottom.

"Vera, you..."

"Shut up!" Madeline interrupted coldly.

Rose trembled. When she met Madeline's frigid glare, she could not help but feel fearful.

"You keep saying that you want to seek justice for your precious daughter Meredith, but just ask yourself, does Meredith even have the right to talk about justice?"

"You..."

"You keep saying that I framed and harmed Meredith, even causing her to get tarnished by a group of thugs. Do you have proof? You don't, but I do!"

"..." Rose's face was flushed white. She then averted her gaze due to a guilty conscience.

The two of them knew the truth clearly. The people at Old Master Whitman's birthday party also knew about this.

"Do you want me to play that hideous video of you kneeling in front of me while begging me not to call the police for everyone to see?"

When Rose heard this, her face turned from red to green. She felt extremely embarrassed.

Madeline scoffed. "You and Meredith worked together to get someone to kidnap me. In the end, Meredith refused to pay them so they were infuriated. She suffered the consequences of her own actions while you were an accomplice. So where did you get the audacity to stand here and twist the truth to slander me? Do you believe that I'll call the police right now to get to the bottom of that incident?"

#### What?

The corner of Rose's lips twitched. Her expression changed and she started feeling anxious.

Madeline continued in a laid-back manner, "The reason Meredith was brought away by the police is that there's sufficient evidence proving that she attempted murder. She's in the detention center now because she brought this upon herself. The law will punish a woman who's capable of harming her own child."

She then looked at Rose with a grin. Rose was on the brink of an emotional breakdown.

"I don't think you're here to avenge Meredith. You're here to solidify her crimes. No wonder Meredith ended up this way. It's all because of you evil dimwits."

"B-Bullsh\*t!" Rose was starting to not make sense. Her fingers were pointed at Madeline shakily. "Don't be fooled by this homewrecker. Mer was falsely accused! This homewrecker is the true culprit!"

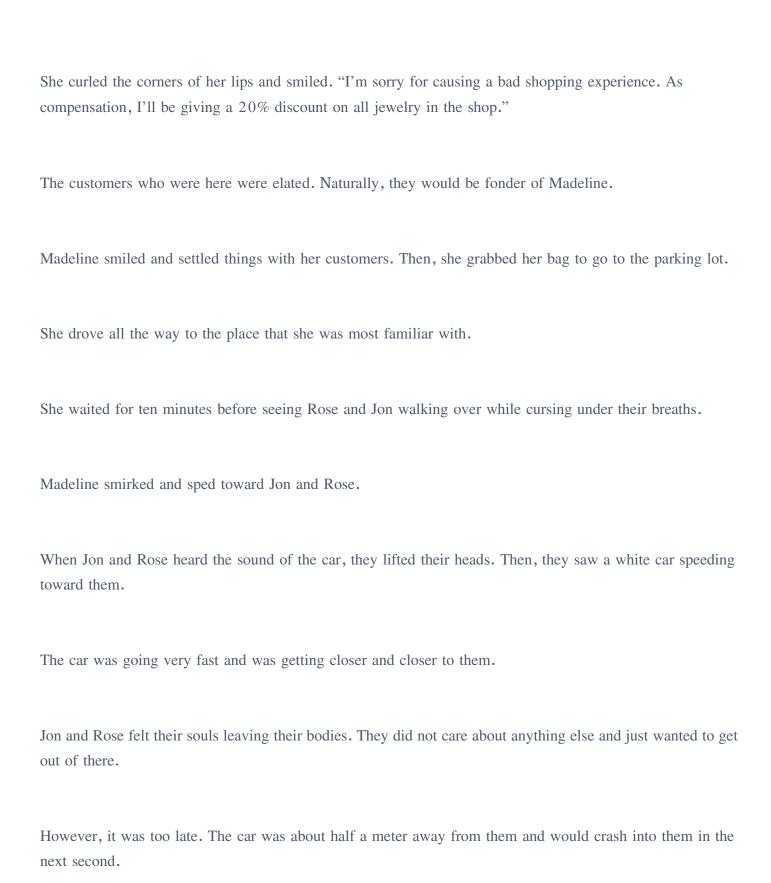
"Jeremy has already announced his relationship with Meredith. They aren't dating or married, so if that's the case, my relationship with Jeremy is right and proper. It's none of anyone's business," Madeline smiled and said in a composed manner.

"On the other hand, I heard that your daughter Meredith stuck her foot in her sister Madeline and Jeremy's marriage. I'm afraid she's the real homewrecker that you keep yammering about."

"Y-You..." Rose was speechless. She could not form any words right now.

Suddenly, she regretted everything. Back then, Meredith told her she was not Vera's opponent and she did not believe her. She insisted on coming out and going against Vera head-on. Now, she had shot herself in her own foot.

"Damn it! What a stupid and vile old woman. Does she really think we're all idiots who can't see the truth?"



"Ah!" Rose screamed in fear and fell to the ground.

At the next second, with a sharp screech, the white car stopped in front of them.
Rose and Jon gasped for air and were still in a panicked state. When they saw the car door opening, Rose decided to blackmail the driver for some money. She started yelling at them.
"Is that how you drive? Don't drive if you don't know how to! Could you afford it if you had run into me? Do you know who I am? Do you know who my son-in-law is?"
"I only did that because I know who you are." Madeline's calm voice went into Rose and Jon's ears.
The two of them looked at her in shock.
"V-Vera?"
Madeline closed the door carefreely and strode in front of Jon and Rose overbearingly.
"You made a fuss in my shop and ruined my reputation. Do you think you can just get away like that?"
Rose's pupils constricted. She dragged her heavy body and stood up challengingly.
"Vera Quinn, what do you want? Let me tell you, this is our territory!" Jon glared and threatened.
"You're still trying to talk to me in that tone? Do you want to accompany your precious daughter in prison of do you want your daughter to stay in there longer?"
When Jon and Rose heard that, they shut their mouths.

Rose shifted her gaze, then suddenly, she said flatteringly with a grin, "Miss Quinn, you're kind and benevolent, so don't quibble over this with an uncultured common person like me. Yes, it was my fault. I' inhuman for targeting you this entire time. I hope you can be lenient and let me off the hook."	m
She even fake-slapped herself a few times.	
"Miss Quinn, if you don't mind, my house is right in front. We can sit down and talk if there's anything the needs to be discussed. What do you think?"	at
Madeline nodded in satisfaction. "That's more like it."	
Rose led the way and gave Jon a look.	
Madeline opened her messaging app to look at it before following them.	
The house was still the same as before. However, the renovation was different.	
It was evident that Meredith had received a lot of benefits from the Montgomeries.	
Madeline sat in the living room while Jon and Rose went into the kitchen. They said they were going to malher tea.	ke
However, when they went inside the kitchen, Rose's hypocritical smile disappeared. There was a sinister gli in her eyes as she dropped some pesticide into the tea.	nt
"Hmph, who asked her to be so arrogant? I want her to never have the chance to speak again!"	

She stirred the tea with a teaspoon and smiled hypocritically. Then, she handed the tea to Madeline respectfully. "Miss Quinn, this is made from our own tea leaves, so its taste is pretty unique. Please have a taste."

Madeline took the cup with a smile. After taking a sniff, she said, "It indeed smells very unique. I have to taste this properly, then."

She said and lifted the cup. Then, she moved it closer to her lips.

Jon and Rose sta	irted straight	at Madeline	when	she	lifted	the	cup	to h	ner lips	and	was	about	to	taste	the	tea.
They were waiting	ng expectant!	ly for Madel	ine to	drin	k it.											

Madeline's lips were about to touch the rim of the cup, but all of a sudden, she lifted her gaze and there was a sharp glint in her eyes.

Jon and Rose were startled. When they were trying to figure out what Madeline was thinking about, she flung her right hand and the tea splashed onto both of their faces.

Even though the water was not at its boiling point, it was at least 150 to 160 degrees Fahrenheit.

Jon and Rose wailed in pain while their faces were burnt red.

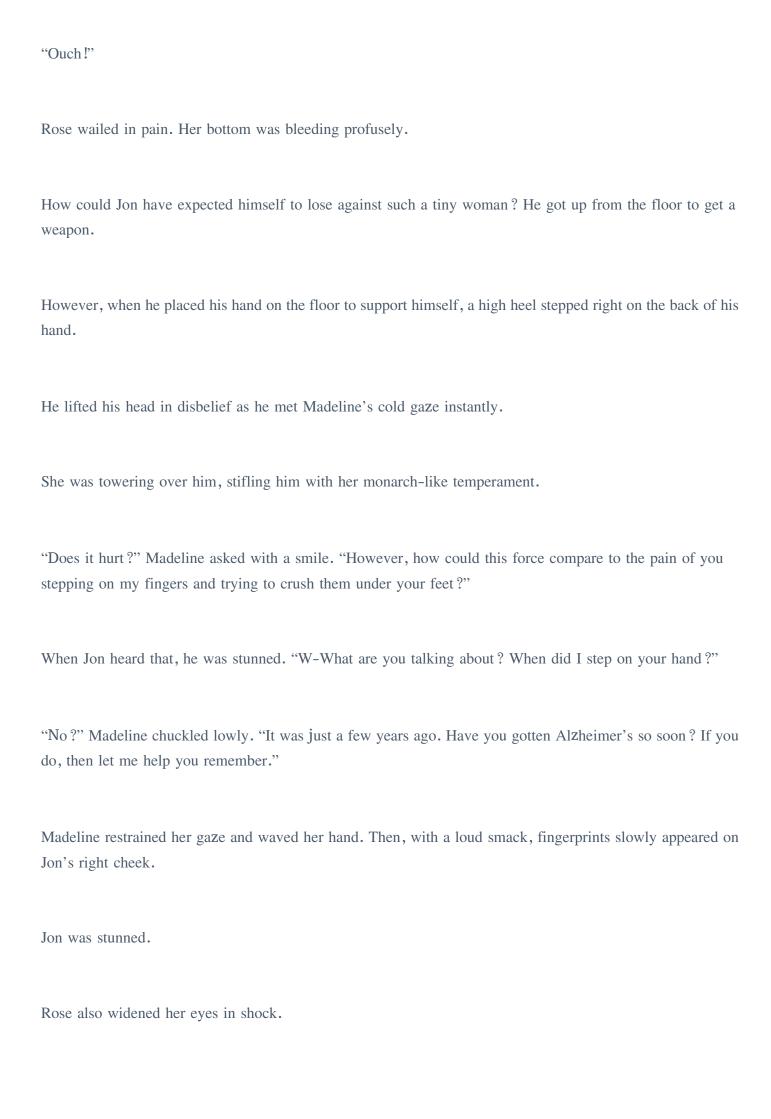
"You! Vera, what the hell are you doing?" Rose took a piece of tissue to wipe her face angrily. Her face at this moment was terrifyingly red and malevolent.

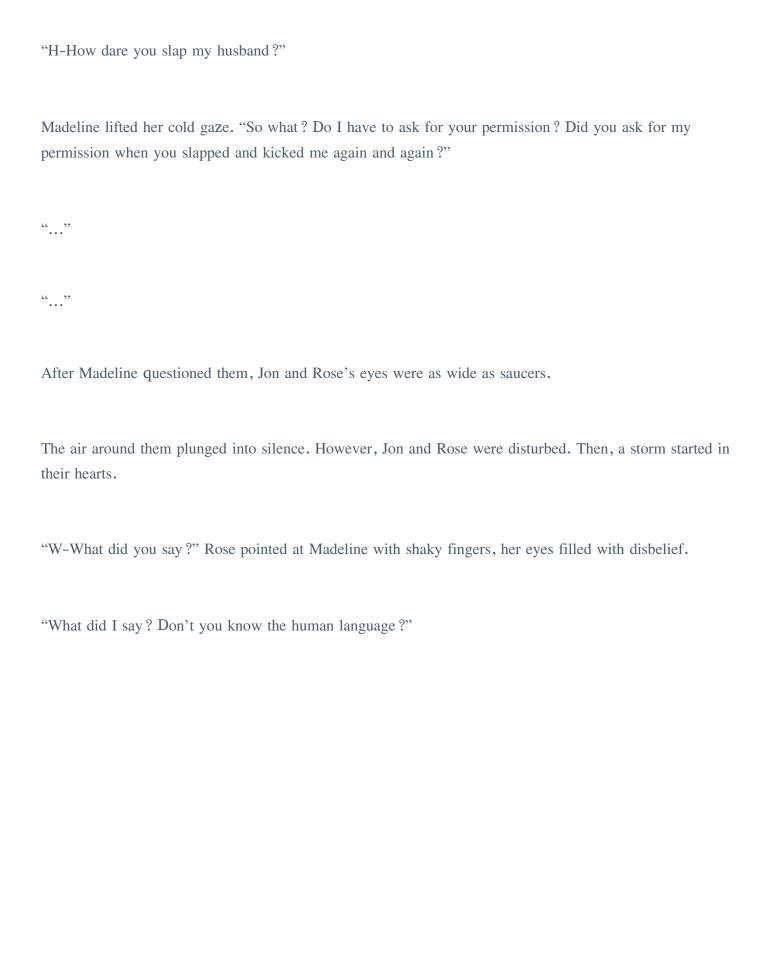
"Do you think I'm stupid? Do you think I don't know that you'd put something in the tea?" Madeline asked in an icy tone. Then, she threw the cup at Jon and Rose's feet.

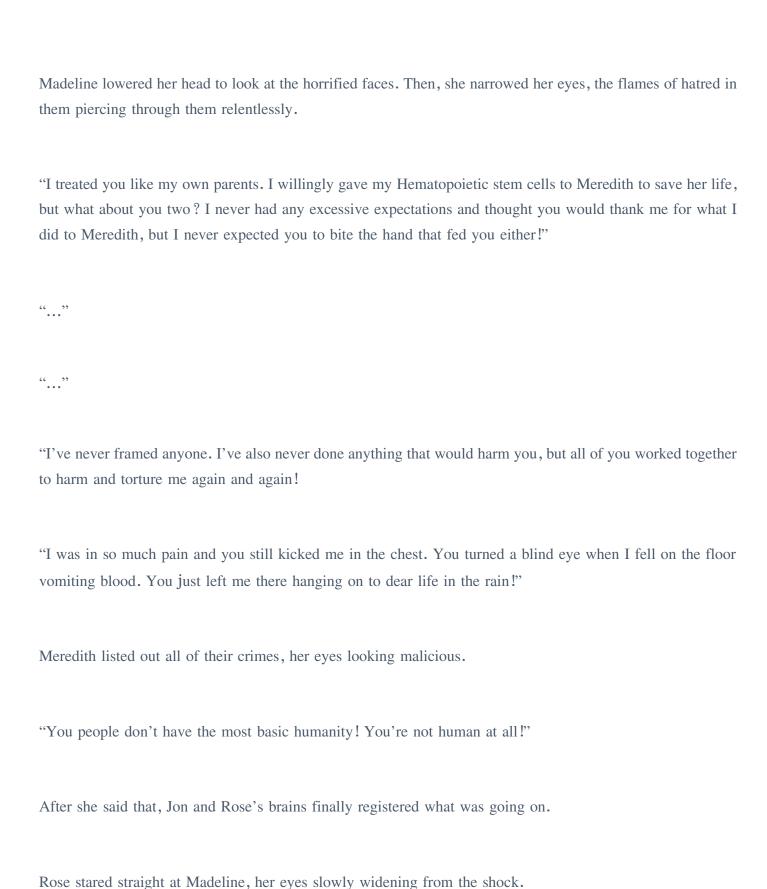
With a smash, the cup broke into pieces. Jon and Rose dodged away from it as they were scared to get hurt by the pieces.

Rose and Jon had been splashed with hot water and were almost smashed with the cup in such a short period of time. They could not come back to their senses after a long while.

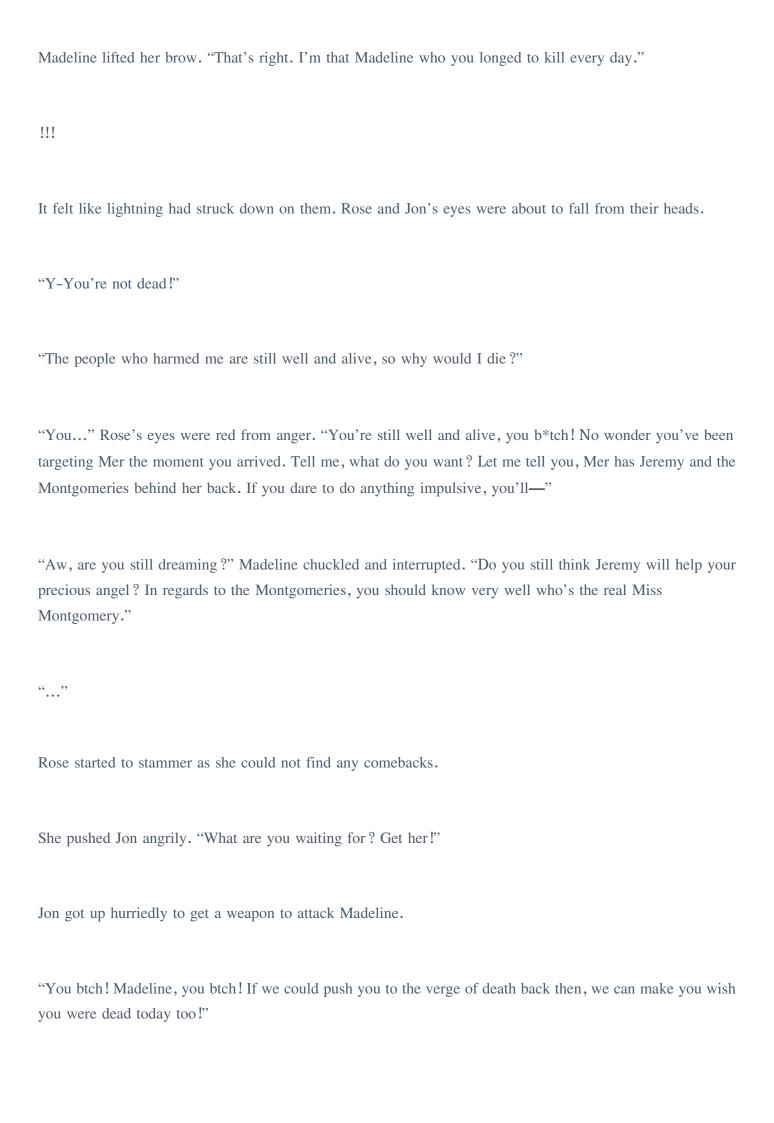
After they came back to their senses, Madeline was already standing in front of them. "How's it? Is the tea delicious?"
Rose's brain registered what was going on as she rolled up her sleeves furiously. Her face looked sinister. "Darling, shut the door!"
When Jon heard that, he quickly ran over to shut the door.
Rose bared her teeth as she glared at Madeline. "How dare you be so unbridled even when you're in our territory?! Vera, I'm going to let you see what I can do!"
She lifted her hand and slapped in the direction of Madeline's face.
Madeline reached out her hand and grabbed Rose's wrist tightly. There was an icy glint in her eyes. "The moment I opened my eyes again, I swore that I would never let anyone hurt me anymore!"
She swung away Rose's wrist coldly.
Rose was stuck in a daze when she saw Madeline's murderous gaze. She stumbled and crashed into the sofa before falling on the broken shards of the cup. Finally, she came back to her senses and started barking orders at Jon.
"Darling, get that b*tch! I'm going to kill her today!"
Jon had an aggressive look on his face. He pounced at Madeline while making threatening gestures.
Madeline reached out her hand calmly, and with the three tactics that Felipe taught her to fight against sexual predators, she managed to take Jon down. Then, she pushed him onto Rose.

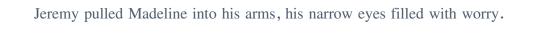






"You... Madeline! You're Madeline! You're not Vera Quinn, you're Madeline Crawford!"





"Vera, are you okay? Are you hurt?"

At this moment, the knife fell and stabbed into the back of Rose's leg.

"Ouch!" Rose wailed in pain again. She lifted her head to see Jeremy holding Madeline with so much gentleness and worry. She forgot Meredith told her that Jeremy had been in love with Madeline the whole time. She blurted out in arrogance, "Jeremy, don't trust this woman. She's not Vera Quinn! She's that b\*tch, Madeline Crawford!"

"Jeremy, I'm telling the truth. That b\*tch is Madeline!" Rose pointed at Madeline and shrieked through gritted teeth.

Jon chimed in, "Jeremy, my wife is telling the truth. Vera Quinn is that b\*tch you despise the most, Madeline Crawford!"

"Shut up!" Jeremy's tone was frigid, and there was a thick layer of frost in his eyes. "How dare you attack Vera to vent on Meredith? I will make you pay dearly for this."

After he said those bone-chilling words, Jon and Rose's pupils constricted. It felt as if a bucket of cold water was poured from above their heads. In an instant, their body temperatures dropped.

"Vera, let me take you home." Jeremy's voice changed. Even his eyes were gentle and warm like they had been caressed by a gentle spring breeze.

Madeline leaned against Jeremy's chest in shock, her eyes looking lovely. "Jeremy, it's so good to be able to see you now. I was so scared that I'd be murdered by them."

"You... Madeline, you btch! Stop acting!" Rose roared angrily and emphasized once again. "Jeremy, she's really that btch, Madeline! She admitted it herself just now!"

"Jeremy, I didn't say that. They want to exonerate Meredith from her crimes, so they want to kill me because I'm the most important witness," Madeline said softly. The horrifying sharpness that Jon and Rose saw in her clear and alluring eyes just now was gone. There was only the vulnerability of a weak woman.

"Madeline, y-you..." Rose was so mad that her face was now bright red. When she was about to say something, she saw Jeremy holding Madeline's shoulder gently before turning around.

Madeline leaned against Jeremy's chest and did not forget to turn around to look at them with victory in her eyes.
When she saw Jon and Rose almost exploding from anger, she smirked.
Madeline got into Jeremy's car. In those three years of staying in F Country, Madeline got a driving license. However, she did not let Jeremy know about this. She also would not let him know that she was the one who drove here.
Before she arrived at this place, she sent a message telling him that Jon and Rose brought her here. She asked him to come quickly to save her.
Everything went smoothly and he came just in time.
Jeremy brought Madeline back to his place. She held onto his arm and leaned against his chest with a terrified look.
"Jeremy, I'm so afraid. Are they trying to use your ex-wife's name to hurt me because I look like her?"
"I won't let anyone hurt you." Jeremy comforted in a soft voice. He lowered his gaze to look at the woman in his embrace.
"I feel much safer with you next to me." Madeline looked at Felipe's message discreetly as a small smile appeared on her face. There was a pleased look in her lively eyes. "Jeremy, I'm still a little scared. Can you stay with me for a little longer?"
"Of course." Jeremy nodded before tightening his arms around her.
•••

After cleaning up their wounds, Jon and Rose went to the detention center to visit Meredith.

When they saw Meredith, Jon and Rose told her everything that happened just now without missing out on a single detail.

They thought that Meredith would be surprised, but she already knew about this before them.

Meredith gritted her teeth as a murderous glint shone in her eyes. "That b\*tch. She planned all of those traps to let me walk right into them!"

Rose touched her injured bottom, feeling perturbed. "I didn't expect that b\*tch to still be alive. She even went through a complete transformation. It's like she's a completely different person. The worst thing now is that Jeremy trusts her completely while you're stuck in here, Mer. What should we do now?"

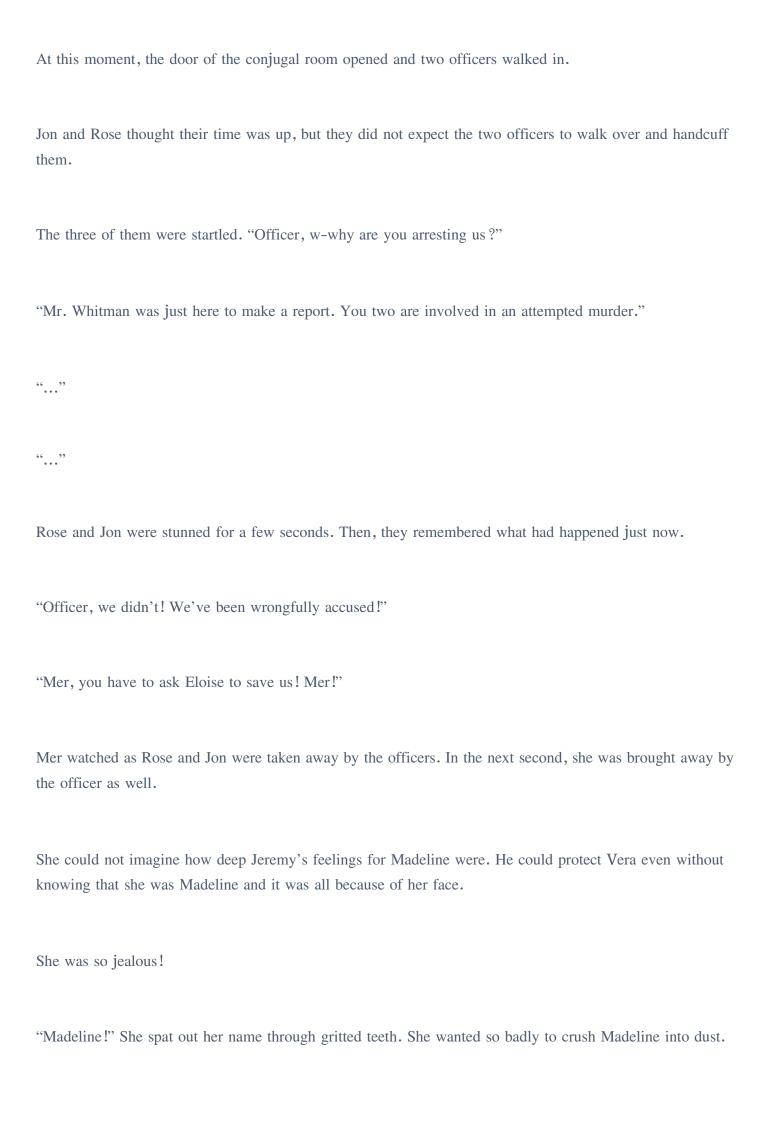
When Meredith heard that, she clenched her fists. There was a trace of unwillingness in her eyes. "Jeremy trusts her because of her btch face!" she said before looking at Rose and Jon. She warned solemnly, saying, "Don't let Jeremy know that the btch is Madeline. If not, we'll all be finished."

• • • •

When Rose and Jon heard that, they looked at each other.

Jon and Rose felt that it made sense after Meredith's analysis.

"Have you already told Jeremy that the b*tch is Madeline?"
"N-No! Plus, it seems like that b*tch doesn't want Jeremy to know that she's Madeline." Rose denied it when she realized that she could not let Jeremy know about this.
After Meredith heard that, she let out a sigh of relief.
"There will be a hearing in two days. Eloise has already hired the best lawyer for me. I should be able to get out of here soon."
Rose's eyes lit up. "Really?"
"Of course." Meredith snorted. "It seems that Madeline doesn't plan to tell the Montgomeries about her real identity."
Jon and Rose looked at each other in confusion. "Mer, doesn't that b*tch already know that she's Eloise's daughter? Since she has already exposed herself to us, then why won't she acknowledge that Eloise and Sear are her parents?"
"If you're in her shoes, would you still want to go back to your parents after you've been attacked, yelled at and ignored by them?" Meredith rolled her eyes.
"I think she resents Sean and Eloise."



After knowing that Jon and Rose had been locked up, Madeline felt pleased.

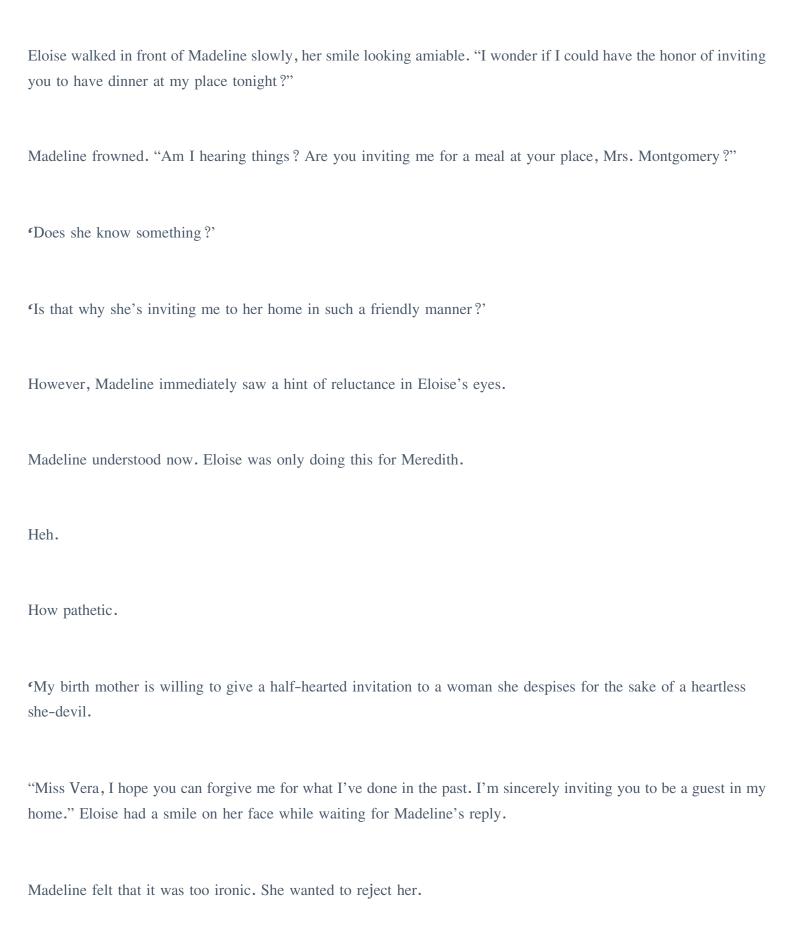
She went to make a statement at the station, proving that Jon and Rose did have the intention to harm her. After signing her name, Madeline was about to leave when she ran into Eloise at the entrance.

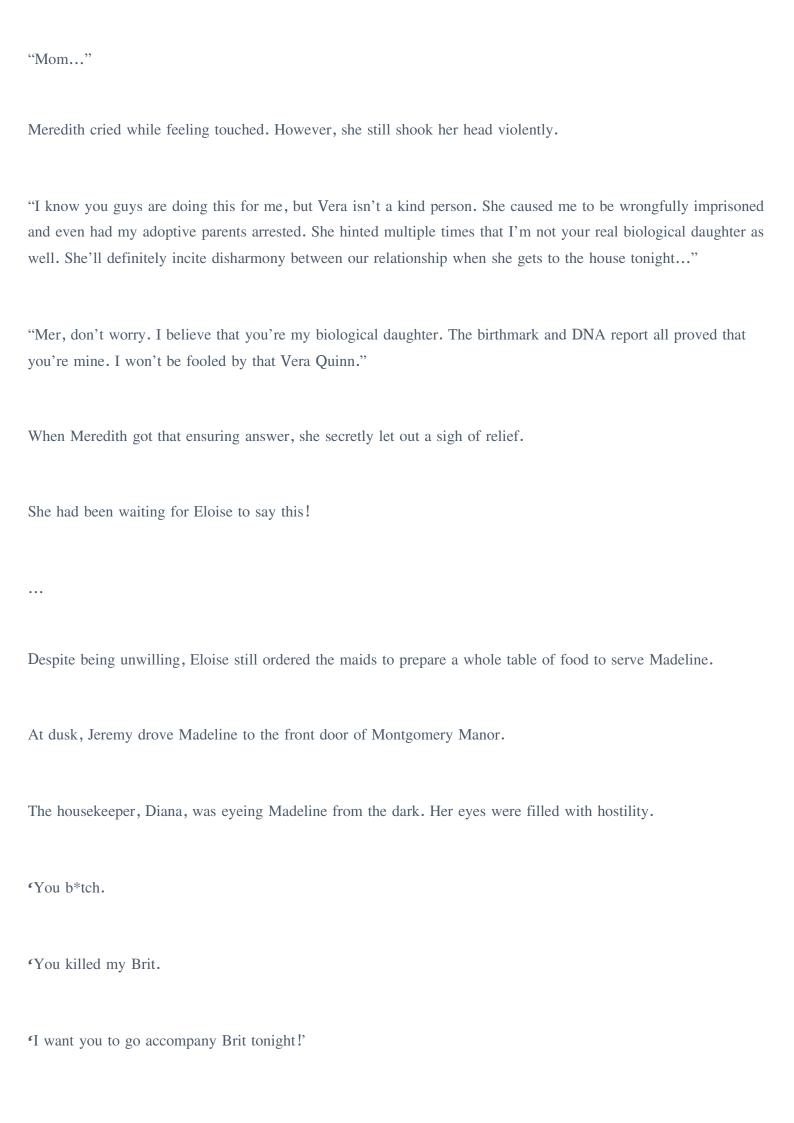
She remembered that she had also run into her at the entrance last time. However, Eloise was hostile with her back then. She still looked elegant and noble, yet she did not look too well. There were even dark circles under her eyes.

Madeline turned around silently to prevent any unnecessary conflict. However, the moment she turned around, she heard Eloise calling out to her in a gentle and friendly tone that she had never heard before. "Miss Vera."

Madeline felt her heart tremble. She could not believe that Eloise would call out to her in such a soft tone.

She stopped in her tracks and turned around. She smiled nonchalantly. "Can I help you, Mrs. Montgomery?"





"Jeremy, I'll go in now. I'll see you later." Madeline waved at Jeremy.

The man looked at her warmly and nodded. "I'll come to pick you up."



Eloise smiled and greeted her, saying, "Please sit, Miss Vera." "Thanks." Madeline sat down indifferently. She looked at the delicious food in front of her, and yet, she had no appetite. Sean opened a bottle of wine that cost six digits and poured it for Madeline. "I'm happy to see you tonight, Miss Quinn. Please forgive us for the misunderstanding and wrongdoings we've done in the past." Forgive. Madeline smiled and lifted the wine glass. Forgive was such an easy word to say, but it was even more difficult to do than flying. When Eloise saw that Madeline was not talking, she looked at Sean nervously. Sean patted Eloise's hand to comfort her. Then, he said, "I know Miss Quinn has a lot of artistic attainments when it comes to jewelry designing. My wife, Ellie, is also well researched in this field. Coincidentally, our company is hosting a big jewelry project and we're looking for a professional as our guide. If you're willing, Miss Quinn, you can name your price." Indeed, they were trying to tempt her with benefits. At the end of the day, this was all for Meredith. Madeline smiled. "Money isn't that important to me. Plus, I'll marry Jeremy soon, so reputation will be readily available for me as well."

"..." Sean and Eloise were speechless.

Madeline placed her wine glass down and walked into the living room.

Eloise and Sean followed her. "Miss Vera, do you want to tour around the house?"

Madeline nodded. "This place is so beautiful. When I was watching television as a kid, I would see the children on television living in such luxurious and beautiful houses, so I would also fantasize about living in such houses and having parents who love me. It must be such a spectacular feeling."

Eloise felt something tugging at her heartstrings when she saw the melancholy in Madeline's face.

She walked next to Madeline. "I remember you mentioning about your parents before, Miss Vera. I think they're—"

"They lost me," Madeline continued profoundly, "Just like how you lost your flesh and blood back then. My absent-minded parents lost me the same way."

" "

After Eloise and Sean heard that, their heartbeats accelerated.

When they saw Madeline's huge eyes that were filled with complicated emotions, they started to feel uneasy for no reason.

"I didn't expect you to have such a similar experience with my daughter," Eloise lamented, "However, thank God me and my husband found our precious baby who had been missing for so many years." As she spoke, a happy smile appeared on her face.

Madeline knew Eloise was talking about Meredith.

She felt a pang of pain in her heart. An unknown ache was taking over her heart.

"Miss Vera has both reputation and money now, so I think you'll have a lot of channels to find someone. Have you not found your birth parents after so many years?"

When Madeline heard Eloise's question, she came back to her senses and looked into her smiling eyes. "I've found them."

When Sean and Eloise heard Madeline's answer, for some reason, their hearts skipped a beat. The two of them asked at the same time, "You've found your parents?"
Madeline nodded and smiled. "Yeah, I've found my birth parents."
When Eloise got such an affirmative answer, she smiled.
At this moment, her smile came from the bottom of her heart.
"That's good. It's good that you found them. You'll be able to reunite with your family if that's the case."
"Reunite with them?" Madeline rolled those words off her mouth and scoffed ironically. "I won't even have the chance to reunite with them."
Eloise frowned. "Why?"
"They can't recognize me even when I'm standing right in front of them. They don't want to acknowledge me either."
Madeline looked straight at Eloise and Sean. The two of them were visibly taken aback.
Madeline smiled and broke the eerie atmosphere. "Maybe I'm just unfortunate. My parents lost me when I was

small, then I was abandoned by my boyfriend after I grew up. Thankfully when I was at my lowest, I met an

exceptional man who's one in a million."

Sean and Eloise looked at each other. They knew Madeline was talking about Jeremy.
The room plummeted into silence again. At this moment, the housekeeper, Diana, walked out with three bowls of soup.
"Madam, Sir, Miss Quinn, please have some soup."
Eloise introduced quickly, saying, "Miss Vera, this is Diana's famous clam chowder. It's delicious and good for you. Have a taste."
"Alright." Madeline quickly turned around and went back to her seat.
Even though she knew Eloise and Sean were just hosting her because of Meredith, it was such a rare reunion for the three of them.
Despite it being a hypocritical show of affection, it was still rare for her.
She picked up the spoon. When she was about to take a sip, her sharp sense of smell told her that there was something wrong with the chowder.
When Eloise saw Madeline putting down her spoon, she asked curiously, "Miss Vera, why aren't you drinking it? Is it not to your liking?"
"I'm afraid you have to ask Diana about this," Madeline said as she looked at the housekeeper who was standing at one side.
When the housekeeper's name was mentioned, her expression changed.

Eloise and Sean were still puzzled when the housekeeper took out a fruit knife from behind her back and was about to stab Madeline with it.

Eloise and Sean were shocked when they saw the sharp knife approaching Madeline. They ran in front of Madeline to stop Diana.

"Diana, what are you doing?" Eloise stood in front of Madeline. "Miss Vera has no beef with you. Why do you want to kill her with a knife? Are you crazy?"

"Miss Vera? She's Madeline Crawford! She killed Miss Brittany and changed her name so she could get away with her crimes! I must avenge Miss Brittany today!"

The housekeeper was extremely hostile, and her eyes were filled with hatred. She wanted so badly to chop Madeline into a million pieces.

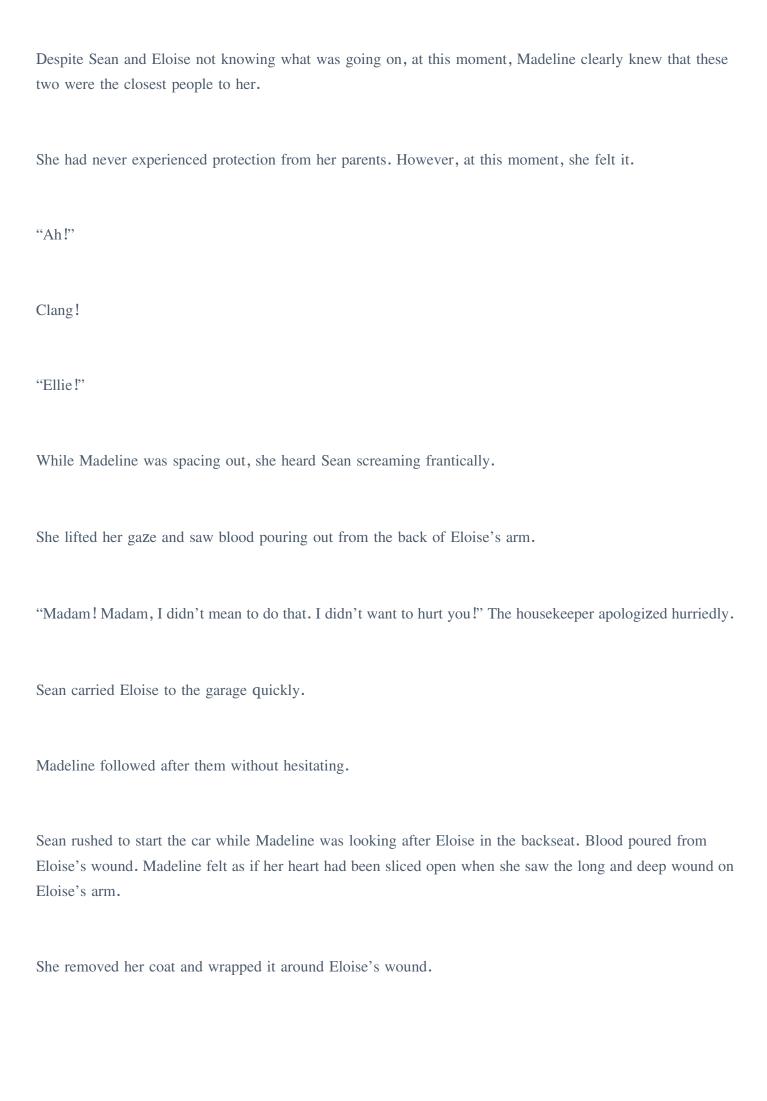
Madeline finally understood. The woman who she saw hiding at the corner crying heavily while looking at Brittany's photo was the housekeeper.

"She's not Madeline! Madeline died a long time ago!" Eloise emphasized. "Put the knife down."

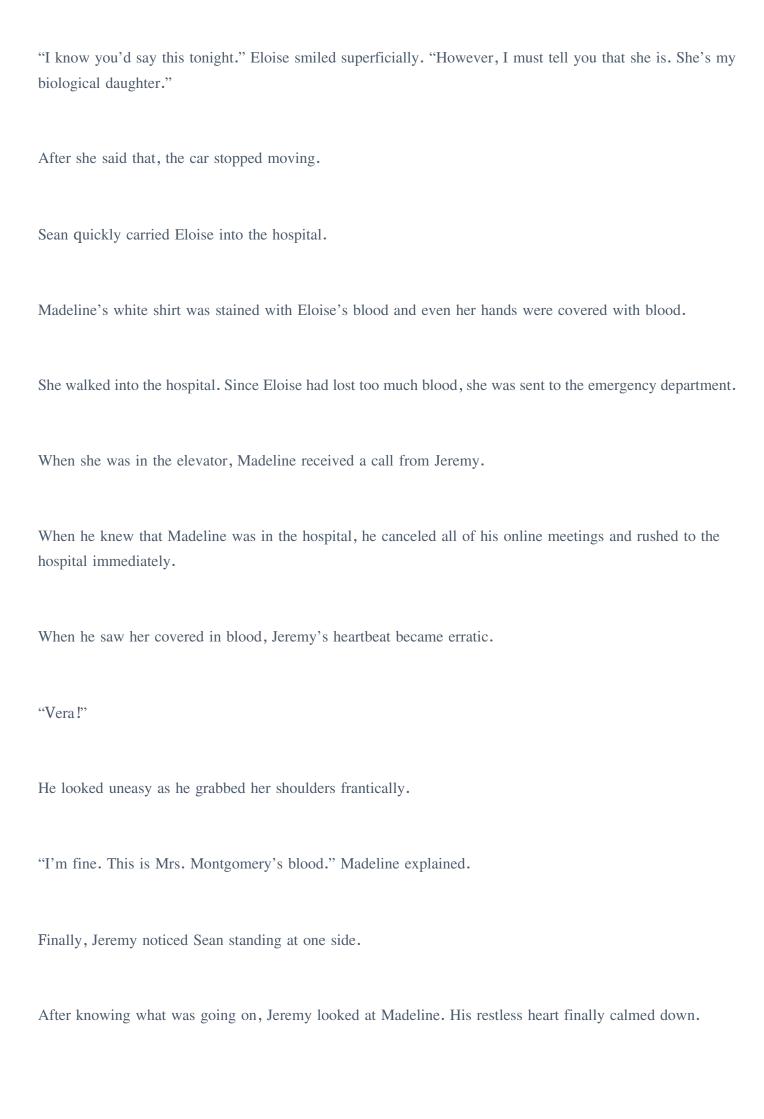
"She is Madeline!" The housekeeper insisted. She waved the fruit knife again. "Madam, please get out of the way. Don't you want me to kill this cold-blooded woman to avenge Miss Brittany?" the housekeeper said while charging toward Madeline and waving the fruit knife.

Madeline knew she could dodge from her safely. However, she did not expect Eloise and Sean to stand in front of her.

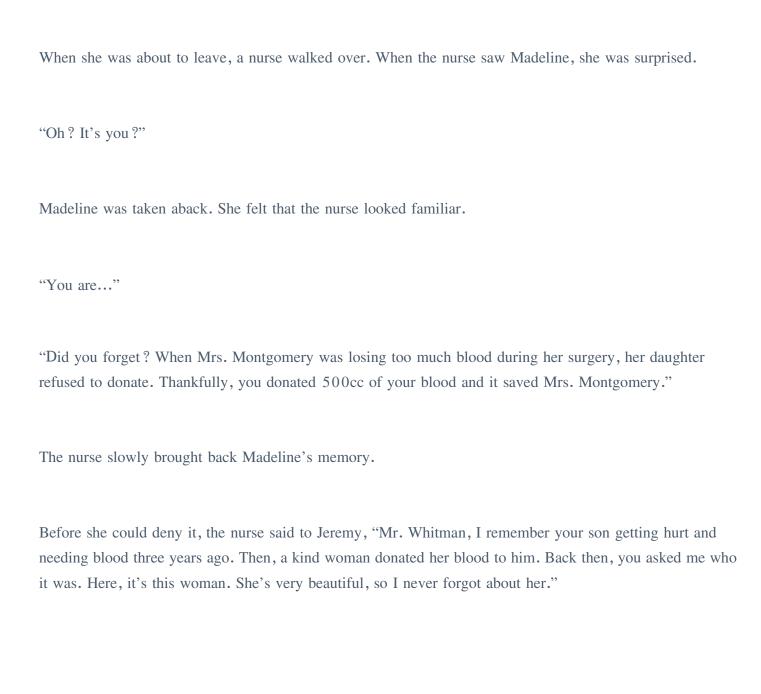
This surprised her.

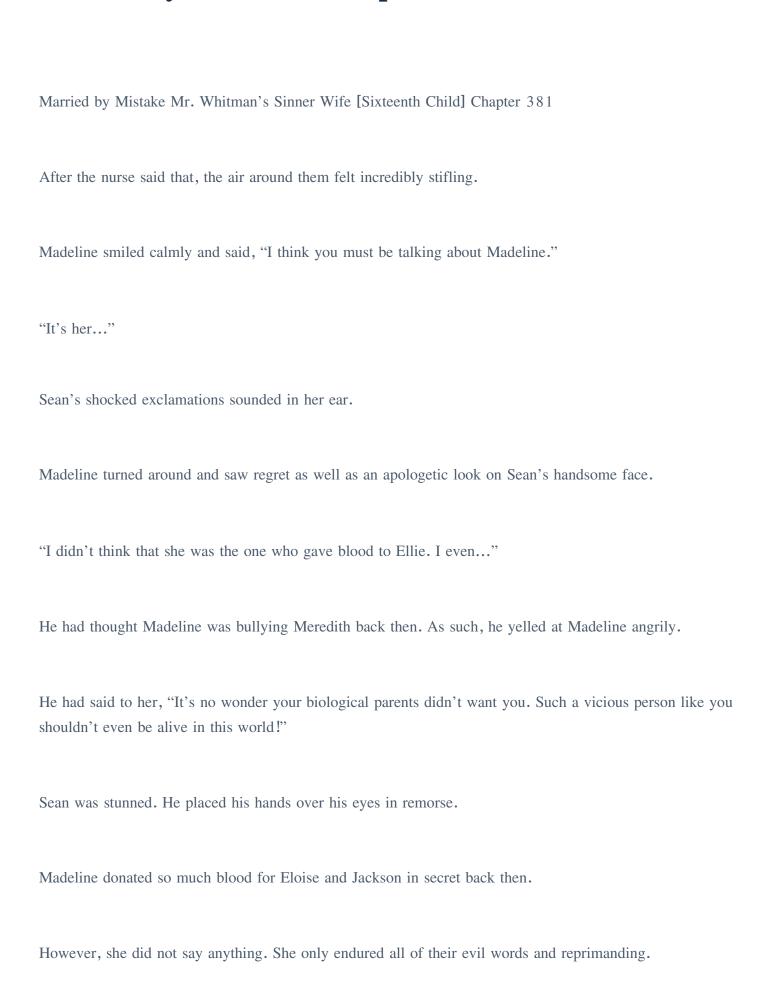


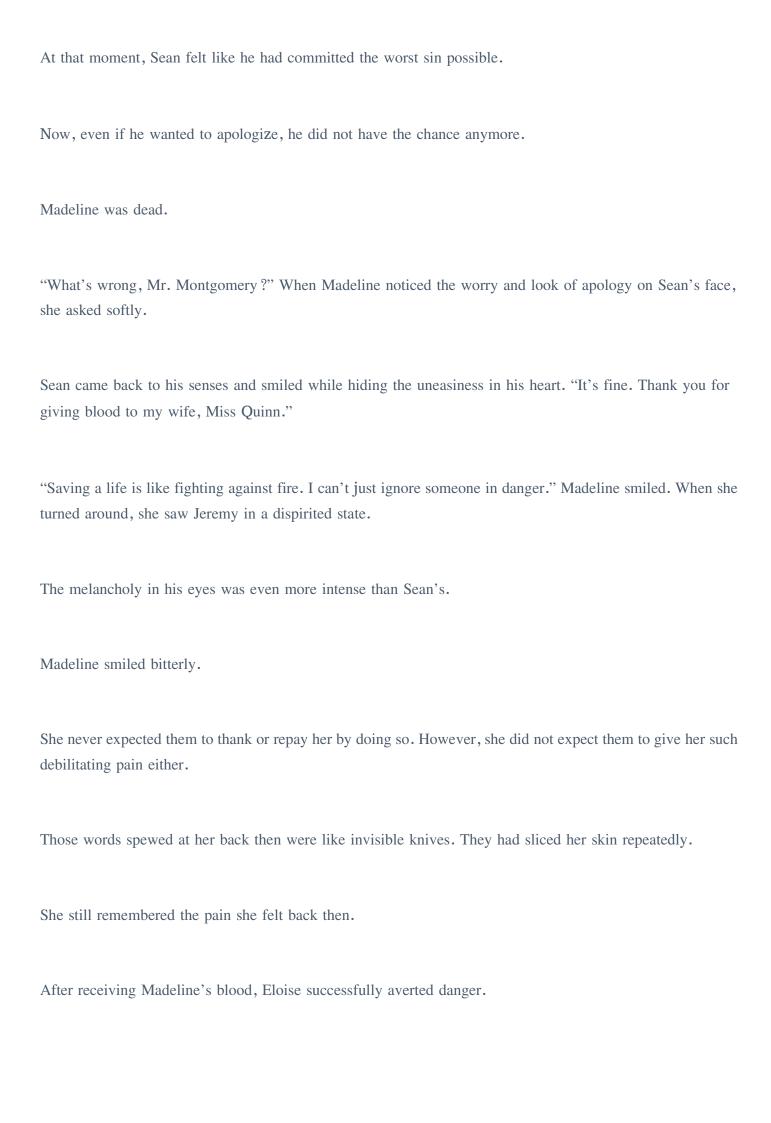




He never wanted to experience that unbearable pain again.
The door of the emergency department opened at this moment. A nurse quickly ran out and Sean stopped her. "How's my wife?"
"Mrs. Montgomery's wound is too deep and she has lost a lot of blood. She's unconscious right now. Since her blood type is rare, the blood bank doesn't have the one she needs. I'm about to go get some in our branch. It'll take at least two hours.
"It can't be helped."
"It can." Madeline walked over. "I can donate my blood to Mrs. Montgomery."
"You?" Sean looked at Madeline in astonishment.
Jeremy's eyes lit up.
"Stop wasting time. I'm going to donate blood now."
Madeline turned around quickly while Jeremy and Sean followed after her.
After asking for some relevant information, Madeline quickly went through the procedure of giving blood. After a while, she donated 500cc of blood.
Jeremy removed his coat and draped it across Madeline's shoulders.
When Sean saw Madeline giving so much blood for Eloise, he did not know what to say.







Sean was obviously defeated. When Madeline told him she was leaving, he was still standing in place in shock.

Jeremy drove Madeline back to his place. On the way, Madeline leaned against the seat and fell asleep from exhaustion. When she woke up, it was dawn.

She noticed that she was lying in the bed in her old bedroom. Her blood-stained clothes had been removed and she was wearing her old pajamas.

Madeline grasped the front of her pajamas in concern. Thankfully, she had worn a tank top underneath her shirt just in case. Unless Jeremy had deliberately pulled down her tank top, he would not have been able to see the mole.

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Madeline got out of bed and cleaned herself up. When she was about to look for Jeremy, she heard noises from the balcony.
She looked over and saw the man standing there alone. Jeremy's tall and slender back looked frail.
There was a cigarette between his long fingers. The tip of the cigarette lit up and dimmed simultaneously, looking desolate in the morning sun.
Perhaps he heard footsteps, so he turned around and saw Madeline walking toward him. He narrowed his eyes into a grin. "Why don't you sleep more?"
"I'll wake up if I get enough sleep." Madeline smiled. When she saw Jeremy in yesterday's clothes, she asked, "You didn't sleep for the entire night?"
He curled the corner of his lips. His eyes were as dark as night as they were glued on Madeline's fair and gentle face.
"It's been difficult for me to fall asleep for the past three years."
A glint flashed across Madeline's eyes when she heard that.
Jeremy extinguished his cigarette and walked in front of her.

The unique smell of tobacco from his body surrounded her slowly.
"Vera, do you think a person will be forgiven after they apologize for the mistake they made?"
Madeline thought about what happened last night when she heard that.
That nurse had made him think about what happened a few years ago.
Perhaps he did not expect the woman who he thought to be evil to do something like that in secret. Therefore, that was why he reckoned that he was wrong.
Madeline smiled. She lifted her hand to caress Jeremy's face in concern. "Jeremy, what's wrong? Why are you asking that question all of a sudden?"
Jeremy held her hand that was on his face.
His hand was cold, and the slight temperature in his hand enveloped hers. "You won't leave me, right?"
"Why would I leave you for no reason?" Madeline asked with a slight smile. "You must be tired from staying awake the entire night. Go have some rest. We need to go to the court later. Meredith's hearing is today," Madeline said, turning around after retracting her hand.
When her hand left the source of warmth, the faint temperature disappeared as well.
Jeremy looked at Madeline's back. The expression in his eyes was getting more and more peculiar.
•••

Meredith's hearing started at ten in the morning.
After a while, Meredith was brought out.
She was wearing a blue and white striped prisoner's outfit. Despite having tidied herself up, she still could not hide the freckles and dark circles on her face.
At this moment, she looked completely different from the image of a socialite from a wealthy family that she had built.
Meredith was brought to the dock. When she saw Sean, she had already readied her tears before looking at him. She was curious about why Eloise was absent.
After scanning across the gallery, she saw Jeremy. Meredith started sobbing even harder now.
The lawyer Eloise hired for Meredith was exceptional. After a while, the circumstances were reversed and Meredith was about to be announced as not guilty.
When she saw this, Meredith used this opportunity to cry out a grievance, "Your Honor, I was wrongfully accused! Someone is framing me!"
She looked at Jeremy after she said that.
"Jeremy, do you see this? I'm innocent. I never did anything that'll go against my conscience."
"Of course, you've never done anything that went against your conscience. You don't even have one anymore."
Madeline's cold tone sounded in the court.

Meredith lifted her gaze and saw Madeline walking over with a powerful aura. She was dressed in a simple yet elegant suit.
Madeline's appearance quickly trumped how Meredith looked right now.
Meredith gritted her teeth and clenched her fists as she scowled at Madeline.
Madeline walked to the witness stand and bowed to the judge. "Your Honor, I'm the victim of this case, Vera Quinn. I have solid evidence that can prove Meredith Crawford did plan to harm me and her son, Jackson Whitman."

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"Your Honor, don't trust this woman. She's trying to frame me! I'm being falsely accused by her!" Meredith pointed at Madeline and shrieked emotionally. "I'm really innocent, Your Honor!"

"Defendant, please calm down. If you continue to make noise, the court will charge you with contempt of court," the judge said seriously.

"..." When she heard this, Meredith shut her mouth quickly.

However, she was nervous. She did not know what Madeline's solid evidence was.

At this moment, the police brought Jon and Rose inside.

Meredith looked at Jon and Rose anxiously. She knew something was not right.

Just as she expected, Jon and Rose were testifying against her in court!

"Your Honor, my adopted daughter, Meredith Crawford, was indeed the person who planned this. She was discussing this with us at our home," Rose said. She did not dare to look Meredith in the eyes.

Jon made a full confession at one side as well. "We wanted to stop Meredith, but she did not want to listen. She said Vera Quinn stole her man and she had to teach her a lesson. She bribed some thugs to kidnap her son so that she could blame it all on Vera Quinn. Then, she decided to kill Vera Quinn and end things once and for all in a blind fit of rage."

Meredith widened her eyes in shock. She almost started vomiting blood from anger.

"You two..." Her chest was heaving violently. "You two are crazy! How can you say something like that?"

Rose and Jon looked at her nonchalantly. "Mer, now that it has come to this, we can't wrongly accuse the innocent anymore. Vera is truly innocent."

"..." Meredith was so angry that her entire body was shaking.

Although she had indeed planned to get rid of Jackson and Madeline, this idea was given to her by Rose.

Now, there were witnesses and evidence present. Meredith did not have any more comebacks. Even if her lawyer was glib-tongued, he would not be able to turn the circumstances around at this stage.

Plus, Meredith was indeed guilty.

The judge quickly came up with a verdict—12 years of prison time.

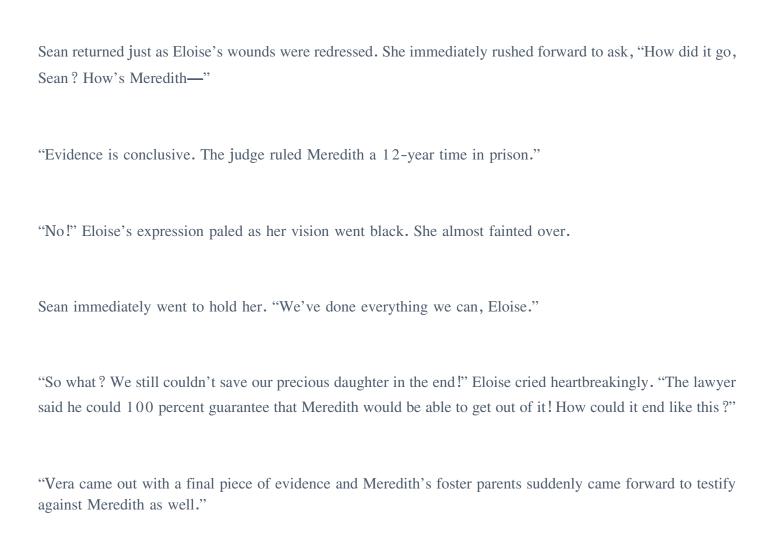
Meredith started wailing emotionally. "I've been wrongfully accused! I want to appeal! I will definitely appeal!"

Of course, she could not accept the charges. She could not even stay one day there, let alone 12 years!

What would she have to compete against Madeline after 12 years?



Madeline was making guesses at what he was saying after he gave her such a vague answer.
Maybe the person he was talking about was the woman who was sleeping forever in the grave.
However, who was that woman?
•••
On the other side, after Sean left the court, he went straight to the hospital.



"What? That Vera Quinn again!" Fury flared in Eloise's eyes. "To think that I had invited her over for dinner last night, hoping she would let Meredith go. I can't believe how cruel she is! Why did she have to force Meredith to a corner? I should never have held Diana back last night! This would never have happened if she had died!"

"Have you gone mad from the anger, Eloise? How could you say such a thing?" Sean felt both shocked and exasperated. "Don't you know who donated blood to you last night? Had it not been for Vera, you wouldn't be well and alright here now!"

Eloise was stunned by his words.

Eloise clenched her teeth when she remembered Meredith's current situation and replied disdainfully, "I don't need her to save me! How much did she donate? I'll just give it back to her!"

"You may be able to return hers, but how will we return Madeline's?" Sean asked dejectedly.

Eloise stared at Sean in confusion. "Madeline? Why are you reminding me of that wretched woman? Death is the smallest penalty for all the horrible things she has done. What can we possibly owe her?"

Sean frowned bitterly and sighed. "You lost an unexpectedly huge amount of blood during an appendicitis surgery you did three years ago, do you remember?

"Meredith and her foster mother even told you that Meredith was the one who donated the blood that brought you back to safety, but that was far from the truth. Meredith wasn't the one who donated the blood at all. In fact, she actually rejected to do so."

"What... Why?" Eloise's eyes widened in disbelief. "What are you saying, Sean? Why would Meredith refuse to donate blood to me? And... And if it wasn't Meredith, then whose blood was it?"

"It was Madeline's."

"..." Eloise was gaping in shock. She felt the air around her suddenly turn into a vacuum, making it hard for her to breathe. "What... What are you saying, Sean? After all those horrible things she's done, why would Madeline donate blood to me? You must be mistaken!"

"I'm not. I contacted a friend to help me check too. From the records back then, Madeline had saved not only you, but she saved our grandson, Jackson, as well."

Sean exhaled a long sigh, leaving the guilt and regret he felt to simmer in the silence around them.

"It seems like we've been left in the dark for too long, Eloise. I can't possibly imagine how many wrongdoings our daughter has done behind our backs. It's all our fault for not being there to nurture her. She's been led completely astray by her foster parents." "..." Eloise was still dazed while her eyes were blankly staring ahead. "It can't be. It can't. It just can't..." Eloise could not bring herself to accept the truth, yet the evidence that was laid bare in front of her had guilt and remorse bubbling from within anyway. Both Madeline and Vera had saved her without asking for repayment, yet all they got were such horrible words in return... Sean persuaded her to rest and heal, but Eloise could not hold back the need to see Meredith. Eloise turned to Sean just before she alighted the car. "Won't you come with me? Meredith's still our daughter, after all." "I don't think I'm ready to meet such a daughter yet." Sean frowned conflictingly. "She may be our only daughter, but her actions..." Eloise understood without Sean needing to say more, so she turned and got out of the car herself. Eloise still found it impossible to believe that this was Meredith's true appearance now that she had calmed down, but Eloise admitted that Meredith had indeed taken it too far.

After walking inside, she was informed by the police that someone else was currently visiting Meredith.

When she asked him, she found that it was none other than Rose and Jon.

As a mother, she felt the responsibility to rein Meredith back.

Thanks to a small tip from Sean, Eloise was allowed in.
However, she was met with Meredith's agitated shouts just as she arrived at the door of the conjugal room. "Are you happy now that I'm in jail? You've gone mad! How could you betray me?"
The corners of Meredith's eyes were dyed red as she glared at Rose and Jon.
Eloise had never seen such a ferocious look on her.
Rose explained herself with her head drooped down. "We didn't have a choice. It was either you or us."
"Then it should have been you!" Meredith banged on the table harshly.
"Calm down, Meredith. Being upset won't get you anywhere. Just hold off for a little longer, okay? I'm sure Eloise and Sean will get you out of here," Rose brushed her off exasperatedly.

Meredith ground her molars together impatiently. "Just who are my parents, you or them? I can't believe you'd indict me just to save yourselves. Did I not bring you enough advantages these few years from the

Montgomeries? How could you betray your biological daughter? Or are you telling me that you've forgotten

that I'm your daughter after all the luxuries you've sucked off me!"

Eloise felt her body freeze at the words Meredith had shouted.
Her hand trembled as it pushed hard at the door to the conjugal room.
The three inside jolted at Eloise's sudden arrival.
"Mrs. Montgomery What are you doing here?" Rose shot up from her seat to look uneasily at Eloise.
Meredith looked calm now that the wave of shock had passed. "Are you here to see me, Mom? What happened to your hand? What's with the bandages?"
Her tone was now kind and the look in her eyes was delicate, leaving no traces of the dominance and bossiness that were there mere moments ago.
Eloise could not care less about Meredith's false concern and greetings, for her eyes were currently boring into that ever-so delicate-looking appearance. "The words you just said, did you mean them?"
Meredith was stunned. She deduced that Eloise must have heard the words she shouted earlier in unrestrained anger.
"You've misunderstood, Mom. It's just"
"I did not misunderstand!" Eloise interrupted icily, a mist of wet anger tinting her eyes. "You've been lying to me this entire time! You were never my daughter! I can't believe I let myself believe this horrid lie you fed me!"

"We didn't lie, Mrs. Montgomery. You've misunderstood us." Rose frantically insisted. "Meredith is your daughter. Don't you remember her birthmark and the DNA test? Both of which prove that she is yours and Mr. Montgomery's daughter!"

"Birthmark?" Eloise suddenly scoffed self-deprecatingly. "Now I know why the two of you went to that tattoo parlor the other day."

66 27

At that, Meredith and Rose turned to share a look.

They had not expected Eloise to know of such a thing.

"It was never a birthmark, but a tattoo! You had someone tattoo a birthmark on you!" Eloise saw through their lie.

Both Meredith and Rose were lost for words.

"The DNA test must be fake as well then. You must have tampered with it too." Eloise stared furiously at Meredith whose eyes began to harden and grow fierce. "You're an abomination, Meredith Crawford! I saw you as my own daughter and defended you time and again after all the despicable things you've done. Hell, I even helped you deal with Vera and thought to pull you out from whatever horrendous place you must be in, but instead, what I get is you teaming up to lie to me?"

"That's not true, Mrs. Montgomery. It's just a misunderstanding..."

"Forget it. You don't have to explain anymore." Meredith interrupted Rose coldly as she raised her dark and sinister gaze to meet Eloise's furious ones. "You're right. I'm not your daughter."

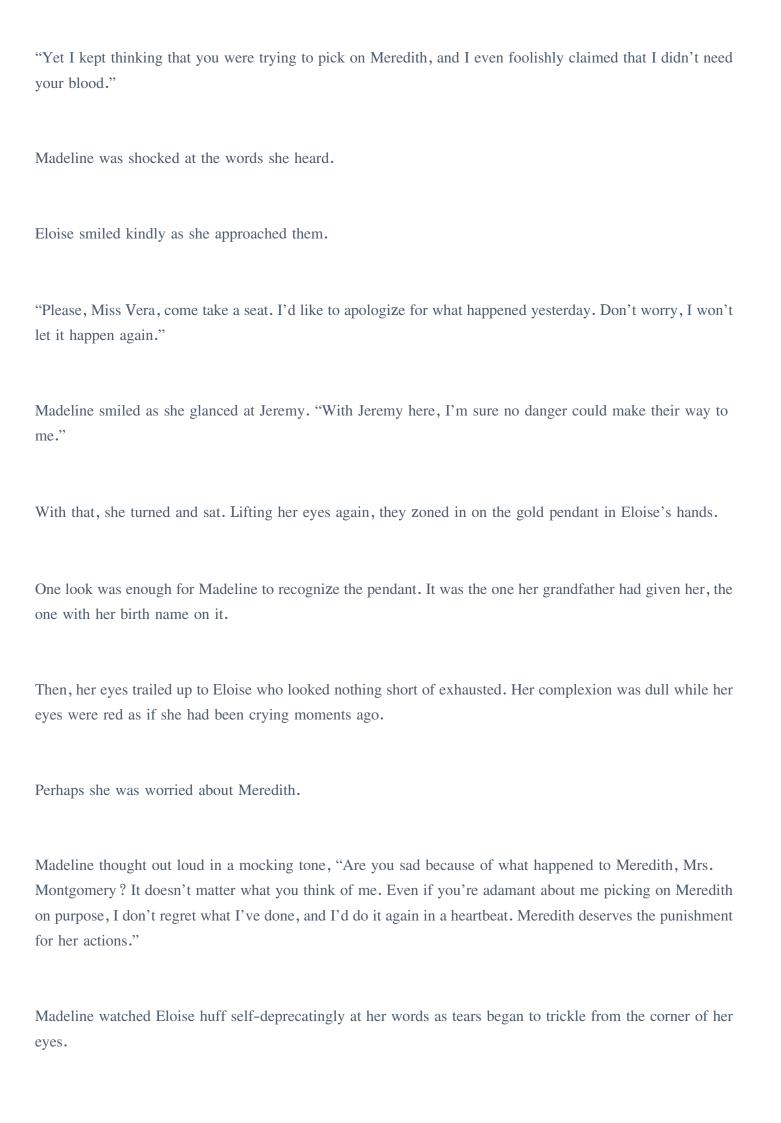
Eloise felt her heart clench and her mind buzz at Meredith's admittance.

She admitted it.
She was not her daughter!
"So Vera has been telling the truth the entire time." Eloise could not feel more regretful. Remorse and guilt ate away at her as she recalled the horrible things she had told and done to Vera.
Meredith scoffed condescendingly. "You'd better think of a way to get me out of here, Eloise Patton. Or you can give up on seeing your daughter ever again!"
Eloise's eyes flared at the words. "You know where my daughter is?"
"Of course, I do. Where else would I get that gold pendant anyway?" Meredith smirked casually before slowly standing again. "We're done here. Now if you could escort me back please, Officer?"
Eloise dashed forward like an unsheathed sword as Meredith made a move to leave. "Don't go, Meredith. Tell me where my daughter is!"
Meredith chuckled coldly without care. "Get me out of here, then maybe I'll tell you. You'd better not tell the whole world about this, or I'll make sure you'll never see your daughter again."
"Meredith Crawford! Meredith, you stand right there!"
Eloise wanted to stop her, but Meredith had already turned and left.
Reading the room, both Rose and Jon also made their way to leave as well. Eloise quickly chased after them.
Sean, who was waiting for Eloise, watched as Rose and Jon suddenly dashed out as the jail doors opened with Eloise hot on their tails.

Realizing	something	was w	rong,	Sean	immed	liately	got o	ut of	the c	ear and	d ran (	over.		



Not even Sean's comforting words could bring an end to her tears.
While Sean was not doing any better, there seemed to be a glimmer of relief within him.
He was relieved that such a wretched woman was not their daughter. He was relieved that their daughter was still alive.
Knock, knock, knock. A maid suddenly knocked on their room door. "Sir, Madam. Mr. Whitman and Ms. Vera are here."
Eloise and Sean immediately lifted their heads, the former's eyes flaring with a prayer of hope. "Perhaps Vera would know something."
With that, she wiped off her tears and ran down the stairs, ignoring the pain in her hand.
Madeline and Jeremy entered the living room to find Eloise dashing down the stairs messily with Sean following right after.
What was going on?
Meredith shared a confused look with Jeremy before turning back to smile at them. "I heard you got out of the hospital, Mrs. Montgomery. Jeremy and I are here to see you."
Eloise's rushed footsteps turned into elegant ones at her words as she reined in her emotions to give a kind smile. "Sean told me you were the one who donated blood to me, Miss Vera. Thank you. You've kept me from a life-threatening situation."
Her eyes turned to look at the floor in shame as she spoke frankly.



Madeline was shocked to see such a reaction, but Eloise lifted her gaze to meet the others there. "I'm so sorry, Miss Vera. I was a fool to refuse your advice and question your intentions when you were merely telling the truth. Meredith really isn't my daughter."

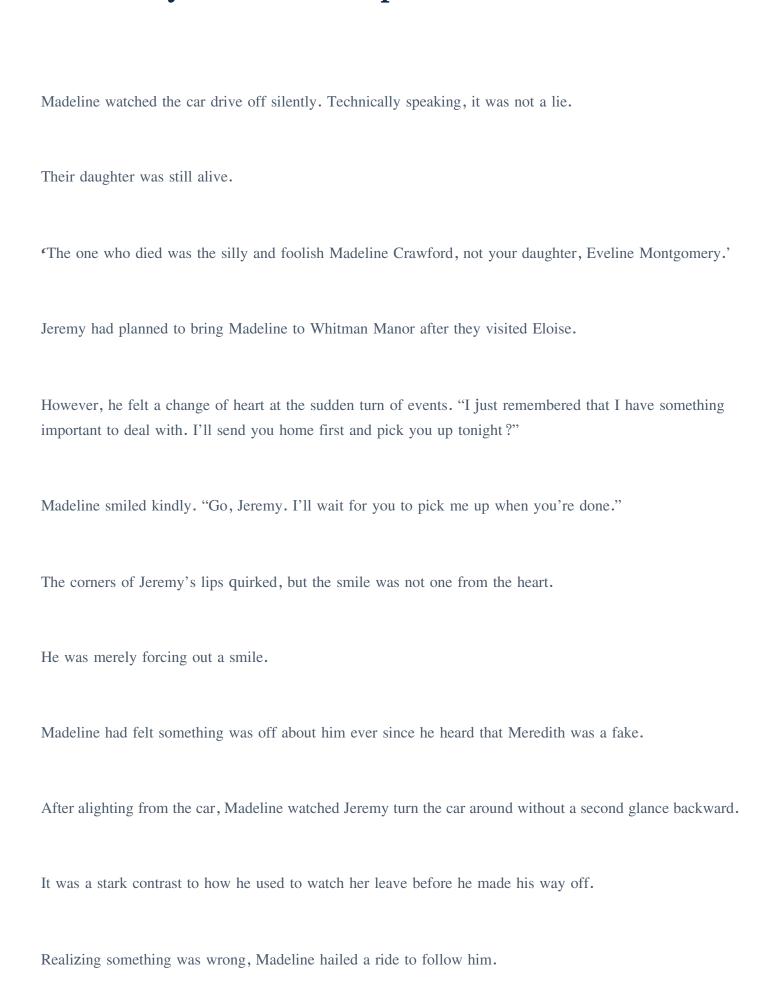
her happy."

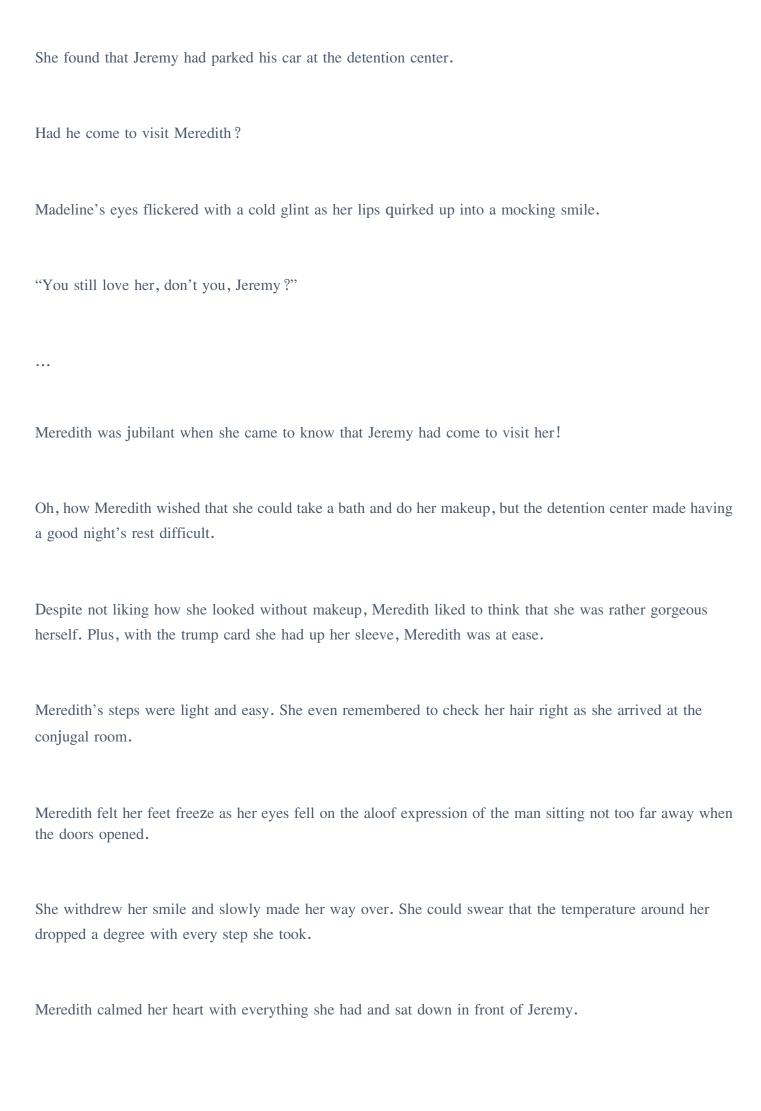
Madeline's eyes flickered with interest as she stared at Eloise, whose tears were streaming freely, in shock. "Why would you say so, Mrs. Montgomery?"
"Eloise and I heard Meredith admit it herself." Sean sighed, his brows furrowing tightly. "I can't believe that she stole the identity."
Madeline was rather confused at the turn of events.
Why would Meredith admit to not being the eldest daughter of the Montgomery family?
Doing such a thing gave her no advantages.
"I would never have heard her conversation with Rose and Jon had I not gone to visit her at the detention center."
Eloise scoffed self-effacingly, and it dawned on Madeline that Eloise had overheard something that was never meant for her to hear.
A lie would always be a lie. Finding out the truth was only a matter of when.
It felt ironic, and she heard Eloise let out a chuckle.
"I thought that I had finally found my daughter after so many years. Sean and I drenched her with love these three years we thought she was ours. I didn't even blink when I spent tens of millions on her as long as it made

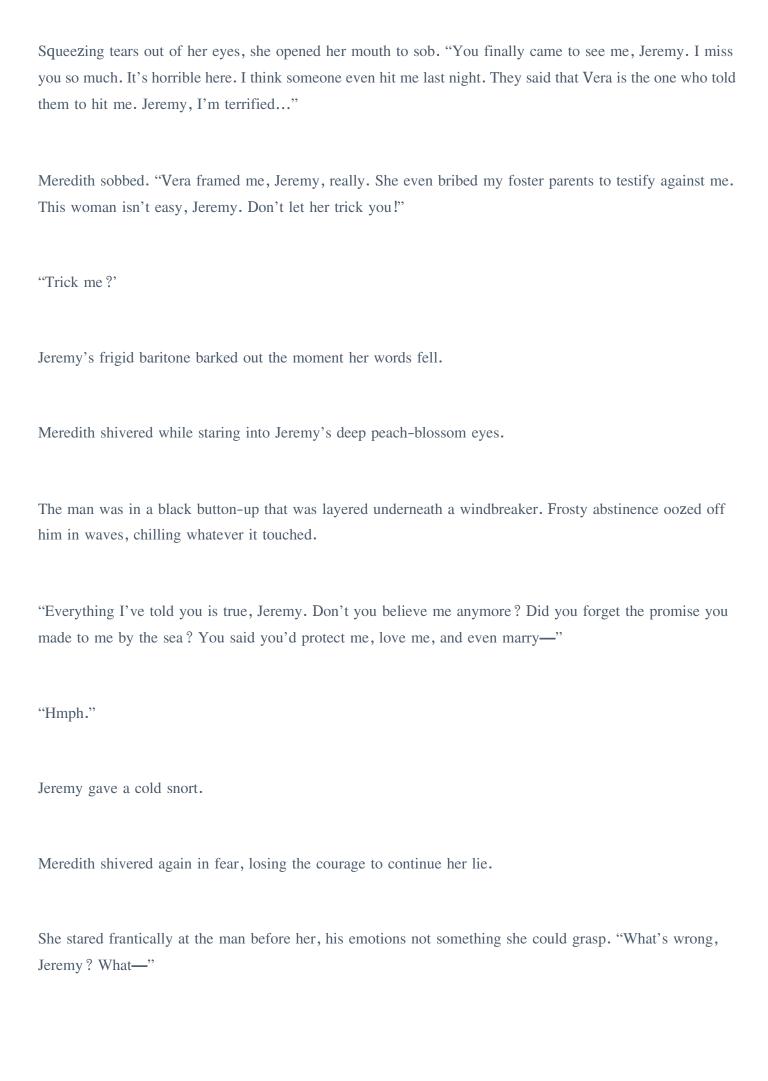
Madeline was not surprised at the number at all. Meredith had always been greedy for fame and wealth. Although most of the money she got her hands on was taken for her own personal use, a fraction of it had certainly gone to Rose and Jon as well. "I don't even care about the money. What hurts is how she took advantage of our love for her. She has been nothing but fake with us these three years. The only thing about us that mattered to her was the Montgomery family wealth." Eloise had finally seen through Meredith's facade. However, it was too late. Madeline pondered silently, finding the absurdity of the situation hilarious. 'My dearest mom and dad, during the time you took Meredith as your daughter, everything she has done, no matter how immoral, you took it in your stride and chose to forgive. 'Your love and protection for her were no different to Jeremy's at the very beginning. You'd stab and hurt me without a second thought and only cared about who was truly in the wrong. The wounds may heal, but the scars will always remain. "Miss Vera." Eloise suddenly reached out to grab Madeline's hand, her expression on edge. Madeline reined herself back to stare at Eloise's hallowed look. "You told me last time, Miss Vera, that you heard Rose Tanner say that my daughter died three years ago. Could you please recall again if you've heard her wrongly? My daughter isn't dead, is she? She can't be!"

Eloise's grip on Madeline's hand tightened.
Hope and expectations glimmered in the woman's eyes as she hoped of a reply that would put her at ease.
Madeline felt her previously calm heart skip a beat as she stared at the teary eyes before her.
"Miss Vera?" Eloise urged anxiously.
Madeline raised her gaze to meet Sean's sincere and pleading ones. Her heart calmed as a faint smile graced her lips.
"I couldn't hear that well since I was standing outside the door. I hear that Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery are well-known in the world of charity? I'm sure your daughter would still be well and alive, living off the blessings of your charitable works."
Eloise's shoulders slumped in relief at the words while Sean sent a grateful look at Madeline.
"That's great, Sean! Our daughter's still alive. Now we just need to find out where she is." Eloise turned to look at Sean excitedly.
Madeline watched quietly, her heart not feeling even a shred of the elation they felt.
It dawned on Madeline that Jeremy had gotten quiet ever since Eloise told them that Meredith was not the Montgomeries' true daughter.
Madeline turned her head to find Jeremy completely emotionless. His expression was frozen as if he was a mere ancient Greek sculpture. Had it not been for the swirl of emotions in his eyes, Madeline would think that he was hexed with a freezing charm with how quiet he was.

However, why was he acting in such a way?
Eloise's emotional rollercoaster ride had caused the wound on her hand to seep with blood again.
Sean was quick to bring her to the hospital. Before they got in the car, Sean walked over to thank Madeline personally.
As grateful he was for the blood donation, he was more grateful for the white lie Madeline told earlier.

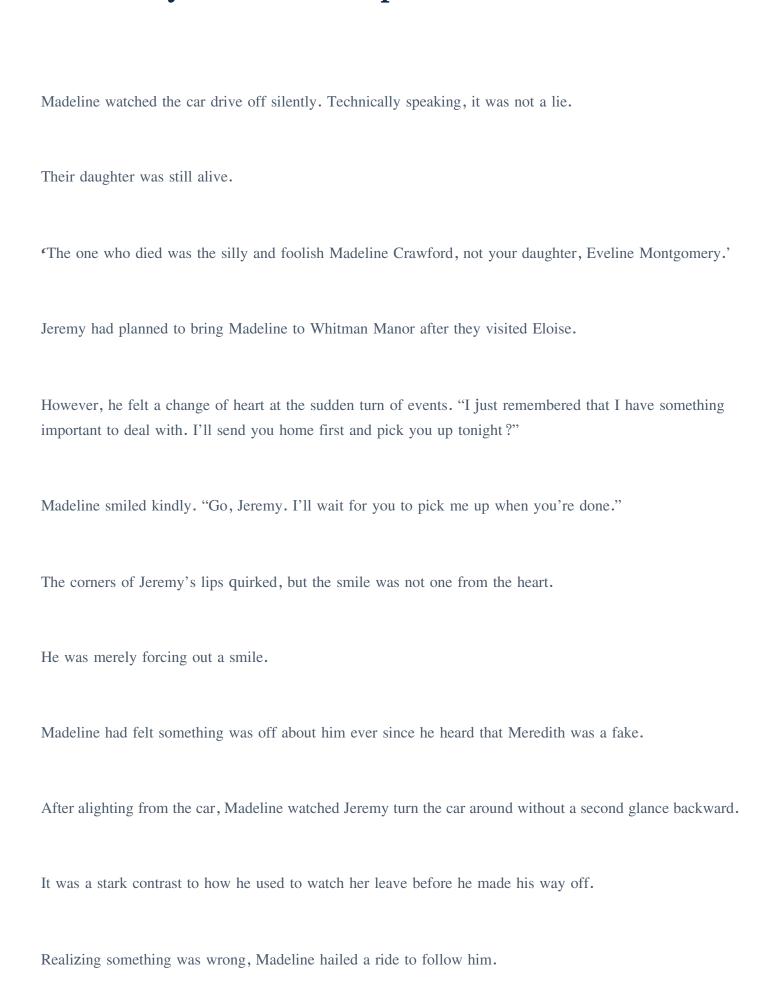


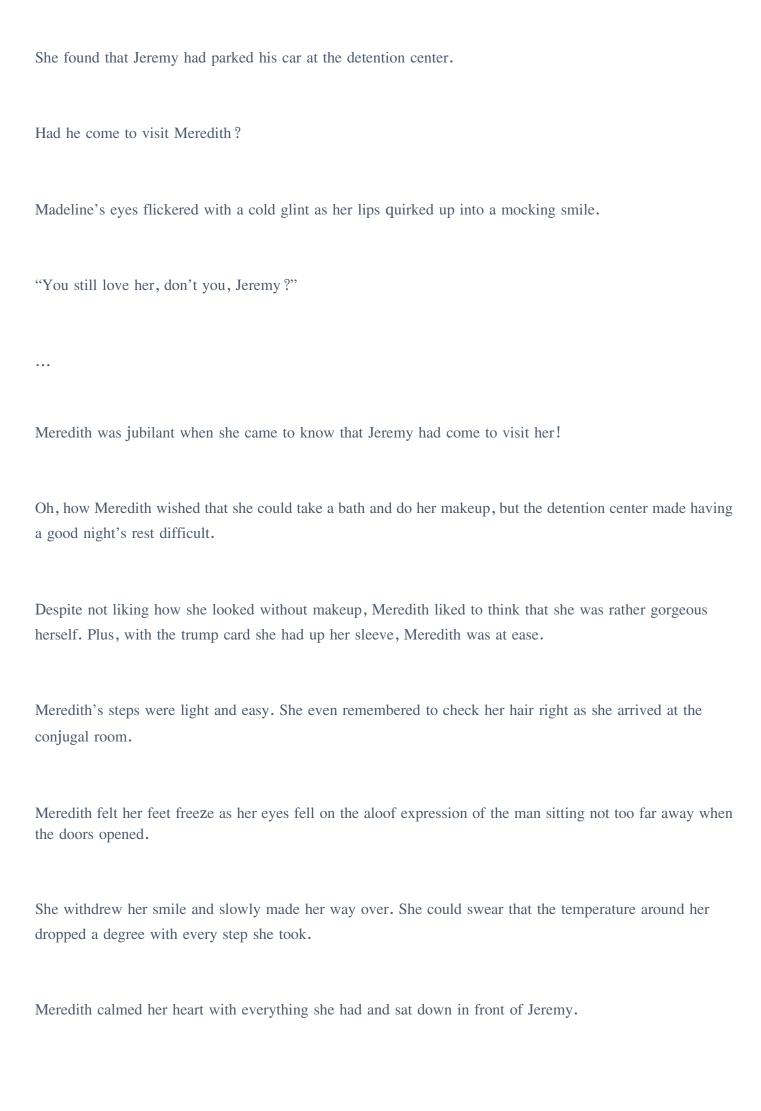


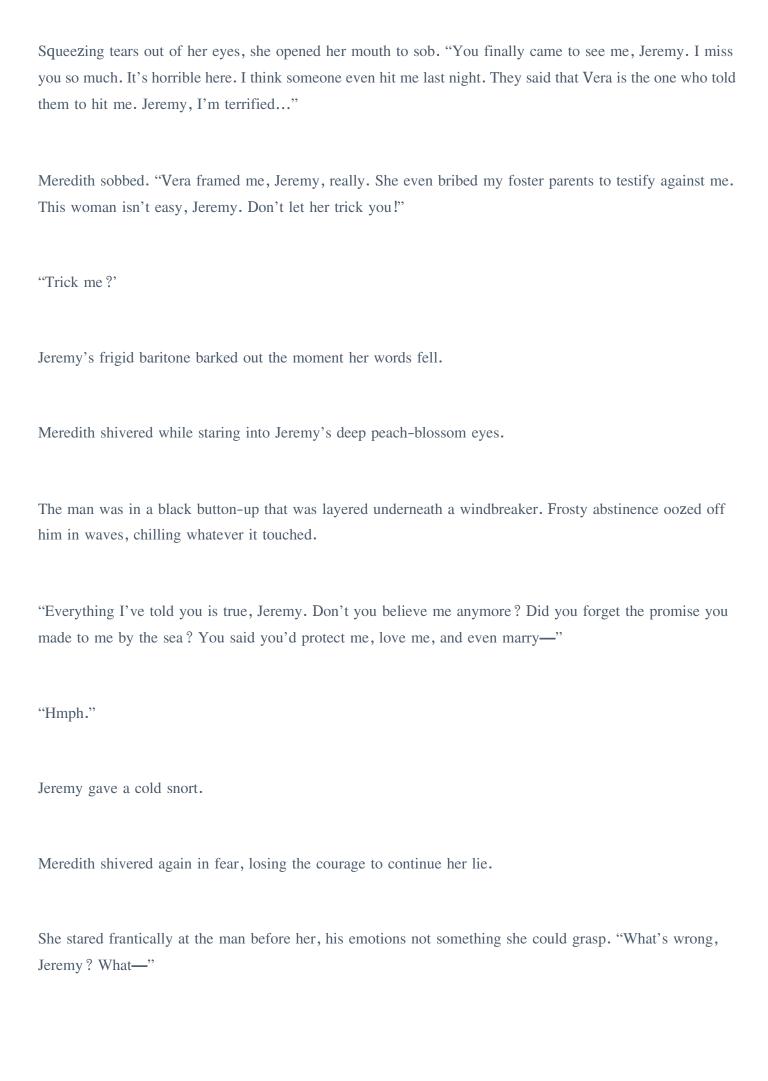


Interrupting Meredith's question, Jeremy stood suddenly, his tall and lean figure casting a shadow that covered the glisten of fake tears in Meredith's eyes. He reached out to grab Meredith by her collar, pulling her harshly toward himself.

Those sinister eyes of his drilled into Meredith. "You were never the girl I met by the sea in April Hill to begin with!"







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Those sinister eyes of his drilled into Meredith. "You were never the girl I met by the sea in April Hill to begin with!"

Staring down at her like a champion looking at the loser, the man oozed with a frightfully domineering aura.

"You wouldn't waste my time unless you want a painful death coming your way." He warned frostily.

Meredith coughed twice for the sake of it and raised her head with difficulty. "I... I know I shouldn't have lied to you, Jeremy. But... But I promise, the love I feel for you is real. I love you, Jeremy, I really do—"

"Cut the bullsh\*t," Jeremy interrupted emotionlessly.

Meredith fell face-down on the ground and bit her lip. "Alright, I'll tell you..."

Head down, Meredith's eyes flashed with deceit. If I can't get this man, Madeline, then you can forget about getting a shred of his love as well!

She clenched her jaw and swore internally before opening her mouth to say, "There was an elective I took with Madeline in my freshman year, and there was a girl with the nickname Linnie in that class. Madeline and I had accidentally taken a look at her diary, and we found out that she shared a past with you, Jeremy. So I..."

Meredith paused before continuing, "The girl transferred for some reason in the end, but I managed to steal her diary before she left. I think Madeline wanted to pretend to be that girl too, but she couldn't because I was a step ahead of her."

With that, she reached out to tug Jeremy's pant leg and begged with newfound humility. "Please, Jeremy. For Jack, let me go..."

"How dare you speak of Jack? You were never fit as his mother at all!"

Jeremy kicked Meredith away coldly as his words fell. Then, he turned around to leave, bringing the cold he oozed with him.

"Jeremy, Jeremy..." Meredith wailed with her rigid throat, but the man slowly vanished from her vision anyway...

Leaving the detention center, Jeremy sped his way to the gates of a cemetery.

He lit a cigarette and stared sorrowfully into space.

Meredith's words reminded him of something Madeline had told him six years ago.

Tears were streaming down her face while she lay by his feet, accusing him of turning back on the promise he made to her when they were young. He was shocked and mere moments away from believing that Madeline was indeed the girl years ago when Meredith had suddenly appeared with her sly words that convinced him Madeline was lying and that she was a wicked woman.

Yet the fact remained that Madeline was not such a woman at all.

She had given without a thought of repayment—a virtue hard to come by.

How could such a woman peek at the contents of another's diary, and then steal their identity?

Jeremy's heart thrummed erratically in his chest. After taking a long drag of the cigarette, he exhaled a puff of white smoke.

Then, he had an epiphany. It was an explanation that resolved every confusion and question mark in his head.

For a split second, he could not describe the flurry of emotions within him.

Just then, his eyes caught sight of a white figure slowly standing from what should be Madeline's grandfather's grave. Her figure was a replica of the one in his memories.

He thought about the same silhouette he had seen the last time, though he was not able to find out who exactly the woman who left the flowers was.

Jeremy's heart picked up its pace as he immediately extinguished the light and strode over.

After leaving flowers for her grandfather, Madeline stood and walked over to the grave to caress the name engraved on the tombstone.

"I know you've always wanted to help me find my parents, Grandfather, but now that I've finally found them, I don't know if I should acknowledge them or not."

She smiled but felt the corner of her eyes sour.

"It's almost hilarious how my dearest parents and the man I used to love the most had held dear the wicked woman who killed you, my child, and almost me.

"But don't worry, Grandfather. Linnie's really close to avenging you two!"

The thrilling rush of revenge flared in Madeline's eyes as the corner of her lips quirked into a smirk.

She turned around to light him a candle, only to find someone standing not too far from her the moment she turned around...

The man before her gave off an air of frost and avoidance, his chiseled features betraying nothing as he stared at her.

The wind blew strongly in the deep of autumn at the cemetery, caressing the cheeks of those who visited.

Madeline calmly gave a soft smile at the man who had appeared in front of her. "Why are you here, Jeremy?" she asked, her tone casual with a hint of surprise. However, she did not let out the nervousness she felt.

Jeremy walked over slowly before turning to look at the tombstone. "Why are you here? And who's this? Why are you paying respects to him? This is your first time in Glendale, isn't it? I didn't know that you had relatives resting here."

Madeline pretended to be shocked as she replied, "Don't you know, Jeremy? Madeline was still technically your ex-wife. Don't you recognize her grandfather?"

"My ex-wife's grandfather?" He stared dazedly at the name engraved on the tombstone, the words 'Grandfather of Madeline Crawford' were indeed engraved on the bottom left corner.

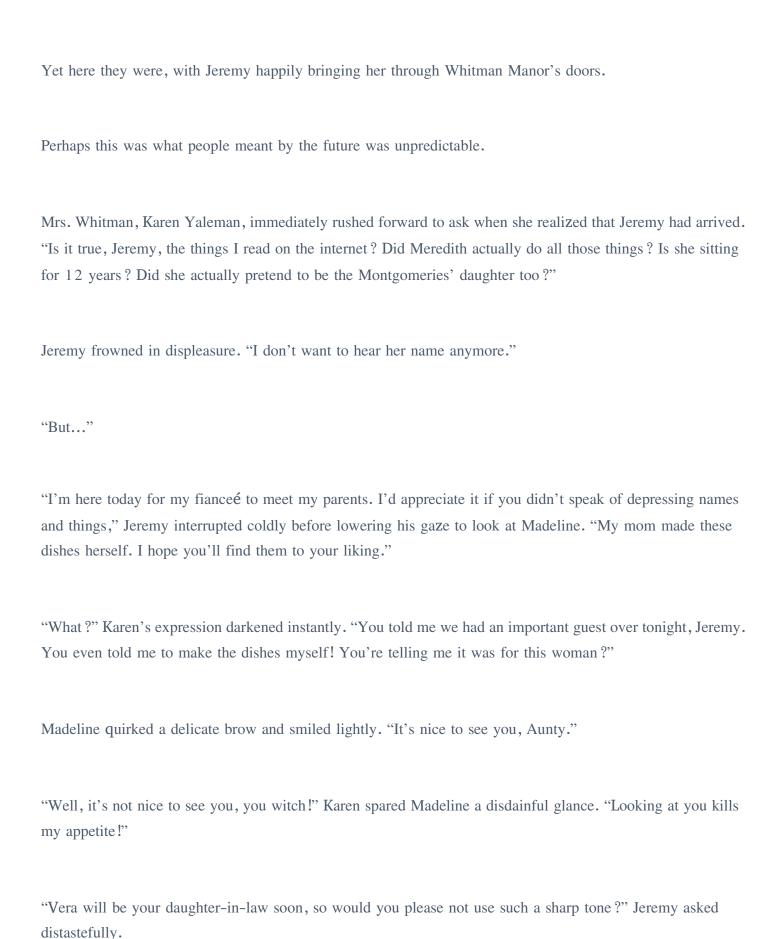
"Why would you come and pay respects to my ex-wife's grandfather out of the blue?"

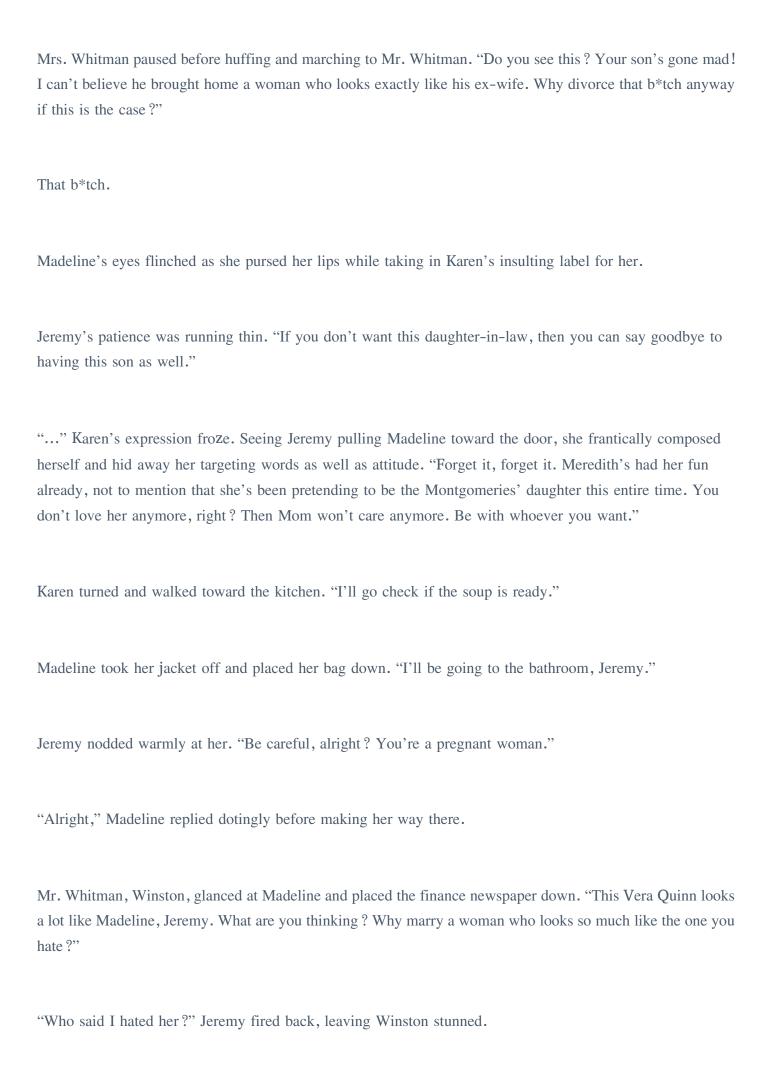
"Sympathy, perhaps," Madeline parted her lips to reply in a heartbeat as she stared at the flowers she placed. "I've been feeling sad for this Madeline Crawford as of late. The man she loved deeply doesn't even like her, and she had died being known as the shameless woman who even your family thinks death's the least amount of punishment for her crimes..."

She said with a smile before bending down to light the candle.

"Perhaps It's because I look too much like Madeline and have fallen in love with the man she was smitten with, so I couldn't help but sympathize with her past. I had someone help me look into her past connections. Knowing that her grandfather had passed away, I thought that maybe I could pay my respects for her."
Madeline found no logical faults in her explanation.
Meanwhile, Jeremy stood stunned by the side. Staring at the flickering candle, his deep dark eyes seemed to have been lit by a bright flare as well.
"Oh, are you here to give roses to someone resting here too, Jeremy?" Madeline stood and smiled, brushing off non-existent lint and smoke out of Jeremy's shirt collar.
"The strong wind's giving me a bit of a headache. How about we return first?"
Jeremy turned to face Madeline's crescent-eyed smile and nodded.
Madeline watched Jeremy quietly as they made their way back and realized that he had yet shown any burst of emotions on his face.
Did he believe the words she said?
Most likely.
He could not possibly stay silent if he suspected her, especially not with how much he hated her.
···
Headlines of Meredith's conviction began to trend in newspapers a few days later.

Following that was the incident of Meredith stealing the identity of Montgomeries' eldest daughter.
Netizens were in outrage. As much as they felt for the Montgomery family, they were also heartbroken for Jackson.
Such a smart and brave child did not deserve such a horrible and wicked woman for a mother.
While reading the news, the Montgomery family's Twitter post about the search for their daughter caught Madeline's eye.
Within the passage of text was a description of a butterfly-shaped birthmark on their long-lost daughter's waist.
Madeline immediately tried to stop that from trending.
She could not let Jeremy see such a piece of news now.
At the same time, Madeline knew that she had to pick up the pace of her revenge.
Jeremy came to look for her just as she read the news and informed her of the date when he was going to bring her to meet his parents.
Madeline made sure to dress up that day and entered Whitman Manor with her arm linked with Jeremy's just as the sun set over the horizon.
Oh, how unwilling Jeremy was when she had stepped foot here back then.





Winston's impression of Madeline was rather neutral, for he had only met her two or three times since he spent most of his time working overseas, but Madeline's appearance was something fresh in his mind.

While he had not seen much of Madeline, he had heard a lot of the wicked things the woman did from his wife and thus came to the conclusion that Madeline was not a good person and was someone his son despised to his bones.

Yet now...

Madeline had no actual need to use the bathroom, but Karen's words fueled the burning flares of hatred within her. She needed to calm down.

She had thought that this mother-in-law of hers would help her when Meredith framed her for stealing a bracelet. Ultimately, Karen had referred to her as their maid instead.

She had never once taken this orphaned daughter-in-law of inferior status seriously.

After recollecting her emotions, Madeline then turned to walk out of the bathroom only to meet face to face with Old Master Whitman who had just returned from the garden outside.

"Hello, Grandpa Whitman. We meet again," Madeline greeted calmly, her chest filled with genuine respect for the man in front of her.

Old Master Whitman replied meaningfully as he stared at the gorgeous features in front of him, "I was still in doubt before, but I'm pretty sure about it now."

Suspicion rose in Madeline's chest, but she wore an expression of befuddlement. "What are you talking about, Grandfather?"

Old Master Whitman lifted his intelligent gaze that was now glistening under the light. "It's you, isn't it, Madeline? I know it's you."

Madeline	was	stunned	for	9	second	hefore	9	calm	smile	graced	her	line	
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"I think you might be a little confused about me, Grandpa Whitman. How could I be Madeline Crawford?"

The light in Old Master Whitman's eyes dulled slightly, but his gaze was clear. "I won't force you to admit it if you don't want to, Madeline."

"I'm really not Madeline, Grandfather." Madeline denied with a smile. "Why would I get married to the man who hates me if I was Madeline? I would've learned the last time that throwing myself to a flame would only get me burned."

Old Master Whitman was shocked to hear the news. His white brows were furrowed tightly. "Are you really getting married to Jeremy?"

Madeline nodded decisively. "Of course, I'm pregnant with Jeremy's child too."

At that, Old Master Whitman's gaze fell on her flat stomach. He pursed his lips but made no further comment.

"Grandfather, Vera." Jeremy walked over. "Why are you talking in front of the bathroom?"

Madeline smiled and walked over. "I bumped into Grandfather by coincidence, so we talked a little bit. He even joked about me being Madeline Crawford too."

Jeremy's brows furrowed with a subtle tint of invisible melancholy, though it was quickly replaced with a smile. He took Madeline's hand in his. "Vera does indeed look a lot like Madeline, Grandfather, but I assure you that they're not the same person."

Madeline felt tranquility wash over her at Jeremy's reassurance.
It was evident that he held no doubts.
His grip on Madeline's hand was gentle.
"I've decided to marry Vera, Grandfather. The wedding is set to be held in half a month. That's why I brought Vera here, to formally meet the family."
Old Master Whitman hesitated as his eyes fell on Madeline, then on Jeremy. He shook his head with a sigh. "This is your sin and therefore your punishment to bear."
"" Madeline grew silent as she mulled over the old master's words. The meaning was clear to her, but she prayed that Jeremy would not pay it too much heed.
At that moment, the maid came over to notify them that dinner was ready.
Old Master Whitman left for upstairs with the excuse that he had no appetite. Including Madeline and Jeremy, the dinner table was set for four.
Despite her grave distaste for Madeline's presence, Mrs. Whitman held back on picking on Madeline since Jeremy was there.
"I hear that you're Miss L.ady's chief designer, Miss Vera. It's rare to see such young talent." Mr. Whitman praised.
Madeline replied with a light smile while turning to look at the man by her side, "It's nothing in comparison to what Jeremy has already accomplished."

"True. Jeremy was already the CEO of a multinational corporation when he was still in school. There aren't many who can compete with Jeremy when it comes to this." Karen glanced pridefully at Madeline. "You've put in so much work to get close to Jeremy, so what else can it be if not for the fame?"
Jeremy's hands slowly came to a halt at the words, the prawn still partially shelled in his hands.
Picking up on Jeremy's displeasure, Karen immediately changed the subject. "My borscht should be done soon I'll go take a look."
She stood as she spoke, unable to bear the displeased aura that Jeremy was giving off.
Placing the peeled prawn on Madeline's plate, Jeremy spoke gently, "My mom loves cooking, and borscht is one of her best dishes as well as her most favorite one to make. Drink more, it's good for you."
Madeline nodded mirthfully. Staring at the peeled prawn on her plate, her smile grew ironic.
Never in your wildest dreams would you have imagined peeling prawns for the woman you hate, huh, Jeremy?
'I remember waiting for you every night when we were married with a table full of food, hoping that you would return to eat. Yet instead, you held the wretched woman in your arms and left me alone to fester in the dust.'
Right then, Karen walked out of the kitchen with a maid behind her bringing the soup.
st, but she wore an expression of befuddlement. "What are you talking about, Grandfather?"

Old Master Whitman lifted his intelligent gaze that was now glistening under the light. "It's you, isn't it,

Madeline? I know it's you."

The corners of Madeline's lips curled as a smudge of mischief bled from her eyes.
Just as Karen was about to sit, Madeline frowned and placed a hand over her chest, dry heaving.
Everyone's gaze fell unanimously on Madeline while Jeremy reached out to hold her with concern. "Are you alright, Vera?"
"Something smells bad. It makes me want to puke," Madeline replied softly, "It might be from the soup, Jeremy. I feel bad. I think I need to vomit."
«
Karen's expression immediately darkened. This soup was one of her proudest dishes. It was rich in antioxidants and vitamins. It was also her favorite soup to drink.
Yet what had this woman said?
The smell of the soup was bad and made her want to puke?
"Bring the soup away," Jeremy demanded.
The maid was stunned, then she nodded and complied.

"Wait!" Karen stopped her. "What are you trying to say, Vera? You don't have to eat my food if you think it's so disgusting! What are you trying to imply by complaining about how it makes you feel like vomiting? You're doing this on purpose, aren't you?"

"Vera's pregnant. Nausea is a normal side effect. If she doesn't like the smell, then we'll get rid of it." Jeremy's tone was stern, his words brimming with his desire to defend Vera.

"..." Rendered speechless, Karen resorted to glaring at Madeline.

Madeline raised her mirthful gaze to meet Karen's angrily rolling ones and quirked a taunting eyebrow.

The dinner ended quickly, for Madeline seemed to gag at every dish Jeremy placed on her plate after a few bites.

Karen's expression soured with each time Madeline gagged.

Mr. Whitman had stepped aside to make a phone call after dinner while Jeremy went to the kitchen to make Madeline something as she hardly ate all dinner.

Madeline and Mrs. Whitman were left alone in the living room.

The maid walked over with a platter of dessert and fruits, only to have Madeline place the spoon back down distastefully. She then picked up her phone instead.

After sparing a glance at the kitchen, Karen finally flew into a rage seeing as Jeremy had yet to return. "You're doing this on purpose, aren't you, Vera? It's one thing to not eat the dinner I made tonight, but it's another to spoil it the way you did! What do you want?"

Madeline looked up slowly. "So what if I did it on purpose?"



"You..."

"Your dishes were so tasteless and they smelled so horrible that I couldn't even swallow a bite. I was already as polite as possible because Jeremy is here, or I would've complained about you already had we been in a restaurant instead."

"What... What are you saying? How could you insult my cooking?"

"Cooking?" Madeline took a whiff of the dessert before she threw it on the coffee table in disgust, knocking over the hot water on the table onto Mrs. Whitman's expensive dress.

Karen sucked in a breath as she stood and pointed a mortified finger at Madeline. "Have you gone mad, Vera? How could you splash hot water on me? I knew you were no good by your appearance, looking just like that btch Madeline! I just never expected that you would be even more abominable than that btch!"

Seeing Madeline remain unfazed as she ignored her words, Karen reached out to grab Madeline's wrist harshly. "I suggest you listen to me, Vera Quinn. You'd better not offend this mother-in-law if you want to marry into the Whitman family, or I swear to God, I'll make sure you end up just like that b\*tch Madeline! You hear me?"

Madeline turned to look at her wrist that was being grabbed by Karen as the woman's warning sounded in the air. She then broke into a meaningful smile and slowly got to her feet...

"Mother-in-law?" Madeline scoffed as she spoke, mocker	y apparent on her enchanting feature	s. "How dare you call
yourself a mother-in-law?"		

"..." Karen's eyes widened in shock.

Madeline tugged her arm back as her proud eyes swept coldly over Karen's frustrated and infuriated expression. Frost suddenly permeated the air. "You're the one who has to watch herself around me. I'm not Madeline Crawford, and I won't allow you to walk over me and scold or hit me as you wish."

"You..." Fury flared in Karen's eyes as she raised an arm to give Madeline a lesson.

"Stop!" Jeremy's icy tone shot through the air, freezing Karen's hand mid-strike.

Madeline quirked a defined brow and parted her pink lips. "Do you not see how much Jeremy cares for me? Don't offend me, do you understand?"

"..." Karen was too infuriated to speak.

A sliver of fear shone in Madeline's eyes as she looked up and walked toward Jeremy. "Let's go back, Jeremy. I don't think Aunty wants to see me."

Jeremy sent Karen a frigid gaze. "This will be the last time I repeat myself. Vera's going to be your daughter-in-law very soon. It would do you good to change your attitude around her."

"Jeremy! You... Don't let yourself be blinded by this woman's lies! She's not as fragile and innocent as you think!"

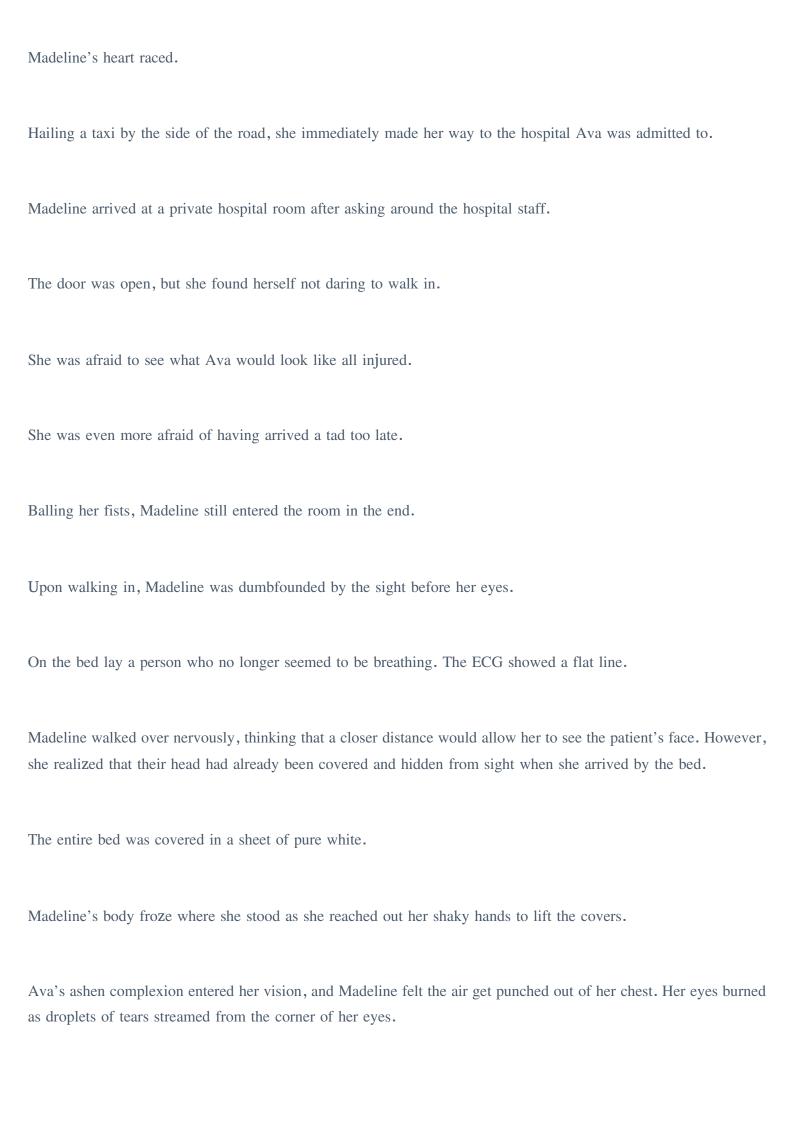
Karen pointed frustratingly at Madeline as she emphasized.

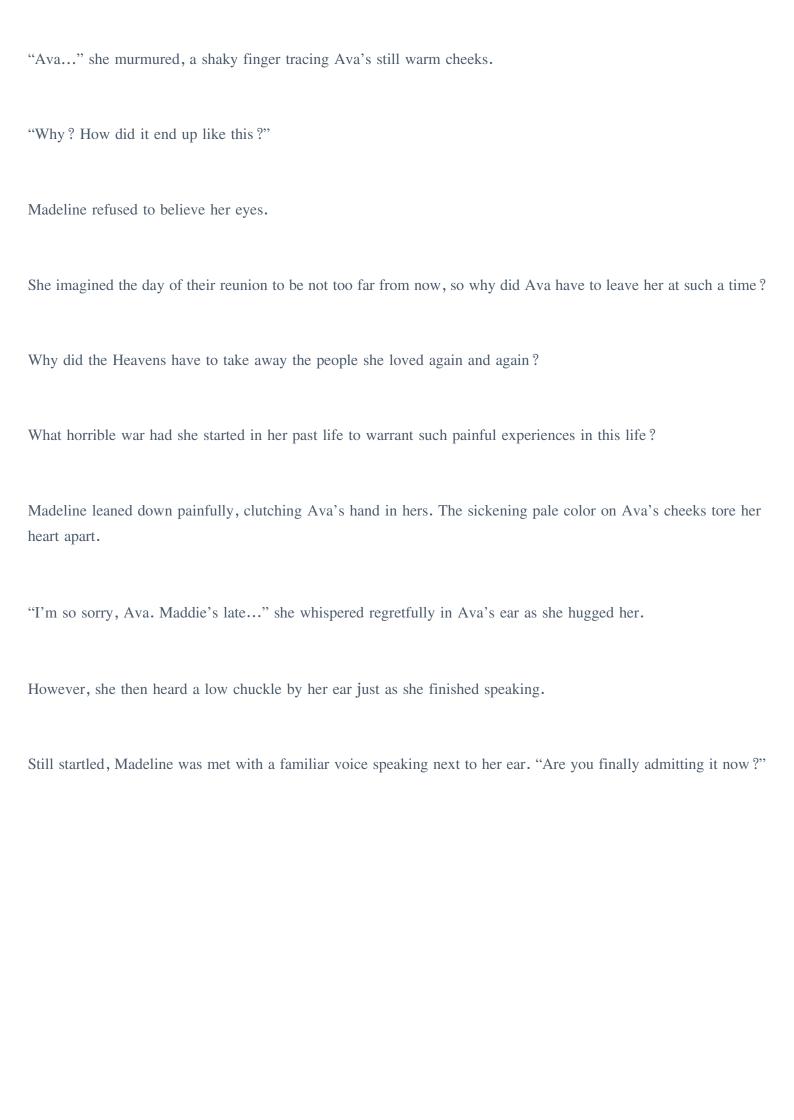
"All I've heard is you picking on Vera time and again. I also saw you raising an arm at her just now," Jeremy stated indifferently as he placed Madeline's jacket over her shoulders and took her hand. "Let's go."
"Hmm." Madeline nodded, allowing Jeremy to interlock their fingers and bring her away.
Karen took a deep breath and ran after them to the car.
"Why would your mother lie to you, Jeremy? This woman really isn't the kind and nice person you think she is! You're going to regret getting married to her, just like when you married that b*tch Madeline!"
Jeremy's grip on the steering wheel tightened at his mother's words.
Raising the driver's window in extreme displeasure, he hit the accelerator and left.
Looking through the rearview mirror, Madeline broke into a small smile at the sight of Karen stomping her foot angrily in the night breeze.
Jeremy made Madeline a bowl of noodles upon their return to the villa.
Perhaps it was the hunger, for Madeline found the noodles rather flavorful.
If they could go back in time and he had shown her even the littlest bit of warmth, they would never have ended up like this today.
Yet there were no such ifs in this world.
•••

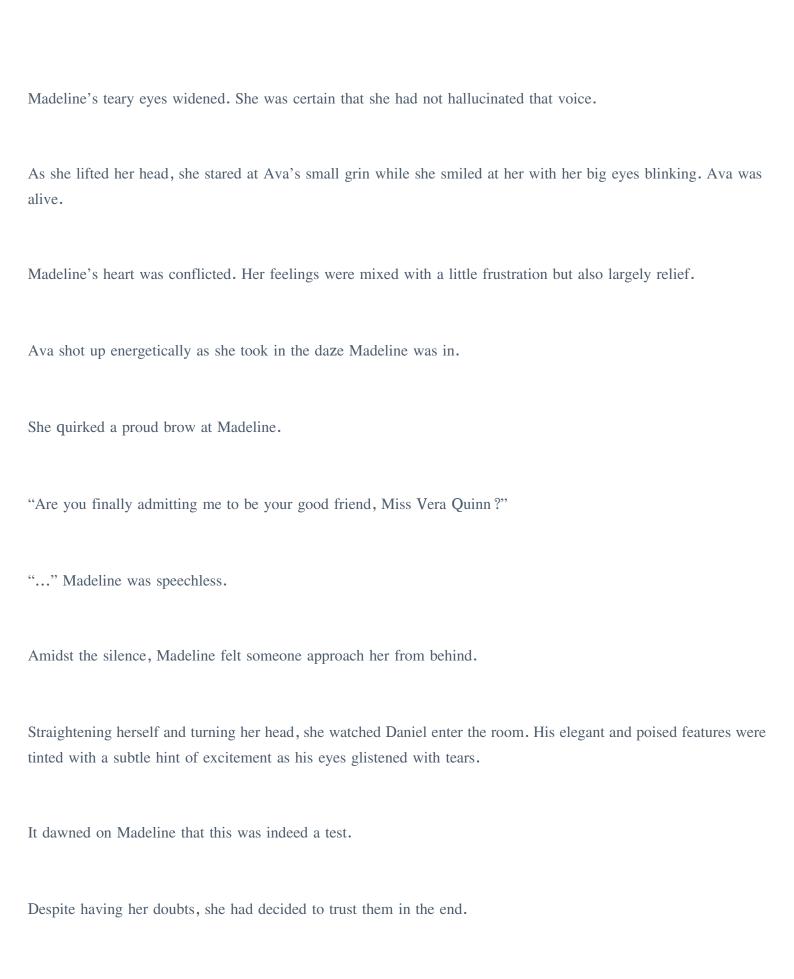
The following day arrived with Jeremy publishing the news of him getting married to a woman called Vera Quinn.
The internet was filled with thousands of comments blessing the couple, yet Madeline could not bring herself to feel a shred of happiness reading them.
These comments were once negative and filled with insults when she had married him years ago.
There was not even one person who blessed their union during that large-scale ceremony. Her innocent and hopeful prayers were the only thing there was.
Now that she had the blessings of the entire city, she no longer held the same youthful hopefulness of a bride-to-be.
Her phone rang as she read the comments.
Madeline picked the call up without a second thought after glancing at the caller ID. "Felipe," she greeted, paying attention to the words the man on the other end spoke before nodding. "Alright, I've got it."
Madeline hung up and grabbed her purse, leaving the house.
The unexpected guest she met as she stepped out had her stopping in her tracks.
Madeline's expression was one of annoyance as she took in Daniel's sudden appearance. "What do you want this time?"
"Are you free, Ms. Quinn? I'd like to bring you somewhere if that's alright," Daniel asked warmly, his voice making it seem as if he was pleading.
Madeline averted her gaze indifferently. "How many times do I have to tell you that I'm not Madeline Crawford? There's nothing for us to talk about."

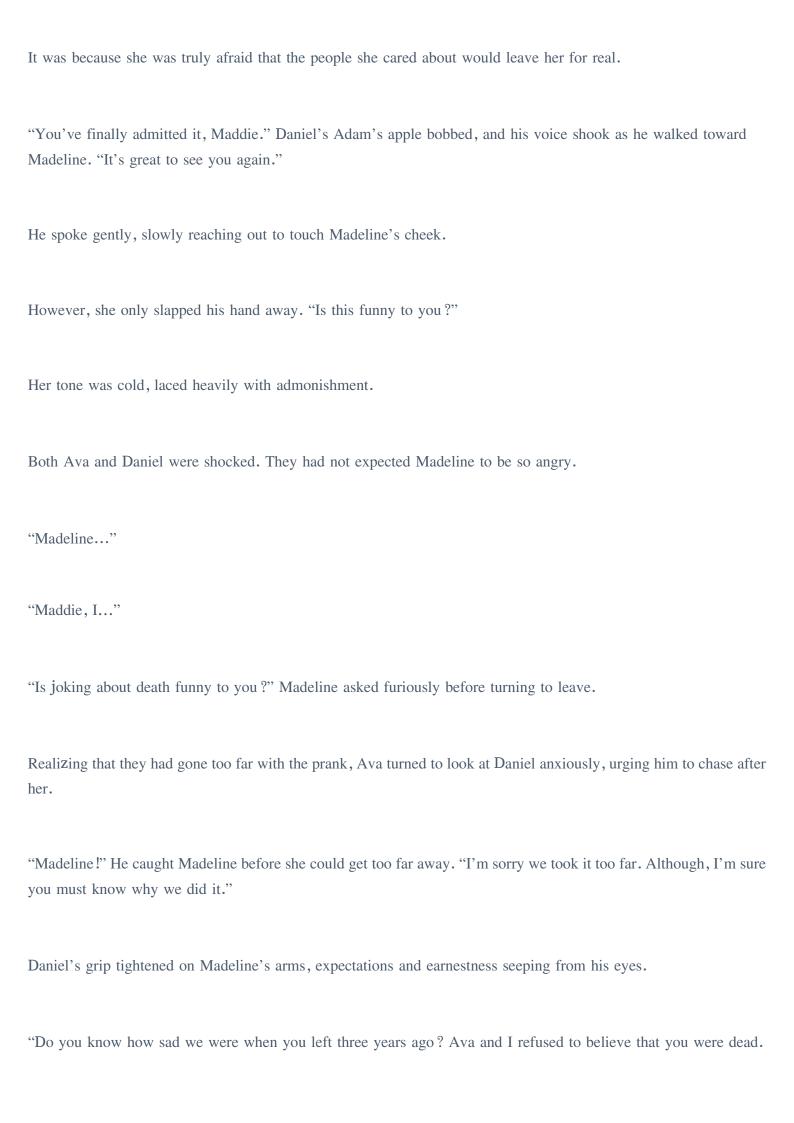
















Ava and Daniel knew better than to persuade Madeline when they took in the determination in her eyes.
Ava had to stay in the hospital due to her leg injury, so Daniel sent Madeline to the intersection instead.
Under the warmth of the autumn sun, he recognized the hints of youth from his memories in Madeline's defined brows and the small smile that graced her lips.
"Would you give me the chance to take care of you when your plan for revenge is over, Madeline?"
While remaining quiet, she found the telltale signs of a confession in Daniel's eyes.
Madeline gave a regretful smile. "Thank you for caring about me, Dan, but I've come to realize that timing matters too. Perhaps you were the right person at the wrong time."
"Do you still love Jeremy?"
"Love?" The word was extremely ironic when used with Jeremy.
Oh, how she had loved him, so much that she threw away her dignity and sense of self in the name of love. Yet all she got in return was the loss of her firstborn. Thinking about it now, her love was almost pitiful.
As such, she no longer loved him.
Every inch of her humble love had died the moment he scattered their child's ashes
After parting ways with Daniel, Madeline made her way to the detention center.
Delight flooded her as she stared at a hollow-looking Meredith who sported dark circles under her eyes.

Turning on her phone, the entire screen was filled with news of hers and Jeremy's impending wedding.	
Meredith's eyes immediately glowered as she read the news, envy and hatred bleeding from her gaze.	
"You btch! Madeline, you btch! Don't think that you're off the hook already! Jeremy will strangle you to death if he finds out that you're Madeline! He would!"	
Madeline kept her phone away casually. "I wouldn't be standing here with you if he actually wanted to strangle me."	
"You…"	
"What? How're you doing inside? Tsk, tsk. It's only been a while and you already look so haggard."	
"Madeline, you You're the one who made me like this. I'll definitely take my revenge!"	
"Revenge?" Madeline found it hilarious. "Who are you to use such a word? You're the one who made you like this. This is your consequence for everything you've done to me! You're the one who threw me in jail and had inmates torture me. You even induced my pregnancy and stole my child! Your punishment is already light enough compared to all you've done to me!"	
"You only spent three years in jail while I'm spending 12 years in here!" Meredith tightened her jaw.	
"12 years for the three lives you took is light enough, isn't it? My grandfather, Brittany Montgomery, and my child. What are 12 years in jail compared to the three lives you took?"	
Madeline's sharp gaze pierced into Meredith.	
"You'd better believe that I won't stop at 12 years. With the three lives you took, I can promise you it'll only be a matter of time before you'll have to go and repent for the lives you've taken. It won't be any longer now."	

The hands that held her pant legs tightened as a spark of fear flared in Meredith's eyes.
Meredith grew frantic as Madeline turned to leave.
She believed that the moment Madeline's true identity came to light, neither the Montgomeries nor Jeremy would let her go so easily. If that happened, she would have a painful death waiting for her.
She did not want to die, let alone never see the light of day again!
"Madeline Crawford! What if I tell you that your b*stard child never died? You'll think of a way to get me out of here, right?"

Madeline was already	out the door when	she heard Meredith	shout the words.	A spark of hope	flickered in her
frosty eyes.					

Her heart raced as well, way past what her body could take.

While still suspicious, she slowly turned around and lifted her cold gaze. "You do know that such a fact will not suddenly make you an innocent woman."

Meredith's reddened eyes glared at her. "I'm not lying! Your child is still alive. I only told you it's dead just to make you feel horrible. I hid your child away so that I could use him as a bargaining chip someday!"

Madeline stilled her heart and emotions as she slowly made her way back to Meredith. "Where's your evidence? Tell me why I should believe you."

"Would you rather believe that your child lives or is dead?" Meredith shot back with a smirk, for she knew that Madeline cared deeply about the child she had never gotten a chance to see!

It would definitely never cross Madeline's mind that her child had been by her side this entire time!

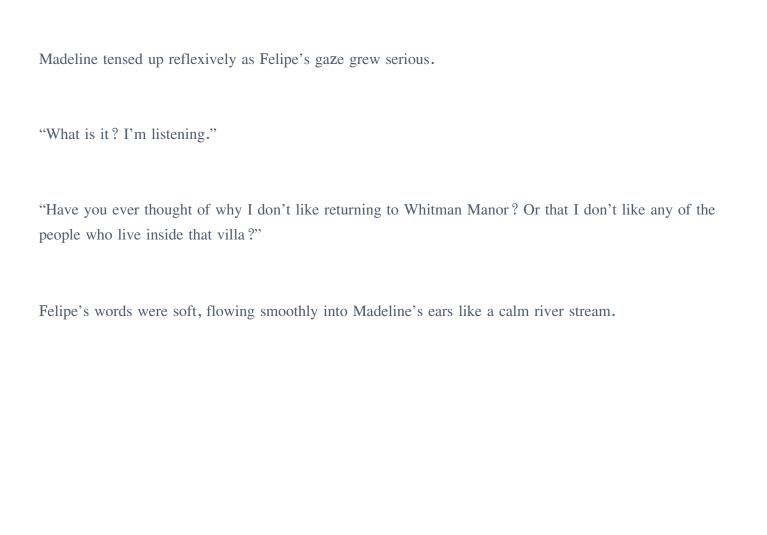
Meredith took Madeline's silence as an opportunity to keep talking. "Get me out of here, Madeline, and I'll tell you where your b\*stard child is. Or else—"

"If you think this is going to get you out of jail, then you're dead wrong," Madeline interrupted.

Meredith was stunned, gaping at the indifferent expression Madeline wore. "Don't you want to know where your child is, Madeline?"

"Of course I do, but I also know that you're not going to tell me the truth. And even if you do, you can give up on the thought of walking out of here a free woman. You will pay for the deaths of my grandfather and Brittany!"
"" Meredith's mouth froze as blood slowly drained from her face. Dazed, she watched Madeline turn around casually.
Was this still the very Madeline Crawford she had once walked and trampled on freely?
She refused to believe that someone could change so drastically.
This bargaining chip of hers had now become an immense lead for Madeline. She had played herself.
Meredith regretted it badly, but it was already too late for her to do anything about it now.
Walking through the detention center's doors, Madeline stared at the azure sky with long-lost mirth and joy in her eyes.
The corner of her lips curled as tears trickled from her eyes.
"As long as you exist, my baby, Mommy will find you. I promise"
Madeline hid the happiness of recovering something she had lost within her and began to investigate the truth back then.
If the child was alive, that meant the ashes back then were fake.
Had Meredith fooled Jeremy too?

If the ashes were fake, then Jeremy's aloofness was real as was his hatred for her and their child.
Despite her covert investigations the next few days, Madeline found no leads.
Nor did she find where Rose and Jon had hidden.
On the eve of the wedding, Madeline went to meet Felipe while Jeremy held an important video meeting in the office.
Felipe was shocked to know that the child stolen from Madeline when she was in prison was still alive.
"Could Meredith have lied to get out of jail? That woman seems to be capable of anything." Felipe remained suspicious.
"The fact that she's capable of anything makes it even more probable that she actually kept my child as a bargaining chip." Madeline analyzed, her eyes sparkling with hope. "I really want to see this child, Felipe. I wonder how she's doing and I wonder if she looks just like Lily"
"I'll help you find this child." Felipe promised, her gentle eyes swimming with a rare tint of sadness. "It's been so many years and I, too, wish to see my parents again."
Madeline turned to look at Felipe as she took in his words, only to find an unfamiliar smudge of melancholy on his warm and gentlemanly features.
"Something's bothering you, Felipe. Won't you tell me? You've helped me so much, and I wish that I could at least help you carry a bit of your burden as well."
Felipe shifted his warm gaze to look at her. "As a gentleman, it is unsightly to have the girl I fancy worry about me, but as of today, there is something that I must be frank with you about."





After hopping in, Madeline almost thought that Jeremy was impatient about getting registered.
Still, it was unlikely that they would go to the town office since she had voiced the desire to leave it for later as there were no auspicious dates.
The road they drove on began to look familiar as she pondered.
It was the road to April Hill.
Indeed, half an hour later, the car came to a stop by the seaside of April Hill.
The mid-autumn wind was salty from the sea breeze as it stabbed waves of coldness into one's bones like pins and needles.
Madeline's heart was jumbled up as she stood facing the sea.
The place was once filled with innocent and beautiful memories, memories that had now wilted and died away.
Why did Jeremy suddenly bring her here?
With confused eyes, she turned around to look at the man who had now exited the parked car.
In his hands were a bouquet of burning-red roses, the gold flakes on its petals reflecting the sharp rays of the sun.
Jeremy stopped in front of her, the autumn wind shooing away the hard corners of his eyes.
"For you." He gently handed the large bouquet.

