

Married by Mistake Mr. Whitman's Sinner Wife [Sixteenth Child] Chapter 1401

Madeline ignored the pain and suddenly shot to her feet.

"Hey, why are you ignoring me?" upset, Eloise grabbed Madeline's hand. She had no idea what was happening behind her.

"Why would I ignore you, Mom?" Madeline held Eloise's hand tightly. Her heart ached at the sight of the dirt and dust on Eloise's innocent child-like appearance.

She did not have a clue what happened while she was unconscious, except that Eloise had woken up and the man was now unconscious on the floor by the door.

Madeline did not have the time to entertain those thoughts. Seeing the spreading flames that had started some time ago, she took Eloise's hand and walked toward the exit.

The spreading flames blocked their way, and Madeline found herself coughing from the pungent billowing smoke.

It was only then that Eloise seemed to have noticed that the house was on fire. Staring dazedly at the raging flames, she seemed lost.

"Mom! Cough. We have to leave now!" Madeline squeezed Eloise's hand. She tried to escape through the room's door, but the piles of garbage and takeaway boxes ended up contributing to the rapid spread of fire.

"Cough cough!"

Madeline fell into a violent and uncomfortable coughing fit when she suddenly heard a violent crash outside.

It was followed by the main doors being kicked open with a bang.

Jeremy kicked down the door and was shocked when he was met with a strong scent of blazing black smoke once he walked through.

“Is it you, Jeremy? Jeremy! Cough, cough, cough...” Madeline shouted at the door. Her senses told her that Jeremy had arrived, and the irregular rhythm of her heartbeat never deceived her.

Jeremy covered his mouth and walked along the entrance to the outside of the room where Madeline and Eloise were trapped in.

“Linnie!”

Through the heavy black smoke, Jeremy’s half-squinted peach blossom eyes caught sight of Madeline and Eloise’s figures.

“Don’t worry, Linnie. I’ll come in and bring you and Mom out right now!”

“Don’t! Don’t come in, cough! It’s still somewhat safe in here. Ensure your own safety before you come and save me and Mom, Jeremy! Do you hear me?”

Madeline persuaded him to stop, even though she wanted nothing more than to bury herself in Jeremy’s arms where it would feel safe like no other place. Still, him entering the room rashly would not do anything to help them.

“Fire! What a big fire!”

Eloise suddenly screamed.

“Eveline’s still in the fire! It’s all gone! The fire has burned everything away!”

“Mom?”

“Eveline! I have to save Eveline!” Eloise murmured to herself before she suddenly pushed Madeline’s hand away and ran toward the flames.

Madeline pulled Eloise back. “Eveline’s right here, Mom. I’m right here!”

“No. You’re not Eveline, you’re not my Eveline! My darling daughter, Eveline Montgomery, is still inside! She’ll be burned to death! It’s Lana, she’s the vile witch who wants to kill our entire family!

“Eveline, my child. Mom knows she has never taken good care of you or protected you but won’t you forgive Mom? Please? Come back to me,” Eloise rambled, her expression especially solemn under her dust-covered face.

She seemed to have remembered the day Montgomery Manor was burned to ruins for she kept repeating about how she needed to save Madeline.

Madeline’s heart tightened as if something had taken hold of it. She had no idea if her eyes were burning from the smoke or something else but she could not seem to stop the tears from flowing.

“Eveline is safe, Mom! She’s standing right in front of you!”

“No, no, my Eveline is still in the fire! I have to save her! Let go of me!”

Eloise pushed Madeline away again and rushed desperately toward the raging flames before her.

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She had only one thought and it was to save Madeline.

Madeline did not expect Eloise’s strength to grow so exponentially either in order to save ‘her’.

She ended up staggering two steps backward before she knocked into the bookshelf beside her.

The bookshelf swayed twice as if it was about to fall.

Knocking into it hurt slightly, but Madeline did not have the time to worry about herself as she saw Eloise already stepping into the fire.

“Mom!” she exclaimed and ran over to embrace Eloise as tears fell freely from her burning eyes.

“Look at me, Mom. I really am your Eveline!” Madeline hugged Eloise and stressed the words.

“My Eveline...” Eloise was stunned for two seconds as she stared blankly at Madeline’s face. Her eyes were filled with doubt and question. “No, you’re not. Eveline would never talk to me. She hates me.

You're not... Cough cough, you're not..."

Madeline tightened her arms around Eloise. "Eveline stopped hating you a long time ago, Mom. I know you didn't hurt me on purpose. Eveline doesn't blame you anymore."

"Eveline doesn't blame me anymore?" Madeline's words seemed to have gotten through to Eloise who raised her hand to touch Madeline's teary cheeks. Her delicate brows became furrowed. "Do you truly not blame me anymore, Eveline?"

Madeline nodded and squeezed Eloise's hand. "Truly. Eveline doesn't blame her mother. Eveline loves her mother. Cough cough."

Eloise seemed to have understood Madeline and gave a relieved smile. "Will you come home with me then, Eveline?"

"Yeah! I'll go home with Mom! Our family won't be separated anymore!"

"Okay." A loving smile broke on Eloise's face. She raised her hand to caress Madeline's head, but a look of horror suddenly tinted her kind gaze.

Madeline had no idea what was going on, but she saw Eloise suddenly rush behind her.

The swaying bookshelf lost its center of gravity and fell with a bang, crushing Eloise, who had run over to protect Madeline, to the ground.

It then dawned on Madeline that Eloise had suddenly run behind her to protect her.

“Mom!” Madeline screamed and hurried over to Eloise.

“Mom, cough cough...” Feeling unwell, Madeline fell into another coughing fit. The pile of garbage around the room had given the thick smoke an abnormal smell that attacked her nose.

“Linnie! Can you hear me, Linnie?” Jeremy’s anxious tone crept closer.

“Jeremy...” Madeline tried to shout back in response but something seemed to be stuck in her throat. It threw all her efforts to waste.

Her vision began to blur and even breathing became more difficult.

“Linnie! Linnie!” Madeline heard Jeremy shouting heart-wrenchingly before her senses were overwhelmed by the scorching high temperature that enveloped her.

Amidst the confusion, she thought she felt a cool gust of air blow over her. It was accompanied by a scent and a familiar sense of security that slowly calmed her inner anxiety and fear.

“Jeremy...” Madeline murmured, seeing Jeremy’s face appearing vaguely in her blurred vision before everything in front of her eyes turned black.

She began to have nightmares about Eloise still crushed under the bookshelf and covered in blood.

She kept screaming ‘Mom, Mom’ but Eloise never woke up.

“Linnie. Linnie, are you awake?”

The man's magnetic, gentle baritone voice drifted into her ears and Madeline's eyes shot open. When she sat up, her eyes were filled with confusion. "Mom! Jeremy!"

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"I'm right here, Linnie." Jeremy sat down on the bed and wrapped his arms around Madeline's shoulder to comfort her. "Everything's alright now, Linnie. It's okay, calm down."

Madeline's nervous heartbeat gradually settled when she felt the man's familiar warmth engulf her.

Thinking back to what happened before she fell unconscious, she clenched her fingers through the aftershock as her beautiful pupils shone with unease.

"The bookshelf fell and Mom got crushed under it to save me." Madeline threw off the covers and got off the bed.

Jeremy rushed forward to hold Madeline. "Where are you going, Linnie? You haven't fully recovered yet."

"I know Mom is in the hospital as well! Bring me there, Jeremy. I need to know how Mom is doing." Her expression was frantic as her eyes became swirled with panic and fear.

Jeremy's sharp brows were knitted together. "Mom's alright, Linnie. Be good and rest, okay?"

"I'll rest, I promise, but I need to know how Mom is doing first." Madeline was persistent as she took Jeremy's hand with a stern expression. "Just bring me there, Jeremy."

Even so, Jeremy hesitated as if taking the step was a difficult feat to accomplish.

Madeline had a foreboding thought that something was wrong. Her expression shifted as she let go of his hand. "Mom is in bad condition, isn't she?"

"Nonsense. She's fine, Linnie. You're overthinking it." Jeremy comforted, trying to pull Madeline back before she broke down.

Madeline regulated her emotions and nodded calmly. "I won't overthink it. I'll just ask the doctor, then!"

Madeline moved quickly and immediately ran to the nurse's station to ask if there was an Eloise Patton who was also hospitalized here.

The nurse did a quick search and affirmed it. "We do have a lady by the name Eloise Patton who was just admitted to the hospital. She's in the VIP ward in front."

Hearing this, Madeline felt her heartstrings tighten suddenly. "Can you tell me how my mother is doing?"

Understanding that Madeline was the patient's daughter, the nurse told her everything she knew.

"The patient is in a rather critical state. She was crushed by a heavy object and broke two of her ribs in the process, one of which had pierced her lung and caused massive internal bleeding. The situation was urgent when she first arrived at the hospital, but she's no longer in life-threatening danger. She'll be alright with enough rest and recovery," the young nurse explained with a smile before she ended with words of comfort.

"Don't worry too much. Your mother is not in life-threatening danger."

Still, Madeline remained dazed. "Thank you."

She then turned to see Jeremy walking over to her.

“Linnie.”

Madeline looked at the man despondently. “I want to see Mom.”

Jeremy knew that Madeline had come to know of Eloise’s situation and took her hand gently. “I’ll come with you.”

“Hmm.” Madeline hummed softly in response and followed Jeremy to Eloise’s room.

Before they walked in, Madeline found Sean sitting by the bed with both his hands clasped around Eloise’s. His very handsome features were filled with concern.

It was evident how much Sean cared about Eloise.

Madeline’s heart twinged, and she suddenly turned to lean against the wall. Her eyes were staring at the ground in defeat.

Jeremy quickly grabbed Madeline’s shoulders. “It’s not your fault, Linnie.”

One glance was all he needed to see through her, to realize that she was feeling guilty inside.

Madeline remained silent, and Jeremy decided to pull her into his arms. “It’s only natural for a mother to protect her children. As long as you’re okay, I’m sure Mom will feel at ease.”

Hearing the man’s comforting words, Madeline lifted her teary gaze at him.

“Thank you for consoling me, Jeremy. I won’t overthink it anymore.”

“We’re husband and wife, silly. You don’t need to thank me for this, hmm?” Jeremy lifted his finger to scratch the tip of her delicate nose.

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Madeline pursed her lips and smiled before suddenly frowning.

“What about the man who kidnapped Mom?”

“He has been brought in by the police and is now in the detention ward. He confessed to everything.”

“What did he say?” Madeline pressed further.

Jeremy stroked Madeline’s tired cheeks while parting his lips to reply. “He said he saw Mom by the road near the ruins of Montgomery Manor. He recognized her from her looks, so he conned Mom to follow him to where he lived. Then, he called us and asked for ransom.”

When he said that, Jeremy felt slightly regretful.

“I made the wrong decision to let you go in alone. I was fully capable of subduing that b*stard by myself, yet I ended up putting you in that kind of danger.”

Jeremy cupped Madeline’s face, his narrow and deep eyes overflowing with remorse. “I was so scared that you’d get hurt again, Linnie.”

Madeline looked up to stare at the man’s enchanting peach blossom eyes, feeling incomparably adored.

She leaned into his embrace without hesitation and felt the weight above her chest lighten.

“I’m so glad to have you, Jeremy.”

Jeremy smiled and caressed Madeline’s head. “Silly.”

Madeline smiled in relief, feeling much better now.

It was the following morning when Eloise finally woke up. As her condition was slightly critical, it affected Eloise’s physicality greatly and all she could do was look at the person in front of her with her eyes open. She could not say a word.

Madeline’s heart ached tremendously at the sight.

Still, regardless of how muddled Eloise’s mind was, Madeline could still feel that her mother cared about her.

Eloise’s tired gaze would always be filled with gentleness and love when they trained on Madeline whenever she entered the room.

Karen would also come to the hospital every day to take care of Eloise, bringing freshly brewed warm herbal soup and personally feeding Eloise one sip at a time. Karen would even comfort the other as she fed, saying, “Get better soon, Eloise. It has to be uncomfortable staying in the hospital every day. Get better and come back to the manor. We’ll spend each day chatting and making snacks like we used to.”

Eloise did not reply, but she looked at Karen with an expression that seemed to show her understanding.

Madeline found herself comforted when she noticed the change in Karen and Eloise’s relationship.

Eloise's mental condition had recovered greatly over the past few days. She would even say a couple of words here and then, even though it would be particularly strenuous for her.

Madeline would shuffle between home and the hospital every day, but she did not find herself complaining about how difficult it was. She was content as long as she got to be with her family. It was mainly because she had lost too many opportunities to spend time with her family, so she cherished every minute she had now.

Jeremy's heart clenched at the sight of Madeline being so busy every day, so he secretly arranged a vacation for the both of them. He was thinking about taking Madeline out on a trip to destress.

Madeline had been pulling herself taut all this while and he would do anything to have her relax for once.

Madeline had no idea that Jeremy was planning a trip for the both of them. Having sent the kids to kindergarten as usual, Madeline then made her way to the hospital to take care of Eloise.

Madeline was in the car, waiting for the light to turn green at the intersection when she suddenly received Jeremy's call.

The man's warm and gentle voice that was like a spring breeze drifted into her ears and tickled her heart. "Where are you now, Linnie?"

"What's this? Is Mr. Whitman missing me?" Madeline jokingly teased Jeremy.

The man chuckled lowly and replied cooperatively, "Yeah. I miss my wife, so I'm wondering if my wife is free to come over and elevate my yearning?"

Sweetness filled Madeline's heart, but she kept a cold facade. "Very well, then. I suppose I could grant your wish this one time."

She hung up the phone with a smile. Watching the light turn green, Madeline then stepped on the accelerator.

She looked up and her eyes zoned in on the person walking on the zebra-crossing right in front of her.

The early autumn breeze blew, and Madeline looked at the silhouette of the person who entered her line of vision. She wondered if something was wrong with her eyes.

'How... How could it be?'

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Madeline gripped the steering wheel as she watched the familiar face a small distance away pass by...

Honk, honk, honk!

The sound of cars honking and urging her sounded from behind, causing Madeline to snap back to her senses. When she looked up again, the face she had just seen was nowhere to be found.

'Did I imagine it?'

Madeline's mind fell into a short daze, but she did not think too much into it and stepped on the accelerator.

Upon meeting up with Jeremy, Madeline came to know that the man had booked flight tickets for their relaxing holiday trip and they were leaving tomorrow.

As she understood Jeremy's intention, Madeline did not reject the idea.

In retrospect, she and Jeremy had never gone on a decent honeymoon with how they kept separating and getting back together all these years.

After deciding on the itinerary, both Madeline and Jeremy went to visit Eloise at the hospital.

They were leaving tomorrow and Madeline was most worried about her mother.

“Go and relax with Jeremy, Eveline. Your mother is already recovering and she has your Dad to take good care of her. Don’t worry and go relax.” Sean patted Madeline’s shoulder and promised that she could have peace of mind.

Madeline knew and trusted her father to do everything to take care of Mom, but she could not help but miss her mom.

After all, Eloise only suffered such a serious injury because she wanted to protect Madeline.

She sat by the bed and took Eloise’s hand, looking into her mother’s tranquil and kind features.

“Eveline won’t be gone for very long, Mom. You have to listen to Dad and take good care of yourself, okay?”

Madeline urged softly and saw Eloise looking back at her with confusion. Her heart sank slightly and she felt a little lost.

Jeremy saw Madeline’s disappointment and walked toward her. He put his hand on her shoulder and patted comfortingly.

“Don’t be disheartened, Linnie. I’m sure Mom will remember that you’re the daughter she has been

missing someday.”

“He’s right. Your mom will recover, Eveline. Don’t worry.” Sean came over to comfort her as well.

One was her beloved husband and the other was her father. Feeling the care and love these two men had for her, Madeline felt joy flood her heart.

At that moment, Madeline suddenly remembered the scene on the road not too long ago. She wondered if it was her own illusion and was still considering whether to tell Jeremy about it when Karen brought in a bowl of warm soup.

Knowing that Madeline and Jeremy were going on a trip tomorrow, Karen picked up the soup and walked toward Eloise. She spoke in an encouraging tone, “Yeah, take a trip. Look at you two. You already have three kids. Jack and Lillian aren’t babies anymore, but you haven’t even had your honeymoon.”

“Don’t worry, I’ll take care of Eloise,” Karen promised while smiling at Eloise. “Don’t worry, Eloise. With me visiting you every day, you’ll never get bored.”

At that, Eloise nodded slightly as if she was in agreement with what Karen said.

Madeline could tell that Karen would take good care of Eloise. “I’ll have to trouble you for the next few days then, Mom.”

“It’s no trouble. We’re family, aren’t we? I’m just doing my part.” Karen sighed with a pitying tone while she brought a spoonful of herbal soup to Eloise’s mouth. “I must’ve been blind before with how I couldn’t see the truth even when it was in front of my eyes. I made you suffer so much, Eveline, and I fought horribly with Eloise. Looking back on it now, it was absolutely ridiculous.”

Karen chuckled self-deprecatingly as she locked gazes with Eloise.

“How unfortunate now that Eloise is suffering such consequences when she already can’t recognize her own daughter. Sigh.”

She sighed involuntarily before she realized that the hospital room had grown silent just as she finished speaking. She found Eloise frowning and staring especially heavily at her. A moment later, Karen immediately backtracked.

“What am I saying? Pretend I didn’t say anything, okay? Don’t worry, everything will turn out okay in the end.”

She quickly changed the subject and began to encourage Eloise.

“You’ll get better Eloise. You will.”

Eloise must have understood for she smiled softly in return.

...

In the custodial ward in prison.

Ryan sat indifferently on the sickbed, resting his eyes while the wounds on his body began to heal.

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Just then, the door of the ward suddenly opened and a prison guard walked in. “Someone’s here to see you, Ryan.”

Ryan slowly opened his starry gray eyes at the sound of the guard’s voice.

He had not expected anyone to come and visit as who else but his parents would come?

'Who else, if not my parents?' he thought to himself, but a face he had never expected surprised him by suddenly appearing before his eyes.

He never thought he could see her again.

He also thought that the meeting that day would be their last.

Ryan was about to speak when he heard the woman in front of him sneering. It was a sound that turned all of Ryan's pleasant surprise and hopes into dust.

"As the one who arranged my future, Rye, did it not occur to you that your future would end up like this?"

The woman curled her lips slightly and a scornful smirk appeared on her picturesque, small face.

"I'm so upset, Rye. Why did you become like this? What's the point of me being like this if you're going to stay in such a place for the rest of your life?"

Ryan stared at the flawless beauty in front of him and looked away indifferently.

"Leave. It's all over already."

The woman's delicate eyebrows furrowed indignantly. "What are you talking about, Rye? You can't just give up like this! How could you? What am I supposed to do if you give up?"

Ryan glanced coldly at the fury that donned her face. Even when she was furious, the woman was beautiful and could move hearts. Even so, he did not feel the slightest bit in love.

The woman grew more frustrated at Ryan's lack of response and seemed moments away from gnashing her teeth.

"The game isn't over, Ryan! What do you have to give up like this?"

"I'm telling you. I won't let it end like this!"

"Just because you're giving up doesn't mean I will too!"

Ryan frowned when he heard this. "What do you want to do?"

The woman chuckled coldly and raised her hand to point at her delicate, beautiful face. "This appearance is my capital. After all that I've suffered, I refuse to give up before I get my profit!"

"Don't you dare mess around," Ryan warned.

"Hmph. Stop lying to yourself, Rye. You can't possibly be content with how it has ended, can you, Rye?" The woman provoked, saying, "In that case, I'll just do what you couldn't then!"

With that, the woman turned around and left hastily.

Ryan sat up abruptly in bed. He wanted to stop her, but every move he made pulled at his wounds.

He furrowed his eyebrows deeply and looked at the closed prison door as he clenched his fists firmly.

'Are you content with how all this ended, Ryan?'

He asked himself, knowing that the question was without an answer.

...

The following day.

Madeline and Jeremy boarded a two-hour flight and arrived at their destination.

The weather in the resort reminded her of midsummer Glendale when the sun shone brightly in the sky.

Madeline and Jeremy left their luggage at the hotel and changed into comfortable leisure clothing before going to the beach.

There were many tourists on the beach, filling the area with young ladies in bikinis, men with exposed abs, and children with their parents.

Surrounded by such a lively atmosphere, Madeline's mood brightened as well.

Staring at the azure body of water that stretched infinitely into the horizon, a bold idea suddenly popped into Madeline's mind.

She was about to turn around and tell Jeremy her idea when the world around her suddenly fell dark.

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"Stop looking at those men." The man's seductive baritone voice drifted clearly into her ears.

Sensing his jealousy, Madeline raised her hand to push Jeremy's palm away from her eyes. She turned around and met the man's narrow and charming gaze with mirthful eyes.

“Why can’t I look? Eyes are meant to admire the beauties of the world,” Madeline replied innocently before she turned back to continue admiring the beautiful view of the beach.

Jeremy walked up to Madeline domineeringly and pushed his handsome face in front of Madeline’s eyes, blocking her sight as her gaze wandered around the beach.

“I’ll get jealous if you keep looking, Linnie,” he stressed seriously.

Madeline tugged the corners of her pink lips prettily into a rare mischievous smile. “Perfect. I’d like to see what my husband looks like when he’s jealous.”

“I think it’s best you don’t.” Jeremy’s expression grew heavy as a cold look that deterred challengers took over his face, though his gaze then turned gentle again a short moment later. “I’ll let you see as much as you want when we get back to the hotel tonight if that’s what my wife wishes, but your eyes can only be on me right now.”

Madeline found it sweet and stopped teasing the stingy man.

“Fine, then. I’ll only look at my husband.” She gave a crescent-eyed smile and wrapped her hands around Jeremy’s shoulders before leaning against his arm intimately.

Jeremy looked down at the woman leaning against him and a bright smile graced his attractive features.

If he could, he wanted the moment to stay forever. He wanted to stay by her side every day and make her happy.

He still remembered what Madeline said when she first returned for revenge. She wanted a quiet and peaceful life, yet she never got to experience it despite her long wait.

'All I want to do right now is fulfill your simple and small wish,' he thought to himself before leaning down to place a peck on Madeline's forehead.

Madeline broke into a light smile and looked up to meet the man's glistening eyes. "I want to do something bold, Jeremy."

"What bold thing?"

"I want to learn to swim," Madeline replied frankly, "Be honest with me, Jeremy. You thought about it too, didn't you? That's why you brought me to a place by the beach."

"I'm sure my talented wife will pick it up very soon." Jeremy ruffled Madeline's short hair as his gaze turned serious. "I want to be by your side to protect you all the time, Linnie, but I'm afraid that something unexpected might happen."

Madeline understood what Jeremy meant as well as the worry he felt.

They had been through too much distress as of recent. The things that she had gone through made him feel uneasy and wary.

"We won't be separated anymore, right, Linnie?" Jeremy suddenly grabbed Madeline's hand to placate his unsettled thoughts.

"Nope. Don't overthink it, Jeremy. Linnie will be right here with you, from now on until forever." Madeline then got on her tiptoes to place a peck on the corner of Jeremy's lips. "Come on, teach me how to swim already."

Madeline was about to take off her UV protection jacket only for Jeremy to pull it back on for her before she could completely take it off.

Jeremy looked around to see predatory gazes everywhere. He decided that he did not want other men seeing Madeline's sensual figure in her swimsuit.

"We have a swimming pool in our room, darling. I'll teach you there."

"..."

It finally dawned on Madeline just how prone to jealousy this stingy man was.

It was not that she was averse to it, for the stingier he was and the more he wanted to keep all of her to himself, the more he loved her.

She had come to spend time with this man and the man's bossy willfulness was filling her with glee.

Seeing as Madeline did not decline, Jeremy then turned her around with a hand around her. They did not expect a young lady to walk by them just as they turned around.

Madeline ended up knocking the woman's hat off which landed just next to Madeline's feet.

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"Sorry." Madeline apologized before quickly bending down to pick up the hat and handed it back to her.

The moment she looked up, Madeline realized that the woman was wearing a large pair of sunglasses that covered more than half her face.

Despite that, Madeline could not help but be stunned as she took in the woman's features.

"It's alright." The woman took the hat back and smiled, then turning to walk to the beach.

Madeline glanced at the woman's back mindfully and fell silent for a few dazed moments.

"What are you looking at, Linnie?" Jeremy wrapped an arm around Madeline's shoulder. "Let's go back to the hotel."

"Did you see that woman's face, Jeremy?" Madeline followed Jeremy but turned back to take another glance.

It may have been a coincidence, but the woman turned around to look at Madeline as well with an intrigued smile on her face.

"I have no interest in looking at any other woman who isn't you, Linnie," Jeremy replied curtly.

Madeline felt like she had been fed a spoonful of honey, but her heart seemed to grow inexplicably unsettled.

Although, the unsettled feeling quickly vanished under the man's sweet and gentle words.

The hotel Jeremy booked was grand and had a large swimming pool of its own.

Thinking back to how she had jumped into the river without a second thought to retrieve the reagent, Madeline decided that she would learn to swim no matter what.

At least that way, she would be able to save herself if a similar occasion ever occurred.

Under Jeremy's kind guidance, Madeline managed to learn the basic foundations of swimming that afternoon.

Dusk began to fall and the sunset rays tinted the clouds with bright and blooming colors.

A server brought over red wine and an exquisite dinner.

Donned in a cool and seductive swimsuit, Madeline stood partially submerged in water as she looked up to watch the sunset.

Jeremy stood next to Madeline with the loose bathrobe lazily worn over his shoulders. Submerged in the pool, the two watched the sun set.

A warm midsummer breeze blew lightly across the night sky and Madeline leaned coquettishly against Jeremy.

“I want to live carefreely with you forever, Jeremy.”

“We can, Linnie, as long as that’s what you wish.” Jeremy leaned down to place a peck on Madeline’s cheek and went to pour the wine into two glasses. He then handed one of them to Madeline.

Madeline took the glass and moved to clink their glasses together, only for the man to intertwine their arms together to toast.

A sweet smile that showed off her dimples graced Madeline’s features before she downed the wine cooperatively.

Madeline placed the glass down after drinking and suddenly realized that Jeremy was staring at her.

Madeline’s face was flushed, be it either due to the setting sun or the wine she drank. It was still cold moments ago, yet now she felt like she was burning up.

“Why are you staring at me?” Madeline averted her pretty eyes away from Jeremy’s gaze in embarrassment.

“You still have some red wine here.” Jeremy parted his lips softly as a slender finger fell on Madeline’s lips.

He approached her, and the sound of the sloshing water around them tugged at Madeline’s heartstrings, causing ripples that broke the calmness of Madeline’s heart.

Jeremy leaned down and engulfed Madeline with his unique, cooling scent.

“I love you, Linnie.”

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As much as Jeremy’s confession was expected, it was still surprisingly sweet when it got to her ears.

Madeline pursed her lips and smiled, meeting the man’s deepening gaze.

“Me too. I’ve wanted to be with you forever since the day I met you. To the end of the world, wherever you go, I’ll come with you.”

Hearing this, Jeremy’s eyes were soft as the look in them grew more tender. “I’m sorry you had to wait so long for this day, Linnie.”

“If the wait leads me to you, then it’ll be worth it.”

With Madeline’s words, Jeremy placed an unrestrained kiss on her lips, pouring in all the emotions he had suppressed in his heart.

“Linnie, how about we have another baby?”

“Can you even afford to raise so many kids, Mr. Whitman?”

“What do you say?” the man asked with a low chuckle but then made a serious promise. “I don’t want you to suffer anymore, Linnie. I’m very content with Jack, Lillian, and Pudding. Though most importantly, I have you.”

The man said tenderly, and Madeline’s reply fell into a small murmur in the end.

The evening breeze caused the candlelights on the table to flicker, and the two tender shadows were reflected on the wall. Their love would continue to prosper...

Glendale.

As usual, Karen brought soup to the hospital and took care of Eloise. As soon as she entered the ward, she saw Sean struggling to stay awake due to his exhaustion.

She walked to the bed and urged Sean to go home. “You haven’t had a good rest for so many nights now, Sean. Go back and sleep. I’ll take care of Eloise.”

Sean did feel a little tired, but he did not have it in him to leave Ellie alone.

Eloise was not clear-headed now and she had no idea who anyone was but him. He was afraid that Eloise would feel scared if he left.

He hesitated when he suddenly heard Eloise speak, “Go home. Rest.”

Although it had taken some effort for Eloise to speak, those three words were still clearly pronounced.

Karen and Sean were elated now that Eloise could speak a few more words. Sean felt a large weight lifting from his shoulders. "Then, I shall go back to rest, Ellie. I'll come back later."

Eloise looked at Sean and nodded gently.

After Sean left, Karen then picked up the bowl of soup and sat by the bed to feed Eloise.

"You're getting better day by day, Eloise. I'm sure you'll be able to get out of bed by the time Eveline comes back from vacation." Karen blew on the steaming soup and then brought it to Eloise's mouth, her actions all done with familiarity now. "It's hot."

Eloise blinked and looked at Karen as if there was something she wanted to say. However, she only frowned and listened to Karen instead because that was all she could do.

"I was truly ridiculous at the beginning, wasn't I? I don't know where the sense of superiority came from but I looked down on Eveline even when my heart longed for the Whitman and Montgomery family to be wedded. When it turned out that Eveline is the Montgomerie's precious daughter, oh how the whiplash I gave myself had hurt."

Karen scoffed self-deprecatingly, her eyes no longer holding that haughty and contemptuous color.

"To be honest, Eveline really is a rare and great child. I blame myself for being deceived by that Meredith Crawford. Otherwise, Eveline wouldn't have had to suffer so many grievances."

The words seemed to have resonated with Eloise for Karen saw regret and annoyance tinting the other woman's eyes.

Eloise hated Meredith as well, perhaps even more than Karen herself.

Karen was also surprised. 'Does Eloise remember who Meredith Crawford is?'

While they were deep in thought, two middle-aged women donned in gold and silver suddenly appeared by the door.

"Oh, I heard that Mrs. Montgomery is still alive. I thought they were joking, but I didn't expect it to be true."

"So the claim that Mrs. Montgomery is paralyzed and stupid is true, then?"

The two women completed each other's sentences with such ominous words as they rolled their eyes at Eloise, their faces filled with arrogance.

Married by Mistake Mr. Whitman's Sinner Wife [Sixteenth Child] Chapter 1410

"How dare your adopted daughter accuse my son of being unworthy when he tried to pursue her back then, Mrs. Montgomery? Your daughter played my son and look where that got her? She's dead now!"

The woman crossed her arms and smirked in schadenfreude.

"Mrs. Montgomery, you took a heinous and vile woman as your own daughter and in return caused your darling daughter to go through so many sufferings. Wouldn't you call this retribution?"

"Exactly! It's probably because of how unlucky the daughter she gave birth to was that she almost tore the Whitman family apart, or so I heard. When the Montgomery family recognized her, their house got burned down. Her mom gets left paralyzed and becomes stupid. What a misfortune! Haha..."

"You're right! Haha..."

The two women started sneering incessantly.

Seeing this, Karen immediately grabbed an apple from the fruit plate and threw it at them forcefully.

The two women stopped laughing abruptly and dodged in fright. In the end, both their foreheads collided and it was followed by painful screams. The two immediately yelled, "Is this how housewives of rich families act? How can you start hitting people?"

Karen sneered unhurriedly and said, "I don't think I hit a person, though."

"..."

"Eloise's adopted daughter died a long time ago. How could you use a deceased person for the sake of your own entertainment? And you dare to call yourself a person? Do people say such things?"

"..." The two women flushed at the words but they could not say anything to refute.

Karen walked straight up to them and chided with unrestrained anger, "I'm already going easy on you by just throwing an apple considering how you're gloating in the face of someone else's misfortune. Leave, before I call the police to have you two arrested!"

"You... Fine!" The woman curled her lips and turned around indignantly, but she had walked too quickly and ended up twisting her ankle. Her heavy body was sent falling to the ground with a thud.

"Ow!"

The other woman who followed tripped as well and their screams filled the air.

Karen could not help but smirk contemptuously at the scene.

“Now this is what I call retribution. In the same lifetime as well!”

“...”

Karen glared before she closed the door and returned to Eloise.

Seeing Eloise’s heavy expression, Karen quickly comforted her. “Ignore them, Eloise. These kinds of people just have nothing better to do. It’s great that you don’t remember the past, or you might be even angrier.”

Karen picked up another apple. Turning back, she found Eloise looking at her intently. She then coaxed Eloise like one would a kid. “I’ll peel you an apple, okay? Don’t be angry anymore.”

Eloise quietly watched Karen who was peeling the apple for her as tears unconsciously brimmed her bright eyes...

The next day, at the resort.

Madeline woke up In Jeremy’s warm embrace and the first thing her bleary eyes met was the man’s sleeping face. She rolled over and lay down beside Jeremy lazily.

The gentle morning halo scattered over the man’s resolute and refined features. Madeline lifted her finger and began to gently trace the man’s eyebrows.

‘I wish that you’ll be the first thing I see whenever I wake up for the rest of my life, Jeremy.’

She leaned in to kiss Jeremy only for the man to raise his hand and hold the back of her head the moment she inched forward.

Caught off guard, Madeline found her lips pressed against Jeremy's thin ones. Blood rushed to her face. "So you were awake all along, Jeremy?"

Jeremy curled the corners of his thin lips and smiled. Just as he was about to talk to Madeline, his phone rang.

Madeline helped him reach for the phone and realized that it was from Karen. She immediately picked up the phone. "Why are you calling so early in the morning, Mom? Did something happen to my mother?"

Madeline was worried that something had happened to Eloise, but Karen's reply astonished her. "What? Really, Mom?"

Married by Mistake Mr. Whitman's Sinner Wife [Sixteenth Child] Chapter 1411

Hearing Karen's reply, Madeline made a confused sound of disbelief.

Jeremy's narrow and charming eyes snapped open and his gaze fell on Madeline's serious small face.

Madeline locked gazes with Jeremy as she continued to listen to Karen speak over the phone.

Soon after, Madeline hung up the phone.

Jeremy pulled her into his arms and asked caringly, "Did something happen to Mom?"

Madeline shook her head. "She's fine. It's just..."

“Just what?” Jeremy stared into Madeline’s glistening eyes.

Madeline took Jeremy’s phone and tapped into Twitter where she found today’s number one trend. She felt conflicted.

“Look, Jeremy.” She handed the phone to him and her frustration deepened.

Jeremy glanced at the content and a cold look flashed in his deep eyes.

The contents of the letter Old Master Jones wrote to Old Master Whitman were trending!

The lead was from an insider who knew of the truth behind the grievances between the Whitman and the Jones family 15 years ago.

“I remember giving the letter to Ryan’s dad and he said that he would destroy it. How could there be pictures of its contents uploaded online?”

Madeline was confused. This was indeed a troublesome incident.

“Now all of Glendale and even the entire world knows about this. Who knows how Ryan and the Jones family will feel if they saw this?”

Jeremy was deep in thought as he hugged Madeline. They were both in sitting positions.

“Grandfather and Ryan’s grandfather used to be good friends back then. It was this project ZF that caused a rift in their relationship.

“Grandfather had shown the project bidding book to Ryan’s grandfather out of trust back then. Ryan’s grandfather thought that some of the contents in the bidding book were very constructive and adaptable, so he plagiarized a few of the points. Grandfather found out about the plagiarism in the end and pointed it out to Ryan’s grandfather. Knowing that he had made a mistake, Ryan’s grandfather chose to disqualify himself.

“Whitman Corporation outstood everyone in the end and successfully got the project. After Riverdawn Corporation’s defeat, Ryan’s grandfather fell into depression. It was most likely because he wanted to maintain the image his family had for him, or perhaps he was angry at that time so he decided to tell his family that Grandfather was the one who plagiarized him instead. The Jones family believed it, so they all thought that Grandfather was the one who indirectly caused their grandfather’s death half a year later. That was how the two families’ hatred began.”

Jeremy’s tone was solemn as he spoke of everything that happened back then.

“The Jones family had no idea that their old master wrote a letter to Grandfather before he passed.”

Jeremy looked at the contents in his phone as he spoke.

The letter relayed Old Master Jones’ apology to Old Master Whitman as well as the truth of the entire

incident.

He also spoke about how he had told such a ridiculous lie because he wanted to protect the reputation he had in his children and grandchildren's eyes.

He had slandered his friend and in return suffered in remorse until he ultimately died in despair.

Jeremy, Madeline, nor the Whitman family had ever thought to publicize the contents of the letter, yet here it was, available for the world to see.

Now that the Jones family were no longer seen as the victims, many netizens began to comment and scold them as well as the late Old Master Jones after the letter started trending.

Madeline and Jeremy got up and went to eat a simple breakfast.

After breakfast, Madeline heard the adjacent table also talking about the trending topic. She could not help but feel frustrated.

"Should we go back, Jeremy?"

Jeremy lifted his beautiful peach blossom eyes. "What for?"

"Shouldn't we do something about this?"

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"I've already told someone to delete as much as they can and try to out-trend it with something else. I've done all I can, so let's just leave the Jones family to worry about the rest," Jeremy replied frankly and tried to console Madeline.

“We aren’t guilty of anything, Linnie. We can’t change how others want to think either. All we can do is our own part.”

With that, Madeline’s emotions calmed greatly.

He was right.

The Whitman family had done most of what they could. Jeremy even went the extra mile to help as well. They had done enough.

“I brought you here so you could be happy and relax, Linnie. Stop worrying about those kinds of things already, hmm?” Jeremy scratched the tip of her delicate nose gently.

Madeline wrapped her arms around the man’s arm as a sweet smile that showed her dimples graced her lips. She asked coquettishly, “Well then, husband of mine, where are you bringing me today?”

Jeremy raised his sharp brows and quirked his seductive thin lips as he replied playfully, “How could I not have everything prepared if I’m going to bring my wife out?”

“Is that so?” Madeline looked curious, her eyes brimming with expectations.

The man smiled mysteriously and intertwined his fingers with Madeline’s.

“I’ve wasted too much time when I should’ve been cherishing you, Linnie. So let me try to make up for those happy times.”

“Hmm?”

‘How are you planning to make up for lost time?’

Madeline was curious and more hopeful about where Jeremy was about to bring her.

Before they left, Jeremy brought Madeline back to their room to change into another set of clothes.

Madeline never expected Jeremy to buy such an outfit for her. It was a white short-sleeved button-up and a dark blue plaid dress.

She turned to look at the man who was donned in an ironed white shirt and a navy blue tie with pants that were in the same midnight blue.

Looking at their outfits, Madeline felt that she had been brought back to when they were still students.

She remembered how she resembled a clumsy doe, knocking right into his chest.

She had flushed as she apologized while he gently placated her and told her it was fine.

It had been years ago, yet it felt like it was just yesterday.

Jeremy dragged Madeline to a university nearby where he had already contacted the professor there. He entered one of the lecture halls naturally. He walked toward the window seat by the last row and sat down with Madeline by his side.

No one suspected that they were not students as the two looked so youthful that their true age was impossible to guess.

Madeline sat by the window where the bright sun splashed on her face. Her flawless cheeks glowed with a youthful tint.

Jeremy sized Madeline up. The sweetness and quiet of the moment seemed to have freed the heart-wrenching remorse he kept locked away.

'If I could've let go of my memory of you when we were children, Linnie, then perhaps I wouldn't have let you go when we met again.'

'Yet it's still you. Be it when you were young or when you grew up, I couldn't help but fall for you in the end.'

'Thank you for loving me. Thank you for giving me another chance to start over.'

Jeremy thought to himself as he quietly reached his hand under the table.

In order to gain extra knowledge, Madeline was listening intently to the professor when she felt the touch of a familiar palm. Her heart skipped a beat as her face immediately flushed red.

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She turned to look at the man beside her to see him staring gently at her. Madeline felt her face growing hotter and her heart racing faster.

Despite already being in love with the man for quite some time, she was dazed as if she had been turned into a lovesick young lady.

She looked up to see the professor teaching the subject passionately. Madeline could not help but play along with the man next to her, allowing him to hook his fingers with hers. Their fingers were

intertwined until the bell that signified the end of class rang.

Madeline could not imagine how it would be if she and Jeremy had gotten the chance to relive their school days. If the past could be rewritten, she wondered if he would turn into the bossy handsome kid who would surround her every day during and after classes, preventing other boys from coming close to her.

Most likely.

Madeline smiled sweetly. From how bossy he was on the beach yesterday, she would not be surprised if he did anything he could to make her his.

Strolling by the campus where even the atmosphere was filled with youthfulness, Madeline found her mood greatly lifted.

The gloom and worry from moments ago seemed to have been swept away. All she wanted to do now was spend some quiet time with this man.

Jeremy and Madeline spent the entire morning in the university. He even brought her to the canteen for lunch during lunchtime.

There were many couples in the university, but it was the first time the students saw such a pretty and loving pair.

“When did our school have such handsome and pretty students?”

“I’ve never seen them before. They don’t seem like our students.”

“Why would they be wearing our uniform if they’re not our students, then? Are you stupid?”

Madeline and Jeremy shared a knowing smile at the conversation around them.

After lunch, Jeremy brought Madeline and left the university.

The two strolled under the trees where rays of sunlight would shine through the leaves. Madeline could not help but tease the man, saying, "Who would've thought that Mr. Whitman would be so eye-catching? They were right. You're indeed a handsome student. I'm pretty sure the number of girls who liked you back in Glendale University would be enough to surround the campus!"

The man quirked his lips proudly. "Are you sure it's just enough to surround the campus? Not the entirety of Glendale?"

"Yeah, yeah, enough to surround the entire Glendale. I'm the luckiest one to be acknowledged by the great Mr. Whitman." Madeline played along in mock annoyance before she chided, "You were the one who wanted to get married to me. Yet you just had to pretend to be the victim and made it seem as if Grandfather was the one who forced you. You're a scheming man, Jeremy Whitman."

Jeremy's smile grew even prouder. "If I wasn't a little scheming, how else would I be able to marry such a great wife?" He smiled before his gaze turned gentle and his voice grew soft. "You have no idea how popular you were back in school, Linnie."

"I was popular?" Madeline pointed at herself in disbelief. Looking back, the only people who talked to her back in her university days were Meredith, Ava, and Daniel.

Forget the boys, but not even girls tried to be friends with her.

Jeremy came to a halt as he stared at Madeline's confused expression. The man then smiled and told her the truth that he had kept away for a long time.

“There were so many boys who tried to pursue you when you first entered university, Linnie. Love at first sight, you know? They tried so many ways to get your contact information and some even wrote love letters for you.”

Madeline was even more confused. “But I didn’t receive any love letters at all, nor did anyone text me their confession. I only remember Dan confessing to me during the graduation ceremony and you ended up thinking that we were together, you doofus.”

“Cough cough.” Jeremy coughed twice as an embarrassed expression spread on his attractive features. He then spoke in a serious tone. “Don’t you know that a jealous man is the pettiest? Daniel completely ignored my presence by confessing to you during the graduation ceremony.”

“Why do people need to acknowledge your presence, though? Nothing was going on between us back then.”

Married by Mistake Mr. Whitman’s Sinner Wife [Sixteenth Child] Chapter 1414

“Wasn’t there?” Jeremy asked back with a smile. “You just didn’t know about it, Linnie, but all the men who fancied or tried to pursue you knew very well that you were mine.”

“What? What are you talking about, Jeremy?” Madeline was feeling progressively confused only to see a slight red flush on the man’s handsome features. “Tell me already, Jeremy. Just what did you do behind my back?”

“Cough.” Jeremy cleared his throat to cover up the slight franticness. “I had someone warn the guys who tried to chase after you so that they knew I was watching over you. Everyone kind of knew better than to offend Glendale’s number one bachelor.”

“...”

Madeline was stricken by the news.

She never expected Jeremy to have done something like that behind her back.

Now that she thought about it, she was not surprised at all.

Jeremy was a dominant man. He was now and he was the same back then.

She had merely never dared to think of such things.

During those blooming days, all Madeline knew was that she had a crush on Jeremy but the person Jeremy loved was Meredith.

When in truth, he had fallen in love with her at first sight when she knocked into him.

Seeing the shock on Madeline's pretty face, Jeremy suddenly felt his heart clench.

"I'm sorry, Linnie. Forgive your husband for being such a deceitful man." Jeremy's warm fingertips fell on Madeline's cheek. "I'm really blessed that not only are you the woman I fell in love with at first glance, but you're also the little girl I yearned for since the beginning, Linnie."

He leaned his head down slowly to push his face right before Madeline's.

Spots of halo were scattered over each other's faces as their eyes sparkled brightly.

"No matter how time passes, Linnie, you'll always be the angel I want to protect the most in my heart."

Madeline smiled sweetly. "What if one day your angel grows old? Would you throw me away then?"

"No matter what you look like, you'll always be my only love."

Following his promise, he sealed his lips over Madeline's.

The sun's scorching radiance was like the love he had for her, burning hotter by the minute.

He had dreamed of kissing her on the streets on a summer day with no one staring at them. At that moment, he realized that as long as they were together, no matter when or where they were or what they were doing, it would all be worth remembering.

Leaving the school grounds, Jeremy then brought Madeline to walk around in a nearby market.

Dusk was approaching, and Jeremy carried an exhausted Madeline on his back as he walked almost an entire mile before he reached the hotel.

It was exhausting, but Jeremy found himself enjoying it.

The two took a soothing bath back in the room before they got ready to eat in a restaurant. Then, the doorbell suddenly rang.

Neither Madeline nor Jeremy knew anyone here. Madeline went to open the door curiously. However, Jeremy held her back and stood in front of her warily to protect her. "I'll open it."

Married by Mistake Mr. Whitman's Sinner Wife [Sixteenth Child] Chapter 1415

After all the accidents and unexpected incidents that had occurred, Jeremy was now exceptionally careful.

Even more so when Madeline was concerned. He simply refused to slack off.

Opening the door, they were met with a smiling server in his uniform.

“Dearest VIP customers, there will be a masquerade party atop our hotel’s terrace in an hour. Our esteemed guests are welcome to join if they wish. Here are your invitations, and I hope that the two of you will leave with unforgettable and happy memories during your stay here.”

It turned out this was what it was. Madeline took the invitations. “Thank you.”

“You’re welcome.” The server smiled politely and turned.

Both Madeline and Jeremy had come here to have fun, so there was no reason for them to miss out on such an activity.

However, Madeline found herself shocked to know that Jeremy knew of such an event and had even prepared their outfits. He even helped Madeline into the impressive black long gown he had specially chosen for her

Watching Madeline standing in front of the full-body mirror, Jeremy went up to hug her from behind. His words were heavily weighted with jealousy. “You look so beautiful, darling. I really don’t want any other man to see such a mesmerizing side of you.”

Madeline met the man’s gaze in the mirror with a smile before she lifted her hand to pat the man’s handsome face lightly. “What are you jealous of? I’m yours anyway, aren’t I?”

“Is that so? I don’t think I believe you. Unless you kiss me.”

Madeline found herself easily giving in to the man’s coquettishness.

She turned without hesitation and pecked Jeremy’s lips thrice. “Mua, mua, mua. Happy now, Your Majesty, King of Jealousy?”

The man immediately broke into a smile. It was one that only ever appeared in front of Madeline.

A cool wind blew that midsummer night.

Madeline linked arms with Jeremy as they made their way to the terrace. The party had not started yet, but the atmosphere was burning with passion.

Men and women who were dressed casually or in weird costumes wore all sorts of masks as they chatted and fooled around on the terrace carefreely.

A server by the door handed Jeremy and Madeline two masks. Madeline took the wolf-shaped one which covered more than half her face, leaving only her twinkling eyes and cherry blossom-pink lips to be seen.

Meanwhile, Jeremy took the cat-shaped mask. For an inexplicable reason, Madeline could not help but laugh at the sight of a company's aloof president wearing such a mask.

"Is this funny to you?" Jeremy asked seriously, feeling the urge to make her laugh more at the sight of the dimples that appeared next to Madeline's lips.

He wrapped an arm around Madeline's waist before taking his phone to snap an intimate picture of the two of them and then posting it on social media.

Soon after, Jackson was the first to like and comment, praising Madeline. [Mom is so beautiful. You can tell she's a beauty just from her dimples.]

Jeremy looked at the comment, feeling conflicted as he felt a jealous urge surge within him despite how unnecessary it was.

Just then, the host announced that the party was about to start.

Everyone understood the rules of the masquerade party and kept their true identities hidden. Under the fantastical lights, people let loose and enjoyed themselves to the fullest.

No one cared who the other person was for all that mattered was to have fun.

However, Madeline and Jeremy were different as they knew who each other was. They only attended to enjoy the atmosphere and had no plans to converse with strangers, let alone rave on the dance floor.

The music started and Jeremy pulled Madeline to the center of the dance floor.

Madeline used to be clueless, but she was now skilled in basic ballroom dances.

However, Jeremy did not only plan to dance ballroom with Madeline. Holding her in his arms, the two danced freely in the center of the dance floor. At this moment, they only had each other in their eyes.

After a while, Madeline felt hungry, so they both went to grab some food by the bar table.

Married by Mistake Mr. Whitman's Sinner Wife [Sixteenth Child] Chapter 1416

They had only sat down for a while when one masked man after another came over to ask Madeline for a dance.

Despite the fantastical lights and the mask on Jeremy's face, Madeline could easily imagine what expression the man was wearing at the moment.

After merely seeing the frost that was pouring out of the man's icy gaze, Madeline could already guess how pissed the man was. Not even drinking something cold would quell his anger.

Now that she thought about it, it was weird that no women had come to ask Jeremy for a dance despite the man's outstanding appearance.

Madeline reached for the cold drink and was about to tease the pissed man in front of her when a young woman in a witch outfit walked over to Jeremy.

The party was loud, but Madeline could easily hear the woman greeting Jeremy.

“I didn’t think I’d see you here, Jeremy. What a coincidence!”

Jeremy did not realize she was there at all until he heard her speak.

She had a large pumpkin mask on her face and Jeremy could not recognize who she was.

Seeing Jeremy’s confusion, the woman took off her mask coolly.

Bright lights swept past the woman’s face and Madeline was met with an ethereal appearance. The woman had flirty and energetic almond eyes.

A sour tinge of jealousy spread in Madeline’s chest at that moment.

She finally understood how Jeremy must have felt all this while. Perhaps, the jealousy she was feeling at this moment was worse.

It was because she did not recognize any of the men who were asking her for a dance.

Yet this woman managed to recognize Jeremy despite the mask he wore and called his name so intimately.

She was about to ask Jeremy who the woman was when she looked up to catch a look of shock and

desire to escape in Jeremy's expression.

Madeline's heartstrings tightened. 'Why would Jeremy make such an expression?

'Or did I imagine it?'

She wondered internally when she heard Jeremy make a confused sound. "What a coincidence. What are you doing here?"

"I've been too busy with work lately, so I decided to come over and take a vacation. What about you? How are you doing lately?" the woman asked with a smile when she realized Madeline sitting next to Jeremy. "This is..."

"This is my wife. I brought my wife here for a vacation," Jeremy explained as he wrapped an arm around Madeline's shoulder affectionately.

Out of respect, Madeline smiled softly at the woman.

The woman returned her smile with a polite one before her gaze fell back on Jeremy. "The fact that you can bring your wife here means that you should be alright now, then. Keep it up, alright? Don't waste all the hard work I've put on you over those six months."

Those six months?

The woman's words awoke some of Madeline's memories.

Indeed.

How could she have forgotten that the man had been refusing to tell her what happened during those six months he disappeared?

This woman was part of Jeremy's disappearance, then.

Madeline's suspicion grew and she wanted to quickly understand the issue. Just then, the woman excused herself as she had something to tend to.

After the woman left, Madeline gave Jeremy a deep look. "I have something to ask you. Outside."

"..." Jeremy had a bad hunch and went after her without a moment's pause. "Linnie!"

Married by Mistake Mr. Whitman's Sinner Wife [Sixteenth Child] Chapter 1417

Jeremy chased after her. He could already feel that Madeline was not in a great mood.

Looking back at those six months, it was not a memory he wanted to revisit.

Madeline sat on the beach by the hotel and took off her mask. She faced the night breeze head-on as she walked forward with no destination in mind.

"Linnie."

Jeremy's voice sounded from behind and Madeline's footsteps slowly came to a halt.

She did not want to fight with him, but it would not change the fact that she was upset.

Jeremy strolled over to stand in front of Madeline. The sea breeze blew and ruffled her short hair. Under the yellow street lamps, the melancholic look on Madeline's small face was clear for Jeremy to see.

His sharp brows furrowed in apology as he opened his arms to pull Madeline into a tight embrace.

“It’s not what you think, Linnie.” He held her tightly, his slow and gentle voice sounding by her ear. “We’re just friends.”

Madeline stared into the boundless sea quietly and parted her pink lips. “She could recognize you despite the mask you wore. She even called you Jeremy so intimately.”

“Linnie.” Jeremy loosened his grip to cup Madeline’s cheeks with both his hands. His lips were pulled into a small smile in an attempt to recover the atmosphere. “Is Linnie being jealous?”

Madeline remained silent and did not deny it.

Jeremy quirked a corner of his thin lips, and his attractive features were tinted with a few extra shades of glee.

“Linnie looks cute when she’s jealous. It makes me very happy.”

“But I’m not.” Madeleine looked at the mirthful man seriously. “When you finally returned after disappearing for six months, I asked you before where you had been and what you did, Jeremy. Yet you refused to tell me, or you would just brush me off with a few simple sentences. I really want to know and it matters a lot to me.”

The smile on Jeremy’s face vanished at Madeline’s words.

“We’ve been through so much, Jeremy. What more do we have to hide from each other? I love you and I care about everything that involves you. Even if these aren’t good things, I’m willing to listen and accept. As long as you’re alright and as long as we can be together, I’m willing to accept all of it.”

Jeremy’s brows furrowed with regret.

He wrapped his arms around Madeline's shoulders again and pulled her into his chest. This time, he cherished her more and was more protective of her.

"I've made you sad again, Linnie." Jeremy sighed and placed a peck on Madeline's forehead. "You're right, I'm running away from the half a year that I spent without you in my life. That was one of the lowest moments in my life, to the point that I would rather die than suffer the pain I went through."

'I would rather die than suffer the pain I went through.'

Madeline felt her heart tighten immediately at Jeremy's description.

She pushed herself away from the man's embrace lightly and lifted her beautiful eyes that were filled with heartache. "Can you tell me what happened, Jeremy?"

Jeremy knew that Madeline was concerned about him and her heart was aching as well. He did not plan for this woman to worry anymore about him.

He smiled and took Madeline's hand as they walked along the beach.

"After I secretly saw you one last time that day, I decided that I had to leave. I thought that at least with me leaving, I would leave with you thinking I'm still alive. I would take that over me decaying and dying in front of you one day when the poison decides to attack."

At that, Madeline's footsteps came to a sudden halt.

Her chest felt like it had been stabbed by a sharp knife. Despite knowing that Jeremy was recovering, she could not ignore the ache that was slowly spreading from her heart to every part of her body at the thought of Jeremy's mental and physical state back then.

Jeremy stopped walking as well. He could tell what Madeline was thinking from her expression, and he gave a reassuring smile as he comforted her. "As long as I can return to you, Linnie, enduring a worse pain would've been worth it."

Married by Mistake Mr. Whitman's Sinner Wife [Sixteenth Child] Chapter 1418

Madeline's vision slowly blurred as she stared at the peaceful expression on the man's face.

"Do you know why the color of my hair and irises have changed?" Jeremy asked with a smile. "It does have something to do with the slow-acting poison Lana gave me, but there's more to it."

As he spoke, his handsome brows suddenly furrowed.

"It has more to do with how I tried all sorts of unknown medication just so that I could live longer. That woman just now was the doctor who invented the medication that would prevent the spread of the slow-acting poison. I spent half a year struggling in despair as I tried to survive.

"She told me that there was no way to completely dispel the poison from my body and I would only have two more years at most. That was why when I returned to you and the kids, I found myself in a very conflicting position."

Jeremy chuckled despondently.

"I wanted to be with you and reciprocate your love with everything I had, yet I was afraid of being too passionate. I didn't want to end up leaving you with more pain in the end. The same went with Lillian. I was afraid that she would lose her dad right after she finally recognized him, so I decided to just be cold to her and let her hate me. It was only after that I realized I was wrong."

Madelyn felt something piercing her heart when she heard that. "Jeremy..."

"Linnie," Jeremy interrupted, meeting her glistening gaze. "It was a grave mistake. I should never have

been cold to you and our children. Every extra day I have with you should be met with optimism instead.”

The man shot her a gentle smile.

Madeline bit her lip as tears brimmed in her eyes.

“Don’t cry, silly. Aren’t I recovering right now?” Jeremy wiped Madeline’s tears away gently. “Don’t cry anymore, okay?”

Jeremy’s words of comfort did not stop Madeline’s tears from falling.

It hurt her to think of how the man had suffered through the hellish torment over those six months.

Seeing Madeline’s tears flowing harder, Jeremy decided to go all the way and capture her lips in a kiss.

Stunned, Madeline found her sorrow slowly vanishing under Jeremy’s deepening kiss.

The waves crashed against the shore and washed away traces of their intertwined footsteps, but it could never wash away the gentle love they shared...

Standing by the hotel door with a glass of red wine in hand, the woman stared at the romantic scene on the beach a distance away before she curled her red lips and downed the glass.

Her gaze lingered for a few more moments on the man embracing Madeline before she turned back to the terrace. She was no longer interested in watching them kiss.

At the hotel suite.

It was already midnight.

Upon returning from the beach, both Jeremy and Madeline went straight to bed.

Sleep refused to come to him and the man sat up, looking down at the small woman deep in sleep by his side. He lifted his hand to caress Madeline's cheek.

"I'm sorry I lied to you, Linnie."

Jeremy furrowed his brows in frustration before he leaned down to kiss Madeline's lips.

At that moment, his phone vibrated and he was notified of a text message.

Jeremy's instincts told him that it would be bad news.

He reached out to take his phone to read the message and his eyes darkened at its contents.

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After reading the contents of the message, Jeremy looked up to glance at Madeline.

Afraid to disturb her sleep, he lifted the covers lightly and got off the bed.

Just as Jeremy slipped on his slippers to leave, he heard Madeline murmuring his name, "Jeremy."

Jeremy halted and turned around guiltily. When he realized that Madeline was only sleep talking, he let out a sigh of relief. However, guilt bubbled in his chest.

'Linnie.

'I'm sorry.

'I'll come back to you once I deal with this.'

Jeremy promised silently before pulling on his wind blazer. With light steps, he left the suite.

The hotel's terrace was empty and silent now that the party had already come to an end.

Jeremy walked inside to see a woman sitting by the bar.

Under the faint yellow street lamps, the woman could be seen holding a glass of wine and casually sipping on it. Her purple curls were splayed over her smooth shoulders, and her curvy figure looked more alluring under the lights.

Even so, Jeremy was not interested in admiring such a beauty. He made his way to stand behind the woman and spoke calmly, "I never thought we'd meet again, Shirley."

The woman, Shirley, paused mid-drink and placed her glass down before flicking a lock of her dense curls. Then, she turned around completely.

The street lamps shone on her slightly intoxicated face, giving it a more enchanting tint.

In her heels, the woman slowly walked toward Jeremy and reached over to touch his face. However, Jeremy quickly avoided her.

"Don't fool around."

“How is this fooling around?” The woman quirked her lips into an amorous smile. “Did you forget those six months, Jeremy? About the numerous times we ‘fooled around’?”

She reached out to place a hand on Jeremy’s shoulder as she spoke.

Jeremy grabbed the woman’s wrist coldly and pushed her away.

“I see you as my friend, Shirley. But if you don’t want to be friends, I don’t mind being strangers the next time we meet.”

Jeremy stated his ground, his firm voice leaving no space for negotiations.

“I’m grateful that you gave me a chance to return to the woman I love the most, but gratefulness is all there is. I don’t feel anything else for you.”

“But I do. I have feelings for you.” The woman arched her brows bewitchingly. “I’ve been looking for you ever since you left without saying goodbye last time. I can’t forget your warmth, your scent, and your—”

“Shirley,” Jeremy frowned icily as he interrupted. His gaze was determined and scorching. “I already have someone I love. I will not love another but my wife for the rest of my life.”

“Your wife? Ha.” The woman scoffed disdainfully. “Your wife is indeed a gorgeous woman. I’m sure there are plenty of men who fancy her, aren’t there?”

Jeremy’s gaze darkened as displeasure bled from his eyes. “What are you trying to say?”

“Nothing much.” The woman waved her hand while she looked at Jeremy, seemingly intrigued. “You seem to have recovered a lot. It appears that Adam is indeed more skilled than me. He actually came up

with a reagent to dispel the poison. Hmm, I suppose their deaths were not for naught.”

The woman sneered as a thick layer of hatred tinted her eyes. Even so, there was an interesting spark that ignited in her eyes for Jeremy.

“You can always look for me if you need me, Jeremy. I’ll be there the moment you call.”

“Never,” Jeremy replied curly, “ Please wake up.”

Jeremy turned to leave. Just as he was about to walk away, he vaguely caught a familiar face in his line of vision.

“Linnie?”

Jeremy’s heart lurched as the figure turned and ran not too far away. He quickly chased after her.

On the other hand, Jennifer watched gleefully as Jeremy panicked. Then, she turned back to the bar and picked up her glass again.

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She swirled the liquid in her glass and scoffed indignantly.

“There’s no way I’ll lose to you, Adam. Did you think you’d really be able to save Jeremy? Hmph. There’s no way I’ll let you stick your hand in my experiment subject!”

Jeremy ran from the terrace all the way back to the hotel’s entrance but he suddenly lost sight of Madeline.

He was worried that Madeline would get the wrong idea after what she heard from their conversation. Not to mention that it was midnight and Madeline was in a strange setting. Jeremy was scared that Madeline would get lost.

He quickly returned to the suite. Seeing the empty bed, Jeremy felt his heart sink deeper.

He took out his phone to search for Madeline's location. Just as he was about to walk to the entrance, he heard the sound of water running coming from the bathroom.

Jeremy's footsteps came to a sudden halt as he looked up to see Madeline squinting blearily while walking out of the bathroom.

Dressed in a loose sleeping gown, it did not look like she had left the room at all.

"Where did you go, Jeremy? I thought you went to the bathroom," Madeline mumbled as she walked toward the man drowsily. She then leaned into his chest adorably.

Jeremy quickly raised his hands to hug Madeline back as his heart thumped erratically.

"I was a little hungry so I went to eat something at the restaurant." Jeremy could not help but lie.

Madeline did not suspect him and buried her head into Jeremy's broad chest intimately as she spoke coquettishly, "Are you done eating, then? Come back to bed with me. I'm sleepy."

"Alright. I'll come with you." Jeremy then bridal-carried Madeline to the bed. Taking off his jacket, he got in bed as well.

Just as he lay down, Madeline burrowed into his arms. "Goodnight, sweetheart."

Jeremy's heart felt sweet but it was even more so remorseful. He placed a peck on the space between her brows and whispered, "Goodnight, Linnie."

Madeline smiled sweetly and contently before she fell comfortably asleep in Jeremy's warm embrace.

Jeremy did not think too much either. Tightening his arms around her, he held his beloved to sleep...

Morning came.

Madeline woke naturally from her dreams and saw Jeremy still asleep. She pecked his cheek before she got up to get ready. She called for breakfast.

By the time Jeremy woke, the server had arrived with their breakfast.

With the cooling breeze, Madeline and Jeremy enjoyed their breakfast lazily on the open balcony in their suite.

Madeline placed the bacon from her plate onto Jeremy's. "Eat more, or you'll get hungry again later."

Jeremy paused in memory of what happened yesterday and reined his thoughts back before smiling. "I have enough to eat, Linnie. You should eat more though, you're too skinny."

He brought the bacon right to Madeline's mouth to feed her.

Madeline did not turn away and ate what he fed in courteousness.

She gave a crescent-eyed smile, having never thought that a honeymoon could be so sweet.

“Let’s go to Adam’s first when we get back, Jeremy. I want to have him do a full-body check-up on you so we can have an update about the poison in your body. I don’t want anything to happen to you if it suddenly relapses.”

“Don’t worry. I know my body, I’ll be fine,” he promised.

Just then, the doorbell rang.

“Did you call for more room service?” Jeremy asked.

Madeline shook her head. “I only ordered breakfast.”

Jeremy nodded and went toward the door. He had a bad feeling just before he got to the door, so he made sure to peep outside first through the hole in the door.

His hand froze on the doorknob mid-turn the moment he saw the person standing outside.

“Who’s outside, Jeremy? Why are you daydreaming by the door?” Married by Mistake Mr. Whitman’s Sinner Wife [Sixteenth Child] Chapter 1421

Jeremy had not expected Linnie to walk over as well and he secretly glanced at the situation through the peephole from the corner of his eye before replying plainly, “I’m not. I was just about to open the door.”

He smiled softly before opening the door.

When the door was opened, Madeline was met with an alluring young lady standing right outside their room.

The lights may have been dim last night, but Madeline would remember such ethereal features.

Shirley watched Madeline give herself a good look and was reminded of how Madeline found out about her late-night talk with Jeremy. She smiled unconcernedly and was about to speak when Madeline suddenly walked up to her with a friendly smile.

“Hello. I’m Eveline, Jeremy’s wife. Jeremy already told me about how you helped him when he wasn’t doing well during that half a year. Thank you for letting my husband come back to me.”

“...” A confused look flashed through Shirley’s eyes.

She suspected if Madeline was mocking her, but the other’s smile was sincere.

“What’s your name?”

“Shirley,” the woman spoke as she gave a generous smile. “You’re too kind, Mrs. Whitman. I’m just a doctor. It’s my duty to help the injured. I’m glad as well to see that my patient’s situation is taking a turn for the better.”

She looked at Jeremy who remained silent as she spoke. “I’m glad I got to meet you here, Jeremy. I just came to say goodbye before I got ready to leave. Perhaps our paths will cross again in Glendale.”

A cold glint flashed through Jeremy’s eyes at her suggestion.

“Are you from Glendale as well, Miss Shirley?” Madeline was surprised.

Shirley nodded. “I am. My parents passed long ago, but I still have family there.”

She then chuckled bitterly and disappointedly. “I don’t have many friends outside of work, Mrs. Whitman. I’m wondering if you’d like to be my friend?”

Jeremy wanted to decline her offer, but he heard Madeline agree.

“Of course. I’d love to be your friend. You’ve helped Jeremy so much.”

“That’s great, then.” The woman’s expression was filled with glee. “If you’ll excuse me, Mrs. Whitman, Jeremy, I won’t bother you two anymore then. I wish you a nice vacation here.”

“Thank you. Goodbye.” Madeline bade and waved the woman farewell.

“Bye,” Jeremy spoke sharply and turned to take Madeline’s hand to close the door without even waiting for the woman to turn around.

Hearing the door close, the woman paused her footsteps and turned to glance back.

She could not help but doubt Madeline’s reaction. ‘Didn’t she see everything last night? So why is she acting like she doesn’t know anything?’

Despite being baffled, she did not think deeper into it. For the rejection she had caught in Jeremy's eyes was enough of a reward.

In the suite.

Madeline began to pack their luggage after breakfast for today was their last day here.

She turned around to see the man dazed. Madeline was both curious and concerned. "What are you thinking about, Jeremy? Are you feeling unwell?"

Jeremy quickly snapped out of his thoughts and smiled as he walked toward Madeline. "I'm alright. I was just thinking about how I can conclude the rest of our trip more happily and perfectly."

"As long as it's with you, I'm happy with wherever and whatever." Madeline gave the man a crescent-eyed smile as she took his hand. "Let's go. To where we planned today."

"I'm so glad I have you, Linnie." Jeremy's eyes were gentle, and he could not help but hug Madeline and kiss her. Holding hands, they left the room and took the elevator down.

Passing through the lobby, the receptionist called Madeline and Jeremy back.

"Are you Mr. and Mrs. Whitman from room 1818?"

Madeline and Jeremy stopped walking and looked over as a server approached Madeline with a prettily wrapped box.

"A woman told us to hand this gift to you, Mrs. Whitman."

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"For me?" Madeline took the gift confusedly and realized that there was a note on it.

On the note wrote: [I was in a rush and didn't have time to find you a better meeting gift. I hope you'll like this.] It was signed by Shirley.

Was this a meeting gift from Shirley?

Madeline was surprised. "Do you have Shirley's contact information, Jeremy? I'd like to thank her."

"No," Jeremy replied curtly, "Let's go, Linnie. We can leave this at the front desk."

"Wouldn't it be impolite to just do that when someone has given me a gift?" Madeline gave it some thought and finally decided to bring it back to the room.

Jeremy did not say much and returned to the room with Madeline.

On the way back, Madeline opened the box to find an aromatherapy kit inside.

The bottle's shape was unusual as it was in the shape of a snake.

Madeline herself was sensitive to scents and coupled with her profession as a perfumer, she gave it an intrigued sniff.

However, except for a few usual aromatzers, she noticed a few scents that she had never smelled before.

“Let’s put it down and go, Linnie, lest we mess up our itinerary for the day.” Jeremy sounded like he was reminding Madeline of the time when in truth, he hated the gift.

Shirley’s words last night still echoed in his ears, but he could not tell Madeline that.

Madeline did not delay anymore and placed the aromatherapy kit on the cupboard by the entrance before she left with Jeremy again.

Today’s itinerary was simple and would be over in the afternoon, so Madeline decided that she would buy souvenirs today.

She video called Jackson so that the boy could choose what he wanted for himself.

Jeremy followed next to Madeline. Seeing Lillian quietly smiling through the camera, guilt weighed heavier in his heart.

‘It’s all Daddy’s fault, Lillian.

‘Daddy was too stupid then.’

Jeremy apologized internally, planning to spend time with the child when he returned so that she could break through her psychological obstacles and revert to the bright child she used to be.

“Lily wants this, Jeremy. Quick, go get it.”

Jeremy snapped back to reality when he heard Madeline calling him and took the small clay dinosaur on the highest shelf.

He smiled warmly at the camera. "Does Lily want this little dinosaur?"

Lillian nodded, her smile obedient and adorable.

"Be good and wait a little longer, okay? Mommy and Daddy will be back with your little dinosaur in two days."

Lillian's smile brightened further, shining through the gloomy clouds that had cast a shadow over Jeremy's heart.

It was almost dusk when they returned to the hotel.

Madeline decided to take a shower before she went for dinner with Jeremy and walked into the bathroom.

Seeing that Madeline had gone to take a shower, he decided to keep the local specialties and souvenirs that they bought today away. As he packed the things, he suddenly felt that something was wrong.

Madeline had just taken her clothes off and readied herself for a bath when she suddenly heard a heavy bang. She looked into the room confusedly. "What happened, Jeremy? Did something fall?"

She asked, but there was no reply. "Jeremy?"

Finding it weird, Madeline wrapped the bathrobe around herself and quickly ran out.

“Jeremy!”

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Madeline ran out of the bathroom and saw Jeremy lying on the floor next to the bed.

“Jeremy!”

She frantically ran over and knelt by the man. The man’s sharp brows were knitted as if he was enduring severe agony. Madeline’s heart raced in panic.

“What happened, Jeremy? Is the poison acting up again?”

Madeline pulled Jeremy by his shoulders so that he could lean against her chest.

She wanted to carry him to the bed if she could but she was not strong enough.

“What happened? Adam himself said that the lapse between each attack would become longer and longer. Why is this happening now?”

Madeline was anxious as her tears began to fall without restraint, falling onto Jeremy’s face.

“Don’t worry, Linnie,” Jeremy spoke through the pain and reached out to caress Madeline’s cheek. “I’m already used to the pain. It won’t be for very long. I’ll be fine soon.”

He comforted her as his seductive lips were pulled into a small smile to placate her worry.

However, the more he was considerate of her emotions, the more Madeline's heart ached.

"Adam. I'll call Adam. He'll know what to do!" Madeline scrambled for her phone and immediately dialed for the man.

However, the phone rang but no one answered the call.

Madeline waited nervously for Adam to pick up the phone and just as it was about to finish ringing, the call was connected.

The person who picked up was a woman.

Madeline could tell that it was the woman who looked just like Cathy.

"Miss Young, I'm looking for Adam. It's an emergency, so could you pass the phone to him? Please! And quickly too!"

Amy heard the fright in Madeline's tone and immediately replied, "Take a deep breath. I'll pass the phone to Adam straight away."

"Thank you!"

Madeline thanked her. One of her hands was holding onto the phone while the other gripped Jeremy's shoulder so that the man could lean against her leg.

Seeing the man's complexion turning pale from the pain, Madeline felt herself about to crack from the anxiousness.

“This is Adam. What happened?”

Adam’s voice sounded from the other end. It had not even been 20 seconds yet Madeline felt like it took forever.

“Jeremy is suddenly in pain, Adam! It’s the same symptoms as when the poison acts up. We’re not in Glendale now and it’ll take at least a few hours on the plane if we even get there. What can I do now? Is there anything I can do to lessen the pain?”

Madeline did her best to suppress her haywire emotions as she relayed the situation, but the tremble in her voice revealed her unease.

“Didn’t he just suffer a bout not too long ago? Why did it relapse again?” Adam was also curious, but now was not the time to investigate its cause. “Calm down for a bit, Eveline. There’s nothing much you can do now but feed him two pills of pain medication. If you can, I’d like you to get some ice. Get as much as you can. The ice will help subdue the pain.”

Adam then ended it with a word of comfort. “This isn’t the first time the poison is acting up and Jeremy should know of his own situation. You don’t need to be too worried. I promise you that he’ll be alright. This won’t put him in life-threatening danger.”

“Thank you!” Madeline thanked the man and looked down at Jeremy who had a thin layer of sweat on his forehead. “I’ll go look for ice, Jeremy. Just hold on for a little longer,” she said before getting up and rushing to the door.

She did not have the time to call for room service, so she went directly to the front desk and told them that she needed ice for analgesia.

The hotel staff understood and promised to send ice to their room immediately.

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Madeline quickly took the elevator upstairs. Just as she stepped out, she saw a familiar figure in the

corridor.

“Shirley?” Madeline called out hesitantly.

The woman walking a small distance away halted her steps and turned around. “It’s me, Mrs. Whitman,” Shirley smiled and explained, “I left something in the room so I came back to take it.”

Madeline then ran toward Shirley. The woman was no different than a lifesaver to her at that moment.

“The poison in Jeremy’s body has suddenly relapsed, Shirley. You treated him once before, right? So that means you can help him again! Please, he’s in a lot of pain!”

At that, Shirley’s expression morphed into one of worry. “Where’s Jeremy now?”

“In the room!”

“Bring me there now!” Shirley quickly followed after Madeline.

Entering the room, Madeline saw that Jeremy had already managed to sit up and was leaning against the bed. She immediately ran toward him. “You’ll be alright, Jeremy. Shirley coincidentally came back to the hotel to get something. She’ll definitely be able to help you!”

Hearing that, Jeremy’s peach blossom eyes half-squinted as he saw Shirley walking toward him. He twisted his body away in disdain.

Shirley saw Jeremy’s distaste but pretended not to. With an expression of concern, she squatted by Jeremy’s side and took the opportunity to put an arm on his shoulder. “Don’t worry, Jeremy. I’ll stop the suffering.”

“No thanks, I’ll be fine soon. I wouldn’t want to trouble you.” Jeremy declined politely. He would rather suffer than come in contact with this woman with ulterior motives.

He wanted to make Madeline understand, but he knew it was difficult to explain it to her now.

“My luggage is still downstairs in the lobby, Mrs. Whitman. The medication and the reagents that I need should be in my luggage. Could I bother you to help me bring them up?” Shirley requested.

Madeline immediately agreed. “I’ll go get them right now!”

She glanced at Jeremy again and immediately ran out without wasting another second.

“Linnie...” Jeremy wanted to call Madeline back but he did not have the strength.

Shirley curled her lips into a smile as she watched Jeremy suffer while enduring the pain. “With your intellect, you should already have guessed it, Jeremy. The perfume I got for your wife isn’t just any normal perfume.”

Jeremy raised his charming eyes that were still filled with killing intent. “What do you want, Shirley?”

“You should know what I want.” Shirley smiled intriguingly before she bent over to lean in front of him. “Relax, how could I possibly let anything happen to you?”

Shirley smiled as she touched Jeremy’s face amorously.

Jeremy avoided her hands in infuriation. “What’s your goal, Shirley?”

Shirley took her hand back and smiled. “Stop guessing what my goal is. Shouldn’t you worry more about

your wife instead? She's really worried about you. I'm sure you wouldn't want her to worry so much, right?"

Jeremy's brows knitted even tighter at the words.

He could not bear to see Madeline frantic and terrified.

"You have no choice, Jeremy. You can only listen to me." Shirley quirked her lips proudly as she took out a syringe from her purse that she had prepared earlier. Then, she looked up and glanced at the bathroom...

Madeline went to the lobby and brought Shirley's luggage up.

However, when she returned to the room, neither Shirley nor Jeremy were where she left them.

She was confused when she suddenly saw a hotel staff walking over from the bathroom. Madeline was about to ask him when she heard strange sounds coming from the bathroom...

Married by Mistake Mr. Whitman's Sinner Wife [Sixteenth Child] Chapter 1425

Madeline was stunned for a moment as she glanced at the bathroom where the glass door was tightly shut.

"It'll be over soon, Jeremy. Just hold on a little longer.

"You can unleash the pain just like you used to before.

"I'm your doctor but I'm also your friend. I can help you, ah..."

Madeline heard Shirley's voice sound non-stop from the bathroom until her last amorous whisper. Then, the bathroom turned silent.

The staff glanced at the bathroom weirdly before turning to Madeline to speak.

"I've already brought all the ice to the bathroom, Mrs. Whitman. I'll be leaving then if there isn't anything else you need."

Madeline snapped back to reality. "Thank you."

"You're welcome." The staff gave a small smile and left.

Madeline dragged Shirley's luggage over to the bathroom and reached out to open the door only to realize that the glass door was locked from the inside.

"I brought your luggage over, Shirley. How's Jeremy doing?" Madeline asked while facing the bathroom door but received no reply.

"Shirley? Shirley? Jeremy! Jeremy!" Madeline was growing frantic. She could not bear radio silence at such a time.

Knock, knock, knock. Madeline raised her hand to knock on the glass door repetitively, her knuckles starting to grow red before she knew it.

"Jeremy!" Madeline was getting distraught and could no longer keep calm.

She was about to knock down the bathroom door when it finally opened.

Shirley was drenched and her clothes looked disheveled when she appeared in Madeline's line of sight.

Madeline was taken aback, but her heart was more interested in how Jeremy was doing. "Where's Jeremy, Shirley? How is he?"

"Don't worry, Mrs. Whitman. I won't let anything happen to Jeremy." Shirley smiled softly. "I need to get something from my luggage. You can go in and take a look at him. I'm sure he'll feel much better with you by his side."

Madeline immediately strolled into the bathroom. Walking in, she saw Jeremy's sharp brows furrowed and his eyes closed as he soaked in the large round bathtub. The shower above his head continued to spray water onto him as dense water droplets fell over his entire body.

Madeline had no idea when Jeremy took his top off, but the setting sun was splashed over his naked upper half from the floor-to-ceiling windows. His flawless skin was glowing white.

Madeline was not in the mindset to focus on such detail now. She quickly ran toward Jeremy. "How are you feeling, Jeremy?"

She reached out to cup the man's fair cheek only to be shocked by how cold it was upon contact.

"Jeremy."

Madeline leaned over to place her cheek against his, trying to warm him up.

However, Jeremy's entire body was cold as if he was some sort of cold-blooded animal. There was not an ounce of warmth in the man's skin.

The thought that Jeremy had gone through such a situation so many times without her knowing brought heat to Madeline's eyes.

Adam said that he was not the person who invented the slow-acting poison. Rather, he was tasked to invent its antidote.

Lana was the one who gave Jeremy the poison back then and Adam indeed had connections with her. However, now that she looked back on things, perhaps that was never the case at all.

Madeline grew more confused the more she tried to think about it. She came up with no leads regarding the poison.

All she wanted now was for Jeremy to get better so that the same situation would not happen again.

“Jeremy...”

Madeline leaned against the man helplessly as her heart ached for him. Just then, she felt a familiar palm gently touching the side of her face.

Her misty eyes shot open and were met with Jeremy’s gentle peach blossom eyes.

“Jeremy.”

“I’m sorry I made you worry, Linnie. I’m alright.”

His deep baritone voice drifted into her ears, but the man’s tone sounded especially weak.

“Are you really alright?” Madeline was still worried. “Why is your body temperature so low? It didn’t use to be like this.”

Married by Mistake Mr. Whitman’s Sinner Wife [Sixteenth Child] Chapter 1426

She touched his arm with eyes full of worry as the man's body temperature had not increased at all.

"His body temperature is low because he's soaking in ice." Shirley's voice sounded from behind.

Madeline turned her head and saw Shirley slowly walking over with a syringe in her hand.

"Could you wait outside, Mrs. Whitman? I don't really like having someone watching over my shoulder when I'm treating my patients."

Madeline understood and got up, only to have Jeremy hold her hand.

"Don't go, Linnie."

"Be good, Jeremy. Let Shirley give you that injection and you'll be alright, okay?" Madeline hushed Jeremy as if he was a child before she let go of her hand.

"Thank you, Shirley."

"You're welcome. It's my pleasure to help those in need." Shirley gave a small smile.

Madeline did not think too much of it and went out.

She gave Jeremy one last glance before she closed the door. She saw that the man's half-squinted peach blossom eyes were tinted red.

He was looking at her delicately.

Madeline suddenly had the urge to return to Jeremy's side, but Shirley suddenly turned to look at her as if checking if Madeline had left the bathroom or not.

It was then that Madeline took in Shirley's figure. Her damp curls had been pulled into a low ponytail while her drenched dress stuck to her flesh and accentuated her curves.

Madeline closed the glass door and could not help but feel uneasy.

Jeremy was soaking topless in the bathtub while Shirley looked like that...

'No, no, no.

'Don't take this the wrong way, Eveline Montgomery.

'She's saving your husband's life.

'She's a doctor.

'She even gave you a meeting gift. She wants to be your friend.'

Madeline continued to persuade herself while she paced outside the bathroom and waited...

In the bathroom.

Shirley walked toward the bathtub with the syringe in hand.

Jeremy did not even glance at her. Ignoring the searing pain that his body was suffering from, he took a

towel from the rack and covered it over himself.

“Get out.” He shoed her away coldly. He would much rather soak in this bone-prickling cold than come in contact with this woman again.

“I’m here to help you, Jeremy. You don’t want your wife to worry, right?” Shirley brought up Madeline again. “She’s right outside waiting for news of your recovery. She’s going to suffer more than you if your pain won’t subside.”

She squatted down and reached out to Jeremy with the syringe.

Frost glinted sharply in Jeremy’s eyes. “Don’t touch me.”

Shirley ignored him and continued to lean over as she spoke amorously, “It’s not like this is the first time I’m touching you, Jeremy. What do you think will happen if your wife knows of what happened between us during that half a year...”

Shirley was interrupted by Jeremy whose hand suddenly wrapped around her throat.

“I don’t need you to remind me of what happened, but if you dare to continue disturbing Linnie while thinking that I’ll go easy on you because of that slightest bit of gratitude I have for you, then you can dream on!” Jeremy warned coldly before he pushed Shirley away unfeelingly.

“Cough, cough.” Shirley coughed twice and squinted her almond eyes.

Staring at Jeremy who oozed with frost, Shirley leaned forward undeterred and stabbed the needle into his arm before he realized.

Madeline was waiting outside the bathroom door when she suddenly heard a crash as if something had fallen.

It was followed by Shirley's frantic voice. "Calm down, Jeremy!"

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"Jeremy!"

Madeline could not find it in her to continue waiting by the door at those comments. She opened the glass door and ran into the bathroom.

What met her was the sight of Jeremy oozing with anger and iciness while Shirley had fallen next to the bathtub.

Madeline had no idea what happened. Her priority was knowing how Jeremy was doing, but out of politeness, she moved to help Shirley up first.

She had just reached out when she felt Jeremy grabbing her arm tightly. The man was strong and Madeline felt a twinge of pain at his firm grip.

"Don't touch her."

Jeremy spat out the four words out coldly, his tone exceptionally chilling.

"Jeremy?" Madeline looked at the man's sharp gaze. "Are you okay, Jeremy? What happened? Is Shirley—"

"Don't worry, Mrs. Whitman. I'm alright." Shirley grabbed the side of the tub as she slowly sat up. She glanced at Jeremy's cold gaze from the corner of her eyes before she turned to smile at Madeline.

“Jeremy doesn’t want you to touch me because I accidentally broke the needle, Mrs. Whitman. It would be bad if you get hurt due to my unprofessional slip-up.”

Madeline then saw the small broken needle that was sticking out of Shirley’s arm.

Shirley calmly pulled the needle out the next minute without even a crease in her brows.

“Jeremy’s doing much better already. He’ll be fine after a few more moments in the ice as the pain will subside.”

“Thank you, Shirley.” Madeline thanked her and turned back to Jeremy. Taking his slowly warming hand, her expression was still one of worry. “Are you feeling better, Jeremy?”

“Yeah. I’m feeling much better already, so don’t worry so much, okay?” Jeremy raised his hand to wrap them lightly around Madeline’s shoulders. “Come stay with me for a bit, Linnie.”

“Okay, I’ll stay with you.” Madeline leaned over and held Jeremy’s hand tighter.

Shirley’s eyes showed indignance at the scene but she had no choice but to leave resentfully.

Jeremy raised his brow to glance at Shirley’s turning figure, his eyebrows then furrowing together.

He looked at the woman who was worried about him as guilt and remorse bubbled within him.

‘I’m sorry that I can’t be frank with you, Linnie. I’m sorry I can’t tell you what happened during that half a year I was away from you.

‘I’m sorry...’

In the bedroom.

Shirley grabbed a dry towel and began to pat the water droplets on her face dry.

She was still shaking from the aftershock when she remembered how Jeremy evaded the needle and instead poked it into her.

Her only relief was that Jeremy would not tell Madeline the truth and Madeline would continue to think that she was helping Jeremy.

As far as she was concerned, that worked in her favor.

At that train of thought, Shirley's smile returned to her face.

She glanced at the bathroom. Knowing that neither Madeline nor Jeremy would come out so quickly, she began to look around the room to her heart's content.

Seeing the luggage in the room, she could guess that Jeremy and Madeline were about to leave.

"Returning to Glendale? It looks like it won't be long before our fight." Shirley smiled deeply and turned to see a phone on the bed. From the color of its case, Shirley deduced that it was Madeline's.

Shirley walked over to take the phone when it suddenly rang.

Seeing the name on the screen, Shirley smiled and picked it up without hesitation.

"Is Jeremy doing better?" From the other end of the phone, Adam asked about Jeremy's condition.

Adam was waiting for Madeline's reply when he suddenly heard a woman sneering instead.

"He's dying soon," Shirley replied maliciously.

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Adam was stunned for a moment. "What? What are you saying? Who are you? Where's Eveline?"

"Don't you recognize me anymore? You're just like your parents, Adam. Heartless and cruel," Shirley mocked coldly.

Adam fell silent for a few seconds before he finally reacted.

"It's you." His mind was supplied with a certain identity.

He was dumbfounded by the identity and slightly surprised.

"Yeah, it's me," Shirley replied Adam without hesitation, "We'll be meeting very soon, Adam. Although I don't think you'll be looking forward to it."

Adam fell silent again and ignored Shirley's words. He changed the subject, saying, "Why did you pick up the phone? Where's Eveline? How is Jeremy doing?"

Shirley scoffed. "Didn't I tell you? He's dying soon and his wife is next to him, heartbroken."

"Bullsh*t! He can't possibly be in any life-threatening danger!" It was clear from Adam's tone that he was panicking. "I won't let you fool around like this!"

Adam quickly hung up the phone with that.

Shirley's smile deepened as she stared at the slowly dimming screen.

"Who are you to stop me from fooling around, Adam? On behalf of the two of them who died so many years ago? Hmph."

She scoffed disdainfully and threw the phone back on the bed before picking up her own suitcase. Leaving the room as if she owned the place, she grabbed the bottle of aromatherapy kit by the cupboard as she passed by the entrance as well.

In the bathroom.

Madeline stayed with Jeremy for a long time until the sky outside had slowly turned dark. She felt his body temperature slowly returning to usual.

"It doesn't hurt anymore, Linnie." Jeremy grabbed Madeline's hand. He could tell how tired and unsettled she felt.

"Let's go home, Jeremy." Madeline's watery eyes were filled with concern. "I'm really scared that something will happen to you. We have another vacation again as long as you're alright."

Jeremy knew that he could not outargue Madeline, so he opted to nod obediently instead.

"Okay. Let's go home."

"Yeah." Madeline hugged Jeremy's neck and stuck her face in his face. "All is well as long as you're well."

Jeremy took a deep breath. It was a life worth living to have Madeline love and care so much for him.

Having decided, Madeline then booked a flight back to Glendale that very night.

It was midnight when the two returned, and they decided to go to the new house so as to not disturb their family back at the manor.

Although the trip had been cut short, Madeline felt much more relieved now that they had returned home. It was because Madeline would not need to panic about having no one to rely on if anything were to happen to Jeremy.

Madeline contacted Adam the first thing in the morning when she woke up the following day.

Adam's heart settled knowing that Madeline and Jeremy had returned to Glendale.

Madeline and Jeremy's phones were non-contactable last night and he thought that something had happened to them. In truth, they had merely taken a flight back to Glendale and their phones had run out of battery.

Adam sent Madeline an address and had them go over to his house.

Madeline waited for Jeremy to wake and made the man breakfast before they left for Adam's home.

The address led them to a small villa in the countryside. The house was not large, but its surroundings were quiet and elegant.

Madeline was met with a refreshing scent of flowers upon arriving at the villa's entrance.

She thought about Amy. From her memory, the woman seemed to love plants—especially yellow roses.

Seeing that Madeline and Jeremy had arrived, Adam got out to meet them.

“Come in,” he invited courteously. Just as he spoke, another car then pulled to a stop in front of him.

The car door opened and the person who got down from it rendered Adam stunned.

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Madeline was surprised as well to see the person coming down from the car. “Shirley, why are you here as well?”

Shirley let out a friendly smile that looked almost generous. “Didn’t I say before that I’m coming back home? This is my home.”

Madeline pointed at the small villa ahead. “This is your house?”

“Yup, this is my house.” Shirley nodded confidently. Then, she walked toward Adam who was looking all serious. “Adam, your sister is back home. Why aren’t you looking happy at all?”

That piece of information made Madeline flabbergasted. “Shirley, you’re Adam’s sister?”

“That’s right, I’m Adam’s sister. I’m his biological sister with the same father and mother.” Shirley raised her hand and gently tapped on Adam’s shoulder. She let out a mystifying smile. “Adam, why don’t you introduce your friends to me?”

Adam heard the comment and let out a smile that was not obvious. “There’s no need for me to introduce you since you guys already seem to know each other.” He took two steps ahead as if he was intentionally trying to avoid Shirley. “Let’s head in and talk.”

Shirley smirked and smiled brightly. "I haven't been home for so many years. I guess I should really admire this house that used to accompany me growing up."

As she was saying, she spun around and entered the house first.

Adam invited Madeline and Jeremy in, "Please enter."

Madeline nodded and held onto Jeremy's hand. She looked at the man who was deep in thought and felt sorry for him. "Jeremy, it turns out that Shirley is Adam's sister. They're both doctors who even saved your life before. Are there so many coincidences in this world?"

Listening to Madeline sighing made Jeremy grasp her fingers tightly. He let out a gentle smile, saying, "We should go in too."

He held onto Madeline's hand and made his move. His pair of cold and deep eyes were staring at Shirley's back.

'I'm afraid this is no coincidence but a scheme planned by someone a long time ago.'

However, he did not blurt out his thoughts and kept them to himself. He held onto Madeline's hand and entered the house.

Shirley was occupied with herself upon entering the house, admiring every corner of the house as if in search of the memories from when she was younger.

Madeline scanned the surroundings as well and noticed that no one aside from Adam and Shirley was in the house.

Adam observed Madeline's expression and asked with a faint smile "Are you looking for Amy?"

“Yeah, is she not in?” Madeline asked. Her face was wearing a remorseful expression. “She really looks like someone who used to be a friend of mine. Whenever I see your fiancée, I’ll think of that friend.”

“I think you must’ve met this friend Linnie mentioned,” Jeremy added to Madeline’s speech and looked at Adam who seemed to be quiet. “Back when I was at F Country, I once asked Cathy to look for you. You should remember her.”

“Yeah, I have a deep impression of her.” Adam calmly matched his eyes to Jeremy’s pair of deep eyes that were filled with inquiries. “Back then when I met that lady named Cathy, I was extremely shocked because she really looked like Amy, but I only met her once. Besides, she and Amy were two completely different people.”

“Amy? Who is this Amy?” Shirley entered the scene. She saw the pile of kid’s toys on the sofa in the hall. “Adam, are you married?”

Adam glanced at Shirley. “Amy is my fiancée. We already have two kids.”

“You even have two kids already? Cheeky fella.” Shirley smiled. “Then, where’s my sister-in-law? When can I meet her?”

“She brought the kids out,” Adam just casually answered. He raised his eyes and looked at Jeremy. “Jeremy, come with me. I’ll examine you.”

“Since Adam needs to examine Jeremy, then can you accompany me to have a chat, Mrs. Whitman?” Shirley walked toward Madeline.

However, in the next second, Jeremy suddenly stretched out his hand and grabbed Madeline’s. “Linnie, come accompany me. Without you by my side, I don’t feel safe.”

Madeline, feeling embarrassed, smiled gently at Shirley. "I need to accompany my husband. Have a seat for a moment, Shirley."

"Okay." Shirley smiled generously as if nothing mattered to her.

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Adam did not attend to Shirley either as he led both Madeline and Jeremy into his room where he worked.

The room was spacious, and the interior was decorated in a way that was way more superior to those seen in the hospital. There was various equipment that seemed rather advanced placed beside.

Madeline stood aside and watched Adam conducting various examinations on Jeremy.

Finally, Adam took a blood sample from Jeremy and immediately placed it on a piece of equipment to conduct the analysis.

Madeline was feeling perturbed during the waiting process.

However, she just noticed that the color of Jeremy's blood sample was not as dark as it used to be. That was a good sign.

Approximately ten minutes later, the result was out.

"Adam, is everything alright for Jeremy?" Madeline asked.

"Don't be too worried, Linnie. My condition will definitely be better than before." Jeremy held onto Madeline's hand and comforted her.

“If you’re really much better, then why did your condition deteriorate suddenly on that day?” Madeline was still feeling worried and anxious.

Adam did not speak a word. He scanned through the analysis report twice. His eyes were gleaming but soon faded.

“Things are looking quite good. There’s nothing wrong,” said Adam as he looked at Madeline, “Don’t worry too much. He’ll slowly recover.”

Hearing it made Madeline let out a breath of relief. “Thanks, Adam.”

Adam let out a faint smile. He spun around and gave Madeline a reagent. “Take this for standby. Next time if his condition deteriorates, just give him a jab.”

“Thanks.” Madeline received the reagent, and things started feeling more realistic.

Even though Madeline never suspected anything, Jeremy had noticed that Adam’s eyes were glittering weirdly.

He attempted to find an excuse to make Madeline leave the scene so that he could ask Adam face to face. However, coincidentally, he received a call from Karen. Karen was asking Madeline and Jeremy to go over to the hospital.

Jeremy did not delay a single second, worried that something might have happened to Eloise. He brought Madeline to leave the scene.

Seeing them driving their car and departing, Adam went back into the house but Shirley was nowhere to be seen.

Just when he was guessing where Shirley had gone to, he suddenly heard a commotion coming from the second floor.

He thought perhaps Shirley had entered one of the rooms. Adam dashed up to the second floor. Just when he reached the second floor, he noticed the door of the room where his parents used to stay was left open and the sound of items being thrown was heard coming from inside.

Adam's expression changed for the worst as he dashed into the room. As soon as he entered, he saw Shirley holding onto a photo frame on the shelf above the bed. She was about to discard it on the floor.

"Stop it!" Adam halted her.

Shirley came to a halt when she heard it, but she just let out a cold smile and threw the photo frame hard on the floor.

Crash! The glass photo frame broke into pieces.

"Shirley Jones!" Adam roared at Shirley. He went forth, exasperated and anxious as he picked up the pieces of the shattered photo frame. However, the old photo frame already had a crack on it.

"Why? Feeling sorry for the photo? Feeling sorry for the two dead people?" Shirley snorted.

Adam got up on his feet and glared. "How can you say that? These are your biological parents! You're getting ridiculous!" He was mad and questioned, "Did you happen to do something to Jeremy again? His condition had obviously improved but why did the poison suddenly take a change for the worse? What the hell did you do?!"

Shirley curled her red lips disdainfully, raising her almond eyes and matching up to Adam's infuriated ones. Then, she took out an item from her purse, not in a rush at all. "Look properly, what is this? Now, do you still need to ask what I did to him?"

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