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Chapter 481 Not the Real Daughter

"And have you found any tutors for Tyler?" Toby massaged his temples, looking exhausted.

Tom answered, "Yes, and they're the cream of the crop in their fields. Once Master Tyler's tournament is done, they can start their work."

Toby nodded. "Good. You may leave."

"Yes." Tom nodded and left the office.

Toby unlocked his phone and looked at Sonia's picture, which he had set as his wallpaper. Then, he touched her face with his thumb. "This is as far as I can take you," he mumbled.

At the same time, Sonia had arrived at Charles' place after getting a gift for Grace.

Grace came out to welcome her when she heard the hum of the engine outside. "You're finally here, Sonia."

"We meet again, Grace." Sonia looked at her and hugged her happily.

After a while, Grace let go of Sonia and held her face with both hands. "Let me take a look." She looked closely at Sonia. "It hasn't even been too long since we last met. Did you get thinner again? And you look exhausted. Did you not sleep well?"

Sonia's heart skipped a beat, but she nodded. "Yeah. I've been busy." She wouldn't tell Grace about what she had gone through, or Grace might collapse in shock.

Grace felt sad to hear that Sonia was overworking herself, and she held Sonia's hand tightly. "I know you're busy, but you still have to rest. Don't overwork yourself. You're still young, and you have a long road ahead of you."

"I know. Thanks for your concern, Grace." Sonia was touched that Grace cared so much for her, and she smiled.

Then, Charles went to the trunk and took out the clothes Sonia bought for Grace. "Don't just stand there. Get in."

"Oh my. I almost forgot." Grace smacked her forehead lightly. "I was just too happy to see Sonia and didn't notice that we were still standing outside. Come. Let's go in."

She took Sonia and went into the villa, while Charles followed behind, holding the gifts.

When they came to the living room, Sonia told Charles to cut up some fruits and brew some tea after he gave her the gifts.

The ladies sat on the couch and unwrapped the presents. A pair of simple and elegant earrings slept in the box. It was perfect for women around Grace's age, and Grace loved it the moment she saw it. "It's so beautiful. Thank you, Sonia." Her eyes lit up.

"I'm glad you like it." She smiled.

"Of course I do." She nodded happily. "I love everything you give me. Here, put it on for me."

"Sure," Sonia agreed. She stood up and took Grace's earrings off before replacing them with the ones she bought.

Once Grace wore the new earrings, she shook her head to feel how comfy the new earrings were, then she looked at Sonia. "How do I look, Sonia?"

"Beautiful. You're beautiful no matter what you wear, Grace," she praised.

Delighted, Grace touched the earrings. "You're so sweet. My husband and the boy never praise me this way. They'd be really stupid and say all earrings are the same. So unromantic."

Sonia was about to say something, but Charles beat her to it. "Hey, that's a lie, mom. I am not that kind of guy. You always ask me if you look nice in your jewelry, and I praise you everytime. Dad's the one who said the other thing." He came over and put the fruit platter in front of Sonia. "Have some fruits, babe."

"Sure. Thank you." Sonia nodded and took a cherry.

Grace put her original earrings in the earring box Sonia bought, then she rolled her eyes. "I did not. You might have praised me, but you say the same thing every time. That's not so different from what your father tells me every time."

"Um..." Charles' eyelids twitched, and he had no good comebacks. You can never win against experience. She hits me where it hurts the most. Charles never did say that all earrings were the same, but since he never changed his praise, it was the same thing anyway. He and his father were just trying to avoid the conversation.

Sonia chuckled with delight after Charles got shut down by his mother.

Charles laughed as well when Sonia laughed.

Grace noticed the change in him. She shook her head imperceptibly and sighed in silence. He's still the same kid. Still scared of making a confession. Sheesh. Just tell her you like her if you really do. Don't be afraid of rejection, and don't be scared that you'll never be friends anymore. Just convey your feelings. You might succeed, right?

However, Charles never took her advice to heart. Maybe he did, but he was too much of a scaredy cat to act on it. All he could do was love Sonia in silence. Because of that, Sonia never knew Charles loved her. He brought this on himself. Just go for it and be brave for love. Don't just stand there and do nothing. You can't expect the lady to make the first move.

The more she thought about it, the more annoyed she was at Charles. In the end, Grace shot him a glare. "Don't just stand there. Tell the cook to prepare dinner right now, and call your father. Tell him to come back home on time for dinner."

"Huh?" Charles was surprised.

"Don't 'huh' me. Go!" Grace urged him impatiently.

"Oh, okay," Charles said. "Right away." He got up and went to the kitchen again. At the same time, he thought, Did I do something wrong? Why did she look at me like I was a piece of worthless trash?

After he left, only Grace and Sonia were left in the living room. Sonia put her glass down and asked, "Grace, you told Charles that you wanted to see me when I have time because you have something to tell me. What is it?"

After Sonia asked that, Grace's smile slowly faded away, and it was replaced by a somber look.

When Sonia saw that, her heart skipped a beat. "What is it, Grace?"

Grace shook her head and smiled again. "Nothing. I was just thinking if it's the right time to tell you this."

"Tell me what?" Sonia was curious.

Grace said nothing, but she bent over to take out a small box from the drawer of the coffee table, then handed it to Sonia. "Your mother told me to keep this for her before she passed. She wanted you to have it once you found out your real identity."

"What are you talking about, Grace? What do you mean by my real identity? What is all that about?" She suddenly gripped the box tightly and had a nervous look on her face. At the same time, she was getting scared.

Grace didn't want to tell her, seeing as she was terrified, but in the end, she said, "Actually... you're not the real daughter of your parents."

The revelation came as nothing less than a colossal shock for Sonia. Everything started spinning around her, while the world as she knew it started coming apart. Sonia took a while to calm down, then she looked at Grace in a daze. "I'm not my parents' daughter?" she asked hoarsely.

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Chapter 482 Sonia's Breakdown

Grace nodded. "Yes. That is correct."

"Impossible!" Sonia shot up and shook her head violently. "There's no way I'm not my parents' daughter." Her face was as white as a sheet.

"What? Babe's not Mr. and Mrs. Reed's daughter?" Charles had just come back from giving his father a call when he heard that bombshell of a piece of news. He was stunned for a moment, then he went up to his mother. "Do you know what you're talking about, mom? There's no way babe isn't her parents' real daughter."

"Yes, I do, and I wasn't lying. That's the truth." She sighed.

Sonia started trembling. Her face was getting paler and paler, while her eyes lost focus. "That's impossible. Impossible."

"Yeah, mom. There's no way that's real." Charles refused to believe it either, and he looked at his mother. "When I told you that Sonia wasn't the baby I saw the first time, she already suspected she wasn't her parents' daughter. That's why she went to Norfolk to find out the truth. Then I asked you about it, and you told me the baby I saw the first time belonged to the Reeds' relative, and Sonia's their real daughter. Why are you saying a different thing now?"

Sonia looked at Grace as well. Her eyes were red, but also filled with hope. "You're lying, Grace. You're lying, aren't you? There's no way I'm not their kid."

"I'm sorry, Sonia. I did lie to you, but not this time. I lied back then, back when I told you the baby belonged to the Reeds' relatives. I didn't want to make you sad. The truth is that the baby was your parents' real daughter, but she died when she was five months old, so your father went to adopt you at an orphanage. You were a replacement for the baby, since your mother would have broken down otherwise."

That was the final blow that snuffed all of Sonia's hopes out. She started wobbling and finally plopped down on the sofa, for she had no strength left to stand. It was as if her heart and soul were shattered at the same time.

I see. No wonder grandpa kept that photo of his relative's kid so carefully in his study. That was not his relative's child, but his real granddaughter.

He lied to me. I'm not his grandkid, but a fake. I'm just an orphan who has no idea who my real parents are. My parents aren't my parents, and my grandpa isn't my grandpa either. Now even my name doesn't belong to me. I'm just a b*stard who replaced the real Sonia. The mere thought of that made her smile in despair.

Charles was heartbroken seeing Sonia so depressed, so he glared at his mother. "Why did you have to tell her that, mom? You told her the baby belonged to the Reeds' relative.

Obviously you were going to hide the truth, so why didn't you hide it forever? Why did you tell her now?"

Grace knew she'd break Sonia's heart if she told her the truth, but she had to. And so, she sighed. "Because it didn't sit right with me. After I lied to you, I kept thinking whether it was the right thing to do or not. When I came back, I looked through Lina's photos and thought about her dying wish. That's why I told Sonia. Even if I didn't, she would find out sooner or later."

"As if. She would never know if you said nothing." Charles clenched his fists.

Grace looked at him. "Do you really think so? I said nothing about her real identity, but she still found out about the baby and had suspicions of her own. Do you really think you can hide something like this for life?"

"Um..." Charles couldn't argue with that.

Grace continued, "She'll find out about the truth even if I didn't say anything today." She then turned to Sonia. "Sonia, your parents had planned for your future long before today. They knew the company might not last forever even though it was going strong, nor could they guarantee they'd be with you for life. That's why they set aside a huge sum of money for you when you were little."

"They did?" Sonia looked at her.

"Yes," Grace said. "Just in case the company went under or if they got into an accident, you wouldn't be stranded with nothing even if you were alone. That was why they set the money aside in the bank. Once you turn thirty, the bank will inform you about this, then you'll have to present your parents' details so they can handle the paperwork. Once that happens, you'll also know that your blood type doesn't match with theirs. That's why you'll find out eventually even if I said nothing."

"Holy moly. That's unbelievable." Charles gasped.

Sonia bit her lip but said nothing.

Grace patted her shoulder. "Don't blame me for telling you this, Grace. I did it for your own good, since this secret can't be kept forever. From the moment they left that money to you, it's obvious they didn't intend to keep it a secret forever either. You have the right to know who you truly are. That was why she left me this box and told me to give it to you once you know who you truly are. But I think it's better to give you the box earlier and tell you the truth."

"Why?" Charles was curious.

Grace looked at him as if he was an idiot. "Because she can accept it that much easier. Because she can find out how she really came to the Reed family. If she found this out on her own, she'd be worried about too many things she shouldn't."

Charles couldn't argue with the truth. Telling Sonia the truth and letting her know she came to the Reeds because her foster parents wanted her to was better than her finding it out herself. If she found out about the truth on her own, she might think she was just a mere replacement and complicate an originally simple situation. Worse, she might go ballistic about it.

"Sonia." Grace bent down to hug her. "I know you're upset and you can't accept this, but please don't overthink this matter. You might not be their real daughter, but they truly thought of you as their own. They love you, alright?"

"I understand." A drop of tear fell onto the back of her hand, and her voice broke. "I know they love me, and I know they see me as their own. That's why they thought about my future that much. I just can't face the truth as calmly as you want me to."

The truth that Grace had divulged shattered her world into a million pieces. She had grown up under an environment filled with love. Her mother passed away when she was five, but her father still loved her. She could never imagine that they weren't her real parents, given how much they loved her. However, that was the truth. I just don't get it. Why must fate be so cruel to me?