

Love Hate 81

Chapter 81

Jodie had already expected Margaret's reaction. "Let's go, Meg. I'll bear any of the consequences."

"What consequences? It's just an engagement party. You're being too dramatic." Suddenly, Steven and Casper approached them with a glass of champagne in their hands.

Jodie was a little flustered at the sight of Steven. She still remembered that he had made her call him "Dad" in the parking lot the other day. "Go away. This is none of your business."

Steven glanced at Margaret and said to Jodie, "I have no concern about you, but she's sort of my sister-in-law. Don't do anything funny. It's useless."

He's right. It's useless. This is all part of Christopher's plan.

With that thought in mind, Margaret smiled. "It's fine, Jo. So he just wanted to see my reaction. Let it be then." /

At that moment, she wondered if Christopher was feeling conflicted when he told her that she could stay home if she didn't feel like attending the event. Yet, she thought that she was being ridiculous. After all, he had never been merciful to her.

Suddenly, Steven saw Megan heading in their direction. He quickly stopped her in her tracks and said, "You're not close to them, are you?"

Megan was still holding a grudge. Thus, she said with a frown, "Are you close to them? Don't worry. Margaret is my elder sister, after all. I won't do anything to her. However, I won't let the woman beside her off the hook so easily."

Steven then pointed at Christopher and said, "Go ahead if you want to stir up trouble. Yet, what will Christopher think of you if he sees this? I don't think it's a good idea for you, the daughter of the Jenkins family, to cause a scene on the Swanson family's big day"

Megan scoffed at his words and headed in Christopher's direction.

The pastor got onto the stage when it was noon and started his speech. However, Margaret was not listening at all. Instead, she was feeling a little annoyed by the lovely piano accompaniment.

As the church doors opened, a beautiful couple stepped out of it. Margaret could not help but feel an urge to cry when she saw Jenson. She thought of how much he had suffered because of her. In three years, the once handsome, young man had matured. His smile was no longer as warm as it used to be. Instead, there was a hint of bitterness to it.

Jodie held Margaret's cold hands tightly in hers and said in a low voice, "Don't cry, Meg. Don't let the others see your sad face."

Not only did Margaret not cry, but she was smiling. She was worried that her tears would bring bad luck to Jenson's marriage, so she tried her best to smile.

His fiancée was so beautiful, and she was a perfect match for the son of the Swanson family. At that moment, Margaret only wished him happiness.

As though there was some sort of attraction, Jenson's eyes landed on Margaret. At that moment, the smile on his face faded, and his beautiful eyes were filled with sadness.

Margaret shifted her gaze within seconds after their eyes met. She could not bring herself to look at him.

Meanwhile, Jodie said through gritted teeth, "Meg, if I'm not mistaken, Jenson's fiancée is wearing the wedding dress you designed. Christopher is too much!"

Margaret only realized then that Jodie was right. She thought that Christopher had brought her to the company's fashion exhibition because her work was on display. He had even taken her to Water Bay Restaurant for a meal. For a moment, she thought that perhaps he had done all those things because it was their wedding anniversary. However, she realized now that he only wanted her to remember what her design looked like, and bringing her to a meal meant nothing special to him.

As expected from Christopher... His plan is always so perfect. Not only did he have me design a wedding dress for Jenson's fiancée, but he wanted me to see it for myself.

Still, that was not all that Christopher had done. What happened between her and Jenson was no secret. Thus, his fiancée was aware of it as well. Even so, not only did she not refuse to wear the wedding dress, but she even invited Margaret to deliver a speech to give her blessings as the wedding dress designer.

Jodie almost burst out in anger at the sound of that. "Meg, don't go. We'll leave right away!"

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Margaret lowered her head and took a deep breath. When she looked up again, her lips were curled into a pleasant smile.

The audience was eagerly anticipating a fallout, but she was putting up an act to mask her real emotions.

Slowly, she sauntered over and took the microphone from Waverly Gadway, Jenson's fiancée. Without looking at Jenson, she said, "I'm honored to have my work displayed here. As a former friend of yours, I wish you happiness, Jenson."

Without warning, Jenson pulled her into a tight and meaningful embrace. "I hope you'll be happy, too."

Waverly was standing right next to them, so she saw the anguish in Jenson's eyes. The sight of Jenson's anguish was pure torture to her.

The hug only lasted for five seconds, and nothing out of the ordinary happened. Margaret returned the microphone to the pastor and headed back to the crowd without looking back.

Christopher's gaze tracked her every movement. His lips were pursed, and he didn't utter a word.

Beside him, Steven joked, "Christopher, I suddenly realized Margaret resembles you a lot. She's great at putting up an act so others won't know what she's thinking about."

Without a word, Christopher strode toward Margaret. Feeling worried, Steven dragged Casper and trailed after him.

When Jodie spotted the three men, her face turned as dark as thunder. Standing before Margaret in a protective manner, she demanded, "Christopher, have you had enough? You've achieved your goal! I was wondering why Meg had to suffer back in primary school despite having you as her brother. Turns out you were gentle to everyone except for her! You don't deserve to be her brother, let alone her husband!"

To everyone's surprise, Christopher remained unfazed. Steven, however, bristled and pulled Jodie away. "Shut up! This doesn't concern you. Let's go!"

No matter how hard Jodie struggled, she was no match for Steven. The man dragged her away easily. As a result, she bit into his wrist and caused a bloody wound.

Steven found it both annoying and hilarious. "Are you a dog?" he demanded.

Jodie glared at him. "I'm not a dog, but I don't mind turning into one—when I see you. You're a b*stard, just like Christopher!"

Steven felt wronged, but he couldn't really explain himself. "All right, then. You can assume whatever you like as long as you're happy."

Meanwhile, Margaret didn't show her displeasure or fury before Christopher. She took his arm and said, "I'd like to go home. Should we leave together? Or should I leave alone so you can give Megan a ride?"

Christopher gazed at her intently. For the first time in his life, he couldn't read her thoughts. "Let's go."

Back in the car, Margaret kept a distance between them and wore an icy expression that resembled his. Through the rearview mirror, Noah glanced at both icebergs and felt a chill go down his spine. "Mr. and Mrs. Lewis, a—are we going home?"

Margaret said nothing, but Christopher responded with a curt grunt.

Throughout the journey, they didn't utter a word. Back at the Lewis residence, Margaret took a shower and changed into comfortable house slippers and casual clothes before entering the art room. After locking the door, she finally allowed the tears to trickle down her cheeks.

Initially, she thought her hatred would fade away with time, but she belatedly realized it would merely intensify with time. Christopher still hated her, and her hatred for him was increasing drastically. No matter how hard she tried to keep the balance and peace, it just wouldn't work. *I shouldn't have harbored any wishful thinking in the first place!*

That night, Christopher left the Lewis residence in his car.

Elizabeth knocked on the door of the art room. "Meg, dinner's ready. Mr. Lewis went on an outstation trip, so I believe he'll only be back a few days later."

After finding out that Christopher wasn't around, Margaret left her brush aside and headed downstairs.

When Elizabeth spotted her swollen eyes, she couldn't hide her concern. "Meg, what happened?"

Margaret gave a nonchalant shrug, "I'm fine. I'm just a little tired after drawing for a long period."

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Elizabeth didn't think much about it and helped her with the food. "You're too weak. Here, have more nourishing food. I told the chef to prepare some nourishing soup. Have more of this."

Margaret lost her appetite at the sight of the soup. Right then, her phone rang. She flashed Elizabeth a smile and went aside to answer the call.

After Elizabeth went back to the kitchen to resume work, Margaret heaved a sigh of relief. The soup had a fishy smell, so she didn't like it at all. As she didn't want to upset Elizabeth, the only way out was to avoid drinking the soup.

On the other end of the line, Jodie's dejected voice rang out. "Meg, can you keep me company? I'm in a bad mood now. I feel horrible."

Usually, Jodie would only mention the good things and hide the bad news from her. *She must be in trouble to call me now to vent her frustrations.* Plagued with worry, Margaret asked, "What happened, Jo?"

After a brief silence, Jodie didn't reveal the reason. "I don't feel like saying it. Can you not ask questions? If you can't make it, never mind."

Margaret blurted out, "Where are you? I'll come meet you now."

Jodie proceeded to rattle off her location. After hanging up, Margaret went upstairs to change her clothes. Before she could head out, Fredrick stopped her. "Mrs. Lewis, Mr. Lewis left orders that you can't leave the house before his return."

Biting her lip, Margaret stood still stubbornly. *I'm Christopher's wife, not someone who he keeps captive. I can go anywhere to meet anyone I like. That's my freedom. No one can interfere in my life!*

"Fredrick, I'm going to meet a female friend. I'll try my best to come back early. You can choose not to inform Christopher. Even if he finds out, that's fine. I'll bear the consequences," she begged.

Fredrick had a change of mind. He had watched both Margaret and Christopher grow up. Sometimes, there was no need to be too strict. "Then try to come back as early as possible. Mr. Lewis might call later, and I can't explain to him if you aren't home."

Touched, Margaret uttered, "Thank you, Fredrick."

Fredrick had worked for the Lewis family for decades. He never went against Christopher's orders. Now that he was willing to help her, she could only offer her gratitude

Upon arrival at Jodie's location, Margaret realized it was a bar. She despised such places, for the loud music would make her feel uneasy. She couldn't even bring herself to look at the dancing bodies on the dance floor. Everything seemed too ostentatious to her.

The bar was dimly lit, so Margaret couldn't see Jodie anywhere. She had to call Jodie to find out where the latter was. It took a few attempts before Jodie answered her call. "I'm at booth twelve."

Clearly, Jodie was tipsy.

Margaret immediately went over to the booth and saw Jodie drinking alone.

Taking the bottle of liquor away, she demanded, "Jo, why are you drinking? If something happened, you can share it with me. Drinking too much alcohol regularly can damage your body and your brain!"

A bleary-eyed Jodie curved her lips into a grin. "Oh, you sound like my dad. You don't look like a girl in her twenties. In fact, you act like my mom..."

Margaret couldn't stand how foolish she looked. "Stop drinking. I'll give you a ride home."

Jodie promptly uncorked another bottle of alcohol. "No, let me drink. Life is tough. I'm going to lose everything soon."

Lose everything? Margaret did not quite understand what she meant. "What do you mean by losing everything? Did you have a fight with Jack?"

Jodie covered her mouth. "Oh, slip of the tongue! It's nothing. I'm fine."

Despite Margaret's efforts, Jodie insisted on finishing the alcohol she ordered before stopping. By then, she was in a drunken stupor and couldn't stop mumbling incoherently.

Left with no choice, Margaret had to carry Jodie on her back. It was past eleven at night, so she was obviously going to reach home past midnight.

"Meg, we found the person who stole our jewelry's raw material. He's dead, and the jewelry is gone. Our family is doomed. My dad is in the hospital, and we can't afford

to repay our debts..."

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Margaret halted in her tracks as her eyes turned red. "It's fine, Jo. I'll ask for Christopher's help. Everything will be fine."

Suddenly, Jodie grew agitated. "No, don't go to him! No! Don't you dare ask for his help. I'm not the kind who sells their friends out: Remember what he did to you? Why would you ask for his help? Even if I die, I won't allow you to grovel before him!"

Afraid that she'd kick up a fuss, Margaret played along with her. "All right. I won't ask for his help. Come on, let's go home."

After sending Jodie back home, it was almost midnight. Exhausted, she trudged back to the Lewis residence. At the door, she realized the entire house was brightly lit. *Christopher's back. He must've rushed back as I disobeyed his order and stayed out until past midnight.*

Drawing her clothes together, she headed in, ready to place herself in the eye of the storm.

Inside the Lewis residence, everyone was still awake. Both Elizabeth and Fredrick were standing in the living room. Upon spotting her, Fredrick sighed out loud but said nothing.

Inhaling deeply, she said, "It's fine. I'll explain everything to him."

Elizabeth reminded her, "Mr. Lewis had a few drinks, and he's in a foul mood. Be careful."

Margaret shot her a smile in response before heading upstairs. The bedroom door was ajar, and Christopher was sitting on a chair before the window. He was holding a lit cigarette between his fingers. Smoke swirled around the room, adding a sense of etherealness to his figure.

He was still in his suit, so it was clear that he had only returned a while ago. Margaret went to him and poured a cup of tea for him. "Jo was in a bad mood and got drunk. I gave her a ride home before coming back."

Christopher paid no heed to her explanation. He took a puff of his cigarette and asked icily, "Didn't Fredrick tell you that you can't leave the house?"

Calmly, she answered, "Yes, but he's just a butler. He can't stop me from leaving, so this has nothing to do with him."

After putting his cigarette out, the man announced, "You never learn your lesson, huh? Fredrick is getting old, so he should retire and enjoy his later years in peace."

Margaret couldn't hide her shock. She had no idea Fredrick would receive such a severe punishment. "Didn't I say that my decision has nothing to do with Fredrick?"

Instead of answering her question, Christopher remained silent. Despite wearing a frosty expression, he seemed tired. Margaret knew there was no room for negotiation, but she refused to give up. "What do I have to do so Fredrick can stay?"

Christopher said nothing. He leaned into the chair and shut his eyes as his brows furrowed up.

Margaret knew she shouldn't be hasty, for he hated noise when he was exhausted. In a low voice, she uttered, "You must be tired. Get some rest, and we'll talk about it tomorrow."

With that, she retreated slowly and went downstairs to tell Elizabeth and Fredrick to get some rest. She settled down on the couch and decided to spend the night there. That way, she would wake up in time before Christopher was to leave the house. After all, she wasn't sure when he would leave, and when he would return here again. She couldn't afford to wait that long.

That night, Margaret couldn't sleep well. She roused when it was barely six in the morning. Despite feeling drained, she couldn't sleep well and ended up with an aching body.

Elizabeth also had a sleepless night. Looking spent, she got up and prepared some oatmeal porridge. "Meg, what happened? Why did you sleep on the couch? Did Mr. Lewis lock you out of the room?"

Margaret shook her head. "No. I didn't want to disturb him."

Elizabeth parted her lips to say something but changed her mind and hesitated. Seeing that, Margaret said, "You can say anything that's on your mind."

Elizabeth bobbed her head. "Last night, Mr. Lewis came home with a dark expression. He blamed Fredrick for allowing you to leave home and ordered Fredrick to leave right away, Fredrick is packing up his stuff now. Can you persuade Mr. Lewis to change his mind? He must have been overtaken by rage when he made that decision. Mr. Lewis cared for you and was afraid you'd end up in danger late at night. You should talk to him."

Chapter 86

That night, Christopher didn't come home. Margaret had a sleepless night again thanks to Jodie's situation. She didn't sleep a wink. The next day, her pale complexion was a stark contrast to her dark eye circles.

Jodie's phone was still switched off, and Margaret couldn't leave the house without Christopher's approval. Out of ideas, she finally gave Christopher a call.

Christopher was discussing a contract with his business partner. When his phone rang, he frowned in displeasure and switched it off without bothering to look at the caller ID.

After signing the contract, he went back to the hotel before checking his phone. His expression grew stern when he realized the missed call was from Margaret. *She doesn't call me usually*

He dialed her number and waited patiently for her to pick up. However, an automated message soon rang out, "Sorry, the number you have dialed is currently not available. Please try again later."

He then called the Lewis residence. It was Elizabeth who answered the call. When the call was connected, he asked, "Where is Margaret?"

Elizabeth glanced upstairs and replied, "Mrs. Lewis has been under the weather recently. The lights in her room were on the whole night. I believe she didn't sleep well. She's currently sleeping."

Christopher exhaled subconsciously. "Mm. Tell her to call me back when she gets up."

He had just hung up when another call arrived. This time, it was from Megan.

As he was exhausted from work, he decided to ignore her and rejected the call. Shortly after, Megan called him again insistently.

Frustrated, he pondered briefly before answering the call. However, he didn't utter a word.

Megan's upset voice rang out from the other end of the line. Christopher, why did you hang up on me? I tried calling you earlier, but the line was engaged. Who were you talking to? How long will your business trip take? I miss you!"

A hint of disgust flashed across Christopher's eyes after he heard her sickeningly sweet voice. Calmly, he replied, "Do I need to report to you where I am and what I am doing? Megan, please know your place. You're only Margaret's stepsister, nothing else. Get it?"

Megan couldn't believe her ears. "W-What's wrong? Did you suffer a setback at work? I won't disturb you. Please don't get mad at me."

In a cruel manner, the man stated, "I should've made things clear. You're merely imagining things."

A hint of desperation crept into Megan's voice. "No, this isn't it! You said you like me! You even bought me my favorite bags and a diamond ring. You'd fulfill my every wish and bring me out to social engagements! How could that be nothing?"

Christopher responded flatly, "Yes, I gave you everything you wanted, except for my love. We were merely using each other to get what we wanted. Why are you taking it so seriously? If you don't know your place, I can get another replacement anytime."

With that, he cut the line immediately.

Compared to Margaret's silence, Megan was too noisy. He never liked her and merely used her.

Megan stared at her phone screen that had dimmed and let out a sudden shriek.

Hannah pushed the door open hastily. "What happened?"

Megan bawled in such a hysterical manner that her ugly side was shown. "Christopher doesn't love me anymore! Mom, what should I do? I called him, but he said I should know my place. If I can't do that, he can get another replacement anytime! He said I'm just Margaret's stepsister to him! That b*tch! He can give me anything I want except for his love. What does he mean? He's the only one I want!"

After finding out what happened, Hannah said calmly, "All right, stop crying. Don't be pathetic. If he doesn't like it when you contact him frequently, then don't do that and wait for him to contact you. It isn't easy to conquer a man like him. Also, Margaret is your sister. You aren't allowed to insult her. This is the last time. Do you

get it?"

Chapter 85

Margaret felt an incoming headache. She glanced at the steaming bowl of oatmeal porridge and got up to head upstairs.

As she thought that Christopher was still asleep, she was surprised to learn that Christopher didn't sleep a wink last night. After he took a shower, he put on his bathrobe and sat before the window the entire night. The covers on the bed remained untouched, so it was obvious that he didn't sleep on the bed last night.

Margaret offered him the oatmeal porridge. "Have some oatmeal porridge to soothe your stomach."

Christopher didn't bother sparing her a glance. "Get out."

She did not move an inch. "Fredrick is currently packing up his stuff. Is there really no room for negotiation?"

Massaging his glabella, Christopher answered impatiently, "Don't make me repeat myself."

Margaret shut up at once, but she made no move to leave.

Alas, Christopher ignored her and got up to change his clothes. Panicking, she declared, "Christopher! The culprit behind Jo's family case was found dead, but the materials are nowhere to be found. Jo was in a bad mood, so I went out to comfort her. I insisted on leaving the house, and it has nothing to do with Fredrick. If you want to blame someone, come at me!"

After putting on his suit, Christopher wore his watch and glanced at the time before announcing, "You have two minutes to convince me. If you can't make me change my mind, my decision will remain the same. Don't talk nonsense."

Anxiety flared up in Margaret's heart as she blurted out, "I'm no longer the little girl you took in. I'm your wife! We need to accept the change in our relationship no matter what the cause is. It's time for us to change the way we deal with matters!"

He shot her a calm look. "First, you should act like a wife. It isn't a good habit to stay out late."

Margaret was deflated like a balloon, and her shoulders slumped. "I'm sorry."

Christopher reminded her, "You want to change the way we deal with stuff.

Therefore, you shouldn't apologize to solve the problem just like you used to do back then."

With that said, he strode toward the door. At her wit's end, Margaret ran over and blocked his path. She stood on her tiptoes and gave his cheek a peck. "It was my fault. Please don't be mad at me, hmm?"

The man's body stiffened as he was shocked by her action.

Margaret felt a flush creep up her cheeks in embarrassment. *I sound just like Megan when she acts coy. Despite hating it, I instinctively did it thinking that he loves it.*

Taking in the change in his expression, she waited eagerly for him to speak. Finally, after a brief silence, Christopher gave in. "This better not happen again. Get out of my way."

Margaret made way for him obediently. She dared not mention Jodie's family, for it took her a lot of effort to persuade him to let Fredrick stay. The Clark family's debts amounted to hundreds of millions, so she couldn't be sure that Christopher would agree to help.

Their war would always end before it could begin. No matter how much her hatred toward him was, and even when she was on the verge of crumbling down, he would always wait patiently until she caved in. There was only one way out. If she wanted to live in peace, she would have to please him.

Sometimes, she found the situation strange. Despite hating her, he enjoyed seeing her submitting to him. *Does he enjoy the pleasure of revenge when I beg for his forgiveness? I guess that's it...*

It was a casual afternoon. Margaret sprawled on the couch and scrolled through her phone, bored out of her mind. News about Jodie's family had got out. Judging from the situation, the Clark family was a gone case. Some netizens pitied their plight, but some were cruel and enjoyed the drama. No one bothered to offer help. The debts amounting to hundreds of millions were too much for one to bear.

She wanted to meet up with Jodie and do her part as a friend. Alas, Christopher left instructions that she wasn't allowed to step out of the house. She tried calling Jodie, but Jodie's phone was switched off.

Chapter 87

Megan was already feeling frustrated. When she heard Hannah taking Margaret's side, she bristled and declared, "Remember how you slapped me and stopped me from talking bad about her? She's just a piece of trash that you discarded, so she isn't even your daughter. Why are you siding with her? Do you feel guilty? You didn't even take care of her as a mother. There's no need to put up an act!"

Hannah's expression darkened. "Megan, if you say that again, I shall disown you as my daughter!"

This wasn't the first time they had argued over Margaret. Megan refused to continue the fight and exclaimed, "Fine, I'm not your daughter. She is your daughter, all right?"

Her expression frosty, Hannah spun on her heels and stalked out of the room before locking Megan inside. "I'll only let you out when you calm down so you won't ruin my plan!"

When Margaret woke up, it was already nighttime. As she seemed drained, Elizabeth dared not wake her up and waited until she woke up herself before giving her a bowl of piping hot seafood stew.

The fishy smell of the stew caused Margaret to lose her appetite. "Elizabeth, I don't want to eat this. Prepare something that doesn't have a fishy smell. Did Christopher say when he'll be back?"

Elizabeth replied, "No, but he called earlier and asked you to give him a call after you wake up."

Hearing that, Margaret pulled her phone out and spotted a missed call from him. She immediately called him back.

Meanwhile, Christopher was in the middle of a dinner meeting when his phone rang. This time, he glanced at the caller ID and made sure it was Margaret before getting to his feet. He apologized to his guest and went outside to answer the call. "What's wrong?"

Afraid that he was busy, Margaret went straight to the topic. "Are you on a business trip? When will you be back?"

Christopher glanced into the private room before answering, "The day after tomorrow, I guess. I have an important business meeting. If it isn't something

important, wait till I get home. If it's important, you can come here."

After a brief deliberation, Margaret made up her mind. "I'll come to you now!"

The call ended, and Christopher returned to the private room. Inside, an elderly man with a potbelly joked, "I wonder who's the person who made you answer your phone in the middle of a business meeting."

Christopher's lips curved slightly. "I've left home a while ago, so my wife misses me. It's normal for her to give me a call. Silas, you're a henpecked husband, too. Stop teasing me, will you?"

Silas Ludwick patted his belly and chortled. "Brat, you're good with words, huh? I'm no longer as healthy as I used to be, so I can't drink with you. My secretary shall drink with you instead."

The young and pretty secretary sitting beside Silas got to her feet and went to Christopher, but he pushed his glass away. "Silas, if you can't drink, we won't drink during dinner. We've worked together for years, so there's no need to drink to complete the deal. Let's just have dinner together as friends."

Silas flashed a grin. "I know you're a henpecked husband just like me. From now on, you can't tease me anymore! All right, let's eat now." He chuckled.

It took Margaret around two hours to arrive at the city neighboring Dellmoor by taking the high-speed rail. It was ten sharp when she reached the restaurant Christopher was in. His car was parked outside, and no one was inside. Afraid that he was in a business meeting, she waited outside patiently.

A cold gust of wind blew into her coat, and she started stomping to ward off the chill after a while.

Half an hour later, Christopher finally exited the restaurant with Silas, Noah and Silas' secretary trailed after them.

Margaret stood before his car instead of stepping forward to welcome him. She only went to him when Silas and his secretary took their leave.

Upon spotting her, Christopher was taken aback. He then asked in a seemingly nonchalant manner, "How long have you been waiting?"

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She put her reddened, freezing-cold hands into her pockets. "I just got here."

Her face was flushed red from the cold wind. He wasn't blind, so he obviously wouldn't believe her. "Get in the car. Let's head to the hotel first."

When they got to the hotel, the first thing Christopher did was take a shower. While he was doing so, Margaret kept thinking about what to say to him. Before she could make up her mind, the bathroom door swung open. He had a bathrobe wrapped around him. He lit a cigarette but only puffed it twice before putting it out again. "What's going on?"

In a panic, she couldn't bring herself to say anything. Her face was flushed.

He picked up the watch he had taken off earlier before showering and fiddled with it. "Does this have something to do with Jodie?"

She nodded. "Yes. D-Do you think you could help out?"

He raised his head to look at her and said flatly, "It's not a question of whether I can or not. Every business has its ups and downs. Because of this matter, I had to forfeit more than a hundred million in those lost materials. I also have to account for the

loss in profit of what those materials were supposed to provide for me. I am the biggest victim here. Why should I pity the party who had caused me to suffer a loss? It was the Clark family's mistake for losing the materials. As a businessman, I can only do my best to fix what happened and keep my losses to a minimum. Even if the Clark family are doomed, it's not my fault. Do you understand me?"

Margaret understood the logic behind his words, and she couldn't retort him. However, he was the only one she could go to for help. "Well, can't you think about it from their point of view? Tell me how much you've lost in total. I'll find a way to pay it off with Jo. Her dad is still in the hospital, and her mom is always sick. There's no way she can do it on her own."

Christopher found her words hilarious. "Are you serious? Where are you going to get a hundred million to pay me? Stop being so naïve and stop putting everything on yourself. You can't do it, so I won't accept your proposal. This is a business matter. I don't want to involve my own personal feelings."

Since he had said so, she didn't know how to convince him any further. It was true that he hadn't done anything wrong. With a deep breath, she replied, "All right. I understand where you stand now. Just pretend I never asked then."

Christopher lowered his head and looked at the expensive watch in his palm. With a vague tone, he said, "That's not the way you should be helping people. It's so suspicious that the person who supposedly stole all the materials just so happened to die in a fire. From what I know, that person didn't even have the time to resell the parts yet. Anyway, I don't care about all that. That is for the Clark family to deal with. – They have to face the consequences."

Margaret could tell there was more to the matter. But if even the police couldn't solve it, she doubted she had the power to do so either. It wasn't that easy to retrace the lost materials. The future was unpredictable, but one thing for sure was the Clark family was doomed.

"Okay, I get it.." She lowered her head and headed toward the door. Christopher looked at the watch in his hand. With a frown, he said, "It's late. Just wait for me to finish up my work and we'll head back together."

However, Margaret wasn't in the mood to hang around. "It's fine. Jo must feel horrible now. I think I should go spend some time with her. Is that okay?"

He lost his patience. "If you want to see her, then you'd better be a good girl and stay here tonight."

Left with no choice, she could only stay.

She looked toward the huge bed in the room. "I... I think I'll go book another room. You're going to be busy, so I wouldn't want to disturb you."

Christopher walked over to the edge of the bed and sat down. "Don't worry, I know what I'm doing. Come over and get into bed."

He knows what he's doing? She wondered if he was referring to something suggestive, but he looked so serious that it seemed unlikely. She started to doubt if there was something wrong with her train of thought.

Perhaps because he was too tired, Christopher fell asleep as soon as his head hit the pillow.

After Margaret came out of the shower, she gently lay down in bed. She was unable to fall asleep, but she couldn't move around too much for fear of waking him up. It made her very restless.

Suddenly, Christopher's phone buzzed. It just so happened that he had placed it on the bedside table next to Margaret. She got up and took a look at it. On the screen, it showed a message notification. She could see a part of the message that read: Hey,

Christopher. Are you awake? I'm sorry. I know I was wrong now. I really miss you. Can you come over

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She couldn't see what the rest of the message was, but she could already guess what it was about. Megan wanted to come to see him!

To compare the two, the hatred she had for Christopher was more of a feeling of helplessness, whereas when it came to Hannah and Megan, she simply hated them to the core.

She suddenly had a very evil thought on her mind. *What if I replied to the text for him?* However, when she picked up the phone, she realized it was locked.

She racked her brain. She had seen Christopher use a password somewhere else. Margaret thought that he probably used the same password for everything.

Deciding to try her luck, she keyed in the passcode. *One, zero, two, seven.*

The phone was unlocked. She texted back: *Sorry. He's asleep.*

Immediately, Megan called the phone. Margaret was already expecting this, so she had pre-emptively silenced the phone. When she answered the call, Megan shrieked, "Who are you?"

Margaret did not back down. Her voice was soft but firm. "Who else? Megan, when I was your age, I never did anything as shameless as seducing someone else's man. I can't believe your own mother supports this. There really are all kinds of people in this world."

When Megan heard Margaret's voice, she sighed in relief. She thought that Christopher had actually found someone new. After confirming that he hadn't, she scolded, "You're the one who can't capture his heart. How is it my fault? Christopher excels in everything except when it comes to you. You're the dark stain in his life. He really should just kick you to the curb!"

Margaret buried her face into the blanket. She tried to lower her voice as much as possible. "Too bad for you but he would never do that. Save your breath. I'm on a business trip with him, so we'll be together for the next two days. You can come and see him if you want. I don't mind. It's up to him how to react."

Megan was furious. "Don't be too happy! I just had a small argument with him; that's all. Otherwise, he wouldn't even take a look at your face. Other people might not know any better, but I do. The person he hates the most in this world is you!"

Afraid of waking Christopher up, Margaret did not bother to argue with Megan any longer. Instead, she ended the call.

Just as she flipped open the blanket to come out, she felt a hand on her waist. "Since when did you learn to check out my phone?"

Margaret swallowed nervously. He hadn't heard her on the phone. He just thought she was going through it.

Slowly, she turned over and stammered, "No... I was just looking at the time. I can't sleep... As she spoke, she put the phone back onto the bedside table and cleared out the call log

Just as she was preparing to lie back down, he swiftly put his hands into her shirt. "I'll tire you out so you'll be able to sleep then."

Margaret's body instantly stiffened. She was scared. "No, no. I can sleep! I just overslept a little the day before. You go ahead and sleep. I won't bother you again..."

Christopher said nothing. His hands didn't move any further either. She breathed a sigh of relief and stared blankly at the dark ceiling above her. However, what she didn't know was that Christopher had his eyes wide open at the moment. From the looks of it, it didn't seem like he had just woken up from his sleep at all.

The next morning, Margaret woke up after having a nightmare, her body covered in sweat. The room was too warm, and she wasn't used to it. She got up to adjust the temperature. At this moment, the sky had just started to brighten. Christopher was still fast asleep.

She sat on the couch facing the bed and scrolled through her phone to read the news. After the night before, all the major news outlets were reporting about the factory owned by Jodie's family shutting down. The news of Dellmoor's third largest jewelry factory closing down made headlines. There were also articles about the huge debt they owed.

At that moment, she felt utterly helpless. She was watching as Jodie's family fell from grace, but there was nothing she could do.

Margaret raised her head to look at the man asleep on the bed. He seemed less serious when he wasn't awake. He wasn't gentle to others, nor was he cold toward her. This was his truest form and the one that she felt closest to.

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At eight o'clock in the morning, Christopher woke up as per usual. Margaret poured him a glass of warm water. "The air is quite dry. Have some water."

He slowly peeled his eyes open and looked her up and down before accepting the glass of water. "I need to meet with someone today. I want you to come with me."

Margaret wanted to tell him that she wasn't feeling well and didn't feel like going outside, but she couldn't bring herself to say it. She knew he didn't like to be turned down.

While Christopher went out for work, she stayed in the hotel the entire morning. Around noon, Noah drove her to a high-end restaurant. As usual, they had booked a private room. Looking out, she could see that the restaurant was bustling with

customers.

When she went in, Christopher was inside with another white-haired old man. He looked pretty energetic for his age. His clothes were lowkey, but she could tell they were luxurious,

“Meg, this is Mr. Moore,” said Christopher with a smile.

She wasn’t used to him being so gentle. Obviously, Christopher really respected this old guy. Hence, she followed suit and greeted him.

Charles Moore looked her up and down. He smiled warmly and gestured for her to sit down. “No need to be so polite. I’m a childhood friend of Christopher’s father. I was previously living overseas, and I’ve just returned recently.”

Margaret would be lying if she said she wasn’t nervous. She wondered why Christopher would bring her to meet Charles. It made her feel as though she was meeting his elders somehow.

For the most part, Christopher and Charles would talk to each other. Margaret just focused on eating her lunch and barely said a few words. She only spoke when Charles asked her a question.

After several rounds of drinking, Charles was feeling a little tipsy. He suddenly asked, “Christopher, have you ever seen your younger brother before?”

Christopher’s expression hardened. “What are you talking about? I don’t have a younger brother.”

Charles waved his hand. “Well, I guess you’re old enough for me to tell you now. A long time ago, your dad... He had a son with another woman. Seeing your reaction, I guess the mother and son have never come looking for you all these years. I’m surprised they haven’t made a move yet.”

Christopher did not speak. Margaret could sense that the atmosphere was tense, so she set down the fork in her hand. She had never heard of Christopher having a younger brother either. Quite frankly, she suspected that Charles was just spouting nonsense since he was drunk.

Perhaps he was really letting the alcohol get to him, but Charles continued to chatter on about the past. It was almost as though the bombshell he had dropped earlier was mere nonsense.

After exiting the restaurant, Christopher and Margaret helped Charles into his car before returning to their own hotel.

Since the topic earlier, Christopher’s face had been dark. Margaret did not dare to ask him any questions either. She hadn’t slept well the night before, and she was very sleepy now. But since he was present, she didn’t feel comfortable taking a nap. Hence, she had no choice but to power through.

Christopher seemed to be pretty free that afternoon. He didn’t go out. Instead, he sat on the couch and tapped away at his laptop.

Margaret yawned repeatedly. She wanted to try to find something to talk about so that she could stay awake. For some reason, she decided to bring up what Charles had mentioned. “Do you really have a younger brother?”

Christopher’s hands froze briefly. His expression stiffened as he replied, “Do you really think that’s possible? If that were true, he would have shown up a long time ago to claim his shares to the family assets.”

Margaret knew she had misspoken. She dared not say anything more. Just as another wave of sleepiness washed over her, she felt her phone buzz. She received a message that read: *Hey, I'm at Jadeborough too.*

Christopher and she were in Jadeborough right now. *Who sent this message? How did he or she know I'm here?*

Her heart started to beat wildly. After running through a possible list of people in her mind, she came to the bold conclusion that this person could be none other than Jenson.