

Chapter 351 - The Plan of Saving Nora Novel Free

Even someone as strong as Ian would push a woman away when she clearly wanted to get close, let alone Joel and Quentin.

But if Nora was Ian's daughter... then it would be completely different!

Joel could still maintain his composure. Although he was surprised, he could still maintain his calm.

Quentin was stunned. "That's impossible. I pulled your hair last time and tested your DNA. Is that hair not yours? We have a cousin?"

Nora: "..."

This was a novel way of thinking.

She grimaced and answered, "It's mine."

She was silent for a moment, then decided not to bring up the question Lily had discovered, because she had sensitively caught that it might have involved something.

She said confidently, "The result was wrong."

Quentin: "!!!"

There was a small chance that the DNA test report would go wrong, and the probability was about 0.01%. How could they encounter such a thing?

Quentin did not think much about it and asked, "Then, your mom didn't betray Uncle Ian?"

"...I don't think so," Nora said slowly. "Now that I think about it, she might have only given me the surname Smith after marrying Henry Smith. Also..."

There was also the pharmaceutical company her mother had left behind, Idealian Pharmaceuticals. The name Idealian had the name 'Ian' in it!

Quentin believed her again. He nodded and approached Nora directly. He patted her shoulder. "Alright, Nora. Since you're Uncle Ian's biological daughter, you're my biological sister. I'll protect you in the future! Don't be

afraid. As long as I'm here, I won't let anyone bully you! Also, I won't nag anymore when I'm protecting you! You don't have to feel burdened, I'll protect you personally. I'm also responsible for Uncle Ian."

Nora: "..."

Joel: "..."

Joel glanced at Quentin and then at Nora. His dark eyes were filled with thoughts.

Nora only pretended not to notice his probing gaze.

Yvonne was sent back to the villa in the suburbs, and Granduncle followed suit.

He paced back and forth in the living room and looked at Yvonne angrily. "Didn't you say that she was Ryan's daughter? How did she become Ian's legitimate daughter again?!"

Yvonne was like an ant on a hot pan, not knowing what to do. She anxiously said, "Granduncle, what's the point of talking about this now? You should think of a way to get me out of this!"

Granduncle glanced at her and sneered. "I'll think of a way for you? Anyway, when your father wakes up, you're the one he wants to settle the score with, not me! This has nothing to do with me!"

With that, he walked out quickly.

Yvonne wanted to chase after him, but the old man had already slipped away as if he wanted to get rid of her.

She clenched her fists in anger.

This sinister and cunning old man!

Previously, he hated Ian so much that he gritted his teeth. After all, no elder in charge of guarding the old residence would be looked down upon like this. However, Ian was too domineering and did not take him seriously at all.

This old man would never miss any opportunity to bully Ian.

Yet, he could not bear the responsibility!

Yvonne's chest rose and fell as she sat on the sofa.

She clenched her fists and stared ahead.

Nora had become her father's biological daughter. Then, her father would look down on her even more!

After all, all these years, she only had a nominal relationship with Ian. Ian had never taken her out for a day.

Furthermore, Ian was someone who abhorred evil. After knowing what she had done, even if they had no evidence, they might still chase her out of the Smiths!

She could not leave the Smiths.

She was used to living in luxury since she was young. She could not live without money!

Yvonne lowered her head, her eyes turning red.

Why did everyone look down on her? Wasn't it because she was an adopted daughter? It was because she was an adopted daughter that she was afraid of being chased away and cared about her status...

She covered her face and cried gloomily.

But as she cried, she suddenly looked up again!

She could not cry. She had not reached the end!

She could still be saved!

She stood up and walked around the room.

Yes, the only person who wanted to chase her out of the Smiths was her father. If her father died now, even if the Smiths acknowledged Nora, she would still have a share of her father's assets!

What a pity. Why did Nora save her father?!

Saved...

Yvonne's eyes flashed with ruthlessness.

After understanding something, she looked out the door and saw that there was no one outside.

Joel was really silly.

After sending her here yesterday, he had not left anyone behind to keep an eye on her, letting her go out and find Granduncle.

It was the same today.

But it was good too.

She walked back and forth in her room, anxious to wait until it was dark. Then, she went out, took out her diamond ring, and found a black car.

The driver took her to the hospital.

The sky had already turned completely dark.

After Yvonne got out of the black car, she entered the hospital with an uneasy expression.

The more she walked, the calmer she became.

When she arrived at the floor of Ian's ward, she had already calmed down.

She slipped into the changing room at the side and changed into a nurse's uniform before leaving with a mask on.

She pushed the cart toward Ian's ward. When she reached the door, she was stopped. "Who is it?"

Yvonne was very calm as she said impatiently, "I'm here to change the dressing! Open the door!"

The bodyguard was stunned before opening the door.

Yvonne rushed to the bed and looked at Ian.

Nora had said that he would wake up tomorrow.

Therefore, she only had tonight.

She took out a syringe and looked out. Then, her fingers trembled as she held Ian's IV bottle and pushed the medicine in the syringe.

With a fierce look in her eyes, she said, "Daddy, don't blame me. If you want to blame someone, blame your biological daughter and my big brother for forcing me too hard!"

However, just as she said this, a hand suddenly reached out from the side and held her hand tightly!

Yvonne was stunned. She turned around stiffly and met Joel's face!

Yvonne was shocked senseless.

She cried out in disbelief. "Ah!"

Then her hand trembled and the needle landed on the bed.

Her lips trembled. "Jo... Joel, what... what are you doing?"

Joel looked at her with deep eyes. "I should be the one asking you this. What are you doing?"

Yvonne bit her lips and refused to speak. "I-I was worried about Dad, so I came to see him."

"Is that so?"

Joel lowered his head and looked at the needle on the bed. "What is this?"

Yvonne gulped and stuttered, "Vitamin."

"Tsk, why didn't I know this was vitamin?"

Suddenly, another deep voice sounded, causing Yvonne to turn her head again and see Nora walking over.

She picked up the syringe from the bed and sniffed it. After studying it carefully, she came to a conclusion. "This is potassium cyanide. As little as 0.1 grams injected into a person's body would kill within thirty seconds!"

Yvonne stared at the needle and said in shock, "This, this isn't, don't talk nonsense..."

"Really?"

Nora handed the syringe to her. "There's still some residue in here. If it's vitamins, eat it and I'll believe you."

Yvonne: "!!"

She took the syringe with trembling fingers and stared at the liquid inside.

Of course, she knew best what was inside!

Potassium cyanide was medicine for euthanasia!

Her hands trembled, but she did not dare to really drink it. She threw the syringe on the ground. "Why should I drink it? I won't! I refuse!"

Yvonne immediately shouted, "You're slandering me! I didn't want to poison Daddy!"

She suddenly came to a realization and said, "I know. Is it because you didn't treat Daddy at all, so you deliberately said that he would wake up tomorrow and forced me to do it?! This way, it won't show that your medical skills are bad. Nora, you're really sinister and cunning!"

Nora heard her and lifted the blanket on Ian's arm.

The bottle of drip was not even connected to his hand!

Yvonne was stunned.

Nora smiled. "Indeed, he won't wake up tomorrow. Do you think he will wake up immediately after the surgery when his brain illness is so serious? He will need to rest for at least a week. However, I couldn't wait another week."

What could she not wait for?

Just as Yvonne was hesitating, Joel added, “The matter of you manipulating Florence to poison Old Maddy can’t be solved even if Florence sues you and makes a confession. As long as you refuse to admit it, there will be no evidence. We can’t convict you of instigating someone to murder, so we thought of this method.”

The moment Nora left the operating theater, Yvonne had nervously asked when Ian would wake up. Joel had given Nora a look.

Nora immediately said Ian would wake up tomorrow.

This only gave Yvonne a day to make a move.

When Yvonne heard that, she took a step back and looked at the two of them in disbelief. “Despicable! You’re too despicable!! You actually schemed against me!”

Joel lowered his eyes. “This is a setup, but we didn’t force you to come in. Before tonight, I thought that if you didn’t come, you would still have some conscience. Then, I would have given you a decent dowry and married you off since you’re the eldest daughter of the Smiths. From the looks of it, I was still soft-hearted.”

Yvonne cried out in surprise, “You’re too soft-hearted? You’ve always been the most careful and firm. I don’t need to spend much effort to please other brothers, but what about you? I’ve tried so hard, but I can’t make you treat me better! I know that you’ve never treated me like family!”

Joel looked up at her.

Yvonne was actually right.

He was a cold person by nature. There were not many people he cared about.

Ian was one of them.

Mia was one of them.

Tanya from many years ago was one of them.

He could barely count the cousins of the Smiths, but Yvonne had never been in his heart.

Joel ignored her and said to the people outside, "Come in."

The bodyguards walked in.

Joel pointed at Yvonne. "Take her away and send her to the police station tomorrow."

The word "police station" made Yvonne's body shudder.

She suddenly raised her head and looked at Joel in disbelief. "You... you're sending me to the police station? If that's the case, the Smiths' matter will spread! This is all a scandal!"

When Joel heard this, he nodded. "You're right. The police will at most charge you with attempted murder. You'll be sentenced to life imprisonment. If you're more sensible inside, your life won't be too bad."

The words "life imprisonment" made Yvonne shudder.

Joel suddenly turned to look at Nora. "Nora, tell me. What should we do?"

Was he handing her execution rights to Nora?

Nora probably hated her to death!

Yvonne panicked. "Joel, big brother! You can't do this. We're siblings after all. Please give me a way out!"

Joel lowered his eyes. "A way out? It's not impossible. I'll help you suppress this matter, but you have to listen to me and get married obediently..."

Yes, she would get married to anyone he wanted!

Yvonne nodded immediately. "I'll listen to you!"

However, Nora could hear another meaning from her words.

Whoever she married, she had to listen to Joel's arrangements. From Joel's words, she could hear some killing intent.

The man Joel wanted her to marry was definitely not a good person.

She lowered her eyes and suddenly said, "Send her to the police station!"

These words stunned Joel. “You’re willing to let her off?”

Yvonne was also anxious. “Nora, you’re so evil!”

She slowly turned back to Joel, stunned.

Yvonne asked in confusion, “Joel, what do you mean by letting me off?”

Joel lowered his eyes. “I originally planned to marry you to Jason.”

Jason...

Hearing this name, Yvonne shivered.

This person had violent tendencies. He had married two wives and both of them had been beaten to death. Because he was from a wealthy family, he had spent money to suppress the matter.

However, domestic violence would not change. If she married him, there would only be one outcome—being beaten to death!

Yvonne’s legs went soft and she fell to the ground.

How could she have forgotten?

Joel was a smiling tiger. Although he always had a smile on his face and his eyes were smiling, his heart was actually the most ruthless.

She suddenly shouted, “Hypocrite! The Smiths are all hypocrites! Ian! He adopted me but did not take good care of me! He never gave me fatherly love. You’re no better, you never treated me as your real sister! Was I wrong? I was not wrong! Because if I did not scheme, no one would think about me!”

Yvonne shouted crazily. She pointed at Joel and scolded, “You adopted me only because you wanted to matchmake me. Now, you see that I’m useless. This woman is back and you already have a sister, so you’re planning to abandon me! Are you despising me for being a hindrance? You Smiths are all bad people! Bad people! From the moment you adopted me, you’ve been up to no good!”

“ ... ”

She screamed hysterically. If someone did not know better, they would have thought that the Smiths were torturing her.

She did not know how long she had been shouting for before Nora stretched out her fingers and dug her ears. "Tsk, I really can't listen to it anymore."

Yvonne's voice stopped as she looked at her angrily.

Nora squatted down and looked at her face to face. "Before you came, I investigated you."

She wanted to see if this person could still be saved. Was her heart bad or was it really because she lacked love?

After all, she was an adopted daughter.

The result was shocking.

She took out her phone and opened the information she had saved in the photo album. "You said that he adopted you and treated you badly... Then do you know what the children who were with you at the orphanage are doing now?"

"This is the girl who slept on your top bunk. You should know her, right? She was adopted by an ordinary family, but she didn't have the money to go to university after she went to high school. So she went out to work and met her boyfriend. The two of them are married now, but they have been fighting for their lives. She never knew in her life that someone's clothes could be customized for hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars because she had never seen that much money."

"This is normal. Look at this girl. She's also a girl from your dormitory. She was adopted by a beastly father and was placed under house arrest for 20 years. He got someone to come to her door and let her pick up guests to earn money. Her life was worse than death. Now that she has that kind of illness, she can't see well and is waiting to die."

"And this..."

The pictures were of all kinds of adopted children and their recent situations. Most of the children lived normally, but they were only middle-class.

A small portion of people lived miserably.

Nora looked at Yvonne. "So, why can't you thank him for never mistreating you, for sending you to the best school, and even sending you overseas to study? The piano, violin, dance, computer, which of these don't you need resources for? Some people have never come into contact with them. As for company and feelings, some people are just not good at talking, but he has never mocked you or ignored you, right?"

"We shouldn't ask for too much. The thought of destroying what we can't get is too terrifying."

Yvonne still retorted, "I don't ask for much. I just want a family! But the people in this family are too cold to me! I'm just a child!"

Nora saw that she was being stubborn and sneered. Before she could say anything, Joel's voice suddenly came from the side. "I originally didn't want to talk to you, but I don't want to tarnish my reputation like you! Have you ever wondered why Uncle Ian is so distant and cold to you?"

Yvonne was startled. "What?"

Joel lowered his eyes. "When you were four years old, you had a fever once. Uncle Ian even guarded you for a night. At that time, he even played with you often... He was a perfect father!"

Four years old?

This was something that had happened too long ago, and Yvonne had long forgotten about it.

As she was thinking, she heard Joel say, "Uncle Ian doesn't treat you well because when you were four years old, he saw you kill the little rabbit that you kept as a pet."

Yvonne's entire body froze.

Joel lowered his eyes. "Uncle Ian bought you all kinds of pets, but because you felt that he treated them too well, you indirectly caused their deaths. During that period of time, other than humans, there were no living things in the house! Uncle Ian tried to correct your thoughts, but you were born with bad roots. You were bad to the bone. If you felt the slightest dissatisfaction,

you would poison them. At that time, I felt that you were mentally unstable, but at most, you would hurt the pets. But I didn't expect you to dare to poison people now! A vicious woman like you probably has a black heart. How could Uncle Ian possibly treat you with love?!"

Yvonne narrowed her eyes.

She bit her lip. "Those pets stole my love. So what if I killed them? They're just some animals! And that Old Maddy was just a lunatic adopted by our family. He didn't even have any dignity when he was alive. So what if he died? He didn't even have a family. What's the point of such a person living in this world!"

Hearing her words, Nora narrowed her eyes.

Over the years, she had been used to seeing patients and lunatics. However, the person in front of her was the first person who made her feel terrified because she was a naturally bad person.

She did not want to be involved with her anymore. She only said one last sentence. "Actually, when he adopted you, he had never thought of giving up on you again. If you don't believe me, you can look at your name."

Name?

Yvonne was stunned before she reacted. Her name was Yvonne, and Ian loved Yvette.

She clenched her fists and sneered. "I already know what this name means. My existence is just him showing off his longing for his ex-girlfriend!"

Nora said softly, "But he has been longing for her all his life."

So how could he chase the adopted daughter who represented Yvette out of the house?

Yvonne was stunned.

Nora did not give her a chance to speak again. Actually, she did not want to say anything to her here. She just did not want Yvonne to hate the person on the bed for no reason and let her tarnish his reputation.

Now that everything was clear, she looked at Joel. "Send her to the police station."

Joel was silent.

Nora said, "Didn't you say that he's the most law-abiding? Then he'll definitely send her to the police station and not torture her privately."

When Joel heard this, he looked at the person on the hospital bed. In the end, he suppressed the anger in his heart and said to the bodyguard, "Send her to the police station. Also, send all the surveillance camera footage. We'll definitely convict her of attempted murder!"

"Yes, sir."

When Yvonne was dragged out by the security guards, she no longer spoke. Her body was also soft.

Nora did not have time to sigh about her fate. She only told Joel that she was leaving first.

It had been a long time since she went to the underground arena. She was going to take a look tonight.

Otherwise, if she could not enter Class F, she would not be able to compete with Big Brother!

She parked the car at the martial arts arena and entered.

Quentin, who had been protecting her all along, followed closely behind. He was stunned when he entered the parking lot of the underground arena.

What was his little cousin doing here?

Nora entered the underground arena and saw Justin in the food section.

After all, a man holding a little girl was too eye-catching.

She walked over and Cherry, who was wearing a silver mask, said softly, "Mommy, I haven't seen you in a few days. I missed you so much~ When I see you, I feel full of energy!"

Nora: "..."

The corners of her lips twitched. Seeing that Cherry still had the intention to continue talking, she quickly said, “Shhh.”

Cherry immediately shut her mouth obediently.

Nora walked over and fell onto the sofa. She immediately leaned against the sofa and closed her eyes to rest. In order to wait for Yvonne to go to the hospital tonight, she had not slept since the day before.

However, after closing her eyes, she could still hear Cherry mumbling at Justin’s ear. “Daddy, do you see that? Mommy is very scary if she hasn’t slept enough. You can’t provoke her now!”

Justin smiled. “...How scary is she?”

Cherry said softly, “When I was young, I was insensible once and woke her up. She spanked me a few times! It hurt so much!”

“...”

The man remained silent for a long time before saying, “I envy you.”

Nora: “??”

What did he envy Cherry for? Being spanked?

Was this dog man still a masochist?

She grimaced, rolled over, and went back to sleep.

At this moment, enthusiastic applause and sighs were suddenly heard on the nearest ring. Then, someone passed by them while still discussing fervently.

“Heavens, isn’t Victor too powerful? The last time he was injured, he was clearly more severely injured than Randy from Quinn School of Martial Arts, but Randy is still lying in the hospital and can’t get up. But look at Victor, he has already recovered, and he seems to be even more powerful than last time!”

“That’s right. He only used a few moves to defeat the fighter from Class E. He’s too powerful. I think his skills aren’t much different from those two!”

“No way? Big Brother and Big Sister are the representatives of martial arts. Victor is only the disciple of a foreign boxing champion and has only studied for two years. It can't be...”

The two of them left while talking. Nora suddenly opened her eyes. At that moment, her dark eyes met Justin's.

The mole under the man's eye seemed to be flashing with the same question.

The moment the two of them looked at each other, neither of them spoke. They stood up and walked toward the arena.

Indeed, Victor was getting off the stage. On the other side, a man was being carried off the stage.

“That's a Class E martial artist. He entered Class F last year, and his skills are not bad. He couldn't even take a few moves from Victor?”

Justin was a little hesitant as he stared at Victor. He slowly analyzed in a deep voice, “Furthermore, from the way he walked, his injuries seem to have healed completely. But he only took four days to heal his muscles and bones! This is too fast!”

“There must be a reason why things are so abnormal.” Nora suddenly approached Justin. Her voice was very low. “Follow him and take a look?”

Justin nodded.

The two of them followed Victor out. When they saw him take two steps, he reached out and pressed his chest, his face filled with pain.

The last time, Nora taught him a good lesson. Even if his external injuries were healed, his internal injuries were still there.

The wound on his chest was the hardest to heal.

As the two of them were thinking, Victor suddenly took out a bag of strange-looking medicine, opened it, and drank it.

After he finished drinking, the pain in his chest seemed to have been relieved. Even his footsteps had become more vigorous. It looked like his martial arts skills had improved again?

“There’s something wrong with that medicine.”

Just as this sentence appeared in Nora’s mind, Justin had already spoken. Nora nodded. “Don’t disturb him. Let’s go over and take a look first.”

Victor finished the bag of medicine and did not throw the packaging into the trash can. Instead, he carefully folded the bag and placed it in his pocket.

Nora frowned.

Justin seemed to have sensed something and asked, “You want it?”

“Yeah.”

Justin handed her Cherry. “Wait a minute.”

Nora had just taken Cherry when she saw Justin walking towards Victor in the distance. When the two of them brushed past each other, Justin’s shoulder suddenly bumped into Victor.

Victor was furious. “What are you doing? Are you crazy?”

Justin was wearing a black mask, and his thin lips curled up slightly. “I’m sorry.”

Victor still wanted to scold him. After all, his temper had always been bad. However, for some reason, when he met this man’s pitch-black eyes, he could not say anything else.

This was the pressure of an expert.

Victor could only snort and mutter something before lowering his head and leaving quickly.

After he left, Justin turned around and returned. He took out the bag of medicine, that Victor had drunk earlier, like a magic trick and handed it to Nora.

Nora took it and glanced at it. Indeed, she saw some residue inside.

She smirked. “I’ll let Lily see what’s in this medicine tonight. It shouldn’t be ordinary stimulants.”

Justin nodded.

Cherry, who had long been placed on the ground by Nora, reached out her small hand to Justin. "Daddy, hug."

"Why do you need him to hug you? Don't you have legs?"

Nora muttered in disdain, but Justin still bent down without any hesitation and picked Cherry up. When he saw Nora frowning, he subconsciously explained, "It's too messy here. It's better to keep her close, just to be safe."

Nora: "..."

After a moment of silence, she asked, "Do you hug Pete this much too?"

Justin said without hesitation, "He doesn't need it. As a man, this little danger is nothing."

"..."

Why such double standards?

Nora ignored him and rolled her eyes at Cherry instead.

Cherry wrapped her arms around her father's neck and praised, "Daddy, you looked so handsome when you were stealing!"

Justin: "..."

Cherry blinked. "Should we continue to steal things?"

Justin smiled. "We have everything you want at home. In this world..."

He suddenly looked at Nora and said meaningfully, "Other than the one thing that I want to steal, I can buy everything else for you."

Cherry was curious. "Then what are you trying to steal, Daddy?"

Justin just smiled.

For some reason, Nora's heart skipped a beat when he stared at her.

Her face was even slightly hot, so much so that she did not notice a figure quietly approaching her.

Just as Justin's lips moved slightly and he was about to say something, a figure suddenly darted out from the side.

Quentin attacked Nora's face very quickly and took off her mask. "Big Sister, let me see your true colors today!"

Quentin moved very quickly. Just as it seemed like he was about to take off her mask, and even Nora was caught somewhat off-guard, a large hand suddenly held her around her waist and pulled her back a couple of steps. She fell right into the man's arms.

The man's familiar testosterone-y aura took Nora by surprise.

She turned to see Justin staring at her. After quickly letting go of her waist, the man said in a low and deep voice, "You're welcome."

Nora: "..."

She actually wasn't planning on thanking him.

She stood up straight and looked at Quentin. "What are you doing?"

Quentin felt rather regretful that he hadn't managed to take off her mask. He said, "Sorry, Big Sister. I just wanted to see what you really look like."

When he was walking over just now, he had seen Big Sister spacing out for once. On top of that, she had even seemed distracted and somewhat dazed, so he had reckoned that this was probably the best opportunity he would ever have.

Unexpectedly, it had actually failed.

He couldn't help but glare at Justin, who was wearing a black mask.

What was he showing off how in love they were at a critical moment like that for?

Couldn't he just hug her at home? To think he actually did that in public. Was it because he thought that he was single and didn't have a girlfriend?

He curled his lips disdainfully and ignored Justin. Instead, he showed Nora a lot of admiration and asked, “Why didn’t you come the last two days, Big Sister?”

Nora: “?”

Didn’t he know exactly what she was doing?

She curled her lips into a smile and replied, “I had something on.”

Quentin nodded. “I just so happened to have something on too. My cousin was framed, so I went to save her. By the way, are we still taking part in the match today, Big Sister?”

“Yeah.”

Nora agreed to it without any hesitation.

Quentin looked around.

“Are you looking for someone?” asked Nora.

Quentin nodded. “I saw my cousin’s car outside. She must have heard about the tournament somewhere and come here to have some fun. I’m afraid she’ll offend someone because she doesn’t know the rules, so I’m looking around to see if I can find her. I don’t know where she’s hiding, though.”

Nora: “...”

Next to her, Cherry, who was holding her cell phone, swept her gaze across Quentin and shook her head a little. It would probably take that silly uncle of hers forever to realize that Mommy was Big Sister!

Nora and Justin were the two mainstays of the martial arts circle. With Quentin, the self-proclaimed third, with them, their team practically forged ahead unopposed.

Before they went into the ring, Quentin even said to Justin, “Remember to protect yourself later. You’re the weakest among us three. Don’t give the opponents any chance for a breakthrough.”

Justin: “...”

His words made Nora give Justin a close, scrutinizing look.

The two of them had fought each other a few times before, but she hadn't been able to completely suppress Justin before. This showed that the man was very strong. Who exactly was he? Who had he learned his martial arts from?

Perhaps because he noticed her gaze, Justin came up to her and let out a low chuckle. With his beauty mark covered by his mask, the man's eyes were dark and bottomless and looked a little less bewitching than usual. He said, "I'll take off the mask and let you look at me for free after the fight is over and we go home. Don't look anymore for now."

Nora: "!!"

Quentin: "..."

For some reason, he felt like they were showing off how in love they were again. The two of them were too much!

Were they here to compete or to show off how deeply they were in love with each other?!

The triggered Quentin straight-up displayed his martial prowess to its fullest and utterly defeated his opponent.

With all the points they had accumulated recently, they had reached Class D.

The team of three fought two more matches. However, when they were about to leave at night, the organizer of the tournament came up to them with a troubled look on his face. He said, "Please wait a minute, the three of you."

The trio stopped and looked at the organizer in confusion.

The organizer sighed and asked, "Can the three of you wait for a while and watch a certain match?"

Watch a certain match?

All three of them nodded.

Quentin had agreed because the tournament used to be organized by Ryan. At the bottom of it all, the Smiths had to take responsibility for the tournament.

As for Justin, as a leading figure in the martial arts circle, he had his responsibilities, of course.

Although Nora didn't actively participate in the Quinn School of Martial Arts' affairs, as Big Sister, she would play her part in maintaining order in the tournament, so she also agreed to it.

The organizer took the trio to Arena No. 5.

Once one-on-one matches were over, team matches were slotted in at intervals.

However, Nora was stunned when she saw the three people in the ring because...

The people in the ring were none other than Victor and his two fellow disciples!

The few of them were disciples of the Benevolence Hall, which had only been established for two years. Additionally, the owner of the Benevolence Hall was none other than the foreign boxing champion, Abigail!

Why had those three suddenly formed a team, though?

While she was wondering about it, the organizer standing beside them sighed and said, "That man called Victor, as well as his two fellow disciples, suddenly became very strong. Originally, we didn't think much about it—after all, once they reach Class F, there are Big Brother and Big Sister who will teach them a lesson or two."

While saying that, he secretly cast a glance at Justin.

Seeing that Justin was ignoring him, he continued and said, "But unexpectedly, those three have actually formed a team. Now that they've become a three-man team, it may really be true that no one can beat them anymore!"

Quentin snorted coldly at his words. "Why wouldn't anyone be able to beat them? How can you put yourself down when you haven't even fought them?! There's still me and Big... my elder sister, isn't it?"

He'd originally wanted to say 'Big Sister', but he suddenly remembered that Big Sister wanted to hide her identity, so he ended up saying 'elder sister' instead.

Nora: "??"

Her lips slowly curled into a smile. She couldn't help but wonder if that fellow would still be able to bring himself to call her his 'elder sister' once he knew who she really was.

The organizer, however, misunderstood and thought that Quentin wanted to say 'Big Brother', so he didn't think too much about it. He merely sighed and said, "There's only the two of you. Besides, it's one-on-one. To be honest, I'm not worried about Big Sister or Big Brother being up against Victor one-on-one. But there are three of them, so... it's hard to say!"

The organizer glanced at Justin.

Victor and his two fellow disciples were comparable in strength to Big Sister and Big Brother now. Unfortunately, Team Third In The World only had Big Brother and Quentin, who was ranked third. How would they be able to beat them?

Quentin also heaved a sigh. "Yeah. I'm not trying to diss you, but you're holding us back, bro."

Nevertheless, he still said impartially, "Just try your best. It doesn't matter even if you lose. We're all Americans here, so it doesn't matter."

As soon as he said that, the organizer fell silent for a moment. At last, he heaved a huge sigh and asked, "Do you know what their team name is?"

"What is it?"

"Americans Are Incompetent."

His words stunned the three of them.

Quentin shouted angrily, "What kind of ridiculous name is that? You guys actually allowed it?"

The organizer was also very angry. "We don't have any rules in the tournament. It's just like how no one would say anything even if you named

your team First In The World.. They exploited that loophole. So, do you still think it's okay to lose?"

Was it okay to lose?

Of course not!

Quentin said, "Let us face them in a match! We'll kick their a*s*s!"

The organizer looked at him and shook his head again. "Sigh. Let's talk about it again after you watch their match."

Quentin didn't understand what he meant, but shortly after, he did.

He'd originally thought that Victor must be the strongest among the three, but unexpectedly, the bald black man next to him was actually the strongest.

His body was as if it was made out of steel, and he seemed immune to all attacks. All the teams they were up against were from Class D, but the three of them played them all like they were babies.

Victor wasn't that lacking in martial arts ethics anymore this time.

The victory was theirs once the three of them threw their opponents out of the ring.

There was no applause around them. Victor was quiet and didn't say anything. The bald man next to him rubbed his bald head and said something in a foreign language.

Someone who didn't understand asked, "What did he say?"

Cherry translated it for him. "He said, 'Isn't there anyone in America who can fight?'"

"..."

That one line from her made everyone fall silent.

Even Quentin, who was usually the chattiest person ever, had a serious look on his face. He stared at them for quite a while before he finally leaned toward Nora and asked, "Big Sister, did you notice..."

“They’ve become stronger.”

Nora answered him straightaway.

Quentin immediately nodded. “Yes, and it isn’t just by a little. Why do I feel like Victor can last a few dozen moves against you now?”

Nora replied, “Twenty moves.”

Quentin: “...”

Big Sister was simply so confident!

But!

He felt an acute sense of crisis. “I was originally ranked third in New York, but I feel threatened by that guy now. Aside from Big Brother and Big Sister, there’s probably no one else who would be their match now, right? I can only tie with them at the most.”

The organizer sighed and said, “Now you understand why I asked you guys to watch the match, right? It’ll probably only be possible to defeat them if Big Brother and Big Sister team up!”

Quentin nodded at once. “I think so, too.”

Even if he could stop Victor, Big Sister would have a hard time dealing with the other two by herself.

The organizer said, “Out of all the teams, Team Third In The World has the highest chance of beating them. Therefore, from tomorrow onward, I intend to arrange five matches for you guys every day, so that you can enter Class F as soon as possible. This way, you’ll be able to go up against them! Otherwise, if they hog the Class F seats and clamor there every day, won’t we die of anger? I wonder if the three of you would agree to it?”

Justin looked straight at Nora and said, “She has the final say.”

The organizer: “...”

He looked at Nora.

Nora kept quiet for a moment before she nodded. “Okay.”

She was duty-bound to uphold the American pride in their martial arts.

The organizer looked at Quentin again.

Quentin, who had a stern look on his face, hesitated for very long before he finally said, "Okay! After all, as the person ranked third in the world, who else can do it, if not me?"

The organizer finally breathed a sigh of relief and left.

After he left, Quentin walked over to Justin and Nora. "Big Sister, I think the three of us may not be able to win against the three of them because we have someone in the team holding us back."

Both Justin and Nora nodded.

And wasn't that so?

He had quite a lot of self-awareness after all.

Unexpectedly, the next moment, Quentin said to Justin, "How about you withdraw from the team? If we replace you with Big Brother, we likely won't have any problems anymore!"

Justin: "??"

He let out a low scoff of laughter. He was about to speak when a woman's cold and urgent voice reached them. "No, I don't want that."

Quentin: "?"

Justin also looked at her, only to see dissatisfaction in Nora's almond-shaped eyes. "I don't want to be in the same team as him."

Justin: "..."

Quentin was also dumbfounded. "Huh? Why?"

"We don't get along." After giving a brief explanation, Nora looked at Justin and added, "Besides, he isn't weak. The three of us can do it."

Only Nora, who had fought with him before, knew how strong Justin truly was. Quentin usually fought very valiantly against their opponents, so he had

basically dealt with the opponents for Justin. Moreover, he was carrying Cherry, which made Nora worried that she would get hurt, so she also helped him out all the time.

As a result, despite being on the same team, Quentin still didn't know how strong Justin 'The Pretty Boy' was.

Quentin liked Big Sister, but he also liked Big Brother very much.

He couldn't help but speak up for Big Brother. "Big Sister, what did Big Brother do to you? Did he steal your baby? Or did he steal your husband? Why are you so at odds with him?"

Nora: "..."

Quentin scratched his head. "Besides, I know you definitely think highly of your husband, but shouldn't we be realistic? You can't just think that your husband isn't weak just because beauty is in the eye of the beholder."

Then, he held his arm up, raised his chin, and said, "Or how about I compete with him in a duel? If he can beat me, he can stay in the team."

Nora glanced at him and left.

Justin also glanced at him and left.

Quentin: "??"

What did those two mean by that? Why did he feel as if the more he looked at them, the more he felt like something was wrong?

Were they looking down on him?

The corners of his lips spasmed and he chased after them. However, he could no longer see the two of them.

Never mind.

He would just look for his cousin first.

He went one round in the arena but didn't find her. In the end, he decided to go to the car park and wait for her!!

No matter where she was, she would eventually have to go to the car park, right?

Nora and Justin had already turned the corner and gone onto the path at the side. After confirming that there was no one on either side, Justin said, "I know those two people that teamed up with Victor. They have been here since the start of the tournament, but at that time, they weren't as strong as they are now."

"So, that means they've also become stronger?"

Nora asked hesitantly.

Justin nodded.

Nora took out the drink pouch that Justin stole from Victor and asked, "Do you know what Morris told me?"

Justin practically replied without any hesitation, "Human experiments?"

Nora was surprised. "You know about it?"

"I was guessing."

Nora wasn't doubtful anymore. Given how smart Justin was, he must have already figured out something from the point where Morris started to frequently check whether there were any unknown chemicals in Old Maddy's body.

A puzzled Justin asked, "Are you suspecting that their increase in strength is related to illegal drugs?"

Nora raised the pouch she was holding. "I will know whether there's any relation once I check the chemical composition of the stuff in here overnight."

Justin nodded. The two walked to the car park.

Nora had only just come up to her black jeep when Quentin came after her.

When Nora, who was about to stop in front of the jeep, saw him coming over out of the corner of her eye, she paused slightly and instead followed Justin to the ordinary car two parking spaces away from the jeep.

Justin glanced behind him. When he saw Quentin, he immediately understood why she had done that. However, he pretended not to understand and raised an eyebrow. He asked, "Are you thinking of going home with me? It'll be my greatest pleasure."

Nora: "..."

She rolled her eyes and said, "Can you be a little more serious?"

Justin let out a low chuckle. "This is the very first time someone has ever told me to be more serious."

In front of outsiders, he had always been unfathomable and unsmiling, but the man was really letting go of himself more and more in front of her.

For some reason, Nora suddenly thought of the first time they had met.

The man had been cold and unfathomable at that time.

He had walked out of Hotel Finest's elevator in California like he was the bright moon surrounded by a myriad of stars. At that time, Pete's head was buried into his shoulders with only the back of his head exposed.

The man had glanced at her and then coldly said, "You're not my type, Ms. Smith."

...

How times had changed. How had that cold and distant man of that time suddenly fallen into the mortal world?

While she was thinking about it, the man walked over to the backseat, opened the door, and put Cherry in. Then, he looked at her. "You don't want to be in the backseat? Oh, that's true. You'd definitely want to be in the passenger seat instead."

Nora: "..."

Fine. No matter how much time flew by, it seemed like the man would only become more and more narcissistic.

Nora sat in the backseat in the end. Justin didn't mind, either. He drove off with her and Cherry.

In the car park.

Quentin stood in front of the jeep after watching Big Sister get into the car with her husband and daughter. However, even after waiting for a long while, he didn't see his cousin coming out. He frowned and looked into the jeep through the window.

The car's chassis was very high. When he looked at the backseat, he noticed two pieces of clothing that had been placed there.

Quentin was taken aback.

Weren't those the clothes that Nora was wearing when she was treating Uncle Ian in the hospital?

Why were they in the backseat?

No, wait...

Quentin suddenly understood something, and he immediately smiled.

Nora left with Justin. She waited until Quentin left before she finally went back to her car.

She got into the car and changed in the backseat. After casually tossing the red dress onto the backseat, she finally opened the door to go to the driver's seat.

Before she went over, Justin chuckled and said, "If you really want to hide your identity, you should change your car too."

He tossed his car key to Nora and suggested, "Why don't you drive this car instead for now?"

Nora glanced at his car.

From the outside, it was just an ordinary Volkswagen.

But once one entered, they would realize that it wasn't as simple as it looked on the inside.

Be it the engine or the leather seats, all of them were the best. Remodeling a car cost a lot. In addition, even if she had the money, time was needed to remodel a car at the last minute.

Thus, after thinking about it for a while, she didn't turn him down. She took the car keys from him and said, "I won't stand on ceremony, then."

Nora drove the jeep while Justin drove the 'ordinary' Volkswagen. The two left the building one after the other, and subsequently entered a high-end residential complex.

After getting Justin to park the Volkswagen in the residential complex, Nora said, "I've bought an apartment here. This is the parking lot for the apartment."

Justin looked upstairs. "What's your apartment number?"

Nora was a little surprised, but nevertheless answered, "302."

Then, she asked, "What are you planning?"

"To buy 301." Justin smiled and said, "If you ever move in, we can be neighbors."

"... You must be sick in the head," said Nora.

"Yeah, why don't you treat my illness?" Justin immediately quipped.

Nora: "..."

The corners of her lips spasmed. She got into the jeep and said, "Get in the car. I'll take you guys home."

Justin picked up Cherry and got in the backseat. When Nora, who had gotten into the driver's seat, saw them, she couldn't help but say, "She has already grown up, yet you're still holding her?"

"There's no child seat. It's not safe."

Justin briefly explained.

Nora curled her lips disdainfully. "She's already used to riding in the car by herself."

“Mommy, that was because no one doted on me back then! I’m not used to it anymore!”

Cherry protested weakly. However, as soon as she said that, she saw Nora’s stern eyes in the rearview mirror. She was so scared that she shrank back and hastily said, “Yes, I’m very used to it. Why don’t you put me down, Daddy? Don’t hold me so tightly~”

Despite saying that, she didn’t get off Justin’s legs but instead hugged his neck tighter.

Nora: “...”

Justin chuckled and stroked Cherry’s hair. He didn’t expose her, but instead supported her and said, “Be good. Don’t listen to your Mommy, she’s just jealous.”

Cherry was puzzled. “What’s she jealous of?”

“That I’m hugging you, of course.”

This was an ambiguous statement.

First, it meant that she was jealous of Cherry.

Second, it meant that she was jealous of Justin.

That scumbag was really taking advantage of her every moment of the day.

The corners of Nora’s lips spasmed. She couldn’t be bothered with the two of them, so she instead asked detachedly, “When are you and Pete switching back, Cherry?”

Cherry panicked at once. She said, “Mommy, I really miss you very much. I miss you super much! I miss the way you sleep, the way you get ready to go to bed, the way you doze off while you eat...”

She couldn’t come up with any more. After being stuck for a while, she finally said, “But Pete needs you more! After all, you haven’t seen each other for five years, so I won’t disturb your bonding session, okay?”

“...”

That clever little fellow obviously didn't want to come back anymore after Justin spoiled her so much, so she made up so many excuses.

She sneered, "Shall I thank you on behalf of Pete?"

"It's fine~" Cherry said shyly, "What can I do? I'm his little sister, after all, so I have to give in to my elder brother~"

"..."

It seemed like Cherry had become more thick-skinned than before.

She glared at Justin. It really was like what they said—one was marked by the company they kept!

After Nora took Cherry and Justin to the Hunts, while Cherry was getting out of the car, she asked, "Mommy, when are you and Daddy taking Pete and me to the amusement park?"

"Another day."

Nora answered.

Cherry, however, persisted. She asked, "When is that?"

"... The day after tomorrow!"

Nora had no choice but to give her an answer.

"Yay!" Cherry raised her eyebrows at Justin triumphantly. Then, she bounced off while holding his hand and entered the manor.

Nora returned to the Smiths after that.

Unexpectedly, right after she got out of the car, Quentin came out of nowhere and blocked her way. He said, "You don't have to pretend anymore, Nora! I know your secret now!"

Nora's pupils shrank!

Surely her identity as Big Sister hadn't been exposed, had it?

She asked calmly, "What secret?"

“Did you go to the martial arts tournament because you heard something?”

A resigned Nora nodded. “That’s right.”

“I knew it. You even changed and put on a mask, so I didn’t recognize you.” Quentin looked around after he spoke. Then he said, “Since you were at the tournament, then you must have heard of me, right? ”

Nora: “?”

Quentin said, “Didn’t I already tell you? I’m the best fighter in the family and am ranked third in New York. I will definitely shine in the tournament! Do you know who I am?”

“... No, I don’t.”

Quentin the dimwit immediately looked around. Then, he said, “I’ll tell you and you alone since you’re my cousin, Nora. You’re the only one I’m telling, get it? Even Joel doesn’t know the alias I’m using in the tournament!”

He straightened his back, raised his chin, and declared, “I am Smithin!”

“...”

However, when he didn’t see any reaction from Nora, Quentin glanced at her and frowned. “Haven’t you heard of that name? Then do you know the famous Team Third In The World?”

Be it Smithin or Team Third In The World, both had actually become very famous in the underground arena recently. Anyone who had been there would have heard of him.

But...

Nora decided to tease him and deliberately said, “I’m new there, so I only heard them talking about Victor.”

Quentin: “...”

No one in the family knew that he was participating in the martial arts tournament, so he couldn’t show off. Now that he had finally found a cousin who was interested in the tournament, how could she be kept unaware of his greatness?

Quentin was very puzzled, very much so. “Victor is nothing. He’s just a piece of trash who lost to me two years ago. Even if you have never heard of Smithin, surely you’ve heard of Team Third In The World, right?!”

He hadn’t competed in his own name, so it was normal that she hadn’t heard of him. But how come she hadn’t heard of the famous Team Third In The World, either?

Nora walked toward the house. “And then?”

“What do you mean by ‘and then’?!” Quentin became anxious. He gritted his teeth, steeled his resolve, and said, “Forget it, I’ll let you in on another big secret!”

Nora looked back at him.

Quentin said, “But you have to swear that you won’t tell anyone! I promised that I wouldn’t reveal her identity casually to outsiders. I’m only telling you because you’re my cousin.”

Nora had a vague idea what he was going to say next when she heard that. Sure enough, the next moment, he asked, “Do you know who that woman in the red dress in Team Third In The World is?”

Nora: “...”

“She’s Big Sister! The Big Sister of the Quinn School of Martial Arts!!!”

Quentin said triumphantly, “Do you see now? Even Big Sister has teamed up with me. She approached me because she thought that I was talented and fought pretty well... Surely you’ve at least heard of Big Sister, right?”

“... Yeah, I have.”

Quentin was satisfied at last. He said, “So, don’t you feel very honored that Big Sister has seen something in your elder brother? But don’t you get ahead of yourself. You absolutely mustn’t say anything about this to outsiders. Big Sister’s identity is confidential.”

“...”

“Is that look in your eyes envy? Actually, you don’t have to be envious that Big Sister has seen something in me. Uncle Ian picked me out of everyone in the

family to practice martial arts when I was a child, so I've been practicing ever since. I heard that you used to be obese, and were even in poor health in the past, so you must not have practiced martial arts much before, right? By the way, which class are you in now?"

Nora: "..."

She knew how eager Quentin was to show off and bask in the limelight, so she knew that she didn't need to say anything. Sure enough, Quentin said, "My team is already in Class D now. Once we win another five matches tomorrow, we'll advance to Class E. We'll be able to advance to Class F the day after tomorrow!"

"... Wow, how amazing."

"Isn't it? I think so, too." Quentin folded his arms and said triumphantly, "But don't you dare think it's because I'm piggybacking off Big Sister. I can still compete by myself without any problems even without Big Sister. Why are you walking so fast? Forget it, I won't say any more, lest you become jealous. But don't worry, if someone bullies you in the arena, you can just use the name Smithin to scare them off!"

"..."

Nora suddenly felt like she'd better not let the young man with eighth-grader syndrome know her true identity after all. If she did, she reckoned that she'll never have any peace anymore.

The corners of her lips spasmed and she went upstairs.

When she entered the bedroom, she realized that Pete had already returned from school and was obediently working on his Mathematical Olympiad problems.

Nora glanced at his workbook. The Mathematical Olympiad problems he was doing were almost at high school standard now. The five-year-old's IQ was simply terrifying.

"Mommy."

Pete greeted her obediently.

Nora made a sound of acknowledgment and stepped forward. She stroked his hair, and then bent over and gave him a kiss on the forehead. She said, "Let's go downstairs for dinner after you're done with that."

Pete nodded and continued to bury his head into the workbook.

Nora picked up her cell phone and saw a voice message from Tanya: 'Have you given your son a kiss?'

Nora replied: '... Yes, I have.'

Tanya: "Yeah, Pete's sense of security still leaves a little to be desired. It can't be compared with Cherry's at all. After all, the role a mother plays is simply too crucial when one is growing up. You have to have more physical contact with Pete, get it?"

Nora: 'Yeah, yeah. I know.'

Tanya sighed emotionally again and said: "Don't think of me as being too long-winded. After all... I also wish I could give mine a kiss."

When Nora heard the message, she immediately knew that Tanya had thought of her missing child again.

She didn't know how she should comfort her. After all, she had also experienced the pain of losing her own child.

Nora kept quiet for a while before she replied: "You'll definitely find him or her one day."

Tanya: 'Yeah.'

Since she had fallen silent, Nora didn't send her any more messages. She turned to her son. Suddenly, she felt like something was amiss. "Where's Mia?" She asked.

By right, Pete and Mia should be playing with each other at this time!

Without even lifting his head, Pete replied, "She's having dance classes at God-mom's!"

" ... "

In the villa in the suburbs.

Mia's forehead was covered in perspiration as she did leg stretches.

The small and thin five-year-old looked as if she was only four years old. Tanya went over and gave her a few pointers.

Mia glanced at Tanya.

Her teacher was very strict, but for some reason, she wasn't scared of her at all. When Tanya lowered her head toward her, Mia even suddenly kissed her on the cheek.

Tanya was stunned. She looked at Mia in disbelief, upon which Mia said, "Didn't you want a kiss, Ms. Turner? I'll give you a kiss."

An acerbic feeling suddenly welled up in Tanya, and she felt a mix of emotions come over her.

It seemed like she could still feel the warmth from the soft lips on her cheek.

Tanya touched her cheek and looked at the small, timid Mia in front of her. Suddenly, a feeling welled up in her—would it also feel like this if her child kissed her?

She spaced out and kept quiet for a while.

Seeing her freeze, Mia became frightened. Her eyes reddened and she hastily asked, "Are you mad, Ms. Turner?"

Tanya didn't know whether she should be angry or not.

In fact, she even felt like her decision to teach Mia dancing was a mistake in itself!

The child she had with Joel was missing.

Yet, here she was, teaching Joel's daughter how to dance. In fact, when she kissed her, she hadn't even pushed her away. It was as if she had already accepted her.

How could she do that?!

Tanya was originally helping Mia with her leg stretches, but she suddenly stood up. She wanted to say coldly, 'Don't kiss me again in the future.'

But when she looked at Mia's round eyes and small pointed face, she simply couldn't bring herself to say it. In fact, the words at the tip of her tongue even changed. She said, "No, I'm not."

Mia nodded. "Then, are you happy?"

Tanya wanted to say that she wasn't, but when she saw the hopeful look in Mia's eyes, she instead replied impulsively, "Yes."

Her answer made Mia's eyes instantly light up.

She said timidly, "My mother said that I can't kiss her so casually, Ms. Turner. She would also become unhappy if I made physical contact with her, so I thought you were unhappy, too. I only kissed you because I heard you say that you wanted a kiss. Are you really not mad at me?"

Her mother didn't allow her to touch her?

Tanya was dumbfounded.

She didn't know how other mothers behaved, but if it were her daughter, she would never tire of giving her kisses. Besides, whenever she was out, she always saw a lot of children who behaved very intimately with their mothers.

Little did she expect a tiny little girl like Mia to be so pitiful?

With that thought in mind, she said, "It's true, I really am happy. Ms. Turner likes to keep close contact with children."

"That's great!"

Mia stood up straight and grabbed Tanya's hand. She made her lower her head and then kissed her on the cheek again. She said, "I will make you happy every day from now on, Ms. Turner!"

She pursed her lips and gave her a bashful smile.

Tanya simply couldn't bring herself to say any words of rejection when faced with such a well-behaved and adorable little girl!

She ruffled Mia's hair and asked, "Doesn't it hurt when you stretch?"

Mia immediately nodded. "It does!"

"Then why didn't you say anything?" Tanya asked curiously.

After she decided to take Mia as her student, she had added an hour of class for her after school every day. As there wasn't a suitable location in the kindergarten, she had brought her to her home.

Fine beads of perspiration had formed on Mia's forehead when she was dancing, yet she hadn't complained about being tired.

After dancing, Tanya had even told her to do leg stretches.

One must always do their stretches properly after exercise. Besides, Mia was already five. To be honest, it was already a bit of a late start for a dancer because the body would no longer be flexible enough anymore. Thus, Tanya had also taught her a few difficult moves such as bending over backward.

Despite that, Mia hadn't made even a single sound from beginning to end.

Just as she was wondering whether it was because the girl's pain receptors were less sensitive than others, Mia replied, "I can't complain that it hurts."

Tanya was taken aback. "Why?"

When she was a child, she would always cry out even at the slightest bit of pain when she was practicing. This way, the teacher would show her some mercy.

Mia replied, "Because Daddy will be unhappy if I'm in pain. If Daddy is unhappy, Mommy will also be unhappy."

Unhappy?

Tanya frowned. Suddenly, she started to feel sorry for the girl.

Although she lived in a wealthy family and had both her parents with her, she led too frustrating a life. While other five-year-olds from ordinary families were blissfully unaware, she didn't even have the right to complain when she was in pain!

Tanya suddenly became a little angry with Joel.

How could he treat a child like that?

No matter what, children were angels of the world. They were the most innocent!!

Tanya said to Mia, "Mia, you can speak freely without holding back in Ms. Turner's home in the future. If you're tired from practice, you can say so. If you're in pain because of stretching, you can also cry out. If you're thirsty or hungry, you can tell me that too. I will prepare everything for you."

Mia's eyes lit up. "Really?"

"Yeah."

Mia hesitated for a while. Then, she hung her head and asked somewhat embarrassedly, "Then... can you bake me a cake?"

Bake her a cake?

Tanya found the request rather odd but nevertheless agreed. "You must be hungry after practicing for so long. Alright, let's go downstairs."

Tanya used to be really bad at housework, but when she went abroad and lived by herself, she had to cook for herself, so her culinary skills had improved over the years.

Baking a cake was no problem for her.

Sometime later, she walked out of the kitchen with a simple cupcake in her hands. She was a little embarrassed as she said, "I can only bake simple stuff like this, Mia. You don't mind, right?"

Mia immediately shook her head. "Of course not, Ms. Turner!"

Tanya smiled and said, "You can dig in now."

Mia picked up the fork. She was about to eat when she suddenly said, "I'll give you half, Ms. Turner."

"No, it's fine."

A smiling Tanya went back to the kitchen and then came out with another cupcake. "I made a few. Come on, let's eat!"

Mia stared at the cupcake. Suddenly, she clasped her hands together, closed her eyes, and seemingly thought about something. Only then did she start to eat the cupcake.

Tanya looked at her, feeling rather amused. The girl actually had the sense to say a prayer before eating.

The two of them dug into their respective cupcakes with gusto.

When Tanya saw the little girl's cheeks all puffed up from eating, she felt a sense of accomplishment come over her, especially when Mia finished more than one cupcake from the batch she had baked.

She ate so much that even her belly had swelled up.

After they were done eating, she went to the kitchen to do the dishes. Then, she told Mia, "You can come here for dance practice every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday in the future. You can go and play the rest of the time. You're still young, so you shouldn't restrain yourself."

Mia pursed her lips and smiled at her as she nodded. "Okay, Ms. Turner."

All of a sudden, the doorbell rang.

Tanya knew that it must be Joel here to pick Mia up.

She looked at the clock in surprise—sure enough, it was already seven. She hadn't expected time to pass so fast. Somewhat reluctantly, she helped Mia carry her schoolbag and then walked over to the door.

Sure enough, Joel was standing outside when she opened the door.

Tanya didn't look at him. Instead, she waved at Mia and said, "See you in school tomorrow, Mia~"

"Okie-Dokie. See you tomorrow, Ms. Turner~"

Mia took Joel's hand after she spoke. Just as she was about to leave, she suddenly looked back at Tanya and said, "Thank you for the birthday cake today, Ms. Turner. It was really yummy!"

Birthday cake?

Tanya was taken aback. Then, she heard Joel say, "It's Mia's birthday today."

Birthday...

Tanya felt like a bomb had suddenly gone off in her head.

It was Mia's birthday. No wonder she had asked Tanya to bake her a cake, and even said a prayer before eating it.

Oh, right.

He had slept with Hillary right after he slept with her back then, hadn't he?

It was all too normal that their children's birthdays would be so close to each other's.

She bit her lip.

It had also been her child's birthday five days ago!

She didn't even know where her child might be wandering lost in the world, yet here she was, celebrating Mia's birthday?

Indescribable pain and misery made Tanya's expression instantly change.

She stared at Mia blankly.

Mia was terribly nervous. The puzzled girl looked at Tanya and asked, "W-what's wrong, Ms. Turner? Are you upset?"

She pushed Joel and said, "Daddy, hurry up and kiss Ms. Turner! She'll cheer up if you do that!"

Joel: "..."

Tanya: "..."

Joel didn't know the reason for Tanya's sudden change in behavior, but he knew that she likely held a grudge against Mia's existence all this time.

He lowered his head and slowly said, "I'm sorry."

He was sorry.

Five years ago, he had felt even more apologetic toward her.

If he hadn't gotten himself drunk, become muddleheaded, and ended up sleeping with Hillary, how would he have gotten her pregnant and ended up letting her give birth to Mia?

No, to be honest, he hadn't even known that she was pregnant.

Hillary understood him very well. She knew that he would definitely make her abort the child if he were to know, so she had secretly gone into hiding.

It wasn't until ten months later that she had finally returned with Mia.

He had done a DNA test when he saw the child—she was indeed his daughter. As such, he could only acknowledge her. That was probably the one and only time he had acted so spinelessly.

His heart had softened when he saw the child.

It was as if the child had a lot of affinity with him.

When Tanya heard his apology, her shame and anger made her eyes redden. She was about to yell at him when Mia suddenly held her hand and said, "I'll kiss you if Daddy won't, Ms. Turner. Don't be mad anymore, okay?"

Tanya lowered her head. When her eyes met Mia's timid eyes that looked as if she was trying to please her, her fury instantly extinguished.

Indeed.

She had only lost her child because she hadn't kept an eye on it. What did it have to do with Joel or Mia?

In fact, Joel didn't even know that she had given birth to his child!

Tanya lowered her head and stared at Mia.

She was just a pitiful little girl.

Tanya suddenly said, "Wait a minute."

She turned and went upstairs.

In addition to her own bedroom, she had also prepared another two children's rooms on the upper floor. One was a boy's room and the other a girl's.

This was because she didn't know whether her missing child was a boy or a girl.

Regardless, she would always prepare clothes for her son or daughter every year. The clothes currently in the closets were for five-year-olds, and on the bed in the girl's room was also a gift box.

It was the birthday gift she had bought five days ago for her child.

There was also one in the boy's room.

She picked up the gift box. Inside was an exquisite Barbie doll wearing a pink dress. Next to it were all kinds of doll clothing that one could dress up the doll with.

She touched the bedsheets and murmured silently, "I don't know where you are, my child, but I believe you'll be willing to make another child like yourself happy, right?"

She took the gift box and went downstairs.

Before she reached the door, she saw Mia nervously asking Joel, "Daddy, why did Ms. Turner suddenly get mad? Is it because it's Mia's birthday? Daddy, I won't celebrate my birthday anymore, okay? I like Ms. Turner, I don't want to make her mad..."

Joel stroked her hair. His voice was soft and gentle as he said, "It's not your fault. Daddy's the one who made Ms. Turner angry."

Mia then said seriously, "Daddy, you should apologize to Ms. Turner if you made her mad. Are you too embarrassed to say sorry, Daddy?"

Joel: "..."

He sighed. "I've already told her I'm sorry, but she won't accept my apology."

"Then say it a few more times!"

A child's world was very simple. For Mia, if her father had done something wrong, then he should apologize until Ms. Turner forgave him.

Joel sighed. "Okay."

When Mia wanted to say something again, she suddenly spotted Tanya, who had just returned. Her eyes lit up and she immediately called out, "Ms. Turner!"

Tanya handed her the gift box with the Barbie and said, "Happy birthday."

Mia's eyes instantly became even brighter. "Thank you, Ms. Turner!"

The little girl stretched out her hands and took the Barbie doll from her.

The Barbie was half her height, so it was very heavy for the small and thin girl.

Joel reached out to carry it for her.

However, Mia ducked and said, "I can do it, Daddy!"

This was a gift from Ms. Turner. She liked it very much.

Joel nodded. Then, he looked at Tanya. He was about to speak when Tanya sneered, "You must be very busy with work, right, Mr. Smith?"

Joel was overjoyed when he heard what she said. He thought that Tanya was showing him concern, so he nodded and replied, "It's alright."

"Hah." Tanya gave him a mocking smile and said, "Since it's alright, then shouldn't you learn how to be a qualified father, Mr. Smith?"

Joel was taken aback.

Tanya knew that there were some things she shouldn't say in front of Mia, so she merely gave him a subtle reminder. Then, she said, "Bye, Mia."

Mia replied softly, "Bye, Ms. Turner."

When Joel took Mia into the car, he received a call from Hillary. When he answered, the woman said, "Joel, it's Mia's birthday today. Can you let me see her? I miss her. I think Mia would also want her family to be together."

Joel's expression turned cold. He was about to say something when Hillary spoke again. She said, "I'm Mia's mother, after all, Joel. I really miss her. I should think that she misses me, too! You can't stop us from meeting when we're mother and daughter. Mia will resent you for it in the future if you do that.

"I know you hate me, but my love for Mia is true. I am the one who has been taking care of Mia ever since she was born. You should know how dependent she is on me. Joel, all I want is really just to see my daughter. I don't have any other intentions... Please?"

Joel looked at Mia.

He suddenly asked, "Do you want to meet your mother, Mia?"

Mia's eyes immediately flickered when she heard him.

Her mom had told her before that she had to reply that she wanted to meet her if Daddy ever asked. Otherwise, her mom would hate her very much.

But she thought of how Ms. Turner had told her not to keep things to herself, and to voice her thoughts if she had any. She had said that she could cry out if she was in pain, or cry if she wanted to...

When she thought of what Ms.. Turner had told her, the little Mia seemed to have suddenly found her courage.

Just as Mia was about to say something, Hillary's voice rang out through the phone. "Do you miss Mommy, Mia?"

The little Mia trembled a little when she heard Hillary's voice. In the end, she nodded and replied weakly, "Yes."

"Did you hear that, Joel?"

Hillary tried her best to convince him, "Mia wants to see me!"

Joel heaved a huge sigh.

He didn't want to let Mia and Hillary come into contact anymore, but if Mia wanted to see her mother, he couldn't stop her.

Therefore, Hillary immediately knew that Joel must have relented when she heard him sigh. She asked tentatively, "Can I go back to the Smiths' tonight? I heard that you've just found your younger sister, so I can also take the chance to pay her a visit."

Chapter 352 - The Plan of Saving Nora Novel Free

Yvonne was shocked senseless.

She cried out in disbelief. "Ah!"

Then her hand trembled and the needle landed on the bed.

Her lips trembled. "Jo... Joel, what... what are you doing?"

Joel looked at her with deep eyes. "I should be the one asking you this. What are you doing?"

Yvonne bit her lips and refused to speak. "I-I was worried about Dad, so I came to see him."

"Is that so?"

Joel lowered his head and looked at the needle on the bed. "What is this?"

Yvonne gulped and stuttered, "Vitamin."

"Tsk, why didn't I know this was vitamin?"

Suddenly, another deep voice sounded, causing Yvonne to turn her head again and see Nora walking over.

She picked up the syringe from the bed and sniffed it. After studying it carefully, she came to a conclusion. "This is potassium cyanide. As little as 0.1 grams injected into a person's body would kill within thirty seconds!"

Yvonne stared at the needle and said in shock, "This, this isn't, don't talk nonsense..."

"Really?"

Nora handed the syringe to her. "There's still some residue in here. If it's vitamins, eat it and I'll believe you."

Yvonne: "!!"

She took the syringe with trembling fingers and stared at the liquid inside.

Of course, she knew best what was inside!

Potassium cyanide was medicine for euthanasia!

Her hands trembled, but she did not dare to really drink it. She threw the syringe on the ground. "Why should I drink it? I won't! I refuse!"

Yvonne immediately shouted, "You're slandering me! I didn't want to poison Daddy!"

She suddenly came to a realization and said, "I know. Is it because you didn't treat Daddy at all, so you deliberately said that he would wake up tomorrow and forced me to do it?! This way, it won't show that your medical skills are bad. Nora, you're really sinister and cunning!"

Nora heard her and lifted the blanket on Ian's arm.

The bottle of drip was not even connected to his hand!

Yvonne was stunned.

Nora smiled. "Indeed, he won't wake up tomorrow. Do you think he will wake up immediately after the surgery when his brain illness is so serious? He will need to rest for at least a week. However, I couldn't wait another week."

What could she not wait for?

Just as Yvonne was hesitating, Joel added, "The matter of you manipulating Florence to poison Old Maddy can't be solved even if Florence sues you and makes a confession. As long as you refuse to admit it, there will be no evidence. We can't convict you of instigating someone to murder, so we thought of this method."

The moment Nora left the operating theater, Yvonne had nervously asked when Ian would wake up. Joel had given Nora a look.

Nora immediately said Ian would wake up tomorrow.

This only gave Yvonne a day to make a move.

When Yvonne heard that, she took a step back and looked at the two of them in disbelief. “Despicable! You’re too despicable!! You actually schemed against me!”

Joel lowered his eyes. “This is a setup, but we didn’t force you to come in. Before tonight, I thought that if you didn’t come, you would still have some conscience. Then, I would have given you a decent dowry and married you off since you’re the eldest daughter of the Smiths. From the looks of it, I was still soft-hearted.”

Yvonne cried out in surprise, “You’re too soft-hearted? You’ve always been the most careful and firm. I don’t need to spend much effort to please other brothers, but what about you? I’ve tried so hard, but I can’t make you treat me better! I know that you’ve never treated me like family!”

Joel looked up at her.

Yvonne was actually right.

He was a cold person by nature. There were not many people he cared about.

Ian was one of them.

Mia was one of them.

Tanya from many years ago was one of them.

He could barely count the cousins of the Smiths, but Yvonne had never been in his heart.

Joel ignored her and said to the people outside, “Come in.”

The bodyguards walked in.

Joel pointed at Yvonne. “Take her away and send her to the police station tomorrow.”

The word “police station” made Yvonne’s body shudder.

She suddenly raised her head and looked at Joel in disbelief. "You... you're sending me to the police station? If that's the case, the Smiths' matter will spread! This is all a scandal!"

When Joel heard this, he nodded. "You're right. The police will at most charge you with attempted murder. You'll be sentenced to life imprisonment. If you're more sensible inside, your life won't be too bad."

The words "life imprisonment" made Yvonne shudder.

Joel suddenly turned to look at Nora. "Nora, tell me. What should we do?"

Was he handing her execution rights to Nora?

Nora probably hated her to death!

Yvonne panicked. "Joel, big brother! You can't do this. We're siblings after all. Please give me a way out!"

Joel lowered his eyes. "A way out? It's not impossible. I'll help you suppress this matter, but you have to listen to me and get married obediently..."

Yes, she would get married to anyone he wanted!

Yvonne nodded immediately. "I'll listen to you!"

However, Nora could hear another meaning from her words.

Whoever she married, she had to listen to Joel's arrangements. From Joel's words, she could hear some killing intent.

The man Joel wanted her to marry was definitely not a good person.

She lowered her eyes and suddenly said, "Send her to the police station!"

These words stunned Joel. "You're willing to let her off?"

Yvonne was also anxious. "Nora, you're so evil!"

She slowly turned back to Joel, stunned.

Yvonne asked in confusion, "Joel, what do you mean by letting me off?"

Joel lowered his eyes. "I originally planned to marry you to Jason."

Jason...

Hearing this name, Yvonne shivered.

This person had violent tendencies. He had married two wives and both of them had been beaten to death. Because he was from a wealthy family, he had spent money to suppress the matter.

However, domestic violence would not change. If she married him, there would only be one outcome—being beaten to death!

Yvonne's legs went soft and she fell to the ground.

How could she have forgotten?

Joel was a smiling tiger. Although he always had a smile on his face and his eyes were smiling, his heart was actually the most ruthless.

She suddenly shouted, "Hypocrite! The Smiths are all hypocrites! Ian! He adopted me but did not take good care of me! He never gave me fatherly love. You're no better, you never treated me as your real sister! Was I wrong? I was not wrong! Because if I did not scheme, no one would think about me!"

Yvonne shouted crazily. She pointed at Joel and scolded, "You adopted me only because you wanted to matchmake me. Now, you see that I'm useless. This woman is back and you already have a sister, so you're planning to abandon me! Are you despising me for being a hindrance? You Smiths are all bad people! Bad people! From the moment you adopted me, you've been up to no good!"

"..."

She screamed hysterically. If someone did not know better, they would have thought that the Smiths were torturing her.

She did not know how long she had been shouting for before Nora stretched out her fingers and dug her ears. "Tsk, I really can't listen to it anymore."

Yvonne's voice stopped as she looked at her angrily.

Nora squatted down and looked at her face to face. “Before you came, I investigated you.”

She wanted to see if this person could still be saved. Was her heart bad or was it really because she lacked love?

After all, she was an adopted daughter.

The result was shocking.

She took out her phone and opened the information she had saved in the photo album. “You said that he adopted you and treated you badly... Then do you know what the children who were with you at the orphanage are doing now?”

“This is the girl who slept on your top bunk. You should know her, right? She was adopted by an ordinary family, but she didn’t have the money to go to university after she went to high school. So she went out to work and met her boyfriend. The two of them are married now, but they have been fighting for their lives. She never knew in her life that someone’s clothes could be customized for hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars because she had never seen that much money.”

“This is normal. Look at this girl. She’s also a girl from your dormitory. She was adopted by a beastly father and was placed under house arrest for 20 years. He got someone to come to her door and let her pick up guests to earn money. Her life was worse than death. Now that she has that kind of illness, she can’t see well and is waiting to die.”

“And this...”

The pictures were of all kinds of adopted children and their recent situations. Most of the children lived normally, but they were only middle-class.

A small portion of people lived miserably.

Nora looked at Yvonne. “So, why can’t you thank him for never mistreating you, for sending you to the best school, and even sending you overseas to study? The piano, violin, dance, computer, which of these don’t you need resources for? Some people have never come into contact with them. As for company and feelings, some people are just not good at talking, but he has never mocked you or ignored you, right?”

“We shouldn’t ask for too much. The thought of destroying what we can’t get is too terrifying.”

Yvonne still retorted, “I don’t ask for much. I just want a family! But the people in this family are too cold to me! I’m just a child!”

Nora saw that she was being stubborn and sneered. Before she could say anything, Joel’s voice suddenly came from the side. “I originally didn’t want to talk to you, but I don’t want to tarnish my reputation like you! Have you ever wondered why Uncle Ian is so distant and cold to you?”

Yvonne was startled. “What?”

Joel lowered his eyes. “When you were four years old, you had a fever once. Uncle Ian even guarded you for a night. At that time, he even played with you often... He was a perfect father!”

Four years old?

This was something that had happened too long ago, and Yvonne had long forgotten about it.

As she was thinking, she heard Joel say, “Uncle Ian doesn’t treat you well because when you were four years old, he saw you kill the little rabbit that you kept as a pet.”

Yvonne’s entire body froze.

Joel lowered his eyes. “Uncle Ian bought you all kinds of pets, but because you felt that he treated them too well, you indirectly caused their deaths. During that period of time, other than humans, there were no living things in the house! Uncle Ian tried to correct your thoughts, but you were born with bad roots. You were bad to the bone. If you felt the slightest dissatisfaction, you would poison them. At that time, I felt that you were mentally unstable, but at most, you would hurt the pets. But I didn’t expect you to dare to poison people now! A vicious woman like you probably has a black heart. How could Uncle Ian possibly treat you with love?!”

Yvonne narrowed her eyes.

She bit her lip. “Those pets stole my love. So what if I killed them? They’re just some animals! And that Old Maddy was just a lunatic adopted by our family.

He didn't even have any dignity when he was alive. So what if he died? He didn't even have a family. What's the point of such a person living in this world!"

Hearing her words, Nora narrowed her eyes.

Over the years, she had been used to seeing patients and lunatics. However, the person in front of her was the first person who made her feel terrified because she was a naturally bad person.

She did not want to be involved with her anymore. She only said one last sentence. "Actually, when he adopted you, he had never thought of giving up on you again. If you don't believe me, you can look at your name."

Name?

Yvonne was stunned before she reacted. Her name was Yvonne, and Ian loved Yvette.

She clenched her fists and sneered. "I already know what this name means. My existence is just him showing off his longing for his ex-girlfriend!"

Nora said softly, "But he has been longing for her all his life."

So how could he chase the adopted daughter who represented Yvette out of the house?

Yvonne was stunned.

Nora did not give her a chance to speak again. Actually, she did not want to say anything to her here. She just did not want Yvonne to hate the person on the bed for no reason and let her tarnish his reputation.

Now that everything was clear, she looked at Joel. "Send her to the police station."

Joel was silent.

Nora said, "Didn't you say that he's the most law-abiding? Then he'll definitely send her to the police station and not torture her privately."

When Joel heard this, he looked at the person on the hospital bed. In the end, he suppressed the anger in his heart and said to the bodyguard, "Send her to

the police station. Also, send all the surveillance cameras footage. We'll definitely convict her of attempted murder!"

"Yes, sir."

When Yvonne was dragged out by the security guards, she no longer spoke. Her body was also soft.

Nora did not have time to sigh about her fate. She only told Joel that she was leaving first.

It had been a long time since she went to the underground arena. She was going to take a look tonight.

Otherwise, if she could not enter Class F, she would not be able to compete with Big Brother!

She parked the car at the martial arts arena and entered.

Quentin, who had been protecting her all along, followed closely behind. He was stunned when he entered the parking lot of the underground arena.

What was his little cousin doing here?

Nora entered the underground arena and saw Justin in the food section.

After all, a man holding a little girl was too eye-catching.

She walked over and Cherry, who was wearing a silver mask, said softly, "Mommy, I haven't seen you in a few days. I missed you so much~ When I see you, I feel full of energy!"

Nora: "..."

The corners of her lips twitched. Seeing that Cherry still had the intention to continue talking, she quickly said, "Shhh."

Cherry immediately shut her mouth obediently.

Nora walked over and fell onto the sofa. She immediately leaned against the sofa and closed her eyes to rest. In order to wait for Yvonne to go to the hospital tonight, she had not slept since the day before.

However, after closing her eyes, she could still hear Cherry mumbling at Justin's ear. "Daddy, do you see that? Mommy is very scary if she hasn't slept enough. You can't provoke her now!"

Justin smiled. "...How scary is she?"

Cherry said softly, "When I was young, I was insensible once and woke her up. She spanked me a few times! It hurt so much!"

"..."

The man remained silent for a long time before saying, "I envy you."

Nora: "??"

What did he envy Cherry for? Being spanked?

Was this dog man still a masochist?

She grimaced, rolled over, and went back to sleep.

At this moment, enthusiastic applause and sighs were suddenly heard on the nearest ring. Then, someone passed by them while still discussing fervently.

"Heavens, isn't Victor too powerful? The last time he was injured, he was clearly more severely injured than Randy from Quinn School of Martial Arts, but Randy is still lying in the hospital and can't get up. But look at Victor, he has already recovered, and he seems to be even more powerful than last time!"

"That's right. He only used a few moves to defeat the fighter from Class E. He's too powerful. I think his skills aren't much different from those two!"

"No way? Big Brother and Big Sister are the representatives of martial arts. Victor is only the disciple of a foreign boxing champion and has only studied for two years. It can't be..."

The two of them left while talking. Nora suddenly opened her eyes. At that moment, her dark eyes met Justin's.

The mole under the man's eye seemed to be flashing with the same question.

The moment the two of them looked at each other, neither of them spoke. They stood up and walked toward the arena.

Indeed, Victor was getting off the stage. On the other side, a man was being carried off the stage.

“That’s a Class E martial artist. He entered Class F last year, and his skills are not bad. He couldn’t even take a few moves from Victor?”

Justin was a little hesitant as he stared at Victor. He slowly analyzed in a deep voice, “Furthermore, from the way he walked, his injuries seem to have healed completely. But he only took four days to heal his muscles and bones! This is too fast!”

“There must be a reason why things are so abnormal.” Nora suddenly approached Justin. Her voice was very low. “Follow him and take a look?”

Justin nodded.

The two of them followed Victor out. When they saw him take two steps, he reached out and pressed his chest, his face filled with pain.

The last time, Nora taught him a good lesson. Even if his external injuries were healed, his internal injuries were still there.

The wound on his chest was the hardest to heal.

As the two of them were thinking, Victor suddenly took out a bag of strange-looking medicine, opened it, and drank it.

After he finished drinking, the pain in his chest seemed to have been relieved. Even his footsteps had become more vigorous. It looked like his martial arts skills had improved again?

“There’s something wrong with that medicine.”

Just as this sentence appeared in Nora’s mind, Justin had already spoken. Nora nodded. “Don’t disturb him. Let’s go over and take a look first.”

Victor finished the bag of medicine and did not throw the packaging into the trash can. Instead, he carefully folded the bag and placed it in his pocket.

Nora frowned.

Justin seemed to have sensed something and asked, "You want it?"

"Yeah."

Justin handed her Cherry. "Wait a minute."

Nora had just taken Cherry when she saw Justin walking towards Victor in the distance. When the two of them brushed past each other, Justin's shoulder suddenly bumped into Victor.

Victor was furious. "What are you doing? Are you crazy?"

Justin was wearing a black mask, and his thin lips curled up slightly. "I'm sorry."

Victor still wanted to scold him. After all, his temper had always been bad. However, for some reason, when he met this man's pitch-black eyes, he could not say anything else.

This was the pressure of an expert.

Victor could only snort and mutter something before lowering his head and leaving quickly.

After he left, Justin turned around and returned. He took out the bag of medicine, that Victor had drunk earlier, like a magic trick and handed it to Nora.

Nora took it and glanced at it. Indeed, she saw some residue inside.

She smirked. "I'll let Lily see what's in this medicine tonight. It shouldn't be ordinary stimulants."

Justin nodded.

Cherry, who had long been placed on the ground by Nora, reached out her small hand to Justin. "Daddy, hug."

"Why do you need him to hug you? Don't you have legs?"

Nora muttered in disdain, but Justin still bent down without any hesitation and picked Cherry up. When he saw Nora frowning, he subconsciously explained, "It's too messy here. It's better to keep her close, just to be safe."

Nora: "..."

After a moment of silence, she asked, "Do you hug Pete this much too?"

Justin said without hesitation, "He doesn't need it. As a man, this little danger is nothing."

"..."

Why such double standards?

Nora ignored him and rolled her eyes at Cherry instead.

Cherry wrapped her arms around her father's neck and praised, "Daddy, you looked so handsome when you were stealing!"

Justin: "..."

Cherry blinked. "Should we continue to steal things?"

Justin smiled. "We have everything you want at home. In this world..."

He suddenly looked at Nora and said meaningfully, "Other than the one thing that I want to steal, I can buy everything else for you."

Cherry was curious. "Then what are you trying to steal, Daddy?"

Justin just smiled.

For some reason, Nora's heart skipped a beat when he stared at her.

Her face was even slightly hot, so much so that she did not notice a figure quietly approaching her.

Just as Justin's lips moved slightly and he was about to say something, a figure suddenly darted out from the side.

Quentin attacked Nora's face very quickly and took off her mask. "Big Sister, let me see your true colors today!"

Quentin moved very quickly. Just as it seemed like he was about to take off her mask, and even Nora was caught somewhat off-guard, a large hand

suddenly held her around her waist and pulled her back a couple of steps. She fell right into the man's arms.

The man's familiar testosterone-y aura took Nora by surprise.

She turned to see Justin staring at her. After quickly letting go of her waist, the man said in a low and deep voice, "You're welcome."

Nora: "..."

She actually wasn't planning on thanking him.

She stood up straight and looked at Quentin. "What are you doing?"

Quentin felt rather regretful that he hadn't managed to take off her mask. He said, "Sorry, Big Sister. I just wanted to see what you really look like."

When he was walking over just now, he had seen Big Sister spacing out for once. On top of that, she had even seemed distracted and somewhat dazed, so he had reckoned that this was probably the best opportunity he would ever have.

Unexpectedly, it had actually failed.

He couldn't help but glare at Justin, who was wearing a black mask.

What was he showing off how in love they were at a critical moment like that for?

Couldn't he just hug her at home? To think he actually did that in public. Was it because he thought that he was single and didn't have a girlfriend?

He curled his lips disdainfully and ignored Justin. Instead, he showed Nora a lot of admiration and asked, "Why didn't you come the last two days, Big Sister?"

Nora: "?"

Didn't he know exactly what she was doing?

She curled her lips into a smile and replied, "I had something on."

Quentin nodded. "I just so happened to have something on too. My cousin was framed, so I went to save her. By the way, are we still taking part in the match today, Big Sister?"

"Yeah."

Nora agreed to it without any hesitation.

Quentin looked around.

"Are you looking for someone?" asked Nora.

Quentin nodded. "I saw my cousin's car outside. She must have heard about the tournament somewhere and come here to have some fun. I'm afraid she'll offend someone because she doesn't know the rules, so I'm looking around to see if I can find her. I don't know where she's hiding, though."

Nora: "..."

Next to her, Cherry, who was holding her cell phone, swept her gaze across Quentin and shook her head a little. It would probably take that silly uncle of hers forever to realize that Mommy was Big Sister!

Nora and Justin were the two mainstays of the martial arts circle. With Quentin, the self-proclaimed third, with them, their team practically forged ahead unopposed.

Before they went into the ring, Quentin even said to Justin, "Remember to protect yourself later. You're the weakest among us three. Don't give the opponents any chance for a breakthrough."

Justin: "..."

His words made Nora give Justin a close, scrutinizing look.

The two of them had fought each other a few times before, but she hadn't been able to completely suppress Justin before. This showed that the man was very strong. Who exactly was he? Who had he learned his martial arts from?

Perhaps because he noticed her gaze, Justin came up to her and let out a low chuckle. With his beauty mark covered by his mask, the man's eyes were dark and bottomless and looked a little less bewitching than usual. He said, "I'll

take off the mask and let you look at me for free after the fight is over and we go home. Don't look anymore for now."

Nora: "!!"

Quentin: "..."

For some reason, he felt like they were showing off how in love they were again. The two of them were too much!

Were they here to compete or to show off how deeply they were in love with each other?!

The triggered Quentin straight-up displayed his martial prowess to its fullest and utterly defeated his opponent.

With all the points they had accumulated recently, they had reached Class D.

The team of three fought two more matches. However, when they were about to leave at night, the organizer of the tournament came up to them with a troubled look on his face. He said, "Please wait a minute, the three of you."

The trio stopped and looked at the organizer in confusion.

The organizer sighed and asked, "Can the three of you wait for a while and watch a certain match?"

Watch a certain match?

All three of them nodded.

Quentin had agreed because the tournament used to be organized by Ryan. At the bottom of it all, the Smiths had to take responsibility for the tournament.

As for Justin, as a leading figure in the martial arts circle, he had his responsibilities, of course.

Although Nora didn't actively participate in the Quinn School of Martial Arts' affairs, as Big Sister, she would play her part in maintaining order in the tournament, so she also agreed to it.

The organizer took the trio to Arena No. 5.

Once one-on-one matches were over, team matches were slotted in at intervals.

However, Nora was stunned when she saw the three people in the ring because...

The people in the ring were none other than Victor and his two fellow disciples!

The few of them were disciples of the Benevolence Hall, which had only been established for two years. Additionally, the owner of the Benevolence Hall was none other than the foreign boxing champion, Abigail!

Why had those three suddenly formed a team, though?

While she was wondering about it, the organizer standing beside them sighed and said, "That man called Victor, as well as his two fellow disciples, suddenly became very strong. Originally, we didn't think much about it—after all, once they reach Class F, there are Big Brother and Big Sister who will teach them a lesson or two."

While saying that, he secretly cast a glance at Justin.

Seeing that Justin was ignoring him, he continued and said, "But unexpectedly, those three have actually formed a team. Now that they've become a three-man team, it may really be true that no one can beat them anymore!"

Quentin snorted coldly at his words. "Why wouldn't anyone be able to beat them? How can you put yourself down when you haven't even fought them?! There's still me and Big... my elder sister, isn't it?"

He'd originally wanted to say 'Big Sister', but he suddenly remembered that Big Sister wanted to hide her identity, so he ended up saying 'elder sister' instead.

Nora: "??"

Her lips slowly curled into a smile. She couldn't help but wonder if that fellow would still be able to bring himself to call her his 'elder sister' once he knew who she really was.

The organizer, however, misunderstood and thought that Quentin wanted to say 'Big Brother', so he didn't think too much about it. He merely sighed and said, "There's only the two of you. Besides, it's one-on-one. To be honest, I'm not worried about Big Sister or Big Brother being up against Victor one-on-one. But there are three of them, so... it's hard to say!"

The organizer glanced at Justin.

Victor and his two fellow disciples were comparable in strength to Big Sister and Big Brother now. Unfortunately, Team Third In The World only had Big Brother and Quentin, who was ranked third. How would they be able to beat them?

Quentin also heaved a sigh. "Yeah. I'm not trying to diss you, but you're holding us back, bro."

Nevertheless, he still said impartially, "Just try your best. It doesn't matter even if you lose. We're all Americans here, so it doesn't matter."

As soon as he said that, the organizer fell silent for a moment. At last, he heaved a huge sigh and asked, "Do you know what their team name is?"

"What is it?"

"Americans Are Incompetent."

His words stunned the three of them.

Quentin shouted angrily, "What kind of ridiculous name is that? You guys actually allowed it?"

The organizer was also very angry. "We don't have any rules in the tournament. It's just like how no one would say anything even if you named your team First In The World.. They exploited that loophole. So, do you still think it's okay to lose?"

Was it okay to lose?

Of course not!

Quentin said, "Let us face them in a match! We'll kick their a*ses!"

The organizer looked at him and shook his head again. "Sigh. Let's talk about it again after you watch their match."

Quentin didn't understand what he meant, but shortly after, he did.

He'd originally thought that Victor must be the strongest among the three, but unexpectedly, the bald black man next to him was actually the strongest.

His body was as if it was made out of steel, and he seemed immune to all attacks. All the teams they were up against were from Class D, but the three of them played them all like they were babies.

Victor wasn't that lacking in martial arts ethics anymore this time.

The victory was theirs once the three of them threw their opponents out of the ring.

There was no applause around them. Victor was quiet and didn't say anything. The bald man next to him rubbed his bald head and said something in a foreign language.

Someone who didn't understand asked, "What did he say?"

Cherry translated it for him. "He said, 'Isn't there anyone in America who can fight?'"

"..."

That one line from her made everyone fall silent.

Even Quentin, who was usually the chattiest person ever, had a serious look on his face. He stared at them for quite a while before he finally leaned toward Nora and asked, "Big Sister, did you notice..."

"They've become stronger."

Nora answered him straightaway.

Quentin immediately nodded. "Yes, and it isn't just by a little. Why do I feel like Victor can last a few dozen moves against you now?"

Nora replied, "Twenty moves."

Quentin: "..."

Big Sister was simply so confident!

But!

He felt an acute sense of crisis. "I was originally ranked third in New York, but I feel threatened by that guy now. Aside from Big Brother and Big Sister, there's probably no one else who would be their match now, right? I can only tie with them at the most."

The organizer sighed and said, "Now you understand why I asked you guys to watch the match, right? It'll probably only be possible to defeat them if Big Brother and Big Sister team up!"

Quentin nodded at once. "I think so, too."

Even if he could stop Victor, Big Sister would have a hard time dealing with the other two by herself.

The organizer said, "Out of all the teams, Team Third In The World has the highest chance of beating them. Therefore, from tomorrow onward, I intend to arrange five matches for you guys every day, so that you can enter Class F as soon as possible. This way, you'll be able to go up against them! Otherwise, if they hog the Class F seats and clamor there every day, won't we die of anger? I wonder if the three of you would agree to it?"

Justin looked straight at Nora and said, "She has the final say."

The organizer: "..."

He looked at Nora.

Nora kept quiet for a moment before she nodded. "Okay."

She was duty-bound to uphold the American pride in their martial arts.

The organizer looked at Quentin again.

Quentin, who had a stern look on his face, hesitated for very long before he finally said, "Okay! After all, as the person ranked third in the world, who else can do it, if not me?"

The organizer finally breathed a sigh of relief and left.

After he left, Quentin walked over to Justin and Nora. “Big Sister, I think the three of us may not be able to win against the three of them because we have someone in the team holding us back.”

Both Justin and Nora nodded.

And wasn't that so?

He had quite a lot of self-awareness after all.

Unexpectedly, the next moment, Quentin said to Justin, “How about you withdraw from the team? If we replace you with Big Brother, we likely won't have any problems anymore!”

Justin: “??”

He let out a low scoff of laughter. He was about to speak when a woman's cold and urgent voice reached them. “No, I don't want that.”

Quentin: “?”

Justin also looked at her, only to see dissatisfaction in Nora's almond-shaped eyes. “I don't want to be in the same team as him.”

Justin: “...”

Quentin was also dumbfounded. “Huh? Why?”

“We don't get along.” After giving a brief explanation, Nora looked at Justin and added, “Besides, he isn't weak. The three of us can do it.”

Only Nora, who had fought with him before, knew how strong Justin truly was. Quentin usually fought very valiantly against their opponents, so he had basically dealt with the opponents for Justin. Moreover, he was carrying Cherry, which made Nora worried that she would get hurt, so she also helped him out all the time.

As a result, despite being on the same team, Quentin still didn't know how strong Justin ‘The Pretty Boy’ was.

Quentin liked Big Sister, but he also liked Big Brother very much.

He couldn't help but speak up for Big Brother. "Big Sister, what did Big Brother do to you? Did he steal your baby? Or did he steal your husband? Why are you so at odds with him?"

Nora: "..."

Quentin scratched his head. "Besides, I know you definitely think highly of your husband, but shouldn't we be realistic? You can't just think that your husband isn't weak just because beauty is in the eye of the beholder."

Then, he held his arm up, raised his chin, and said, "Or how about I compete with him in a duel? If he can beat me, he can stay in the team."

Nora glanced at him and left.

Justin also glanced at him and left.

Quentin: "??"

What did those two mean by that? Why did he feel as if the more he looked at them, the more he felt like something was wrong?

Were they looking down on him?

The corners of his lips spasmed and he chased after them. However, he could no longer see the two of them.

Never mind.

He would just look for his cousin first.

He went one round in the arena but didn't find her. In the end, he decided to go to the car park and wait for her!!

No matter where she was, she would eventually have to go to the car park, right?

Nora and Justin had already turned the corner and gone onto the path at the side. After confirming that there was no one on either side, Justin said, "I know those two people that teamed up with Victor. They have been here since the start of the tournament, but at that time, they weren't as strong as they are now."

“So, that means they’ve also become stronger?”

Nora asked hesitantly.

Justin nodded.

Nora took out the drink pouch that Justin stole from Victor and asked, “Do you know what Morris told me?”

Justin practically replied without any hesitation, “Human experiments?”

Nora was surprised. “You know about it?”

“I was guessing.”

Nora wasn’t doubtful anymore. Given how smart Justin was, he must have already figured out something from the point where Morris started to frequently check whether there were any unknown chemicals in Old Maddy’s body.

A puzzled Justin asked, “Are you suspecting that their increase in strength is related to illegal drugs?”

Nora raised the pouch she was holding. “I will know whether there’s any relation once I check the chemical composition of the stuff in here overnight.”

Justin nodded. The two walked to the car park.

Nora had only just come up to her black jeep when Quentin came after her.

When Nora, who was about to stop in front of the jeep, saw him coming over out of the corner of her eye, she paused slightly and instead followed Justin to the ordinary car two parking spaces away from the jeep.

Justin glanced behind him. When he saw Quentin, he immediately understood why she had done that. However, he pretended not to understand and raised an eyebrow. He asked, “Are you thinking of going home with me? It’ll be my greatest pleasure.”

Nora: “...”

She rolled her eyes and said, “Can you be a little more serious?”

Justin let out a low chuckle. "This is the very first time someone has ever told me to be more serious."

In front of outsiders, he had always been unfathomable and unsmiling, but the man was really letting go of himself more and more in front of her.

For some reason, Nora suddenly thought of the first time they had met.

The man had been cold and unfathomable at that time.

He had walked out of Hotel Finest's elevator in California like he was the bright moon surrounded by a myriad of stars. At that time, Pete's head was buried into his shoulders with only the back of his head exposed.

The man had glanced at her and then coldly said, "You're not my type, Ms. Smith."

...

How times had changed. How had that cold and distant man of that time suddenly fallen into the mortal world?

While she was thinking about it, the man walked over to the backseat, opened the door, and put Cherry in. Then, he looked at her. "You don't want to be in the backseat? Oh, that's true. You'd definitely want to be in the passenger seat instead."

Nora: "..."

Fine. No matter how much time flew by, it seemed like the man would only become more and more narcissistic.

Nora sat in the backseat in the end. Justin didn't mind, either. He drove off with her and Cherry.

In the car park.

Quentin stood in front of the jeep after watching Big Sister get into the car with her husband and daughter. However, even after waiting for a long while, he didn't see his cousin coming out. He frowned and looked into the jeep through the window.

The car's chassis was very high. When he looked at the backseat, he noticed two pieces of clothing that had been placed there.

Quentin was taken aback.

Weren't those the clothes that Nora was wearing when she was treating Uncle Ian in the hospital?

Why were they in the backseat?

No, wait...

Quentin suddenly understood something, and he immediately smiled.

Nora left with Justin. She waited until Quentin left before she finally went back to her car.

She got into the car and changed in the backseat. After casually tossing the red dress onto the backseat, she finally opened the door to go to the driver's seat.

Before she went over, Justin chuckled and said, "If you really want to hide your identity, you should change your car too."

He tossed his car key to Nora and suggested, "Why don't you drive this car instead for now?"

Nora glanced at his car.

From the outside, it was just an ordinary Volkswagen.

But once one entered, they would realize that it wasn't as simple as it looked on the inside.

Be it the engine or the leather seats, all of them were the best. Remodeling a car cost a lot. In addition, even if she had the money, time was needed to remodel a car at the last minute.

Thus, after thinking about it for a while, she didn't turn him down. She took the car keys from him and said, "I won't stand on ceremony, then."

Nora drove the jeep while Justin drove the 'ordinary' Volkswagen. The two left the building one after the other, and subsequently entered a high-end residential complex.

After getting Justin to park the Volkswagen in the residential complex, Nora said, "I've bought an apartment here. This is the parking lot for the apartment."

Justin looked upstairs. "What's your apartment number?"

Nora was a little surprised, but nevertheless answered, "302."

Then, she asked, "What are you planning?"

"To buy 301." Justin smiled and said, "If you ever move in, we can be neighbors."

"... You must be sick in the head," said Nora.

"Yeah, why don't you treat my illness?" Justin immediately quipped.

Nora: "..."

The corners of her lips spasmed. She got into the jeep and said, "Get in the car. I'll take you guys home."

Justin picked up Cherry and got in the backseat. When Nora, who had gotten into the driver's seat, saw them, she couldn't help but say, "She has already grown up, yet you're still holding her?"

"There's no child seat. It's not safe."

Justin briefly explained.

Nora curled her lips disdainfully. "She's already used to riding in the car by herself."

"Mommy, that was because no one doted on me back then! I'm not used to it anymore!"

Cherry protested weakly. However, as soon as she said that, she saw Nora's stern eyes in the rearview mirror. She was so scared that she shrank back and hastily said, "Yes, I'm very used to it. Why don't you put me down, Daddy? Don't hold me so tightly~"

Despite saying that, she didn't get off Justin's legs but instead hugged his neck tighter.

Nora: "..."

Justin chuckled and stroked Cherry's hair. He didn't expose her, but instead supported her and said, "Be good. Don't listen to your Mommy, she's just jealous."

Cherry was puzzled. "What's she jealous of?"

"That I'm hugging you, of course."

This was an ambiguous statement.

First, it meant that she was jealous of Cherry.

Second, it meant that she was jealous of Justin.

That scumbag was really taking advantage of her every moment of the day.

The corners of Nora's lips spasmed. She couldn't be bothered with the two of them, so she instead asked detachedly, "When are you and Pete switching back, Cherry?"

Cherry panicked at once. She said, "Mommy, I really miss you very much. I miss you super much! I miss the way you sleep, the way you get ready to go to bed, the way you doze off while you eat..."

She couldn't come up with any more. After being stuck for a while, she finally said, "But Pete needs you more! After all, you haven't seen each other for five years, so I won't disturb your bonding session, okay?"

"..."

That clever little fellow obviously didn't want to come back anymore after Justin spoiled her so much, so she made up so many excuses.

She sneered, "Shall I thank you on behalf of Pete?"

"It's fine~" Cherry said shyly, "What can I do? I'm his little sister, after all, so I have to give in to my elder brother~"

“ ... ”

It seemed like Cherry had become more thick-skinned than before.

She glared at Justin. It really was like what they said—one was marked by the company they kept!

After Nora took Cherry and Justin to the Hunts, while Cherry was getting out of the car, she asked, “Mommy, when are you and Daddy taking Pete and me to the amusement park?”

“Another day.”

Nora answered.

Cherry, however, persisted. She asked, “When is that?”

“... The day after tomorrow!”

Nora had no choice but to give her an answer.

“Yay!” Cherry raised her eyebrows at Justin triumphantly. Then, she bounced off while holding his hand and entered the manor.

Nora returned to the Smiths after that.

Unexpectedly, right after she got out of the car, Quentin came out of nowhere and blocked her way. He said, “You don’t have to pretend anymore, Nora! I know your secret now!”

Nora’s pupils shrank!

Surely her identity as Big Sister hadn’t been exposed, had it?

She asked calmly, “What secret?”

“Did you go to the martial arts tournament because you heard something?”

A resigned Nora nodded. “That’s right.”

“I knew it. You even changed and put on a mask, so I didn’t recognize you.” Quentin looked around after he spoke. Then he said, “Since you were at the tournament, then you must have heard of me, right? ”

Nora: “?”

Quentin said, “Didn’t I already tell you? I’m the best fighter in the family and am ranked third in New York. I will definitely shine in the tournament! Do you know who I am?”

“... No, I don’t.”

Quentin the dimwit immediately looked around. Then, he said, “I’ll tell you and you alone since you’re my cousin, Nora. You’re the only one I’m telling, get it? Even Joel doesn’t know the alias I’m using in the tournament!”

He straightened his back, raised his chin, and declared, “I am Smithin!”

“...”

However, when he didn’t see any reaction from Nora, Quentin glanced at her and frowned. “Haven’t you heard of that name? Then do you know the famous Team Third In The World?”

Be it Smithin or Team Third In The World, both had actually become very famous in the underground arena recently. Anyone who had been there would have heard of him.

But...

Nora decided to tease him and deliberately said, “I’m new there, so I only heard them talking about Victor.”

Quentin: “...”

No one in the family knew that he was participating in the martial arts tournament, so he couldn’t show off. Now that he had finally found a cousin who was interested in the tournament, how could she be kept unaware of his greatness?

Quentin was very puzzled, very much so. “Victor is nothing. He’s just a piece of trash who lost to me two years ago. Even if you have never heard of Smithin, surely you’ve heard of Team Third In The World, right?!”

He hadn’t competed in his own name, so it was normal that she hadn’t heard of him. But how come she hadn’t heard of the famous Team Third In The World, either?

Nora walked toward the house. “And then?”

“What do you mean by ‘and then’?!” Quentin became anxious. He gritted his teeth, steeled his resolve, and said, “Forget it, I’ll let you in on another big secret!”

Nora looked back at him.

Quentin said, “But you have to swear that you won’t tell anyone! I promised that I wouldn’t reveal her identity casually to outsiders. I’m only telling you because you’re my cousin.”

Nora had a vague idea what he was going to say next when she heard that. Sure enough, the next moment, he asked, “Do you know who that woman in the red dress in Team Third In The World is?”

Nora: “...”

“She’s Big Sister! The Big Sister of the Quinn School of Martial Arts!!!”

Quentin said triumphantly, “Do you see now? Even Big Sister has teamed up with me. She approached me because she thought that I was talented and fought pretty well... Surely you’ve at least heard of Big Sister, right?”

“... Yeah, I have.”

Quentin was satisfied at last. He said, “So, don’t you feel very honored that Big Sister has seen something in your elder brother? But don’t you get ahead of yourself. You absolutely mustn’t say anything about this to outsiders. Big Sister’s identity is confidential.”

“...”

“Is that look in your eyes envy? Actually, you don’t have to be envious that Big Sister has seen something in me. Uncle Ian picked me out of everyone in the family to practice martial arts when I was a child, so I’ve been practicing ever since. I heard that you used to be obese, and were even in poor health in the past, so you must not have practiced martial arts much before, right? By the way, which class are you in now?”

Nora: “...”

She knew how eager Quentin was to show off and bask in the limelight, so she knew that she didn't need to say anything. Sure enough, Quentin said, "My team is already in Class D now. Once we win another five matches tomorrow, we'll advance to Class E. We'll be able to advance to Class F the day after tomorrow!"

"... Wow, how amazing."

"Isn't it? I think so, too." Quentin folded his arms and said triumphantly, "But don't you dare think it's because I'm piggybacking off Big Sister. I can still compete by myself without any problems even without Big Sister. Why are you walking so fast? Forget it, I won't say any more, lest you become jealous. But don't worry, if someone bullies you in the arena, you can just use the name Smithin to scare them off!"

"..."

Nora suddenly felt like she'd better not let the young man with eighth-grader syndrome know her true identity after all. If she did, she reckoned that she'll never have any peace anymore.

The corners of her lips spasmed and she went upstairs.

When she entered the bedroom, she realized that Pete had already returned from school and was obediently working on his Mathematical Olympiad problems.

Nora glanced at his workbook. The Mathematical Olympiad problems he was doing were almost at high school standard now. The five-year-old's IQ was simply terrifying.

"Mommy."

Pete greeted her obediently.

Nora made a sound of acknowledgment and stepped forward. She stroked his hair, and then bent over and gave him a kiss on the forehead. She said, "Let's go downstairs for dinner after you're done with that."

Pete nodded and continued to bury his head into the workbook.

Nora picked up her cell phone and saw a voice message from Tanya: 'Have you given your son a kiss?'

Nora replied: '... Yes, I have.'

Tanya: "Yeah, Pete's sense of security still leaves a little to be desired. It can't be compared with Cherry's at all. After all, the role a mother plays is simply too crucial when one is growing up. You have to have more physical contact with Pete, get it?"

Nora: 'Yeah, yeah. I know.'

Tanya sighed emotionally again and said: "Don't think of me as being too long-winded. After all... I also wish I could give mine a kiss."

When Nora heard the message, she immediately knew that Tanya had thought of her missing child again.

She didn't know how she should comfort her. After all, she had also experienced the pain of losing her own child.

Nora kept quiet for a while before she replied: "You'll definitely find him or her one day."

Tanya: 'Yeah.'

Since she had fallen silent, Nora didn't send her any more messages. She turned to her son. Suddenly, she felt like something was amiss. "Where's Mia?" She asked.

By right, Pete and Mia should be playing with each other at this time!

Without even lifting his head, Pete replied, "She's having dance classes at God-mom's!"

"..."

In the villa in the suburbs.

Mia's forehead was covered in perspiration as she did leg stretches.

The small and thin five-year-old looked as if she was only four years old. Tanya went over and gave her a few pointers.

Mia glanced at Tanya.

Her teacher was very strict, but for some reason, she wasn't scared of her at all. When Tanya lowered her head toward her, Mia even suddenly kissed her on the cheek.

Tanya was stunned. She looked at Mia in disbelief, upon which Mia said, "Didn't you want a kiss, Ms. Turner? I'll give you a kiss."

An acerbic feeling suddenly welled up in Tanya, and she felt a mix of emotions come over her.

It seemed like she could still feel the warmth from the soft lips on her cheek.

Tanya touched her cheek and looked at the small, timid Mia in front of her. Suddenly, a feeling welled up in her—would it also feel like this if her child kissed her?

She spaced out and kept quiet for a while.

Seeing her freeze, Mia became frightened. Her eyes reddened and she hastily asked, "Are you mad, Ms. Turner?"

Tanya didn't know whether she should be angry or not.

In fact, she even felt like her decision to teach Mia dancing was a mistake in itself!

The child she had with Joel was missing.

Yet, here she was, teaching Joel's daughter how to dance. In fact, when she kissed her, she hadn't even pushed her away. It was as if she had already accepted her.

How could she do that?!

Tanya was originally helping Mia with her leg stretches, but she suddenly stood up. She wanted to say coldly, 'Don't kiss me again in the future.'

But when she looked at Mia's round eyes and small pointed face, she simply couldn't bring herself to say it. In fact, the words at the tip of her tongue even changed. She said, "No, I'm not."

Mia nodded. "Then, are you happy?"

Tanya wanted to say that she wasn't, but when she saw the hopeful look in Mia's eyes, she instead replied impulsively, "Yes."

Her answer made Mia's eyes instantly light up.

She said timidly, "My mother said that I can't kiss her so casually, Ms. Turner. She would also become unhappy if I made physical contact with her, so I thought you were unhappy, too. I only kissed you because I heard you say that you wanted a kiss. Are you really not mad at me?"

Her mother didn't allow her to touch her?

Tanya was dumbfounded.

She didn't know how other mothers behaved, but if it were her daughter, she would never tire of giving her kisses. Besides, whenever she was out, she always saw a lot of children who behaved very intimately with their mothers.

Little did she expect a tiny little girl like Mia to be so pitiful?

With that thought in mind, she said, "It's true, I really am happy. Ms. Turner likes to keep close contact with children."

"That's great!"

Mia stood up straight and grabbed Tanya's hand. She made her lower her head and then kissed her on the cheek again. She said, "I will make you happy every day from now on, Ms. Turner!"

She pursed her lips and gave her a bashful smile.

Tanya simply couldn't bring herself to say any words of rejection when faced with such a well-behaved and adorable little girl!

She ruffled Mia's hair and asked, "Doesn't it hurt when you stretch?"

Mia immediately nodded. "It does!"

"Then why didn't you say anything?" Tanya asked curiously.

After she decided to take Mia as her student, she had added an hour of class for her after school every day. As there wasn't a suitable location in the kindergarten, she had brought her to her home.

Fine beads of perspiration had formed on Mia's forehead when she was dancing, yet she hadn't complained about being tired.

After dancing, Tanya had even told her to do leg stretches.

One must always do their stretches properly after exercise. Besides, Mia was already five. To be honest, it was already a bit of a late start for a dancer because the body would no longer be flexible enough anymore. Thus, Tanya had also taught her a few difficult moves such as bending over backward.

Despite that, Mia hadn't made even a single sound from beginning to end.

Just as she was wondering whether it was because the girl's pain receptors were less sensitive than others, Mia replied, "I can't complain that it hurts."

Tanya was taken aback. "Why?"

When she was a child, she would always cry out even at the slightest bit of pain when she was practicing. This way, the teacher would show her some mercy.

Mia replied, "Because Daddy will be unhappy if I'm in pain. If Daddy is unhappy, Mommy will also be unhappy."

Unhappy?

Tanya frowned. Suddenly, she started to feel sorry for the girl.

Although she lived in a wealthy family and had both her parents with her, she led too frustrating a life. While other five-year-olds from ordinary families were blissfully unaware, she didn't even have the right to complain when she was in pain!

Tanya suddenly became a little angry with Joel.

How could he treat a child like that?

No matter what, children were angels of the world. They were the most innocent!!

Tanya said to Mia, "Mia, you can speak freely without holding back in Ms. Turner's home in the future. If you're tired from practice, you can say so. If you're in pain because of stretching, you can also cry out. If you're thirsty or hungry, you can tell me that too. I will prepare everything for you."

Mia's eyes lit up. "Really?"

"Yeah."

Mia hesitated for a while. Then, she hung her head and asked somewhat embarrassedly, "Then... can you bake me a cake?"

Bake her a cake?

Tanya found the request rather odd but nevertheless agreed. "You must be hungry after practicing for so long. Alright, let's go downstairs."

Tanya used to be really bad at housework, but when she went abroad and lived by herself, she had to cook for herself, so her culinary skills had improved over the years.

Baking a cake was no problem for her.

Sometime later, she walked out of the kitchen with a simple cupcake in her hands. She was a little embarrassed as she said, "I can only bake simple stuff like this, Mia. You don't mind, right?"

Mia immediately shook her head. "Of course not, Ms. Turner!"

Tanya smiled and said, "You can dig in now."

Mia picked up the fork. She was about to eat when she suddenly said, "I'll give you half, Ms. Turner."

"No, it's fine."

A smiling Tanya went back to the kitchen and then came out with another cupcake. "I made a few. Come on, let's eat!"

Mia stared at the cupcake. Suddenly, she clasped her hands together, closed her eyes, and seemingly thought about something. Only then did she start to eat the cupcake.

Tanya looked at her, feeling rather amused. The girl actually had the sense to say a prayer before eating.

The two of them dug into their respective cupcakes with gusto.

When Tanya saw the little girl's cheeks all puffed up from eating, she felt a sense of accomplishment come over her, especially when Mia finished more than one cupcake from the batch she had baked.

She ate so much that even her belly had swelled up.

After they were done eating, she went to the kitchen to do the dishes. Then, she told Mia, "You can come here for dance practice every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday in the future. You can go and play the rest of the time. You're still young, so you shouldn't restrain yourself."

Mia pursed her lips and smiled at her as she nodded. "Okay, Ms. Turner."

All of a sudden, the doorbell rang.

Tanya knew that it must be Joel here to pick Mia up.

She looked at the clock in surprise—sure enough, it was already seven. She hadn't expected time to pass so fast. Somewhat reluctantly, she helped Mia carry her schoolbag and then walked over to the door.

Sure enough, Joel was standing outside when she opened the door.

Tanya didn't look at him. Instead, she waved at Mia and said, "See you in school tomorrow, Mia~"

"Okie-Dokie. See you tomorrow, Ms. Turner~"

Mia took Joel's hand after she spoke. Just as she was about to leave, she suddenly looked back at Tanya and said, "Thank you for the birthday cake today, Ms. Turner. It was really yummy!"

Birthday cake?

Tanya was taken aback. Then, she heard Joel say, "It's Mia's birthday today."

Birthday...

Tanya felt like a bomb had suddenly gone off in her head.

It was Mia's birthday. No wonder she had asked Tanya to bake her a cake, and even said a prayer before eating it.

Oh, right.

He had slept with Hillary right after he slept with her back then, hadn't he?

It was all too normal that their children's birthdays would be so close to each other's.

She bit her lip.

It had also been her child's birthday five days ago!

She didn't even know where her child might be wandering lost in the world, yet here she was, celebrating Mia's birthday?

Indescribable pain and misery made Tanya's expression instantly change.

She stared at Mia blankly.

Mia was terribly nervous. The puzzled girl looked at Tanya and asked, "W-what's wrong, Ms. Turner? Are you upset?"

She pushed Joel and said, "Daddy, hurry up and kiss Ms. Turner! She'll cheer up if you do that!"

Joel: "..."

Tanya: "..."

Joel didn't know the reason for Tanya's sudden change in behavior, but he knew that she likely held a grudge against Mia's existence all this time.

He lowered his head and slowly said, "I'm sorry."

He was sorry.

Five years ago, he had felt even more apologetic toward her.

If he hadn't gotten himself drunk, become muddleheaded, and ended up sleeping with Hillary, how would he have gotten her pregnant and ended up letting her give birth to Mia?

No, to be honest, he hadn't even known that she was pregnant.

Hillary understood him very well. She knew that he would definitely make her abort the child if he were to know, so she had secretly gone into hiding.

It wasn't until ten months later that she had finally returned with Mia.

He had done a DNA test when he saw the child—she was indeed his daughter. As such, he could only acknowledge her. That was probably the one and only time he had acted so spinelessly.

His heart had softened when he saw the child.

It was as if the child had a lot of affinity with him.

When Tanya heard his apology, her shame and anger made her eyes redden. She was about to yell at him when Mia suddenly held her hand and said, "I'll kiss you if Daddy won't, Ms. Turner. Don't be mad anymore, okay?"

Tanya lowered her head. When her eyes met Mia's timid eyes that looked as if she was trying to please her, her fury instantly extinguished.

Indeed.

She had only lost her child because she hadn't kept an eye on it. What did it have to do with Joel or Mia?

In fact, Joel didn't even know that she had given birth to his child!

Tanya lowered her head and stared at Mia.

She was just a pitiful little girl.

Tanya suddenly said, "Wait a minute."

She turned and went upstairs.

In addition to her own bedroom, she had also prepared another two children's rooms on the upper floor. One was a boy's room and the other a girl's.

This was because she didn't know whether her missing child was a boy or a girl.

Regardless, she would always prepare clothes for her son or daughter every year. The clothes currently in the closets were for five-year-olds, and on the bed in the girl's room was also a gift box.

It was the birthday gift she had bought five days ago for her child.

There was also one in the boy's room.

She picked up the gift box. Inside was an exquisite Barbie doll wearing a pink dress. Next to it were all kinds of doll clothing that one could dress up the doll with.

She touched the bedsheets and murmured silently, "I don't know where you are, my child, but I believe you'll be willing to make another child like yourself happy, right?"

She took the gift box and went downstairs.

Before she reached the door, she saw Mia nervously asking Joel, "Daddy, why did Ms. Turner suddenly get mad? Is it because it's Mia's birthday? Daddy, I won't celebrate my birthday anymore, okay? I like Ms. Turner, I don't want to make her mad..."

Joel stroked her hair. His voice was soft and gentle as he said, "It's not your fault. Daddy's the one who made Ms. Turner angry."

Mia then said seriously, "Daddy, you should apologize to Ms. Turner if you made her mad. Are you too embarrassed to say sorry, Daddy?"

Joel: "..."

He sighed. "I've already told her I'm sorry, but she won't accept my apology."

"Then say it a few more times!"

A child's world was very simple. For Mia, if her father had done something wrong, then he should apologize until Ms. Turner forgave him.

Joel sighed. "Okay."

When Mia wanted to say something again, she suddenly spotted Tanya, who had just returned. Her eyes lit up and she immediately called out, "Ms. Turner!"

Tanya handed her the gift box with the Barbie and said, "Happy birthday."

Mia's eyes instantly became even brighter. "Thank you, Ms. Turner!"

The little girl stretched out her hands and took the Barbie doll from her.

The Barbie was half her height, so it was very heavy for the small and thin girl.

Joel reached out to carry it for her.

However, Mia ducked and said, "I can do it, Daddy!"

This was a gift from Ms. Turner. She liked it very much.

Joel nodded. Then, he looked at Tanya. He was about to speak when Tanya sneered, "You must be very busy with work, right, Mr. Smith?"

Joel was overjoyed when he heard what she said. He thought that Tanya was showing him concern, so he nodded and replied, "It's alright."

"Hah." Tanya gave him a mocking smile and said, "Since it's alright, then shouldn't you learn how to be a qualified father, Mr. Smith?"

Joel was taken aback.

Tanya knew that there were some things she shouldn't say in front of Mia, so she merely gave him a subtle reminder. Then, she said, "Bye, Mia."

Mia replied softly, "Bye, Ms. Turner."

When Joel took Mia into the car, he received a call from Hillary. When he answered, the woman said, "Joel, it's Mia's birthday today. Can you let me see her? I miss her. I think Mia would also want her family to be together."

Joel's expression turned cold. He was about to say something when Hillary spoke again. She said, "I'm Mia's mother, after all, Joel. I really miss her. I should think that she misses me, too! You can't stop us from meeting when we're mother and daughter. Mia will resent you for it in the future if you do that."

“I know you hate me, but my love for Mia is true. I am the one who has been taking care of Mia ever since she was born. You should know how dependent she is on me. Joel, all I want is really just to see my daughter. I don’t have any other intentions... Please?”

Joel looked at Mia.

He suddenly asked, “Do you want to meet your mother, Mia?”

Mia’s eyes immediately flickered when she heard him.

Her mom had told her before that she had to reply that she wanted to meet her if Daddy ever asked. Otherwise, her mom would hate her very much.

But she thought of how Ms. Turner had told her not to keep things to herself, and to voice her thoughts if she had any. She had said that she could cry out if she was in pain, or cry if she wanted to...

When she thought of what Ms.. Turner had told her, the little Mia seemed to have suddenly found her courage.

Just as Mia was about to say something, Hillary’s voice rang out through the phone. “Do you miss Mommy, Mia?”

The little Mia trembled a little when she heard Hillary’s voice. In the end, she nodded and replied weakly, “Yes.”

“Did you hear that, Joel?”

Hillary tried her best to convince him, “Mia wants to see me!”

Joel heaved a huge sigh.

He didn’t want to let Mia and Hillary come into contact anymore, but if Mia wanted to see her mother, he couldn’t stop her.

Therefore, Hillary immediately knew that Joel must have relented when she heard him sigh. She asked tentatively, “Can I go back to the Smiths’ tonight? I heard that you’ve just found your younger sister, so I can also take the chance to pay her a visit.”

Chapter 353 - The Plan of Saving Nora Novel Free

Yvonne shouted crazily. She pointed at Joel and scolded, "You adopted me only because you wanted to matchmake me. Now, you see that I'm useless. This woman is back and you already have a sister, so you're planning to abandon me! Are you despising me for being a hindrance? You Smiths are all bad people! Bad people! From the moment you adopted me, you've been up to no good!"

"..."

She screamed hysterically. If someone did not know better, they would have thought that the Smiths were torturing her.

She did not know how long she had been shouting for before Nora stretched out her fingers and dug her ears. "Tsk, I really can't listen to it anymore."

Yvonne's voice stopped as she looked at her angrily.

Nora squatted down and looked at her face to face. "Before you came, I investigated you."

She wanted to see if this person could still be saved. Was her heart bad or was it really because she lacked love?

After all, she was an adopted daughter.

The result was shocking.

She took out her phone and opened the information she had saved in the photo album. "You said that he adopted you and treated you badly... Then do you know what the children who were with you at the orphanage are doing now?"

"This is the girl who slept on your top bunk. You should know her, right? She was adopted by an ordinary family, but she didn't have the money to go to university after she went to high school. So she went out to work and met her boyfriend. The two of them are married now, but they have been fighting for their lives. She never knew in her life that someone's clothes could be customized for hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars because she had never seen that much money."

"This is normal. Look at this girl. She's also a girl from your dormitory. She was adopted by a beastly father and was placed under house arrest for 20

years. He got someone to come to her door and let her pick up guests to earn money. Her life was worse than death. Now that she has that kind of illness, she can't see well and is waiting to die."

"And this..."

The pictures were of all kinds of adopted children and their recent situations. Most of the children lived normally, but they were only middle-class.

A small portion of people lived miserably.

Nora looked at Yvonne. "So, why can't you thank him for never mistreating you, for sending you to the best school, and even sending you overseas to study? The piano, violin, dance, computer, which of these don't you need resources for? Some people have never come into contact with them. As for company and feelings, some people are just not good at talking, but he has never mocked you or ignored you, right?"

"We shouldn't ask for too much. The thought of destroying what we can't get is too terrifying."

Yvonne still retorted, "I don't ask for much. I just want a family! But the people in this family are too cold to me! I'm just a child!"

Nora saw that she was being stubborn and sneered. Before she could say anything, Joel's voice suddenly came from the side. "I originally didn't want to talk to you, but I don't want to tarnish my reputation like you! Have you ever wondered why Uncle Ian is so distant and cold to you?"

Yvonne was startled. "What?"

Joel lowered his eyes. "When you were four years old, you had a fever once. Uncle Ian even guarded you for a night. At that time, he even played with you often... He was a perfect father!"

Four years old?

This was something that had happened too long ago, and Yvonne had long forgotten about it.

As she was thinking, she heard Joel say, "Uncle Ian doesn't treat you well because when you were four years old, he saw you kill the little rabbit that you kept as a pet."

Yvonne's entire body froze.

Joel lowered his eyes. "Uncle Ian bought you all kinds of pets, but because you felt that he treated them too well, you indirectly caused their deaths. During that period of time, other than humans, there were no living things in the house! Uncle Ian tried to correct your thoughts, but you were born with bad roots. You were bad to the bone. If you felt the slightest dissatisfaction, you would poison them. At that time, I felt that you were mentally unstable, but at most, you would hurt the pets. But I didn't expect you to dare to poison people now! A vicious woman like you probably has a black heart. How could Uncle Ian possibly treat you with love?!"

Yvonne narrowed her eyes.

She bit her lip. "Those pets stole my love. So what if I killed them? They're just some animals! And that Old Maddy was just a lunatic adopted by our family. He didn't even have any dignity when he was alive. So what if he died? He didn't even have a family. What's the point of such a person living in this world!"

Hearing her words, Nora narrowed her eyes.

Over the years, she had been used to seeing patients and lunatics. However, the person in front of her was the first person who made her feel terrified because she was a naturally bad person.

She did not want to be involved with her anymore. She only said one last sentence. "Actually, when he adopted you, he had never thought of giving up on you again. If you don't believe me, you can look at your name."

Name?

Yvonne was stunned before she reacted. Her name was Yvonne, and Ian loved Yvette.

She clenched her fists and sneered. "I already know what this name means. My existence is just him showing off his longing for his ex-girlfriend!"

Nora said softly, "But he has been longing for her all his life."

So how could he chase the adopted daughter who represented Yvette out of the house?

Yvonne was stunned.

Nora did not give her a chance to speak again. Actually, she did not want to say anything to her here. She just did not want Yvonne to hate the person on the bed for no reason and let her tarnish his reputation.

Now that everything was clear, she looked at Joel. "Send her to the police station."

Joel was silent.

Nora said, "Didn't you say that he's the most law-abiding? Then he'll definitely send her to the police station and not torture her privately."

When Joel heard this, he looked at the person on the hospital bed. In the end, he suppressed the anger in his heart and said to the bodyguard, "Send her to the police station. Also, send all the surveillance cameras footage. We'll definitely convict her of attempted murder!"

"Yes, sir."

When Yvonne was dragged out by the security guards, she no longer spoke. Her body was also soft.

Nora did not have time to sigh about her fate. She only told Joel that she was leaving first.

It had been a long time since she went to the underground arena. She was going to take a look tonight.

Otherwise, if she could not enter Class F, she would not be able to compete with Big Brother!

She parked the car at the martial arts arena and entered.

Quentin, who had been protecting her all along, followed closely behind. He was stunned when he entered the parking lot of the underground arena.

What was his little cousin doing here?

Nora entered the underground arena and saw Justin in the food section.

After all, a man holding a little girl was too eye-catching.

She walked over and Cherry, who was wearing a silver mask, said softly, "Mommy, I haven't seen you in a few days. I missed you so much~ When I see you, I feel full of energy!"

Nora: "..."

The corners of her lips twitched. Seeing that Cherry still had the intention to continue talking, she quickly said, "Shhh."

Cherry immediately shut her mouth obediently.

Nora walked over and fell onto the sofa. She immediately leaned against the sofa and closed her eyes to rest. In order to wait for Yvonne to go to the hospital tonight, she had not slept since the day before.

However, after closing her eyes, she could still hear Cherry mumbling at Justin's ear. "Daddy, do you see that? Mommy is very scary if she hasn't slept enough. You can't provoke her now!"

Justin smiled. "...How scary is she?"

Cherry said softly, "When I was young, I was insensible once and woke her up. She spanked me a few times! It hurt so much!"

"..."

The man remained silent for a long time before saying, "I envy you."

Nora: "??"

What did he envy Cherry for? Being spanked?

Was this dog man still a masochist?

She grimaced, rolled over, and went back to sleep.

At this moment, enthusiastic applause and sighs were suddenly heard on the nearest ring. Then, someone passed by them while still discussing fervently.

“Heavens, isn’t Victor too powerful? The last time he was injured, he was clearly more severely injured than Randy from Quinn School of Martial Arts, but Randy is still lying in the hospital and can’t get up. But look at Victor, he has already recovered, and he seems to be even more powerful than last time!”

“That’s right. He only used a few moves to defeat the fighter from Class E. He’s too powerful. I think his skills aren’t much different from those two!”

“No way? Big Brother and Big Sister are the representatives of martial arts. Victor is only the disciple of a foreign boxing champion and has only studied for two years. It can’t be...”

The two of them left while talking. Nora suddenly opened her eyes. At that moment, her dark eyes met Justin’s.

The mole under the man’s eye seemed to be flashing with the same question.

The moment the two of them looked at each other, neither of them spoke. They stood up and walked toward the arena.

Indeed, Victor was getting off the stage. On the other side, a man was being carried off the stage.

“That’s a Class E martial artist. He entered Class F last year, and his skills are not bad. He couldn’t even take a few moves from Victor?”

Justin was a little hesitant as he stared at Victor. He slowly analyzed in a deep voice, “Furthermore, from the way he walked, his injuries seem to have healed completely. But he only took four days to heal his muscles and bones! This is too fast!”

“There must be a reason why things are so abnormal.” Nora suddenly approached Justin. Her voice was very low. “Follow him and take a look?”

Justin nodded.

The two of them followed Victor out. When they saw him take two steps, he reached out and pressed his chest, his face filled with pain.

The last time, Nora taught him a good lesson. Even if his external injuries were healed, his internal injuries were still there.

The wound on his chest was the hardest to heal.

As the two of them were thinking, Victor suddenly took out a bag of strange-looking medicine, opened it, and drank it.

After he finished drinking, the pain in his chest seemed to have been relieved. Even his footsteps had become more vigorous. It looked like his martial arts skills had improved again?

“There’s something wrong with that medicine.”

Just as this sentence appeared in Nora’s mind, Justin had already spoken. Nora nodded. “Don’t disturb him. Let’s go over and take a look first.”

Victor finished the bag of medicine and did not throw the packaging into the trash can. Instead, he carefully folded the bag and placed it in his pocket.

Nora frowned.

Justin seemed to have sensed something and asked, “You want it?”

“Yeah.”

Justin handed her Cherry. “Wait a minute.”

Nora had just taken Cherry when she saw Justin walking towards Victor in the distance. When the two of them brushed past each other, Justin’s shoulder suddenly bumped into Victor.

Victor was furious. “What are you doing? Are you crazy?”

Justin was wearing a black mask, and his thin lips curled up slightly. “I’m sorry.”

Victor still wanted to scold him. After all, his temper had always been bad. However, for some reason, when he met this man’s pitch-black eyes, he could not say anything else.

This was the pressure of an expert.

Victor could only snort and mutter something before lowering his head and leaving quickly.

After he left, Justin turned around and returned. He took out the bag of medicine, that Victor had drunk earlier, like a magic trick and handed it to Nora.

Nora took it and glanced at it. Indeed, she saw some residue inside.

She smirked. "I'll let Lily see what's in this medicine tonight. It shouldn't be ordinary stimulants."

Justin nodded.

Cherry, who had long been placed on the ground by Nora, reached out her small hand to Justin. "Daddy, hug."

"Why do you need him to hug you? Don't you have legs?"

Nora muttered in disdain, but Justin still bent down without any hesitation and picked Cherry up. When he saw Nora frowning, he subconsciously explained, "It's too messy here. It's better to keep her close, just to be safe."

Nora: "..."

After a moment of silence, she asked, "Do you hug Pete this much too?"

Justin said without hesitation, "He doesn't need it. As a man, this little danger is nothing."

"..."

Why such double standards?

Nora ignored him and rolled her eyes at Cherry instead.

Cherry wrapped her arms around her father's neck and praised, "Daddy, you looked so handsome when you were stealing!"

Justin: "..."

Cherry blinked. "Should we continue to steal things?"

Justin smiled. "We have everything you want at home. In this world..."

He suddenly looked at Nora and said meaningfully, "Other than the one thing that I want to steal, I can buy everything else for you."

Cherry was curious. "Then what are you trying to steal, Daddy?"

Justin just smiled.

For some reason, Nora's heart skipped a beat when he stared at her.

Her face was even slightly hot, so much so that she did not notice a figure quietly approaching her.

Just as Justin's lips moved slightly and he was about to say something, a figure suddenly darted out from the side.

Quentin attacked Nora's face very quickly and took off her mask. "Big Sister, let me see your true colors today!"

Quentin moved very quickly. Just as it seemed like he was about to take off her mask, and even Nora was caught somewhat off-guard, a large hand suddenly held her around her waist and pulled her back a couple of steps. She fell right into the man's arms.

The man's familiar testosterone-y aura took Nora by surprise.

She turned to see Justin staring at her. After quickly letting go of her waist, the man said in a low and deep voice, "You're welcome."

Nora: "..."

She actually wasn't planning on thanking him.

She stood up straight and looked at Quentin. "What are you doing?"

Quentin felt rather regretful that he hadn't managed to take off her mask. He said, "Sorry, Big Sister. I just wanted to see what you really look like."

When he was walking over just now, he had seen Big Sister spacing out for once. On top of that, she had even seemed distracted and somewhat dazed, so he had reckoned that this was probably the best opportunity he would ever have.

Unexpectedly, it had actually failed.

He couldn't help but glare at Justin, who was wearing a black mask.

What was he showing off how in love they were at a critical moment like that for?

Couldn't he just hug her at home? To think he actually did that in public. Was it because he thought that he was single and didn't have a girlfriend?

He curled his lips disdainfully and ignored Justin. Instead, he showed Nora a lot of admiration and asked, "Why didn't you come the last two days, Big Sister?"

Nora: "?"

Didn't he know exactly what she was doing?

She curled her lips into a smile and replied, "I had something on."

Quentin nodded. "I just so happened to have something on too. My cousin was framed, so I went to save her. By the way, are we still taking part in the match today, Big Sister?"

"Yeah."

Nora agreed to it without any hesitation.

Quentin looked around.

"Are you looking for someone?" asked Nora.

Quentin nodded. "I saw my cousin's car outside. She must have heard about the tournament somewhere and come here to have some fun. I'm afraid she'll offend someone because she doesn't know the rules, so I'm looking around to see if I can find her. I don't know where she's hiding, though."

Nora: "..."

Next to her, Cherry, who was holding her cell phone, swept her gaze across Quentin and shook her head a little. It would probably take that silly uncle of hers forever to realize that Mommy was Big Sister!

Nora and Justin were the two mainstays of the martial arts circle. With Quentin, the self-proclaimed third, with them, their team practically forged ahead unopposed.

Before they went into the ring, Quentin even said to Justin, "Remember to protect yourself later. You're the weakest among us three. Don't give the opponents any chance for a breakthrough."

Justin: "..."

His words made Nora give Justin a close, scrutinizing look.

The two of them had fought each other a few times before, but she hadn't been able to completely suppress Justin before. This showed that the man was very strong. Who exactly was he? Who had he learned his martial arts from?

Perhaps because he noticed her gaze, Justin came up to her and let out a low chuckle. With his beauty mark covered by his mask, the man's eyes were dark and bottomless and looked a little less bewitching than usual. He said, "I'll take off the mask and let you look at me for free after the fight is over and we go home. Don't look anymore for now."

Nora: "!!"

Quentin: "..."

For some reason, he felt like they were showing off how in love they were again. The two of them were too much!

Were they here to compete or to show off how deeply they were in love with each other?!

The triggered Quentin straight-up displayed his martial prowess to its fullest and utterly defeated his opponent.

With all the points they had accumulated recently, they had reached Class D.

The team of three fought two more matches. However, when they were about to leave at night, the organizer of the tournament came up to them with a troubled look on his face. He said, "Please wait a minute, the three of you."

The trio stopped and looked at the organizer in confusion.

The organizer sighed and asked, “Can the three of you wait for a while and watch a certain match?”

Watch a certain match?

All three of them nodded.

Quentin had agreed because the tournament used to be organized by Ryan. At the bottom of it all, the Smiths had to take responsibility for the tournament.

As for Justin, as a leading figure in the martial arts circle, he had his responsibilities, of course.

Although Nora didn’t actively participate in the Quinn School of Martial Arts’ affairs, as Big Sister, she would play her part in maintaining order in the tournament, so she also agreed to it.

The organizer took the trio to Arena No. 5.

Once one-on-one matches were over, team matches were slotted in at intervals.

However, Nora was stunned when she saw the three people in the ring because...

The people in the ring were none other than Victor and his two fellow disciples!

The few of them were disciples of the Benevolence Hall, which had only been established for two years. Additionally, the owner of the Benevolence Hall was none other than the foreign boxing champion, Abigail!

Why had those three suddenly formed a team, though?

While she was wondering about it, the organizer standing beside them sighed and said, “That man called Victor, as well as his two fellow disciples, suddenly became very strong. Originally, we didn’t think much about it—after all, once they reach Class F, there are Big Brother and Big Sister who will teach them a lesson or two.”

While saying that, he secretly cast a glance at Justin.

Seeing that Justin was ignoring him, he continued and said, “But unexpectedly, those three have actually formed a team. Now that they’ve become a three-man team, it may really be true that no one can beat them anymore!”

Quentin snorted coldly at his words. “Why wouldn’t anyone be able to beat them? How can you put yourself down when you haven’t even fought them?! There’s still me and Big... my elder sister, isn’t it?”

He’d originally wanted to say ‘Big Sister’, but he suddenly remembered that Big Sister wanted to hide her identity, so he ended up saying ‘elder sister’ instead.

Nora: “??”

Her lips slowly curled into a smile. She couldn’t help but wonder if that fellow would still be able to bring himself to call her his ‘elder sister’ once he knew who she really was.

The organizer, however, misunderstood and thought that Quentin wanted to say ‘Big Brother’, so he didn’t think too much about it. He merely sighed and said, “There’s only the two of you. Besides, it’s one-on-one. To be honest, I’m not worried about Big Sister or Big Brother being up against Victor one-on-one. But there are three of them, so... it’s hard to say!”

The organizer glanced at Justin.

Victor and his two fellow disciples were comparable in strength to Big Sister and Big Brother now. Unfortunately, Team Third In The World only had Big Brother and Quentin, who was ranked third. How would they be able to beat them?

Quentin also heaved a sigh. “Yeah. I’m not trying to diss you, but you’re holding us back, bro.”

Nevertheless, he still said impartially, “Just try your best. It doesn’t matter even if you lose. We’re all Americans here, so it doesn’t matter.”

As soon as he said that, the organizer fell silent for a moment. At last, he heaved a huge sigh and asked, “Do you know what their team name is?”

“What is it?”

“Americans Are Incompetent.”

His words stunned the three of them.

Quentin shouted angrily, “What kind of ridiculous name is that? You guys actually allowed it?”

The organizer was also very angry. “We don’t have any rules in the tournament. It’s just like how no one would say anything even if you named your team First In The World.. They exploited that loophole. So, do you still think it’s okay to lose?”

Was it okay to lose?

Of course not!

Quentin said, “Let us face them in a match! We’ll kick their a*s*s!”

The organizer looked at him and shook his head again. “Sigh. Let’s talk about it again after you watch their match.”

Quentin didn’t understand what he meant, but shortly after, he did.

He’d originally thought that Victor must be the strongest among the three, but unexpectedly, the bald black man next to him was actually the strongest.

His body was as if it was made out of steel, and he seemed immune to all attacks. All the teams they were up against were from Class D, but the three of them played them all like they were babies.

Victor wasn’t that lacking in martial arts ethics anymore this time.

The victory was theirs once the three of them threw their opponents out of the ring.

There was no applause around them. Victor was quiet and didn’t say anything. The bald man next to him rubbed his bald head and said something in a foreign language.

Someone who didn’t understand asked, “What did he say?”

Cherry translated it for him. “He said, ‘Isn’t there anyone in America who can fight?’”

“...”

That one line from her made everyone fall silent.

Even Quentin, who was usually the chattiest person ever, had a serious look on his face. He stared at them for quite a while before he finally leaned toward Nora and asked, “Big Sister, did you notice...”

“They’ve become stronger.”

Nora answered him straightaway.

Quentin immediately nodded. “Yes, and it isn’t just by a little. Why do I feel like Victor can last a few dozen moves against you now?”

Nora replied, “Twenty moves.”

Quentin: “...”

Big Sister was simply so confident!

But!

He felt an acute sense of crisis. “I was originally ranked third in New York, but I feel threatened by that guy now. Aside from Big Brother and Big Sister, there’s probably no one else who would be their match now, right? I can only tie with them at the most.”

The organizer sighed and said, “Now you understand why I asked you guys to watch the match, right? It’ll probably only be possible to defeat them if Big Brother and Big Sister team up!”

Quentin nodded at once. “I think so, too.”

Even if he could stop Victor, Big Sister would have a hard time dealing with the other two by herself.

The organizer said, “Out of all the teams, Team Third In The World has the highest chance of beating them. Therefore, from tomorrow onward, I intend to arrange five matches for you guys every day, so that you can enter Class F as soon as possible. This way, you’ll be able to go up against them! Otherwise, if they hog the Class F seats and clamor there every day, won’t we die of anger? I wonder if the three of you would agree to it?”

Justin looked straight at Nora and said, "She has the final say."

The organizer: "..."

He looked at Nora.

Nora kept quiet for a moment before she nodded. "Okay."

She was duty-bound to uphold the American pride in their martial arts.

The organizer looked at Quentin again.

Quentin, who had a stern look on his face, hesitated for very long before he finally said, "Okay! After all, as the person ranked third in the world, who else can do it, if not me?"

The organizer finally breathed a sigh of relief and left.

After he left, Quentin walked over to Justin and Nora. "Big Sister, I think the three of us may not be able to win against the three of them because we have someone in the team holding us back."

Both Justin and Nora nodded.

And wasn't that so?

He had quite a lot of self-awareness after all.

Unexpectedly, the next moment, Quentin said to Justin, "How about you withdraw from the team? If we replace you with Big Brother, we likely won't have any problems anymore!"

Justin: "??"

He let out a low scoff of laughter. He was about to speak when a woman's cold and urgent voice reached them. "No, I don't want that."

Quentin: "?"

Justin also looked at her, only to see dissatisfaction in Nora's almond-shaped eyes. "I don't want to be in the same team as him."

Justin: "..."

Quentin was also dumbfounded. “Huh? Why?”

“We don’t get along.” After giving a brief explanation, Nora looked at Justin and added, “Besides, he isn’t weak. The three of us can do it.”

Only Nora, who had fought with him before, knew how strong Justin truly was. Quentin usually fought very valiantly against their opponents, so he had basically dealt with the opponents for Justin. Moreover, he was carrying Cherry, which made Nora worried that she would get hurt, so she also helped him out all the time.

As a result, despite being on the same team, Quentin still didn’t know how strong Justin ‘The Pretty Boy’ was.

Quentin liked Big Sister, but he also liked Big Brother very much.

He couldn’t help but speak up for Big Brother. “Big Sister, what did Big Brother do to you? Did he steal your baby? Or did he steal your husband? Why are you so at odds with him?”

Nora: “...”

Quentin scratched his head. “Besides, I know you definitely think highly of your husband, but shouldn’t we be realistic? You can’t just think that your husband isn’t weak just because beauty is in the eye of the beholder.”

Then, he held his arm up, raised his chin, and said, “Or how about I compete with him in a duel? If he can beat me, he can stay in the team.”

Nora glanced at him and left.

Justin also glanced at him and left.

Quentin: “??”

What did those two mean by that? Why did he feel as if the more he looked at them, the more he felt like something was wrong?

Were they looking down on him?

The corners of his lips spasmed and he chased after them. However, he could no longer see the two of them.

Never mind.

He would just look for his cousin first.

He went one round in the arena but didn't find her. In the end, he decided to go to the car park and wait for her!!

No matter where she was, she would eventually have to go to the car park, right?

Nora and Justin had already turned the corner and gone onto the path at the side. After confirming that there was no one on either side, Justin said, "I know those two people that teamed up with Victor. They have been here since the start of the tournament, but at that time, they weren't as strong as they are now."

"So, that means they've also become stronger?"

Nora asked hesitantly.

Justin nodded.

Nora took out the drink pouch that Justin stole from Victor and asked, "Do you know what Morris told me?"

Justin practically replied without any hesitation, "Human experiments?"

Nora was surprised. "You know about it?"

"I was guessing."

Nora wasn't doubtful anymore. Given how smart Justin was, he must have already figured out something from the point where Morris started to frequently check whether there were any unknown chemicals in Old Maddy's body.

A puzzled Justin asked, "Are you suspecting that their increase in strength is related to illegal drugs?"

Nora raised the pouch she was holding. "I will know whether there's any relation once I check the chemical composition of the stuff in here overnight."

Justin nodded. The two walked to the car park.

Nora had only just come up to her black jeep when Quentin came after her.

When Nora, who was about to stop in front of the jeep, saw him coming over out of the corner of her eye, she paused slightly and instead followed Justin to the ordinary car two parking spaces away from the jeep.

Justin glanced behind him. When he saw Quentin, he immediately understood why she had done that. However, he pretended not to understand and raised an eyebrow. He asked, "Are you thinking of going home with me? It'll be my greatest pleasure."

Nora: "..."

She rolled her eyes and said, "Can you be a little more serious?"

Justin let out a low chuckle. "This is the very first time someone has ever told me to be more serious."

In front of outsiders, he had always been unfathomable and unsmiling, but the man was really letting go of himself more and more in front of her.

For some reason, Nora suddenly thought of the first time they had met.

The man had been cold and unfathomable at that time.

He had walked out of Hotel Finest's elevator in California like he was the bright moon surrounded by a myriad of stars. At that time, Pete's head was buried into his shoulders with only the back of his head exposed.

The man had glanced at her and then coldly said, "You're not my type, Ms. Smith."

...

How times had changed. How had that cold and distant man of that time suddenly fallen into the mortal world?

While she was thinking about it, the man walked over to the backseat, opened the door, and put Cherry in. Then, he looked at her. "You don't want to be in the backseat? Oh, that's true. You'd definitely want to be in the passenger seat instead."

Nora: "..."

Fine. No matter how much time flew by, it seemed like the man would only become more and more narcissistic.

Nora sat in the backseat in the end. Justin didn't mind, either. He drove off with her and Cherry.

In the car park.

Quentin stood in front of the jeep after watching Big Sister get into the car with her husband and daughter. However, even after waiting for a long while, he didn't see his cousin coming out. He frowned and looked into the jeep through the window.

The car's chassis was very high. When he looked at the backseat, he noticed two pieces of clothing that had been placed there.

Quentin was taken aback.

Weren't those the clothes that Nora was wearing when she was treating Uncle Ian in the hospital?

Why were they in the backseat?

No, wait...

Quentin suddenly understood something, and he immediately smiled.

Nora left with Justin. She waited until Quentin left before she finally went back to her car.

She got into the car and changed in the backseat. After casually tossing the red dress onto the backseat, she finally opened the door to go to the driver's seat.

Before she went over, Justin chuckled and said, "If you really want to hide your identity, you should change your car too."

He tossed his car key to Nora and suggested, "Why don't you drive this car instead for now?"

Nora glanced at his car.

From the outside, it was just an ordinary Volkswagen.

But once one entered, they would realize that it wasn't as simple as it looked on the inside.

Be it the engine or the leather seats, all of them were the best. Remodeling a car cost a lot. In addition, even if she had the money, time was needed to remodel a car at the last minute.

Thus, after thinking about it for a while, she didn't turn him down. She took the car keys from him and said, "I won't stand on ceremony, then."

Nora drove the jeep while Justin drove the 'ordinary' Volkswagen. The two left the building one after the other, and subsequently entered a high-end residential complex.

After getting Justin to park the Volkswagen in the residential complex, Nora said, "I've bought an apartment here. This is the parking lot for the apartment."

Justin looked upstairs. "What's your apartment number?"

Nora was a little surprised, but nevertheless answered, "302."

Then, she asked, "What are you planning?"

"To buy 301." Justin smiled and said, "If you ever move in, we can be neighbors."

"... You must be sick in the head," said Nora.

"Yeah, why don't you treat my illness?" Justin immediately quipped.

Nora: "..."

The corners of her lips spasmed. She got into the jeep and said, "Get in the car. I'll take you guys home."

Justin picked up Cherry and got in the backseat. When Nora, who had gotten into the driver's seat, saw them, she couldn't help but say, "She has already grown up, yet you're still holding her?"

"There's no child seat. It's not safe."

Justin briefly explained.

Nora curled her lips disdainfully. “She’s already used to riding in the car by herself.”

“Mommy, that was because no one doted on me back then! I’m not used to it anymore!”

Cherry protested weakly. However, as soon as she said that, she saw Nora’s stern eyes in the rearview mirror. She was so scared that she shrank back and hastily said, “Yes, I’m very used to it. Why don’t you put me down, Daddy? Don’t hold me so tightly~”

Despite saying that, she didn’t get off Justin’s legs but instead hugged his neck tighter.

Nora: “...”

Justin chuckled and stroked Cherry’s hair. He didn’t expose her, but instead supported her and said, “Be good. Don’t listen to your Mommy, she’s just jealous.”

Cherry was puzzled. “What’s she jealous of?”

“That I’m hugging you, of course.”

This was an ambiguous statement.

First, it meant that she was jealous of Cherry.

Second, it meant that she was jealous of Justin.

That scumbag was really taking advantage of her every moment of the day.

The corners of Nora’s lips spasmed. She couldn’t be bothered with the two of them, so she instead asked detachedly, “When are you and Pete switching back, Cherry?”

Cherry panicked at once. She said, “Mommy, I really miss you very much. I miss you super much! I miss the way you sleep, the way you get ready to go to bed, the way you doze off while you eat...”

She couldn’t come up with any more. After being stuck for a while, she finally said, “But Pete needs you more! After all, you haven’t seen each other for five years, so I won’t disturb your bonding session, okay?”

“ ... ”

That clever little fellow obviously didn't want to come back anymore after Justin spoiled her so much, so she made up so many excuses.

She sneered, “Shall I thank you on behalf of Pete?”

“It's fine~” Cherry said shyly, “What can I do? I'm his little sister, after all, so I have to give in to my elder brother~”

“ ... ”

It seemed like Cherry had become more thick-skinned than before.

She glared at Justin. It really was like what they said—one was marked by the company they kept!

After Nora took Cherry and Justin to the Hunts, while Cherry was getting out of the car, she asked, “Mommy, when are you and Daddy taking Pete and me to the amusement park?”

“Another day.”

Nora answered.

Cherry, however, persisted. She asked, “When is that?”

“... The day after tomorrow!”

Nora had no choice but to give her an answer.

“Yay!” Cherry raised her eyebrows at Justin triumphantly. Then, she bounced off while holding his hand and entered the manor.

Nora returned to the Smiths after that.

Unexpectedly, right after she got out of the car, Quentin came out of nowhere and blocked her way. He said, “You don't have to pretend anymore, Nora! I know your secret now!”

Nora's pupils shrank!

Surely her identity as Big Sister hadn't been exposed, had it?

She asked calmly, "What secret?"

"Did you go to the martial arts tournament because you heard something?"

A resigned Nora nodded. "That's right."

"I knew it. You even changed and put on a mask, so I didn't recognize you." Quentin looked around after he spoke. Then he said, "Since you were at the tournament, then you must have heard of me, right? "

Nora: "?"

Quentin said, "Didn't I already tell you? I'm the best fighter in the family and am ranked third in New York. I will definitely shine in the tournament! Do you know who I am?"

"... No, I don't."

Quentin the dimwit immediately looked around. Then, he said, "I'll tell you and you alone since you're my cousin, Nora. You're the only one I'm telling, get it? Even Joel doesn't know the alias I'm using in the tournament!"

He straightened his back, raised his chin, and declared, "I am Smithin!"

"..."

However, when he didn't see any reaction from Nora, Quentin glanced at her and frowned. "Haven't you heard of that name? Then do you know the famous Team Third In The World?"

Be it Smithin or Team Third In The World, both had actually become very famous in the underground arena recently. Anyone who had been there would have heard of him.

But...

Nora decided to tease him and deliberately said, "I'm new there, so I only heard them talking about Victor."

Quentin: "..."

No one in the family knew that he was participating in the martial arts tournament, so he couldn't show off. Now that he had finally found a cousin

who was interested in the tournament, how could she be kept unaware of his greatness?

Quentin was very puzzled, very much so. “Victor is nothing. He’s just a piece of trash who lost to me two years ago. Even if you have never heard of Smithin, surely you’ve heard of Team Third In The World, right?!”

He hadn’t competed in his own name, so it was normal that she hadn’t heard of him. But how come she hadn’t heard of the famous Team Third In The World, either?

Nora walked toward the house. “And then?”

“What do you mean by ‘and then’?!” Quentin became anxious. He gritted his teeth, steeled his resolve, and said, “Forget it, I’ll let you in on another big secret!”

Nora looked back at him.

Quentin said, “But you have to swear that you won’t tell anyone! I promised that I wouldn’t reveal her identity casually to outsiders. I’m only telling you because you’re my cousin.”

Nora had a vague idea what he was going to say next when she heard that. Sure enough, the next moment, he asked, “Do you know who that woman in the red dress in Team Third In The World is?”

Nora: “...”

“She’s Big Sister! The Big Sister of the Quinn School of Martial Arts!!!”

Quentin said triumphantly, “Do you see now? Even Big Sister has teamed up with me. She approached me because she thought that I was talented and fought pretty well... Surely you’ve at least heard of Big Sister, right?”

“... Yeah, I have.”

Quentin was satisfied at last. He said, “So, don’t you feel very honored that Big Sister has seen something in your elder brother? But don’t you get ahead of yourself. You absolutely mustn’t say anything about this to outsiders. Big Sister’s identity is confidential.”

“...”

“Is that look in your eyes envy? Actually, you don’t have to be envious that Big Sister has seen something in me. Uncle Ian picked me out of everyone in the family to practice martial arts when I was a child, so I’ve been practicing ever since. I heard that you used to be obese, and were even in poor health in the past, so you must not have practiced martial arts much before, right? By the way, which class are you in now?”

Nora: “...”

She knew how eager Quentin was to show off and bask in the limelight, so she knew that she didn’t need to say anything. Sure enough, Quentin said, “My team is already in Class D now. Once we win another five matches tomorrow, we’ll advance to Class E. We’ll be able to advance to Class F the day after tomorrow!”

“... Wow, how amazing.”

“Isn’t it? I think so, too.” Quentin folded his arms and said triumphantly, “But don’t you dare think it’s because I’m piggybacking off Big Sister. I can still compete by myself without any problems even without Big Sister. Why are you walking so fast? Forget it, I won’t say any more, lest you become jealous. But don’t worry, if someone bullies you in the arena, you can just use the name Smithin to scare them off!”

“...”

Nora suddenly felt like she’d better not let the young man with eighth-grader syndrome know her true identity after all. If she did, she reckoned that she’ll never have any peace anymore.

The corners of her lips spasmed and she went upstairs.

When she entered the bedroom, she realized that Pete had already returned from school and was obediently working on his Mathematical Olympiad problems.

Nora glanced at his workbook. The Mathematical Olympiad problems he was doing were almost at high school standard now. The five-year-old’s IQ was simply terrifying.

“Mommy.”

Pete greeted her obediently.

Nora made a sound of acknowledgment and stepped forward. She stroked his hair, and then bent over and gave him a kiss on the forehead. She said, "Let's go downstairs for dinner after you're done with that."

Pete nodded and continued to bury his head into the workbook.

Nora picked up her cell phone and saw a voice message from Tanya: 'Have you given your son a kiss?'

Nora replied: '... Yes, I have.'

Tanya: "Yeah, Pete's sense of security still leaves a little to be desired. It can't be compared with Cherry's at all. After all, the role a mother plays is simply too crucial when one is growing up. You have to have more physical contact with Pete, get it?"

Nora: 'Yeah, yeah. I know.'

Tanya sighed emotionally again and said: "Don't think of me as being too long-winded. After all... I also wish I could give mine a kiss."

When Nora heard the message, she immediately knew that Tanya had thought of her missing child again.

She didn't know how she should comfort her. After all, she had also experienced the pain of losing her own child.

Nora kept quiet for a while before she replied: "You'll definitely find him or her one day."

Tanya: 'Yeah.'

Since she had fallen silent, Nora didn't send her any more messages. She turned to her son. Suddenly, she felt like something was amiss. "Where's Mia?" She asked.

By right, Pete and Mia should be playing with each other at this time!

Without even lifting his head, Pete replied, "She's having dance classes at God-mom's!"

“ ... ”

In the villa in the suburbs.

Mia's forehead was covered in perspiration as she did leg stretches.

The small and thin five-year-old looked as if she was only four years old. Tanya went over and gave her a few pointers.

Mia glanced at Tanya.

Her teacher was very strict, but for some reason, she wasn't scared of her at all. When Tanya lowered her head toward her, Mia even suddenly kissed her on the cheek.

Tanya was stunned. She looked at Mia in disbelief, upon which Mia said, "Didn't you want a kiss, Ms. Turner? I'll give you a kiss."

An acerbic feeling suddenly welled up in Tanya, and she felt a mix of emotions come over her.

It seemed like she could still feel the warmth from the soft lips on her cheek.

Tanya touched her cheek and looked at the small, timid Mia in front of her. Suddenly, a feeling welled up in her—would it also feel like this if her child kissed her?

She spaced out and kept quiet for a while.

Seeing her freeze, Mia became frightened. Her eyes reddened and she hastily asked, "Are you mad, Ms. Turner?"

Tanya didn't know whether she should be angry or not.

In fact, she even felt like her decision to teach Mia dancing was a mistake in itself!

The child she had with Joel was missing.

Yet, here she was, teaching Joel's daughter how to dance. In fact, when she kissed her, she hadn't even pushed her away. It was as if she had already accepted her.

How could she do that?!

Tanya was originally helping Mia with her leg stretches, but she suddenly stood up. She wanted to say coldly, 'Don't kiss me again in the future.'

But when she looked at Mia's round eyes and small pointed face, she simply couldn't bring herself to say it. In fact, the words at the tip of her tongue even changed. She said, "No, I'm not."

Mia nodded. "Then, are you happy?"

Tanya wanted to say that she wasn't, but when she saw the hopeful look in Mia's eyes, she instead replied impulsively, "Yes."

Her answer made Mia's eyes instantly light up.

She said timidly, "My mother said that I can't kiss her so casually, Ms. Turner. She would also become unhappy if I made physical contact with her, so I thought you were unhappy, too. I only kissed you because I heard you say that you wanted a kiss. Are you really not mad at me?"

Her mother didn't allow her to touch her?

Tanya was dumbfounded.

She didn't know how other mothers behaved, but if it were her daughter, she would never tire of giving her kisses. Besides, whenever she was out, she always saw a lot of children who behaved very intimately with their mothers.

Little did she expect a tiny little girl like Mia to be so pitiful?

With that thought in mind, she said, "It's true, I really am happy. Ms. Turner likes to keep close contact with children."

"That's great!"

Mia stood up straight and grabbed Tanya's hand. She made her lower her head and then kissed her on the cheek again. She said, "I will make you happy every day from now on, Ms. Turner!"

She pursed her lips and gave her a bashful smile.

Tanya simply couldn't bring herself to say any words of rejection when faced with such a well-behaved and adorable little girl!

She ruffled Mia's hair and asked, "Doesn't it hurt when you stretch?"

Mia immediately nodded. "It does!"

"Then why didn't you say anything?" Tanya asked curiously.

After she decided to take Mia as her student, she had added an hour of class for her after school every day. As there wasn't a suitable location in the kindergarten, she had brought her to her home.

Fine beads of perspiration had formed on Mia's forehead when she was dancing, yet she hadn't complained about being tired.

After dancing, Tanya had even told her to do leg stretches.

One must always do their stretches properly after exercise. Besides, Mia was already five. To be honest, it was already a bit of a late start for a dancer because the body would no longer be flexible enough anymore. Thus, Tanya had also taught her a few difficult moves such as bending over backward.

Despite that, Mia hadn't made even a single sound from beginning to end.

Just as she was wondering whether it was because the girl's pain receptors were less sensitive than others, Mia replied, "I can't complain that it hurts."

Tanya was taken aback. "Why?"

When she was a child, she would always cry out even at the slightest bit of pain when she was practicing. This way, the teacher would show her some mercy.

Mia replied, "Because Daddy will be unhappy if I'm in pain. If Daddy is unhappy, Mommy will also be unhappy."

Unhappy?

Tanya frowned. Suddenly, she started to feel sorry for the girl.

Although she lived in a wealthy family and had both her parents with her, she led too frustrating a life. While other five-year-olds from ordinary families were

blissfully unaware, she didn't even have the right to complain when she was in pain!

Tanya suddenly became a little angry with Joel.

How could he treat a child like that?

No matter what, children were angels of the world. They were the most innocent!!

Tanya said to Mia, "Mia, you can speak freely without holding back in Ms. Turner's home in the future. If you're tired from practice, you can say so. If you're in pain because of stretching, you can also cry out. If you're thirsty or hungry, you can tell me that too. I will prepare everything for you."

Mia's eyes lit up. "Really?"

"Yeah."

Mia hesitated for a while. Then, she hung her head and asked somewhat embarrassedly, "Then... can you bake me a cake?"

Bake her a cake?

Tanya found the request rather odd but nevertheless agreed. "You must be hungry after practicing for so long. Alright, let's go downstairs."

Tanya used to be really bad at housework, but when she went abroad and lived by herself, she had to cook for herself, so her culinary skills had improved over the years.

Baking a cake was no problem for her.

Sometime later, she walked out of the kitchen with a simple cupcake in her hands. She was a little embarrassed as she said, "I can only bake simple stuff like this, Mia. You don't mind, right?"

Mia immediately shook her head. "Of course not, Ms. Turner!"

Tanya smiled and said, "You can dig in now."

Mia picked up the fork. She was about to eat when she suddenly said, "I'll give you half, Ms. Turner."

“No, it’s fine.”

A smiling Tanya went back to the kitchen and then came out with another cupcake. “I made a few. Come on, let’s eat!”

Mia stared at the cupcake. Suddenly, she clasped her hands together, closed her eyes, and seemingly thought about something. Only then did she start to eat the cupcake.

Tanya looked at her, feeling rather amused. The girl actually had the sense to say a prayer before eating.

The two of them dug into their respective cupcakes with gusto.

When Tanya saw the little girl’s cheeks all puffed up from eating, she felt a sense of accomplishment come over her, especially when Mia finished more than one cupcake from the batch she had baked.

She ate so much that even her belly had swelled up.

After they were done eating, she went to the kitchen to do the dishes. Then, she told Mia, “You can come here for dance practice every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday in the future. You can go and play the rest of the time. You’re still young, so you shouldn’t restrain yourself.”

Mia pursed her lips and smiled at her as she nodded. “Okay, Ms. Turner.”

All of a sudden, the doorbell rang.

Tanya knew that it must be Joel here to pick Mia up.

She looked at the clock in surprise—sure enough, it was already seven. She hadn’t expected time to pass so fast. Somewhat reluctantly, she helped Mia carry her schoolbag and then walked over to the door.

Sure enough, Joel was standing outside when she opened the door.

Tanya didn’t look at him. Instead, she waved at Mia and said, “See you in school tomorrow, Mia~”

“Okie-Dokie. See you tomorrow, Ms. Turner~”

Mia took Joel's hand after she spoke. Just as she was about to leave, she suddenly looked back at Tanya and said, "Thank you for the birthday cake today, Ms. Turner. It was really yummy!"

Birthday cake?

Tanya was taken aback. Then, she heard Joel say, "It's Mia's birthday today."

Birthday...

Tanya felt like a bomb had suddenly gone off in her head.

It was Mia's birthday. No wonder she had asked Tanya to bake her a cake, and even said a prayer before eating it.

Oh, right.

He had slept with Hillary right after he slept with her back then, hadn't he?

It was all too normal that their children's birthdays would be so close to each other's.

She bit her lip.

It had also been her child's birthday five days ago!

She didn't even know where her child might be wandering lost in the world, yet here she was, celebrating Mia's birthday?

Indescribable pain and misery made Tanya's expression instantly change.

She stared at Mia blankly.

Mia was terribly nervous. The puzzled girl looked at Tanya and asked, "W-what's wrong, Ms. Turner? Are you upset?"

She pushed Joel and said, "Daddy, hurry up and kiss Ms. Turner! She'll cheer up if you do that!"

Joel: "..."

Tanya: "..."

Joel didn't know the reason for Tanya's sudden change in behavior, but he knew that she likely held a grudge against Mia's existence all this time.

He lowered his head and slowly said, "I'm sorry."

He was sorry.

Five years ago, he had felt even more apologetic toward her.

If he hadn't gotten himself drunk, become muddleheaded, and ended up sleeping with Hillary, how would he have gotten her pregnant and ended up letting her give birth to Mia?

No, to be honest, he hadn't even known that she was pregnant.

Hillary understood him very well. She knew that he would definitely make her abort the child if he were to know, so she had secretly gone into hiding.

It wasn't until ten months later that she had finally returned with Mia.

He had done a DNA test when he saw the child—she was indeed his daughter. As such, he could only acknowledge her. That was probably the one and only time he had acted so spinelessly.

His heart had softened when he saw the child.

It was as if the child had a lot of affinity with him.

When Tanya heard his apology, her shame and anger made her eyes redden. She was about to yell at him when Mia suddenly held her hand and said, "I'll kiss you if Daddy won't, Ms. Turner. Don't be mad anymore, okay?"

Tanya lowered her head. When her eyes met Mia's timid eyes that looked as if she was trying to please her, her fury instantly extinguished.

Indeed.

She had only lost her child because she hadn't kept an eye on it. What did it have to do with Joel or Mia?

In fact, Joel didn't even know that she had given birth to his child!

Tanya lowered her head and stared at Mia.

She was just a pitiful little girl.

Tanya suddenly said, "Wait a minute."

She turned and went upstairs.

In addition to her own bedroom, she had also prepared another two children's rooms on the upper floor. One was a boy's room and the other a girl's.

This was because she didn't know whether her missing child was a boy or a girl.

Regardless, she would always prepare clothes for her son or daughter every year. The clothes currently in the closets were for five-year-olds, and on the bed in the girl's room was also a gift box.

It was the birthday gift she had bought five days ago for her child.

There was also one in the boy's room.

She picked up the gift box. Inside was an exquisite Barbie doll wearing a pink dress. Next to it were all kinds of doll clothing that one could dress up the doll with.

She touched the bedsheets and murmured silently, "I don't know where you are, my child, but I believe you'll be willing to make another child like yourself happy, right?"

She took the gift box and went downstairs.

Before she reached the door, she saw Mia nervously asking Joel, "Daddy, why did Ms. Turner suddenly get mad? Is it because it's Mia's birthday? Daddy, I won't celebrate my birthday anymore, okay? I like Ms. Turner, I don't want to make her mad..."

Joel stroked her hair. His voice was soft and gentle as he said, "It's not your fault. Daddy's the one who made Ms. Turner angry."

Mia then said seriously, "Daddy, you should apologize to Ms. Turner if you made her mad. Are you too embarrassed to say sorry, Daddy?"

Joel: "..."

He sighed. "I've already told her I'm sorry, but she won't accept my apology."

"Then say it a few more times!"

A child's world was very simple. For Mia, if her father had done something wrong, then he should apologize until Ms. Turner forgave him.

Joel sighed. "Okay."

When Mia wanted to say something again, she suddenly spotted Tanya, who had just returned. Her eyes lit up and she immediately called out, "Ms. Turner!"

Tanya handed her the gift box with the Barbie and said, "Happy birthday."

Mia's eyes instantly became even brighter. "Thank you, Ms. Turner!"

The little girl stretched out her hands and took the Barbie doll from her.

The Barbie was half her height, so it was very heavy for the small and thin girl.

Joel reached out to carry it for her.

However, Mia ducked and said, "I can do it, Daddy!"

This was a gift from Ms. Turner. She liked it very much.

Joel nodded. Then, he looked at Tanya. He was about to speak when Tanya sneered, "You must be very busy with work, right, Mr. Smith?"

Joel was overjoyed when he heard what she said. He thought that Tanya was showing him concern, so he nodded and replied, "It's alright."

"Hah." Tanya gave him a mocking smile and said, "Since it's alright, then shouldn't you learn how to be a qualified father, Mr. Smith?"

Joel was taken aback.

Tanya knew that there were some things she shouldn't say in front of Mia, so she merely gave him a subtle reminder. Then, she said, "Bye, Mia."

Mia replied softly, "Bye, Ms. Turner."

When Joel took Mia into the car, he received a call from Hillary. When he answered, the woman said, "Joel, it's Mia's birthday today. Can you let me see her? I miss her. I think Mia would also want her family to be together."

Joel's expression turned cold. He was about to say something when Hillary spoke again. She said, "I'm Mia's mother, after all, Joel. I really miss her. I should think that she misses me, too! You can't stop us from meeting when we're mother and daughter. Mia will resent you for it in the future if you do that."

"I know you hate me, but my love for Mia is true. I am the one who has been taking care of Mia ever since she was born. You should know how dependent she is on me. Joel, all I want is really just to see my daughter. I don't have any other intentions... Please?"

Joel looked at Mia.

He suddenly asked, "Do you want to meet your mother, Mia?"

Mia's eyes immediately flickered when she heard him.

Her mom had told her before that she had to reply that she wanted to meet her if Daddy ever asked. Otherwise, her mom would hate her very much.

But she thought of how Ms. Turner had told her not to keep things to herself, and to voice her thoughts if she had any. She had said that she could cry out if she was in pain, or cry if she wanted to...

When she thought of what Ms.. Turner had told her, the little Mia seemed to have suddenly found her courage.

Just as Mia was about to say something, Hillary's voice rang out through the phone. "Do you miss Mommy, Mia?"

The little Mia trembled a little when she heard Hillary's voice. In the end, she nodded and replied weakly, "Yes."

"Did you hear that, Joel?"

Hillary tried her best to convince him, "Mia wants to see me!"

Joel heaved a huge sigh.

He didn't want to let Mia and Hillary come into contact anymore, but if Mia wanted to see her mother, he couldn't stop her.

Therefore, Hillary immediately knew that Joel must have relented when she heard him sigh. She asked tentatively, "Can I go back to the Smiths' tonight? I heard that you've just found your younger sister, so I can also take the chance to pay her a visit."

Chapter 354 - The Plan of Saving Nora Novel Free

The two of them left while talking. Nora suddenly opened her eyes. At that moment, her dark eyes met Justin's.

The mole under the man's eye seemed to be flashing with the same question.

The moment the two of them looked at each other, neither of them spoke. They stood up and walked toward the arena.

Indeed, Victor was getting off the stage. On the other side, a man was being carried off the stage.

"That's a Class E martial artist. He entered Class F last year, and his skills are not bad. He couldn't even take a few moves from Victor?"

Justin was a little hesitant as he stared at Victor. He slowly analyzed in a deep voice, "Furthermore, from the way he walked, his injuries seem to have healed completely. But he only took four days to heal his muscles and bones! This is too fast!"

"There must be a reason why things are so abnormal." Nora suddenly approached Justin. Her voice was very low. "Follow him and take a look?"

Justin nodded.

The two of them followed Victor out. When they saw him take two steps, he reached out and pressed his chest, his face filled with pain.

The last time, Nora taught him a good lesson. Even if his external injuries were healed, his internal injuries were still there.

The wound on his chest was the hardest to heal.

As the two of them were thinking, Victor suddenly took out a bag of strange-looking medicine, opened it, and drank it.

After he finished drinking, the pain in his chest seemed to have been relieved. Even his footsteps had become more vigorous. It looked like his martial arts skills had improved again?

“There’s something wrong with that medicine.”

Just as this sentence appeared in Nora’s mind, Justin had already spoken. Nora nodded. “Don’t disturb him. Let’s go over and take a look first.”

Victor finished the bag of medicine and did not throw the packaging into the trash can. Instead, he carefully folded the bag and placed it in his pocket.

Nora frowned.

Justin seemed to have sensed something and asked, “You want it?”

“Yeah.”

Justin handed her Cherry. “Wait a minute.”

Nora had just taken Cherry when she saw Justin walking towards Victor in the distance. When the two of them brushed past each other, Justin’s shoulder suddenly bumped into Victor.

Victor was furious. “What are you doing? Are you crazy?”

Justin was wearing a black mask, and his thin lips curled up slightly. “I’m sorry.”

Victor still wanted to scold him. After all, his temper had always been bad. However, for some reason, when he met this man’s pitch-black eyes, he could not say anything else.

This was the pressure of an expert.

Victor could only snort and mutter something before lowering his head and leaving quickly.

After he left, Justin turned around and returned. He took out the bag of medicine, that Victor had drunk earlier, like a magic trick and handed it to Nora.

Nora took it and glanced at it. Indeed, she saw some residue inside.

She smirked. "I'll let Lily see what's in this medicine tonight. It shouldn't be ordinary stimulants."

Justin nodded.

Cherry, who had long been placed on the ground by Nora, reached out her small hand to Justin. "Daddy, hug."

"Why do you need him to hug you? Don't you have legs?"

Nora muttered in disdain, but Justin still bent down without any hesitation and picked Cherry up. When he saw Nora frowning, he subconsciously explained, "It's too messy here. It's better to keep her close, just to be safe."

Nora: "..."

After a moment of silence, she asked, "Do you hug Pete this much too?"

Justin said without hesitation, "He doesn't need it. As a man, this little danger is nothing."

"..."

Why such double standards?

Nora ignored him and rolled her eyes at Cherry instead.

Cherry wrapped her arms around her father's neck and praised, "Daddy, you looked so handsome when you were stealing!"

Justin: "..."

Cherry blinked. "Should we continue to steal things?"

Justin smiled. "We have everything you want at home. In this world..."

He suddenly looked at Nora and said meaningfully, "Other than the one thing that I want to steal, I can buy everything else for you."

Cherry was curious. "Then what are you trying to steal, Daddy?"

Justin just smiled.

For some reason, Nora's heart skipped a beat when he stared at her.

Her face was even slightly hot, so much so that she did not notice a figure quietly approaching her.

Just as Justin's lips moved slightly and he was about to say something, a figure suddenly darted out from the side.

Quentin attacked Nora's face very quickly and took off her mask. "Big Sister, let me see your true colors today!"

Quentin moved very quickly. Just as it seemed like he was about to take off her mask, and even Nora was caught somewhat off-guard, a large hand suddenly held her around her waist and pulled her back a couple of steps. She fell right into the man's arms.

The man's familiar testosterone-y aura took Nora by surprise.

She turned to see Justin staring at her. After quickly letting go of her waist, the man said in a low and deep voice, "You're welcome."

Nora: "..."

She actually wasn't planning on thanking him.

She stood up straight and looked at Quentin. "What are you doing?"

Quentin felt rather regretful that he hadn't managed to take off her mask. He said, "Sorry, Big Sister. I just wanted to see what you really look like."

When he was walking over just now, he had seen Big Sister spacing out for once. On top of that, she had even seemed distracted and somewhat dazed, so he had reckoned that this was probably the best opportunity he would ever have.

Unexpectedly, it had actually failed.

He couldn't help but glare at Justin, who was wearing a black mask.

What was he showing off how in love they were at a critical moment like that for?

Couldn't he just hug her at home? To think he actually did that in public. Was it because he thought that he was single and didn't have a girlfriend?

He curled his lips disdainfully and ignored Justin. Instead, he showed Nora a lot of admiration and asked, "Why didn't you come the last two days, Big Sister?"

Nora: "?"

Didn't he know exactly what she was doing?

She curled her lips into a smile and replied, "I had something on."

Quentin nodded. "I just so happened to have something on too. My cousin was framed, so I went to save her. By the way, are we still taking part in the match today, Big Sister?"

"Yeah."

Nora agreed to it without any hesitation.

Quentin looked around.

"Are you looking for someone?" asked Nora.

Quentin nodded. "I saw my cousin's car outside. She must have heard about the tournament somewhere and come here to have some fun. I'm afraid she'll offend someone because she doesn't know the rules, so I'm looking around to see if I can find her. I don't know where she's hiding, though."

Nora: "..."

Next to her, Cherry, who was holding her cell phone, swept her gaze across Quentin and shook her head a little. It would probably take that silly uncle of hers forever to realize that Mommy was Big Sister!

Nora and Justin were the two mainstays of the martial arts circle. With Quentin, the self-proclaimed third, with them, their team practically forged ahead unopposed.

Before they went into the ring, Quentin even said to Justin, "Remember to protect yourself later. You're the weakest among us three. Don't give the opponents any chance for a breakthrough."

Justin: "..."

His words made Nora give Justin a close, scrutinizing look.

The two of them had fought each other a few times before, but she hadn't been able to completely suppress Justin before. This showed that the man was very strong. Who exactly was he? Who had he learned his martial arts from?

Perhaps because he noticed her gaze, Justin came up to her and let out a low chuckle. With his beauty mark covered by his mask, the man's eyes were dark and bottomless and looked a little less bewitching than usual. He said, "I'll take off the mask and let you look at me for free after the fight is over and we go home. Don't look anymore for now."

Nora: "!!"

Quentin: "..."

For some reason, he felt like they were showing off how in love they were again. The two of them were too much!

Were they here to compete or to show off how deeply they were in love with each other?!

The triggered Quentin straight-up displayed his martial prowess to its fullest and utterly defeated his opponent.

With all the points they had accumulated recently, they had reached Class D.

The team of three fought two more matches. However, when they were about to leave at night, the organizer of the tournament came up to them with a troubled look on his face. He said, "Please wait a minute, the three of you."

The trio stopped and looked at the organizer in confusion.

The organizer sighed and asked, “Can the three of you wait for a while and watch a certain match?”

Watch a certain match?

All three of them nodded.

Quentin had agreed because the tournament used to be organized by Ryan. At the bottom of it all, the Smiths had to take responsibility for the tournament.

As for Justin, as a leading figure in the martial arts circle, he had his responsibilities, of course.

Although Nora didn’t actively participate in the Quinn School of Martial Arts’ affairs, as Big Sister, she would play her part in maintaining order in the tournament, so she also agreed to it.

The organizer took the trio to Arena No. 5.

Once one-on-one matches were over, team matches were slotted in at intervals.

However, Nora was stunned when she saw the three people in the ring because...

The people in the ring were none other than Victor and his two fellow disciples!

The few of them were disciples of the Benevolence Hall, which had only been established for two years. Additionally, the owner of the Benevolence Hall was none other than the foreign boxing champion, Abigail!

Why had those three suddenly formed a team, though?

While she was wondering about it, the organizer standing beside them sighed and said, “That man called Victor, as well as his two fellow disciples, suddenly became very strong. Originally, we didn’t think much about it—after all, once they reach Class F, there are Big Brother and Big Sister who will teach them a lesson or two.”

While saying that, he secretly cast a glance at Justin.

Seeing that Justin was ignoring him, he continued and said, “But unexpectedly, those three have actually formed a team. Now that they’ve become a three-man team, it may really be true that no one can beat them anymore!”

Quentin snorted coldly at his words. “Why wouldn’t anyone be able to beat them? How can you put yourself down when you haven’t even fought them?! There’s still me and Big... my elder sister, isn’t it?”

He’d originally wanted to say ‘Big Sister’, but he suddenly remembered that Big Sister wanted to hide her identity, so he ended up saying ‘elder sister’ instead.

Nora: “??”

Her lips slowly curled into a smile. She couldn’t help but wonder if that fellow would still be able to bring himself to call her his ‘elder sister’ once he knew who she really was.

The organizer, however, misunderstood and thought that Quentin wanted to say ‘Big Brother’, so he didn’t think too much about it. He merely sighed and said, “There’s only the two of you. Besides, it’s one-on-one. To be honest, I’m not worried about Big Sister or Big Brother being up against Victor one-on-one. But there are three of them, so... it’s hard to say!”

The organizer glanced at Justin.

Victor and his two fellow disciples were comparable in strength to Big Sister and Big Brother now. Unfortunately, Team Third In The World only had Big Brother and Quentin, who was ranked third. How would they be able to beat them?

Quentin also heaved a sigh. “Yeah. I’m not trying to diss you, but you’re holding us back, bro.”

Nevertheless, he still said impartially, “Just try your best. It doesn’t matter even if you lose. We’re all Americans here, so it doesn’t matter.”

As soon as he said that, the organizer fell silent for a moment. At last, he heaved a huge sigh and asked, “Do you know what their team name is?”

“What is it?”

“Americans Are Incompetent.”

His words stunned the three of them.

Quentin shouted angrily, “What kind of ridiculous name is that? You guys actually allowed it?”

The organizer was also very angry. “We don’t have any rules in the tournament. It’s just like how no one would say anything even if you named your team First In The World.. They exploited that loophole. So, do you still think it’s okay to lose?”

Was it okay to lose?

Of course not!

Quentin said, “Let us face them in a match! We’ll kick their a*s*s!”

The organizer looked at him and shook his head again. “Sigh. Let’s talk about it again after you watch their match.”

Quentin didn’t understand what he meant, but shortly after, he did.

He’d originally thought that Victor must be the strongest among the three, but unexpectedly, the bald black man next to him was actually the strongest.

His body was as if it was made out of steel, and he seemed immune to all attacks. All the teams they were up against were from Class D, but the three of them played them all like they were babies.

Victor wasn’t that lacking in martial arts ethics anymore this time.

The victory was theirs once the three of them threw their opponents out of the ring.

There was no applause around them. Victor was quiet and didn’t say anything. The bald man next to him rubbed his bald head and said something in a foreign language.

Someone who didn’t understand asked, “What did he say?”

Cherry translated it for him. “He said, ‘Isn’t there anyone in America who can fight?’”

“...”

That one line from her made everyone fall silent.

Even Quentin, who was usually the chattiest person ever, had a serious look on his face. He stared at them for quite a while before he finally leaned toward Nora and asked, “Big Sister, did you notice...”

“They’ve become stronger.”

Nora answered him straightaway.

Quentin immediately nodded. “Yes, and it isn’t just by a little. Why do I feel like Victor can last a few dozen moves against you now?”

Nora replied, “Twenty moves.”

Quentin: “...”

Big Sister was simply so confident!

But!

He felt an acute sense of crisis. “I was originally ranked third in New York, but I feel threatened by that guy now. Aside from Big Brother and Big Sister, there’s probably no one else who would be their match now, right? I can only tie with them at the most.”

The organizer sighed and said, “Now you understand why I asked you guys to watch the match, right? It’ll probably only be possible to defeat them if Big Brother and Big Sister team up!”

Quentin nodded at once. “I think so, too.”

Even if he could stop Victor, Big Sister would have a hard time dealing with the other two by herself.

The organizer said, “Out of all the teams, Team Third In The World has the highest chance of beating them. Therefore, from tomorrow onward, I intend to arrange five matches for you guys every day, so that you can enter Class F as soon as possible. This way, you’ll be able to go up against them! Otherwise, if they hog the Class F seats and clamor there every day, won’t we die of anger? I wonder if the three of you would agree to it?”

Justin looked straight at Nora and said, "She has the final say."

The organizer: "..."

He looked at Nora.

Nora kept quiet for a moment before she nodded. "Okay."

She was duty-bound to uphold the American pride in their martial arts.

The organizer looked at Quentin again.

Quentin, who had a stern look on his face, hesitated for very long before he finally said, "Okay! After all, as the person ranked third in the world, who else can do it, if not me?"

The organizer finally breathed a sigh of relief and left.

After he left, Quentin walked over to Justin and Nora. "Big Sister, I think the three of us may not be able to win against the three of them because we have someone in the team holding us back."

Both Justin and Nora nodded.

And wasn't that so?

He had quite a lot of self-awareness after all.

Unexpectedly, the next moment, Quentin said to Justin, "How about you withdraw from the team? If we replace you with Big Brother, we likely won't have any problems anymore!"

Justin: "??"

He let out a low scoff of laughter. He was about to speak when a woman's cold and urgent voice reached them. "No, I don't want that."

Quentin: "?"

Justin also looked at her, only to see dissatisfaction in Nora's almond-shaped eyes. "I don't want to be in the same team as him."

Justin: "..."

Quentin was also dumbfounded. “Huh? Why?”

“We don’t get along.” After giving a brief explanation, Nora looked at Justin and added, “Besides, he isn’t weak. The three of us can do it.”

Only Nora, who had fought with him before, knew how strong Justin truly was. Quentin usually fought very valiantly against their opponents, so he had basically dealt with the opponents for Justin. Moreover, he was carrying Cherry, which made Nora worried that she would get hurt, so she also helped him out all the time.

As a result, despite being on the same team, Quentin still didn’t know how strong Justin ‘The Pretty Boy’ was.

Quentin liked Big Sister, but he also liked Big Brother very much.

He couldn’t help but speak up for Big Brother. “Big Sister, what did Big Brother do to you? Did he steal your baby? Or did he steal your husband? Why are you so at odds with him?”

Nora: “...”

Quentin scratched his head. “Besides, I know you definitely think highly of your husband, but shouldn’t we be realistic? You can’t just think that your husband isn’t weak just because beauty is in the eye of the beholder.”

Then, he held his arm up, raised his chin, and said, “Or how about I compete with him in a duel? If he can beat me, he can stay in the team.”

Nora glanced at him and left.

Justin also glanced at him and left.

Quentin: “??”

What did those two mean by that? Why did he feel as if the more he looked at them, the more he felt like something was wrong?

Were they looking down on him?

The corners of his lips spasmed and he chased after them. However, he could no longer see the two of them.

Never mind.

He would just look for his cousin first.

He went one round in the arena but didn't find her. In the end, he decided to go to the car park and wait for her!!

No matter where she was, she would eventually have to go to the car park, right?

Nora and Justin had already turned the corner and gone onto the path at the side. After confirming that there was no one on either side, Justin said, "I know those two people that teamed up with Victor. They have been here since the start of the tournament, but at that time, they weren't as strong as they are now."

"So, that means they've also become stronger?"

Nora asked hesitantly.

Justin nodded.

Nora took out the drink pouch that Justin stole from Victor and asked, "Do you know what Morris told me?"

Justin practically replied without any hesitation, "Human experiments?"

Nora was surprised. "You know about it?"

"I was guessing."

Nora wasn't doubtful anymore. Given how smart Justin was, he must have already figured out something from the point where Morris started to frequently check whether there were any unknown chemicals in Old Maddy's body.

A puzzled Justin asked, "Are you suspecting that their increase in strength is related to illegal drugs?"

Nora raised the pouch she was holding. "I will know whether there's any relation once I check the chemical composition of the stuff in here overnight."

Justin nodded. The two walked to the car park.

Nora had only just come up to her black jeep when Quentin came after her.

When Nora, who was about to stop in front of the jeep, saw him coming over out of the corner of her eye, she paused slightly and instead followed Justin to the ordinary car two parking spaces away from the jeep.

Justin glanced behind him. When he saw Quentin, he immediately understood why she had done that. However, he pretended not to understand and raised an eyebrow. He asked, "Are you thinking of going home with me? It'll be my greatest pleasure."

Nora: "..."

She rolled her eyes and said, "Can you be a little more serious?"

Justin let out a low chuckle. "This is the very first time someone has ever told me to be more serious."

In front of outsiders, he had always been unfathomable and unsmiling, but the man was really letting go of himself more and more in front of her.

For some reason, Nora suddenly thought of the first time they had met.

The man had been cold and unfathomable at that time.

He had walked out of Hotel Finest's elevator in California like he was the bright moon surrounded by a myriad of stars. At that time, Pete's head was buried into his shoulders with only the back of his head exposed.

The man had glanced at her and then coldly said, "You're not my type, Ms. Smith."

...

How times had changed. How had that cold and distant man of that time suddenly fallen into the mortal world?

While she was thinking about it, the man walked over to the backseat, opened the door, and put Cherry in. Then, he looked at her. "You don't want to be in the backseat? Oh, that's true. You'd definitely want to be in the passenger seat instead."

Nora: "..."

Fine. No matter how much time flew by, it seemed like the man would only become more and more narcissistic.

Nora sat in the backseat in the end. Justin didn't mind, either. He drove off with her and Cherry.

In the car park.

Quentin stood in front of the jeep after watching Big Sister get into the car with her husband and daughter. However, even after waiting for a long while, he didn't see his cousin coming out. He frowned and looked into the jeep through the window.

The car's chassis was very high. When he looked at the backseat, he noticed two pieces of clothing that had been placed there.

Quentin was taken aback.

Weren't those the clothes that Nora was wearing when she was treating Uncle Ian in the hospital?

Why were they in the backseat?

No, wait...

Quentin suddenly understood something, and he immediately smiled.

Nora left with Justin. She waited until Quentin left before she finally went back to her car.

She got into the car and changed in the backseat. After casually tossing the red dress onto the backseat, she finally opened the door to go to the driver's seat.

Before she went over, Justin chuckled and said, "If you really want to hide your identity, you should change your car too."

He tossed his car key to Nora and suggested, "Why don't you drive this car instead for now?"

Nora glanced at his car.

From the outside, it was just an ordinary Volkswagen.

But once one entered, they would realize that it wasn't as simple as it looked on the inside.

Be it the engine or the leather seats, all of them were the best. Remodeling a car cost a lot. In addition, even if she had the money, time was needed to remodel a car at the last minute.

Thus, after thinking about it for a while, she didn't turn him down. She took the car keys from him and said, "I won't stand on ceremony, then."

Nora drove the jeep while Justin drove the 'ordinary' Volkswagen. The two left the building one after the other, and subsequently entered a high-end residential complex.

After getting Justin to park the Volkswagen in the residential complex, Nora said, "I've bought an apartment here. This is the parking lot for the apartment."

Justin looked upstairs. "What's your apartment number?"

Nora was a little surprised, but nevertheless answered, "302."

Then, she asked, "What are you planning?"

"To buy 301." Justin smiled and said, "If you ever move in, we can be neighbors."

"... You must be sick in the head," said Nora.

"Yeah, why don't you treat my illness?" Justin immediately quipped.

Nora: "..."

The corners of her lips spasmed. She got into the jeep and said, "Get in the car. I'll take you guys home."

Justin picked up Cherry and got in the backseat. When Nora, who had gotten into the driver's seat, saw them, she couldn't help but say, "She has already grown up, yet you're still holding her?"

"There's no child seat. It's not safe."

Justin briefly explained.

Nora curled her lips disdainfully. “She’s already used to riding in the car by herself.”

“Mommy, that was because no one doted on me back then! I’m not used to it anymore!”

Cherry protested weakly. However, as soon as she said that, she saw Nora’s stern eyes in the rearview mirror. She was so scared that she shrank back and hastily said, “Yes, I’m very used to it. Why don’t you put me down, Daddy? Don’t hold me so tightly~”

Despite saying that, she didn’t get off Justin’s legs but instead hugged his neck tighter.

Nora: “...”

Justin chuckled and stroked Cherry’s hair. He didn’t expose her, but instead supported her and said, “Be good. Don’t listen to your Mommy, she’s just jealous.”

Cherry was puzzled. “What’s she jealous of?”

“That I’m hugging you, of course.”

This was an ambiguous statement.

First, it meant that she was jealous of Cherry.

Second, it meant that she was jealous of Justin.

That scumbag was really taking advantage of her every moment of the day.

The corners of Nora’s lips spasmed. She couldn’t be bothered with the two of them, so she instead asked detachedly, “When are you and Pete switching back, Cherry?”

Cherry panicked at once. She said, “Mommy, I really miss you very much. I miss you super much! I miss the way you sleep, the way you get ready to go to bed, the way you doze off while you eat...”

She couldn’t come up with any more. After being stuck for a while, she finally said, “But Pete needs you more! After all, you haven’t seen each other for five years, so I won’t disturb your bonding session, okay?”

“ ... ”

That clever little fellow obviously didn't want to come back anymore after Justin spoiled her so much, so she made up so many excuses.

She sneered, “Shall I thank you on behalf of Pete?”

“It's fine~” Cherry said shyly, “What can I do? I'm his little sister, after all, so I have to give in to my elder brother~”

“ ... ”

It seemed like Cherry had become more thick-skinned than before.

She glared at Justin. It really was like what they said—one was marked by the company they kept!

After Nora took Cherry and Justin to the Hunts, while Cherry was getting out of the car, she asked, “Mommy, when are you and Daddy taking Pete and me to the amusement park?”

“Another day.”

Nora answered.

Cherry, however, persisted. She asked, “When is that?”

“... The day after tomorrow!”

Nora had no choice but to give her an answer.

“Yay!” Cherry raised her eyebrows at Justin triumphantly. Then, she bounced off while holding his hand and entered the manor.

Nora returned to the Smiths after that.

Unexpectedly, right after she got out of the car, Quentin came out of nowhere and blocked her way. He said, “You don't have to pretend anymore, Nora! I know your secret now!”

Nora's pupils shrank!

Surely her identity as Big Sister hadn't been exposed, had it?

She asked calmly, "What secret?"

"Did you go to the martial arts tournament because you heard something?"

A resigned Nora nodded. "That's right."

"I knew it. You even changed and put on a mask, so I didn't recognize you." Quentin looked around after he spoke. Then he said, "Since you were at the tournament, then you must have heard of me, right? "

Nora: "?"

Quentin said, "Didn't I already tell you? I'm the best fighter in the family and am ranked third in New York. I will definitely shine in the tournament! Do you know who I am?"

"... No, I don't."

Quentin the dimwit immediately looked around. Then, he said, "I'll tell you and you alone since you're my cousin, Nora. You're the only one I'm telling, get it? Even Joel doesn't know the alias I'm using in the tournament!"

He straightened his back, raised his chin, and declared, "I am Smithin!"

"..."

However, when he didn't see any reaction from Nora, Quentin glanced at her and frowned. "Haven't you heard of that name? Then do you know the famous Team Third In The World?"

Be it Smithin or Team Third In The World, both had actually become very famous in the underground arena recently. Anyone who had been there would have heard of him.

But...

Nora decided to tease him and deliberately said, "I'm new there, so I only heard them talking about Victor."

Quentin: "..."

No one in the family knew that he was participating in the martial arts tournament, so he couldn't show off. Now that he had finally found a cousin

who was interested in the tournament, how could she be kept unaware of his greatness?

Quentin was very puzzled, very much so. “Victor is nothing. He’s just a piece of trash who lost to me two years ago. Even if you have never heard of Smithin, surely you’ve heard of Team Third In The World, right?!”

He hadn’t competed in his own name, so it was normal that she hadn’t heard of him. But how come she hadn’t heard of the famous Team Third In The World, either?

Nora walked toward the house. “And then?”

“What do you mean by ‘and then’?!” Quentin became anxious. He gritted his teeth, steeled his resolve, and said, “Forget it, I’ll let you in on another big secret!”

Nora looked back at him.

Quentin said, “But you have to swear that you won’t tell anyone! I promised that I wouldn’t reveal her identity casually to outsiders. I’m only telling you because you’re my cousin.”

Nora had a vague idea what he was going to say next when she heard that. Sure enough, the next moment, he asked, “Do you know who that woman in the red dress in Team Third In The World is?”

Nora: “...”

“She’s Big Sister! The Big Sister of the Quinn School of Martial Arts!!!”

Quentin said triumphantly, “Do you see now? Even Big Sister has teamed up with me. She approached me because she thought that I was talented and fought pretty well... Surely you’ve at least heard of Big Sister, right?”

“... Yeah, I have.”

Quentin was satisfied at last. He said, “So, don’t you feel very honored that Big Sister has seen something in your elder brother? But don’t you get ahead of yourself. You absolutely mustn’t say anything about this to outsiders. Big Sister’s identity is confidential.”

“...”

“Is that look in your eyes envy? Actually, you don’t have to be envious that Big Sister has seen something in me. Uncle Ian picked me out of everyone in the family to practice martial arts when I was a child, so I’ve been practicing ever since. I heard that you used to be obese, and were even in poor health in the past, so you must not have practiced martial arts much before, right? By the way, which class are you in now?”

Nora: “...”

She knew how eager Quentin was to show off and bask in the limelight, so she knew that she didn’t need to say anything. Sure enough, Quentin said, “My team is already in Class D now. Once we win another five matches tomorrow, we’ll advance to Class E. We’ll be able to advance to Class F the day after tomorrow!”

“... Wow, how amazing.”

“Isn’t it? I think so, too.” Quentin folded his arms and said triumphantly, “But don’t you dare think it’s because I’m piggybacking off Big Sister. I can still compete by myself without any problems even without Big Sister. Why are you walking so fast? Forget it, I won’t say any more, lest you become jealous. But don’t worry, if someone bullies you in the arena, you can just use the name Smithin to scare them off!”

“...”

Nora suddenly felt like she’d better not let the young man with eighth-grader syndrome know her true identity after all. If she did, she reckoned that she’ll never have any peace anymore.

The corners of her lips spasmed and she went upstairs.

When she entered the bedroom, she realized that Pete had already returned from school and was obediently working on his Mathematical Olympiad problems.

Nora glanced at his workbook. The Mathematical Olympiad problems he was doing were almost at high school standard now. The five-year-old’s IQ was simply terrifying.

“Mommy.”

Pete greeted her obediently.

Nora made a sound of acknowledgment and stepped forward. She stroked his hair, and then bent over and gave him a kiss on the forehead. She said, "Let's go downstairs for dinner after you're done with that."

Pete nodded and continued to bury his head into the workbook.

Nora picked up her cell phone and saw a voice message from Tanya: 'Have you given your son a kiss?'

Nora replied: '... Yes, I have.'

Tanya: "Yeah, Pete's sense of security still leaves a little to be desired. It can't be compared with Cherry's at all. After all, the role a mother plays is simply too crucial when one is growing up. You have to have more physical contact with Pete, get it?"

Nora: 'Yeah, yeah. I know.'

Tanya sighed emotionally again and said: "Don't think of me as being too long-winded. After all... I also wish I could give mine a kiss."

When Nora heard the message, she immediately knew that Tanya had thought of her missing child again.

She didn't know how she should comfort her. After all, she had also experienced the pain of losing her own child.

Nora kept quiet for a while before she replied: "You'll definitely find him or her one day."

Tanya: 'Yeah.'

Since she had fallen silent, Nora didn't send her any more messages. She turned to her son. Suddenly, she felt like something was amiss. "Where's Mia?" She asked.

By right, Pete and Mia should be playing with each other at this time!

Without even lifting his head, Pete replied, "She's having dance classes at God-mom's!"

“ ... ”

In the villa in the suburbs.

Mia's forehead was covered in perspiration as she did leg stretches.

The small and thin five-year-old looked as if she was only four years old. Tanya went over and gave her a few pointers.

Mia glanced at Tanya.

Her teacher was very strict, but for some reason, she wasn't scared of her at all. When Tanya lowered her head toward her, Mia even suddenly kissed her on the cheek.

Tanya was stunned. She looked at Mia in disbelief, upon which Mia said, "Didn't you want a kiss, Ms. Turner? I'll give you a kiss."

An acerbic feeling suddenly welled up in Tanya, and she felt a mix of emotions come over her.

It seemed like she could still feel the warmth from the soft lips on her cheek.

Tanya touched her cheek and looked at the small, timid Mia in front of her. Suddenly, a feeling welled up in her—would it also feel like this if her child kissed her?

She spaced out and kept quiet for a while.

Seeing her freeze, Mia became frightened. Her eyes reddened and she hastily asked, "Are you mad, Ms. Turner?"

Tanya didn't know whether she should be angry or not.

In fact, she even felt like her decision to teach Mia dancing was a mistake in itself!

The child she had with Joel was missing.

Yet, here she was, teaching Joel's daughter how to dance. In fact, when she kissed her, she hadn't even pushed her away. It was as if she had already accepted her.

How could she do that?!

Tanya was originally helping Mia with her leg stretches, but she suddenly stood up. She wanted to say coldly, 'Don't kiss me again in the future.'

But when she looked at Mia's round eyes and small pointed face, she simply couldn't bring herself to say it. In fact, the words at the tip of her tongue even changed. She said, "No, I'm not."

Mia nodded. "Then, are you happy?"

Tanya wanted to say that she wasn't, but when she saw the hopeful look in Mia's eyes, she instead replied impulsively, "Yes."

Her answer made Mia's eyes instantly light up.

She said timidly, "My mother said that I can't kiss her so casually, Ms. Turner. She would also become unhappy if I made physical contact with her, so I thought you were unhappy, too. I only kissed you because I heard you say that you wanted a kiss. Are you really not mad at me?"

Her mother didn't allow her to touch her?

Tanya was dumbfounded.

She didn't know how other mothers behaved, but if it were her daughter, she would never tire of giving her kisses. Besides, whenever she was out, she always saw a lot of children who behaved very intimately with their mothers.

Little did she expect a tiny little girl like Mia to be so pitiful?

With that thought in mind, she said, "It's true, I really am happy. Ms. Turner likes to keep close contact with children."

"That's great!"

Mia stood up straight and grabbed Tanya's hand. She made her lower her head and then kissed her on the cheek again. She said, "I will make you happy every day from now on, Ms. Turner!"

She pursed her lips and gave her a bashful smile.

Tanya simply couldn't bring herself to say any words of rejection when faced with such a well-behaved and adorable little girl!

She ruffled Mia's hair and asked, "Doesn't it hurt when you stretch?"

Mia immediately nodded. "It does!"

"Then why didn't you say anything?" Tanya asked curiously.

After she decided to take Mia as her student, she had added an hour of class for her after school every day. As there wasn't a suitable location in the kindergarten, she had brought her to her home.

Fine beads of perspiration had formed on Mia's forehead when she was dancing, yet she hadn't complained about being tired.

After dancing, Tanya had even told her to do leg stretches.

One must always do their stretches properly after exercise. Besides, Mia was already five. To be honest, it was already a bit of a late start for a dancer because the body would no longer be flexible enough anymore. Thus, Tanya had also taught her a few difficult moves such as bending over backward.

Despite that, Mia hadn't made even a single sound from beginning to end.

Just as she was wondering whether it was because the girl's pain receptors were less sensitive than others, Mia replied, "I can't complain that it hurts."

Tanya was taken aback. "Why?"

When she was a child, she would always cry out even at the slightest bit of pain when she was practicing. This way, the teacher would show her some mercy.

Mia replied, "Because Daddy will be unhappy if I'm in pain. If Daddy is unhappy, Mommy will also be unhappy."

Unhappy?

Tanya frowned. Suddenly, she started to feel sorry for the girl.

Although she lived in a wealthy family and had both her parents with her, she led too frustrating a life. While other five-year-olds from ordinary families were

blissfully unaware, she didn't even have the right to complain when she was in pain!

Tanya suddenly became a little angry with Joel.

How could he treat a child like that?

No matter what, children were angels of the world. They were the most innocent!!

Tanya said to Mia, "Mia, you can speak freely without holding back in Ms. Turner's home in the future. If you're tired from practice, you can say so. If you're in pain because of stretching, you can also cry out. If you're thirsty or hungry, you can tell me that too. I will prepare everything for you."

Mia's eyes lit up. "Really?"

"Yeah."

Mia hesitated for a while. Then, she hung her head and asked somewhat embarrassedly, "Then... can you bake me a cake?"

Bake her a cake?

Tanya found the request rather odd but nevertheless agreed. "You must be hungry after practicing for so long. Alright, let's go downstairs."

Tanya used to be really bad at housework, but when she went abroad and lived by herself, she had to cook for herself, so her culinary skills had improved over the years.

Baking a cake was no problem for her.

Sometime later, she walked out of the kitchen with a simple cupcake in her hands. She was a little embarrassed as she said, "I can only bake simple stuff like this, Mia. You don't mind, right?"

Mia immediately shook her head. "Of course not, Ms. Turner!"

Tanya smiled and said, "You can dig in now."

Mia picked up the fork. She was about to eat when she suddenly said, "I'll give you half, Ms. Turner."

“No, it’s fine.”

A smiling Tanya went back to the kitchen and then came out with another cupcake. “I made a few. Come on, let’s eat!”

Mia stared at the cupcake. Suddenly, she clasped her hands together, closed her eyes, and seemingly thought about something. Only then did she start to eat the cupcake.

Tanya looked at her, feeling rather amused. The girl actually had the sense to say a prayer before eating.

The two of them dug into their respective cupcakes with gusto.

When Tanya saw the little girl’s cheeks all puffed up from eating, she felt a sense of accomplishment come over her, especially when Mia finished more than one cupcake from the batch she had baked.

She ate so much that even her belly had swelled up.

After they were done eating, she went to the kitchen to do the dishes. Then, she told Mia, “You can come here for dance practice every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday in the future. You can go and play the rest of the time. You’re still young, so you shouldn’t restrain yourself.”

Mia pursed her lips and smiled at her as she nodded. “Okay, Ms. Turner.”

All of a sudden, the doorbell rang.

Tanya knew that it must be Joel here to pick Mia up.

She looked at the clock in surprise—sure enough, it was already seven. She hadn’t expected time to pass so fast. Somewhat reluctantly, she helped Mia carry her schoolbag and then walked over to the door.

Sure enough, Joel was standing outside when she opened the door.

Tanya didn’t look at him. Instead, she waved at Mia and said, “See you in school tomorrow, Mia~”

“Okie-Dokie. See you tomorrow, Ms. Turner~”

Mia took Joel's hand after she spoke. Just as she was about to leave, she suddenly looked back at Tanya and said, "Thank you for the birthday cake today, Ms. Turner. It was really yummy!"

Birthday cake?

Tanya was taken aback. Then, she heard Joel say, "It's Mia's birthday today."

Birthday...

Tanya felt like a bomb had suddenly gone off in her head.

It was Mia's birthday. No wonder she had asked Tanya to bake her a cake, and even said a prayer before eating it.

Oh, right.

He had slept with Hillary right after he slept with her back then, hadn't he?

It was all too normal that their children's birthdays would be so close to each other's.

She bit her lip.

It had also been her child's birthday five days ago!

She didn't even know where her child might be wandering lost in the world, yet here she was, celebrating Mia's birthday?

Indescribable pain and misery made Tanya's expression instantly change.

She stared at Mia blankly.

Mia was terribly nervous. The puzzled girl looked at Tanya and asked, "W-what's wrong, Ms. Turner? Are you upset?"

She pushed Joel and said, "Daddy, hurry up and kiss Ms. Turner! She'll cheer up if you do that!"

Joel: "..."

Tanya: "..."

Joel didn't know the reason for Tanya's sudden change in behavior, but he knew that she likely held a grudge against Mia's existence all this time.

He lowered his head and slowly said, "I'm sorry."

He was sorry.

Five years ago, he had felt even more apologetic toward her.

If he hadn't gotten himself drunk, become muddleheaded, and ended up sleeping with Hillary, how would he have gotten her pregnant and ended up letting her give birth to Mia?

No, to be honest, he hadn't even known that she was pregnant.

Hillary understood him very well. She knew that he would definitely make her abort the child if he were to know, so she had secretly gone into hiding.

It wasn't until ten months later that she had finally returned with Mia.

He had done a DNA test when he saw the child—she was indeed his daughter. As such, he could only acknowledge her. That was probably the one and only time he had acted so spinelessly.

His heart had softened when he saw the child.

It was as if the child had a lot of affinity with him.

When Tanya heard his apology, her shame and anger made her eyes redden. She was about to yell at him when Mia suddenly held her hand and said, "I'll kiss you if Daddy won't, Ms. Turner. Don't be mad anymore, okay?"

Tanya lowered her head. When her eyes met Mia's timid eyes that looked as if she was trying to please her, her fury instantly extinguished.

Indeed.

She had only lost her child because she hadn't kept an eye on it. What did it have to do with Joel or Mia?

In fact, Joel didn't even know that she had given birth to his child!

Tanya lowered her head and stared at Mia.

She was just a pitiful little girl.

Tanya suddenly said, "Wait a minute."

She turned and went upstairs.

In addition to her own bedroom, she had also prepared another two children's rooms on the upper floor. One was a boy's room and the other a girl's.

This was because she didn't know whether her missing child was a boy or a girl.

Regardless, she would always prepare clothes for her son or daughter every year. The clothes currently in the closets were for five-year-olds, and on the bed in the girl's room was also a gift box.

It was the birthday gift she had bought five days ago for her child.

There was also one in the boy's room.

She picked up the gift box. Inside was an exquisite Barbie doll wearing a pink dress. Next to it were all kinds of doll clothing that one could dress up the doll with.

She touched the bedsheets and murmured silently, "I don't know where you are, my child, but I believe you'll be willing to make another child like yourself happy, right?"

She took the gift box and went downstairs.

Before she reached the door, she saw Mia nervously asking Joel, "Daddy, why did Ms. Turner suddenly get mad? Is it because it's Mia's birthday? Daddy, I won't celebrate my birthday anymore, okay? I like Ms. Turner, I don't want to make her mad..."

Joel stroked her hair. His voice was soft and gentle as he said, "It's not your fault. Daddy's the one who made Ms. Turner angry."

Mia then said seriously, "Daddy, you should apologize to Ms. Turner if you made her mad. Are you too embarrassed to say sorry, Daddy?"

Joel: "..."

He sighed. "I've already told her I'm sorry, but she won't accept my apology."

"Then say it a few more times!"

A child's world was very simple. For Mia, if her father had done something wrong, then he should apologize until Ms. Turner forgave him.

Joel sighed. "Okay."

When Mia wanted to say something again, she suddenly spotted Tanya, who had just returned. Her eyes lit up and she immediately called out, "Ms. Turner!"

Tanya handed her the gift box with the Barbie and said, "Happy birthday."

Mia's eyes instantly became even brighter. "Thank you, Ms. Turner!"

The little girl stretched out her hands and took the Barbie doll from her.

The Barbie was half her height, so it was very heavy for the small and thin girl.

Joel reached out to carry it for her.

However, Mia ducked and said, "I can do it, Daddy!"

This was a gift from Ms. Turner. She liked it very much.

Joel nodded. Then, he looked at Tanya. He was about to speak when Tanya sneered, "You must be very busy with work, right, Mr. Smith?"

Joel was overjoyed when he heard what she said. He thought that Tanya was showing him concern, so he nodded and replied, "It's alright."

"Hah." Tanya gave him a mocking smile and said, "Since it's alright, then shouldn't you learn how to be a qualified father, Mr. Smith?"

Joel was taken aback.

Tanya knew that there were some things she shouldn't say in front of Mia, so she merely gave him a subtle reminder. Then, she said, "Bye, Mia."

Mia replied softly, "Bye, Ms. Turner."

When Joel took Mia into the car, he received a call from Hillary. When he answered, the woman said, “Joel, it’s Mia’s birthday today. Can you let me see her? I miss her. I think Mia would also want her family to be together.”

Joel’s expression turned cold. He was about to say something when Hillary spoke again. She said, “I’m Mia’s mother, after all, Joel. I really miss her. I should think that she misses me, too! You can’t stop us from meeting when we’re mother and daughter. Mia will resent you for it in the future if you do that.

“I know you hate me, but my love for Mia is true. I am the one who has been taking care of Mia ever since she was born. You should know how dependent she is on me. Joel, all I want is really just to see my daughter. I don’t have any other intentions... Please?”

Joel looked at Mia.

He suddenly asked, “Do you want to meet your mother, Mia?”

Mia’s eyes immediately flickered when she heard him.

Her mom had told her before that she had to reply that she wanted to meet her if Daddy ever asked. Otherwise, her mom would hate her very much.

But she thought of how Ms. Turner had told her not to keep things to herself, and to voice her thoughts if she had any. She had said that she could cry out if she was in pain, or cry if she wanted to...

When she thought of what Ms.. Turner had told her, the little Mia seemed to have suddenly found her courage.

Just as Mia was about to say something, Hillary’s voice rang out through the phone. “Do you miss Mommy, Mia?”

The little Mia trembled a little when she heard Hillary’s voice. In the end, she nodded and replied weakly, “Yes.”

“Did you hear that, Joel?”

Hillary tried her best to convince him, “Mia wants to see me!”

Joel heaved a huge sigh.

He didn't want to let Mia and Hillary come into contact anymore, but if Mia wanted to see her mother, he couldn't stop her.

Therefore, Hillary immediately knew that Joel must have relented when she heard him sigh. She asked tentatively, "Can I go back to the Smiths' tonight? I heard that you've just found your younger sister, so I can also take the chance to pay her a visit."

Chapter 355 - The Plan of Saving Nora Novel Free

"Are you looking for someone?" asked Nora.

Quentin nodded. "I saw my cousin's car outside. She must have heard about the tournament somewhere and come here to have some fun. I'm afraid she'll offend someone because she doesn't know the rules, so I'm looking around to see if I can find her. I don't know where she's hiding, though."

Nora: "..."

Next to her, Cherry, who was holding her cell phone, swept her gaze across Quentin and shook her head a little. It would probably take that silly uncle of hers forever to realize that Mommy was Big Sister!

Nora and Justin were the two mainstays of the martial arts circle. With Quentin, the self-proclaimed third, with them, their team practically forged ahead unopposed.

Before they went into the ring, Quentin even said to Justin, "Remember to protect yourself later. You're the weakest among us three. Don't give the opponents any chance for a breakthrough."

Justin: "..."

His words made Nora give Justin a close, scrutinizing look.

The two of them had fought each other a few times before, but she hadn't been able to completely suppress Justin before. This showed that the man was very strong. Who exactly was he? Who had he learned his martial arts from?

Perhaps because he noticed her gaze, Justin came up to her and let out a low chuckle. With his beauty mark covered by his mask, the man's eyes were dark

and bottomless and looked a little less bewitching than usual. He said, "I'll take off the mask and let you look at me for free after the fight is over and we go home. Don't look anymore for now."

Nora: "!!"

Quentin: "..."

For some reason, he felt like they were showing off how in love they were again. The two of them were too much!

Were they here to compete or to show off how deeply they were in love with each other?!

The triggered Quentin straight-up displayed his martial prowess to its fullest and utterly defeated his opponent.

With all the points they had accumulated recently, they had reached Class D.

The team of three fought two more matches. However, when they were about to leave at night, the organizer of the tournament came up to them with a troubled look on his face. He said, "Please wait a minute, the three of you."

The trio stopped and looked at the organizer in confusion.

The organizer sighed and asked, "Can the three of you wait for a while and watch a certain match?"

Watch a certain match?

All three of them nodded.

Quentin had agreed because the tournament used to be organized by Ryan. At the bottom of it all, the Smiths had to take responsibility for the tournament.

As for Justin, as a leading figure in the martial arts circle, he had his responsibilities, of course.

Although Nora didn't actively participate in the Quinn School of Martial Arts' affairs, as Big Sister, she would play her part in maintaining order in the tournament, so she also agreed to it.

The organizer took the trio to Arena No. 5.

Once one-on-one matches were over, team matches were slotted in at intervals.

However, Nora was stunned when she saw the three people in the ring because...

The people in the ring were none other than Victor and his two fellow disciples!

The few of them were disciples of the Benevolence Hall, which had only been established for two years. Additionally, the owner of the Benevolence Hall was none other than the foreign boxing champion, Abigail!

Why had those three suddenly formed a team, though?

While she was wondering about it, the organizer standing beside them sighed and said, "That man called Victor, as well as his two fellow disciples, suddenly became very strong. Originally, we didn't think much about it—after all, once they reach Class F, there are Big Brother and Big Sister who will teach them a lesson or two."

While saying that, he secretly cast a glance at Justin.

Seeing that Justin was ignoring him, he continued and said, "But unexpectedly, those three have actually formed a team. Now that they've become a three-man team, it may really be true that no one can beat them anymore!"

Quentin snorted coldly at his words. "Why wouldn't anyone be able to beat them? How can you put yourself down when you haven't even fought them?! There's still me and Big... my elder sister, isn't it?"

He'd originally wanted to say 'Big Sister', but he suddenly remembered that Big Sister wanted to hide her identity, so he ended up saying 'elder sister' instead.

Nora: "??"

Her lips slowly curled into a smile. She couldn't help but wonder if that fellow would still be able to bring himself to call her his 'elder sister' once he knew who she really was.

The organizer, however, misunderstood and thought that Quentin wanted to say 'Big Brother', so he didn't think too much about it. He merely sighed and said, "There's only the two of you. Besides, it's one-on-one. To be honest, I'm not worried about Big Sister or Big Brother being up against Victor one-on-one. But there are three of them, so... it's hard to say!"

The organizer glanced at Justin.

Victor and his two fellow disciples were comparable in strength to Big Sister and Big Brother now. Unfortunately, Team Third In The World only had Big Brother and Quentin, who was ranked third. How would they be able to beat them?

Quentin also heaved a sigh. "Yeah. I'm not trying to diss you, but you're holding us back, bro."

Nevertheless, he still said impartially, "Just try your best. It doesn't matter even if you lose. We're all Americans here, so it doesn't matter."

As soon as he said that, the organizer fell silent for a moment. At last, he heaved a huge sigh and asked, "Do you know what their team name is?"

"What is it?"

"Americans Are Incompetent."

His words stunned the three of them.

Quentin shouted angrily, "What kind of ridiculous name is that? You guys actually allowed it?"

The organizer was also very angry. "We don't have any rules in the tournament. It's just like how no one would say anything even if you named your team First In The World.. They exploited that loophole. So, do you still think it's okay to lose?"

Was it okay to lose?

Of course not!

Quentin said, "Let us face them in a match! We'll kick their a*ses!"

The organizer looked at him and shook his head again. "Sigh. Let's talk about it again after you watch their match."

Quentin didn't understand what he meant, but shortly after, he did.

He'd originally thought that Victor must be the strongest among the three, but unexpectedly, the bald black man next to him was actually the strongest.

His body was as if it was made out of steel, and he seemed immune to all attacks. All the teams they were up against were from Class D, but the three of them played them all like they were babies.

Victor wasn't that lacking in martial arts ethics anymore this time.

The victory was theirs once the three of them threw their opponents out of the ring.

There was no applause around them. Victor was quiet and didn't say anything. The bald man next to him rubbed his bald head and said something in a foreign language.

Someone who didn't understand asked, "What did he say?"

Cherry translated it for him. "He said, 'Isn't there anyone in America who can fight?'"

"..."

That one line from her made everyone fall silent.

Even Quentin, who was usually the chattiest person ever, had a serious look on his face. He stared at them for quite a while before he finally leaned toward Nora and asked, "Big Sister, did you notice..."

"They've become stronger."

Nora answered him straightaway.

Quentin immediately nodded. "Yes, and it isn't just by a little. Why do I feel like Victor can last a few dozen moves against you now?"

Nora replied, "Twenty moves."

Quentin: "..."

Big Sister was simply so confident!

But!

He felt an acute sense of crisis. "I was originally ranked third in New York, but I feel threatened by that guy now. Aside from Big Brother and Big Sister, there's probably no one else who would be their match now, right? I can only tie with them at the most."

The organizer sighed and said, "Now you understand why I asked you guys to watch the match, right? It'll probably only be possible to defeat them if Big Brother and Big Sister team up!"

Quentin nodded at once. "I think so, too."

Even if he could stop Victor, Big Sister would have a hard time dealing with the other two by herself.

The organizer said, "Out of all the teams, Team Third In The World has the highest chance of beating them. Therefore, from tomorrow onward, I intend to arrange five matches for you guys every day, so that you can enter Class F as soon as possible. This way, you'll be able to go up against them! Otherwise, if they hog the Class F seats and clamor there every day, won't we die of anger? I wonder if the three of you would agree to it?"

Justin looked straight at Nora and said, "She has the final say."

The organizer: "..."

He looked at Nora.

Nora kept quiet for a moment before she nodded. "Okay."

She was duty-bound to uphold the American pride in their martial arts.

The organizer looked at Quentin again.

Quentin, who had a stern look on his face, hesitated for very long before he finally said, "Okay! After all, as the person ranked third in the world, who else can do it, if not me?"

The organizer finally breathed a sigh of relief and left.

After he left, Quentin walked over to Justin and Nora. “Big Sister, I think the three of us may not be able to win against the three of them because we have someone in the team holding us back.”

Both Justin and Nora nodded.

And wasn't that so?

He had quite a lot of self-awareness after all.

Unexpectedly, the next moment, Quentin said to Justin, “How about you withdraw from the team? If we replace you with Big Brother, we likely won't have any problems anymore!”

Justin: “??”

He let out a low scoff of laughter. He was about to speak when a woman's cold and urgent voice reached them. “No, I don't want that.”

Quentin: “?”

Justin also looked at her, only to see dissatisfaction in Nora's almond-shaped eyes. “I don't want to be in the same team as him.”

Justin: “...”

Quentin was also dumbfounded. “Huh? Why?”

“We don't get along.” After giving a brief explanation, Nora looked at Justin and added, “Besides, he isn't weak. The three of us can do it.”

Only Nora, who had fought with him before, knew how strong Justin truly was. Quentin usually fought very valiantly against their opponents, so he had basically dealt with the opponents for Justin. Moreover, he was carrying Cherry, which made Nora worried that she would get hurt, so she also helped him out all the time.

As a result, despite being on the same team, Quentin still didn't know how strong Justin ‘The Pretty Boy’ was.

Quentin liked Big Sister, but he also liked Big Brother very much.

He couldn't help but speak up for Big Brother. "Big Sister, what did Big Brother do to you? Did he steal your baby? Or did he steal your husband? Why are you so at odds with him?"

Nora: "..."

Quentin scratched his head. "Besides, I know you definitely think highly of your husband, but shouldn't we be realistic? You can't just think that your husband isn't weak just because beauty is in the eye of the beholder."

Then, he held his arm up, raised his chin, and said, "Or how about I compete with him in a duel? If he can beat me, he can stay in the team."

Nora glanced at him and left.

Justin also glanced at him and left.

Quentin: "??"

What did those two mean by that? Why did he feel as if the more he looked at them, the more he felt like something was wrong?

Were they looking down on him?

The corners of his lips spasmed and he chased after them. However, he could no longer see the two of them.

Never mind.

He would just look for his cousin first.

He went one round in the arena but didn't find her. In the end, he decided to go to the car park and wait for her!!

No matter where she was, she would eventually have to go to the car park, right?

Nora and Justin had already turned the corner and gone onto the path at the side. After confirming that there was no one on either side, Justin said, "I know those two people that teamed up with Victor. They have been here since the start of the tournament, but at that time, they weren't as strong as they are now."

“So, that means they’ve also become stronger?”

Nora asked hesitantly.

Justin nodded.

Nora took out the drink pouch that Justin stole from Victor and asked, “Do you know what Morris told me?”

Justin practically replied without any hesitation, “Human experiments?”

Nora was surprised. “You know about it?”

“I was guessing.”

Nora wasn’t doubtful anymore. Given how smart Justin was, he must have already figured out something from the point where Morris started to frequently check whether there were any unknown chemicals in Old Maddy’s body.

A puzzled Justin asked, “Are you suspecting that their increase in strength is related to illegal drugs?”

Nora raised the pouch she was holding. “I will know whether there’s any relation once I check the chemical composition of the stuff in here overnight.”

Justin nodded. The two walked to the car park.

Nora had only just come up to her black jeep when Quentin came after her.

When Nora, who was about to stop in front of the jeep, saw him coming over out of the corner of her eye, she paused slightly and instead followed Justin to the ordinary car two parking spaces away from the jeep.

Justin glanced behind him. When he saw Quentin, he immediately understood why she had done that. However, he pretended not to understand and raised an eyebrow. He asked, “Are you thinking of going home with me? It’ll be my greatest pleasure.”

Nora: “...”

She rolled her eyes and said, “Can you be a little more serious?”

Justin let out a low chuckle. "This is the very first time someone has ever told me to be more serious."

In front of outsiders, he had always been unfathomable and unsmiling, but the man was really letting go of himself more and more in front of her.

For some reason, Nora suddenly thought of the first time they had met.

The man had been cold and unfathomable at that time.

He had walked out of Hotel Finest's elevator in California like he was the bright moon surrounded by a myriad of stars. At that time, Pete's head was buried into his shoulders with only the back of his head exposed.

The man had glanced at her and then coldly said, "You're not my type, Ms. Smith."

...

How times had changed. How had that cold and distant man of that time suddenly fallen into the mortal world?

While she was thinking about it, the man walked over to the backseat, opened the door, and put Cherry in. Then, he looked at her. "You don't want to be in the backseat? Oh, that's true. You'd definitely want to be in the passenger seat instead."

Nora: "..."

Fine. No matter how much time flew by, it seemed like the man would only become more and more narcissistic.

Nora sat in the backseat in the end. Justin didn't mind, either. He drove off with her and Cherry.

In the car park.

Quentin stood in front of the jeep after watching Big Sister get into the car with her husband and daughter. However, even after waiting for a long while, he didn't see his cousin coming out. He frowned and looked into the jeep through the window.

The car's chassis was very high. When he looked at the backseat, he noticed two pieces of clothing that had been placed there.

Quentin was taken aback.

Weren't those the clothes that Nora was wearing when she was treating Uncle Ian in the hospital?

Why were they in the backseat?

No, wait...

Quentin suddenly understood something, and he immediately smiled.

Nora left with Justin. She waited until Quentin left before she finally went back to her car.

She got into the car and changed in the backseat. After casually tossing the red dress onto the backseat, she finally opened the door to go to the driver's seat.

Before she went over, Justin chuckled and said, "If you really want to hide your identity, you should change your car too."

He tossed his car key to Nora and suggested, "Why don't you drive this car instead for now?"

Nora glanced at his car.

From the outside, it was just an ordinary Volkswagen.

But once one entered, they would realize that it wasn't as simple as it looked on the inside.

Be it the engine or the leather seats, all of them were the best. Remodeling a car cost a lot. In addition, even if she had the money, time was needed to remodel a car at the last minute.

Thus, after thinking about it for a while, she didn't turn him down. She took the car keys from him and said, "I won't stand on ceremony, then."

Nora drove the jeep while Justin drove the 'ordinary' Volkswagen. The two left the building one after the other, and subsequently entered a high-end residential complex.

After getting Justin to park the Volkswagen in the residential complex, Nora said, "I've bought an apartment here. This is the parking lot for the apartment."

Justin looked upstairs. "What's your apartment number?"

Nora was a little surprised, but nevertheless answered, "302."

Then, she asked, "What are you planning?"

"To buy 301." Justin smiled and said, "If you ever move in, we can be neighbors."

"... You must be sick in the head," said Nora.

"Yeah, why don't you treat my illness?" Justin immediately quipped.

Nora: "..."

The corners of her lips spasmed. She got into the jeep and said, "Get in the car. I'll take you guys home."

Justin picked up Cherry and got in the backseat. When Nora, who had gotten into the driver's seat, saw them, she couldn't help but say, "She has already grown up, yet you're still holding her?"

"There's no child seat. It's not safe."

Justin briefly explained.

Nora curled her lips disdainfully. "She's already used to riding in the car by herself."

"Mommy, that was because no one doted on me back then! I'm not used to it anymore!"

Cherry protested weakly. However, as soon as she said that, she saw Nora's stern eyes in the rearview mirror. She was so scared that she shrank back and hastily said, "Yes, I'm very used to it. Why don't you put me down, Daddy? Don't hold me so tightly~"

Despite saying that, she didn't get off Justin's legs but instead hugged his neck tighter.

Nora: "..."

Justin chuckled and stroked Cherry's hair. He didn't expose her, but instead supported her and said, "Be good. Don't listen to your Mommy, she's just jealous."

Cherry was puzzled. "What's she jealous of?"

"That I'm hugging you, of course."

This was an ambiguous statement.

First, it meant that she was jealous of Cherry.

Second, it meant that she was jealous of Justin.

That scumbag was really taking advantage of her every moment of the day.

The corners of Nora's lips spasmed. She couldn't be bothered with the two of them, so she instead asked detachedly, "When are you and Pete switching back, Cherry?"

Cherry panicked at once. She said, "Mommy, I really miss you very much. I miss you super much! I miss the way you sleep, the way you get ready to go to bed, the way you doze off while you eat..."

She couldn't come up with any more. After being stuck for a while, she finally said, "But Pete needs you more! After all, you haven't seen each other for five years, so I won't disturb your bonding session, okay?"

"..."

That clever little fellow obviously didn't want to come back anymore after Justin spoiled her so much, so she made up so many excuses.

She sneered, "Shall I thank you on behalf of Pete?"

"It's fine~" Cherry said shyly, "What can I do? I'm his little sister, after all, so I have to give in to my elder brother~"

“ ... ”

It seemed like Cherry had become more thick-skinned than before.

She glared at Justin. It really was like what they said—one was marked by the company they kept!

After Nora took Cherry and Justin to the Hunts, while Cherry was getting out of the car, she asked, “Mommy, when are you and Daddy taking Pete and me to the amusement park?”

“Another day.”

Nora answered.

Cherry, however, persisted. She asked, “When is that?”

“... The day after tomorrow!”

Nora had no choice but to give her an answer.

“Yay!” Cherry raised her eyebrows at Justin triumphantly. Then, she bounced off while holding his hand and entered the manor.

Nora returned to the Smiths after that.

Unexpectedly, right after she got out of the car, Quentin came out of nowhere and blocked her way. He said, “You don’t have to pretend anymore, Nora! I know your secret now!”

Nora’s pupils shrank!

Surely her identity as Big Sister hadn’t been exposed, had it?

She asked calmly, “What secret?”

“Did you go to the martial arts tournament because you heard something?”

A resigned Nora nodded. “That’s right.”

“I knew it. You even changed and put on a mask, so I didn’t recognize you.” Quentin looked around after he spoke. Then he said, “Since you were at the tournament, then you must have heard of me, right? ”

Nora: “?”

Quentin said, “Didn’t I already tell you? I’m the best fighter in the family and am ranked third in New York. I will definitely shine in the tournament! Do you know who I am?”

“... No, I don’t.”

Quentin the dimwit immediately looked around. Then, he said, “I’ll tell you and you alone since you’re my cousin, Nora. You’re the only one I’m telling, get it? Even Joel doesn’t know the alias I’m using in the tournament!”

He straightened his back, raised his chin, and declared, “I am Smithin!”

“...”

However, when he didn’t see any reaction from Nora, Quentin glanced at her and frowned. “Haven’t you heard of that name? Then do you know the famous Team Third In The World?”

Be it Smithin or Team Third In The World, both had actually become very famous in the underground arena recently. Anyone who had been there would have heard of him.

But...

Nora decided to tease him and deliberately said, “I’m new there, so I only heard them talking about Victor.”

Quentin: “...”

No one in the family knew that he was participating in the martial arts tournament, so he couldn’t show off. Now that he had finally found a cousin who was interested in the tournament, how could she be kept unaware of his greatness?

Quentin was very puzzled, very much so. “Victor is nothing. He’s just a piece of trash who lost to me two years ago. Even if you have never heard of Smithin, surely you’ve heard of Team Third In The World, right?!”

He hadn’t competed in his own name, so it was normal that she hadn’t heard of him. But how come she hadn’t heard of the famous Team Third In The World, either?

Nora walked toward the house. “And then?”

“What do you mean by ‘and then’?!” Quentin became anxious. He gritted his teeth, steeled his resolve, and said, “Forget it, I’ll let you in on another big secret!”

Nora looked back at him.

Quentin said, “But you have to swear that you won’t tell anyone! I promised that I wouldn’t reveal her identity casually to outsiders. I’m only telling you because you’re my cousin.”

Nora had a vague idea what he was going to say next when she heard that. Sure enough, the next moment, he asked, “Do you know who that woman in the red dress in Team Third In The World is?”

Nora: “...”

“She’s Big Sister! The Big Sister of the Quinn School of Martial Arts!!!”

Quentin said triumphantly, “Do you see now? Even Big Sister has teamed up with me. She approached me because she thought that I was talented and fought pretty well... Surely you’ve at least heard of Big Sister, right?”

“... Yeah, I have.”

Quentin was satisfied at last. He said, “So, don’t you feel very honored that Big Sister has seen something in your elder brother? But don’t you get ahead of yourself. You absolutely mustn’t say anything about this to outsiders. Big Sister’s identity is confidential.”

“...”

“Is that look in your eyes envy? Actually, you don’t have to be envious that Big Sister has seen something in me. Uncle Ian picked me out of everyone in the family to practice martial arts when I was a child, so I’ve been practicing ever since. I heard that you used to be obese, and were even in poor health in the past, so you must not have practiced martial arts much before, right? By the way, which class are you in now?”

Nora: “...”

She knew how eager Quentin was to show off and bask in the limelight, so she knew that she didn't need to say anything. Sure enough, Quentin said, "My team is already in Class D now. Once we win another five matches tomorrow, we'll advance to Class E. We'll be able to advance to Class F the day after tomorrow!"

"... Wow, how amazing."

"Isn't it? I think so, too." Quentin folded his arms and said triumphantly, "But don't you dare think it's because I'm piggybacking off Big Sister. I can still compete by myself without any problems even without Big Sister. Why are you walking so fast? Forget it, I won't say any more, lest you become jealous. But don't worry, if someone bullies you in the arena, you can just use the name Smithin to scare them off!"

"..."

Nora suddenly felt like she'd better not let the young man with eighth-grader syndrome know her true identity after all. If she did, she reckoned that she'll never have any peace anymore.

The corners of her lips spasmed and she went upstairs.

When she entered the bedroom, she realized that Pete had already returned from school and was obediently working on his Mathematical Olympiad problems.

Nora glanced at his workbook. The Mathematical Olympiad problems he was doing were almost at high school standard now. The five-year-old's IQ was simply terrifying.

"Mommy."

Pete greeted her obediently.

Nora made a sound of acknowledgment and stepped forward. She stroked his hair, and then bent over and gave him a kiss on the forehead. She said, "Let's go downstairs for dinner after you're done with that."

Pete nodded and continued to bury his head into the workbook.

Nora picked up her cell phone and saw a voice message from Tanya: 'Have you given your son a kiss?'

Nora replied: '... Yes, I have.'

Tanya: "Yeah, Pete's sense of security still leaves a little to be desired. It can't be compared with Cherry's at all. After all, the role a mother plays is simply too crucial when one is growing up. You have to have more physical contact with Pete, get it?"

Nora: 'Yeah, yeah. I know.'

Tanya sighed emotionally again and said: "Don't think of me as being too long-winded. After all... I also wish I could give mine a kiss."

When Nora heard the message, she immediately knew that Tanya had thought of her missing child again.

She didn't know how she should comfort her. After all, she had also experienced the pain of losing her own child.

Nora kept quiet for a while before she replied: "You'll definitely find him or her one day."

Tanya: 'Yeah.'

Since she had fallen silent, Nora didn't send her any more messages. She turned to her son. Suddenly, she felt like something was amiss. "Where's Mia?" She asked.

By right, Pete and Mia should be playing with each other at this time!

Without even lifting his head, Pete replied, "She's having dance classes at God-mom's!"

"..."

In the villa in the suburbs.

Mia's forehead was covered in perspiration as she did leg stretches.

The small and thin five-year-old looked as if she was only four years old. Tanya went over and gave her a few pointers.

Mia glanced at Tanya.

Her teacher was very strict, but for some reason, she wasn't scared of her at all. When Tanya lowered her head toward her, Mia even suddenly kissed her on the cheek.

Tanya was stunned. She looked at Mia in disbelief, upon which Mia said, "Didn't you want a kiss, Ms. Turner? I'll give you a kiss."

An acerbic feeling suddenly welled up in Tanya, and she felt a mix of emotions come over her.

It seemed like she could still feel the warmth from the soft lips on her cheek.

Tanya touched her cheek and looked at the small, timid Mia in front of her. Suddenly, a feeling welled up in her—would it also feel like this if her child kissed her?

She spaced out and kept quiet for a while.

Seeing her freeze, Mia became frightened. Her eyes reddened and she hastily asked, "Are you mad, Ms. Turner?"

Tanya didn't know whether she should be angry or not.

In fact, she even felt like her decision to teach Mia dancing was a mistake in itself!

The child she had with Joel was missing.

Yet, here she was, teaching Joel's daughter how to dance. In fact, when she kissed her, she hadn't even pushed her away. It was as if she had already accepted her.

How could she do that?!

Tanya was originally helping Mia with her leg stretches, but she suddenly stood up. She wanted to say coldly, 'Don't kiss me again in the future.'

But when she looked at Mia's round eyes and small pointed face, she simply couldn't bring herself to say it. In fact, the words at the tip of her tongue even changed. She said, "No, I'm not."

Mia nodded. "Then, are you happy?"

Tanya wanted to say that she wasn't, but when she saw the hopeful look in Mia's eyes, she instead replied impulsively, "Yes."

Her answer made Mia's eyes instantly light up.

She said timidly, "My mother said that I can't kiss her so casually, Ms. Turner. She would also become unhappy if I made physical contact with her, so I thought you were unhappy, too. I only kissed you because I heard you say that you wanted a kiss. Are you really not mad at me?"

Her mother didn't allow her to touch her?

Tanya was dumbfounded.

She didn't know how other mothers behaved, but if it were her daughter, she would never tire of giving her kisses. Besides, whenever she was out, she always saw a lot of children who behaved very intimately with their mothers.

Little did she expect a tiny little girl like Mia to be so pitiful?

With that thought in mind, she said, "It's true, I really am happy. Ms. Turner likes to keep close contact with children."

"That's great!"

Mia stood up straight and grabbed Tanya's hand. She made her lower her head and then kissed her on the cheek again. She said, "I will make you happy every day from now on, Ms. Turner!"

She pursed her lips and gave her a bashful smile.

Tanya simply couldn't bring herself to say any words of rejection when faced with such a well-behaved and adorable little girl!

She ruffled Mia's hair and asked, "Doesn't it hurt when you stretch?"

Mia immediately nodded. "It does!"

"Then why didn't you say anything?" Tanya asked curiously.

After she decided to take Mia as her student, she had added an hour of class for her after school every day. As there wasn't a suitable location in the kindergarten, she had brought her to her home.

Fine beads of perspiration had formed on Mia's forehead when she was dancing, yet she hadn't complained about being tired.

After dancing, Tanya had even told her to do leg stretches.

One must always do their stretches properly after exercise. Besides, Mia was already five. To be honest, it was already a bit of a late start for a dancer because the body would no longer be flexible enough anymore. Thus, Tanya had also taught her a few difficult moves such as bending over backward.

Despite that, Mia hadn't made even a single sound from beginning to end.

Just as she was wondering whether it was because the girl's pain receptors were less sensitive than others, Mia replied, "I can't complain that it hurts."

Tanya was taken aback. "Why?"

When she was a child, she would always cry out even at the slightest bit of pain when she was practicing. This way, the teacher would show her some mercy.

Mia replied, "Because Daddy will be unhappy if I'm in pain. If Daddy is unhappy, Mommy will also be unhappy."

Unhappy?

Tanya frowned. Suddenly, she started to feel sorry for the girl.

Although she lived in a wealthy family and had both her parents with her, she led too frustrating a life. While other five-year-olds from ordinary families were blissfully unaware, she didn't even have the right to complain when she was in pain!

Tanya suddenly became a little angry with Joel.

How could he treat a child like that?

No matter what, children were angels of the world. They were the most innocent!!

Tanya said to Mia, "Mia, you can speak freely without holding back in Ms. Turner's home in the future. If you're tired from practice, you can say so. If you're in pain because of stretching, you can also cry out. If you're thirsty or hungry, you can tell me that too. I will prepare everything for you."

Mia's eyes lit up. "Really?"

"Yeah."

Mia hesitated for a while. Then, she hung her head and asked somewhat embarrassedly, "Then... can you bake me a cake?"

Bake her a cake?

Tanya found the request rather odd but nevertheless agreed. "You must be hungry after practicing for so long. Alright, let's go downstairs."

Tanya used to be really bad at housework, but when she went abroad and lived by herself, she had to cook for herself, so her culinary skills had improved over the years.

Baking a cake was no problem for her.

Sometime later, she walked out of the kitchen with a simple cupcake in her hands. She was a little embarrassed as she said, "I can only bake simple stuff like this, Mia. You don't mind, right?"

Mia immediately shook her head. "Of course not, Ms. Turner!"

Tanya smiled and said, "You can dig in now."

Mia picked up the fork. She was about to eat when she suddenly said, "I'll give you half, Ms. Turner."

"No, it's fine."

A smiling Tanya went back to the kitchen and then came out with another cupcake. "I made a few. Come on, let's eat!"

Mia stared at the cupcake. Suddenly, she clasped her hands together, closed her eyes, and seemingly thought about something. Only then did she start to eat the cupcake.

Tanya looked at her, feeling rather amused. The girl actually had the sense to say a prayer before eating.

The two of them dug into their respective cupcakes with gusto.

When Tanya saw the little girl's cheeks all puffed up from eating, she felt a sense of accomplishment come over her, especially when Mia finished more than one cupcake from the batch she had baked.

She ate so much that even her belly had swelled up.

After they were done eating, she went to the kitchen to do the dishes. Then, she told Mia, "You can come here for dance practice every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday in the future. You can go and play the rest of the time. You're still young, so you shouldn't restrain yourself."

Mia pursed her lips and smiled at her as she nodded. "Okay, Ms. Turner."

All of a sudden, the doorbell rang.

Tanya knew that it must be Joel here to pick Mia up.

She looked at the clock in surprise—sure enough, it was already seven. She hadn't expected time to pass so fast. Somewhat reluctantly, she helped Mia carry her schoolbag and then walked over to the door.

Sure enough, Joel was standing outside when she opened the door.

Tanya didn't look at him. Instead, she waved at Mia and said, "See you in school tomorrow, Mia~"

"Okie-Dokie. See you tomorrow, Ms. Turner~"

Mia took Joel's hand after she spoke. Just as she was about to leave, she suddenly looked back at Tanya and said, "Thank you for the birthday cake today, Ms. Turner. It was really yummy!"

Birthday cake?

Tanya was taken aback. Then, she heard Joel say, "It's Mia's birthday today."

Birthday...

Tanya felt like a bomb had suddenly gone off in her head.

It was Mia's birthday. No wonder she had asked Tanya to bake her a cake, and even said a prayer before eating it.

Oh, right.

He had slept with Hillary right after he slept with her back then, hadn't he?

It was all too normal that their children's birthdays would be so close to each other's.

She bit her lip.

It had also been her child's birthday five days ago!

She didn't even know where her child might be wandering lost in the world, yet here she was, celebrating Mia's birthday?

Indescribable pain and misery made Tanya's expression instantly change.

She stared at Mia blankly.

Mia was terribly nervous. The puzzled girl looked at Tanya and asked, "W-what's wrong, Ms. Turner? Are you upset?"

She pushed Joel and said, "Daddy, hurry up and kiss Ms. Turner! She'll cheer up if you do that!"

Joel: "..."

Tanya: "..."

Joel didn't know the reason for Tanya's sudden change in behavior, but he knew that she likely held a grudge against Mia's existence all this time.

He lowered his head and slowly said, "I'm sorry."

He was sorry.

Five years ago, he had felt even more apologetic toward her.

If he hadn't gotten himself drunk, become muddleheaded, and ended up sleeping with Hillary, how would he have gotten her pregnant and ended up letting her give birth to Mia?

No, to be honest, he hadn't even known that she was pregnant.

Hillary understood him very well. She knew that he would definitely make her abort the child if he were to know, so she had secretly gone into hiding.

It wasn't until ten months later that she had finally returned with Mia.

He had done a DNA test when he saw the child—she was indeed his daughter. As such, he could only acknowledge her. That was probably the one and only time he had acted so spinelessly.

His heart had softened when he saw the child.

It was as if the child had a lot of affinity with him.

When Tanya heard his apology, her shame and anger made her eyes redden. She was about to yell at him when Mia suddenly held her hand and said, "I'll kiss you if Daddy won't, Ms. Turner. Don't be mad anymore, okay?"

Tanya lowered her head. When her eyes met Mia's timid eyes that looked as if she was trying to please her, her fury instantly extinguished.

Indeed.

She had only lost her child because she hadn't kept an eye on it. What did it have to do with Joel or Mia?

In fact, Joel didn't even know that she had given birth to his child!

Tanya lowered her head and stared at Mia.

She was just a pitiful little girl.

Tanya suddenly said, "Wait a minute."

She turned and went upstairs.

In addition to her own bedroom, she had also prepared another two children's rooms on the upper floor. One was a boy's room and the other a girl's.

This was because she didn't know whether her missing child was a boy or a girl.

Regardless, she would always prepare clothes for her son or daughter every year. The clothes currently in the closets were for five-year-olds, and on the bed in the girl's room was also a gift box.

It was the birthday gift she had bought five days ago for her child.

There was also one in the boy's room.

She picked up the gift box. Inside was an exquisite Barbie doll wearing a pink dress. Next to it were all kinds of doll clothing that one could dress up the doll with.

She touched the bedsheets and murmured silently, "I don't know where you are, my child, but I believe you'll be willing to make another child like yourself happy, right?"

She took the gift box and went downstairs.

Before she reached the door, she saw Mia nervously asking Joel, "Daddy, why did Ms. Turner suddenly get mad? Is it because it's Mia's birthday? Daddy, I won't celebrate my birthday anymore, okay? I like Ms. Turner, I don't want to make her mad..."

Joel stroked her hair. His voice was soft and gentle as he said, "It's not your fault. Daddy's the one who made Ms. Turner angry."

Mia then said seriously, "Daddy, you should apologize to Ms. Turner if you made her mad. Are you too embarrassed to say sorry, Daddy?"

Joel: "..."

He sighed. "I've already told her I'm sorry, but she won't accept my apology."

"Then say it a few more times!"

A child's world was very simple. For Mia, if her father had done something wrong, then he should apologize until Ms. Turner forgave him.

Joel sighed. "Okay."

When Mia wanted to say something again, she suddenly spotted Tanya, who had just returned. Her eyes lit up and she immediately called out, "Ms. Turner!"

Tanya handed her the gift box with the Barbie and said, "Happy birthday."

Mia's eyes instantly became even brighter. "Thank you, Ms. Turner!"

The little girl stretched out her hands and took the Barbie doll from her.

The Barbie was half her height, so it was very heavy for the small and thin girl.

Joel reached out to carry it for her.

However, Mia ducked and said, "I can do it, Daddy!"

This was a gift from Ms. Turner. She liked it very much.

Joel nodded. Then, he looked at Tanya. He was about to speak when Tanya sneered, "You must be very busy with work, right, Mr. Smith?"

Joel was overjoyed when he heard what she said. He thought that Tanya was showing him concern, so he nodded and replied, "It's alright."

"Hah." Tanya gave him a mocking smile and said, "Since it's alright, then shouldn't you learn how to be a qualified father, Mr. Smith?"

Joel was taken aback.

Tanya knew that there were some things she shouldn't say in front of Mia, so she merely gave him a subtle reminder. Then, she said, "Bye, Mia."

Mia replied softly, "Bye, Ms. Turner."

When Joel took Mia into the car, he received a call from Hillary. When he answered, the woman said, "Joel, it's Mia's birthday today. Can you let me see her? I miss her. I think Mia would also want her family to be together."

Joel's expression turned cold. He was about to say something when Hillary spoke again. She said, "I'm Mia's mother, after all, Joel. I really miss her. I should think that she misses me, too! You can't stop us from meeting when we're mother and daughter. Mia will resent you for it in the future if you do that."

“I know you hate me, but my love for Mia is true. I am the one who has been taking care of Mia ever since she was born. You should know how dependent she is on me. Joel, all I want is really just to see my daughter. I don’t have any other intentions... Please?”

Joel looked at Mia.

He suddenly asked, “Do you want to meet your mother, Mia?”

Mia’s eyes immediately flickered when she heard him.

Her mom had told her before that she had to reply that she wanted to meet her if Daddy ever asked. Otherwise, her mom would hate her very much.

But she thought of how Ms. Turner had told her not to keep things to herself, and to voice her thoughts if she had any. She had said that she could cry out if she was in pain, or cry if she wanted to...

When she thought of what Ms.. Turner had told her, the little Mia seemed to have suddenly found her courage.

Just as Mia was about to say something, Hillary’s voice rang out through the phone. “Do you miss Mommy, Mia?”

The little Mia trembled a little when she heard Hillary’s voice. In the end, she nodded and replied weakly, “Yes.”

“Did you hear that, Joel?”

Hillary tried her best to convince him, “Mia wants to see me!”

Joel heaved a huge sigh.

He didn’t want to let Mia and Hillary come into contact anymore, but if Mia wanted to see her mother, he couldn’t stop her.

Therefore, Hillary immediately knew that Joel must have relented when she heard him sigh. She asked tentatively, “Can I go back to the Smiths’ tonight? I heard that you’ve just found your younger sister, so I can also take the chance to pay her a visit.”

Chapter 356 - The Plan of Saving Nora Novel Free

He felt an acute sense of crisis. "I was originally ranked third in New York, but I feel threatened by that guy now. Aside from Big Brother and Big Sister, there's probably no one else who would be their match now, right? I can only tie with them at the most."

The organizer sighed and said, "Now you understand why I asked you guys to watch the match, right? It'll probably only be possible to defeat them if Big Brother and Big Sister team up!"

Quentin nodded at once. "I think so, too."

Even if he could stop Victor, Big Sister would have a hard time dealing with the other two by herself.

The organizer said, "Out of all the teams, Team Third In The World has the highest chance of beating them. Therefore, from tomorrow onward, I intend to arrange five matches for you guys every day, so that you can enter Class F as soon as possible. This way, you'll be able to go up against them! Otherwise, if they hog the Class F seats and clamor there every day, won't we die of anger? I wonder if the three of you would agree to it?"

Justin looked straight at Nora and said, "She has the final say."

The organizer: "..."

He looked at Nora.

Nora kept quiet for a moment before she nodded. "Okay."

She was duty-bound to uphold the American pride in their martial arts.

The organizer looked at Quentin again.

Quentin, who had a stern look on his face, hesitated for very long before he finally said, "Okay! After all, as the person ranked third in the world, who else can do it, if not me?"

The organizer finally breathed a sigh of relief and left.

After he left, Quentin walked over to Justin and Nora. "Big Sister, I think the three of us may not be able to win against the three of them because we have someone in the team holding us back."

Both Justin and Nora nodded.

And wasn't that so?

He had quite a lot of self-awareness after all.

Unexpectedly, the next moment, Quentin said to Justin, "How about you withdraw from the team? If we replace you with Big Brother, we likely won't have any problems anymore!"

Justin: "??"

He let out a low scoff of laughter. He was about to speak when a woman's cold and urgent voice reached them. "No, I don't want that."

Quentin: "?"

Justin also looked at her, only to see dissatisfaction in Nora's almond-shaped eyes. "I don't want to be in the same team as him."

Justin: "..."

Quentin was also dumbfounded. "Huh? Why?"

"We don't get along." After giving a brief explanation, Nora looked at Justin and added, "Besides, he isn't weak. The three of us can do it."

Only Nora, who had fought with him before, knew how strong Justin truly was. Quentin usually fought very valiantly against their opponents, so he had basically dealt with the opponents for Justin. Moreover, he was carrying Cherry, which made Nora worried that she would get hurt, so she also helped him out all the time.

As a result, despite being on the same team, Quentin still didn't know how strong Justin 'The Pretty Boy' was.

Quentin liked Big Sister, but he also liked Big Brother very much.

He couldn't help but speak up for Big Brother. "Big Sister, what did Big Brother do to you? Did he steal your baby? Or did he steal your husband? Why are you so at odds with him?"

Nora: "..."

Quentin scratched his head. “Besides, I know you definitely think highly of your husband, but shouldn’t we be realistic? You can’t just think that your husband isn’t weak just because beauty is in the eye of the beholder.”

Then, he held his arm up, raised his chin, and said, “Or how about I compete with him in a duel? If he can beat me, he can stay in the team.”

Nora glanced at him and left.

Justin also glanced at him and left.

Quentin: “??”

What did those two mean by that? Why did he feel as if the more he looked at them, the more he felt like something was wrong?

Were they looking down on him?

The corners of his lips spasmed and he chased after them. However, he could no longer see the two of them.

Never mind.

He would just look for his cousin first.

He went one round in the arena but didn’t find her. In the end, he decided to go to the car park and wait for her!!

No matter where she was, she would eventually have to go to the car park, right?

Nora and Justin had already turned the corner and gone onto the path at the side. After confirming that there was no one on either side, Justin said, “I know those two people that teamed up with Victor. They have been here since the start of the tournament, but at that time, they weren’t as strong as they are now.”

“So, that means they’ve also become stronger?”

Nora asked hesitantly.

Justin nodded.

Nora took out the drink pouch that Justin stole from Victor and asked, "Do you know what Morris told me?"

Justin practically replied without any hesitation, "Human experiments?"

Nora was surprised. "You know about it?"

"I was guessing."

Nora wasn't doubtful anymore. Given how smart Justin was, he must have already figured out something from the point where Morris started to frequently check whether there were any unknown chemicals in Old Maddy's body.

A puzzled Justin asked, "Are you suspecting that their increase in strength is related to illegal drugs?"

Nora raised the pouch she was holding. "I will know whether there's any relation once I check the chemical composition of the stuff in here overnight."

Justin nodded. The two walked to the car park.

Nora had only just come up to her black jeep when Quentin came after her.

When Nora, who was about to stop in front of the jeep, saw him coming over out of the corner of her eye, she paused slightly and instead followed Justin to the ordinary car two parking spaces away from the jeep.

Justin glanced behind him. When he saw Quentin, he immediately understood why she had done that. However, he pretended not to understand and raised an eyebrow. He asked, "Are you thinking of going home with me? It'll be my greatest pleasure."

Nora: "..."

She rolled her eyes and said, "Can you be a little more serious?"

Justin let out a low chuckle. "This is the very first time someone has ever told me to be more serious."

In front of outsiders, he had always been unfathomable and unsmiling, but the man was really letting go of himself more and more in front of her.

For some reason, Nora suddenly thought of the first time they had met.

The man had been cold and unfathomable at that time.

He had walked out of Hotel Finest's elevator in California like he was the bright moon surrounded by a myriad of stars. At that time, Pete's head was buried into his shoulders with only the back of his head exposed.

The man had glanced at her and then coldly said, "You're not my type, Ms. Smith."

...

How times had changed. How had that cold and distant man of that time suddenly fallen into the mortal world?

While she was thinking about it, the man walked over to the backseat, opened the door, and put Cherry in. Then, he looked at her. "You don't want to be in the backseat? Oh, that's true. You'd definitely want to be in the passenger seat instead."

Nora: "..."

Fine. No matter how much time flew by, it seemed like the man would only become more and more narcissistic.

Nora sat in the backseat in the end. Justin didn't mind, either. He drove off with her and Cherry.

In the car park.

Quentin stood in front of the jeep after watching Big Sister get into the car with her husband and daughter. However, even after waiting for a long while, he didn't see his cousin coming out. He frowned and looked into the jeep through the window.

The car's chassis was very high. When he looked at the backseat, he noticed two pieces of clothing that had been placed there.

Quentin was taken aback.

Weren't those the clothes that Nora was wearing when she was treating Uncle Ian in the hospital?

Why were they in the backseat?

No, wait...

Quentin suddenly understood something, and he immediately smiled.

Nora left with Justin. She waited until Quentin left before she finally went back to her car.

She got into the car and changed in the backseat. After casually tossing the red dress onto the backseat, she finally opened the door to go to the driver's seat.

Before she went over, Justin chuckled and said, "If you really want to hide your identity, you should change your car too."

He tossed his car key to Nora and suggested, "Why don't you drive this car instead for now?"

Nora glanced at his car.

From the outside, it was just an ordinary Volkswagen.

But once one entered, they would realize that it wasn't as simple as it looked on the inside.

Be it the engine or the leather seats, all of them were the best. Remodeling a car cost a lot. In addition, even if she had the money, time was needed to remodel a car at the last minute.

Thus, after thinking about it for a while, she didn't turn him down. She took the car keys from him and said, "I won't stand on ceremony, then."

Nora drove the jeep while Justin drove the 'ordinary' Volkswagen. The two left the building one after the other, and subsequently entered a high-end residential complex.

After getting Justin to park the Volkswagen in the residential complex, Nora said, "I've bought an apartment here. This is the parking lot for the apartment."

Justin looked upstairs. "What's your apartment number?"

Nora was a little surprised, but nevertheless answered, "302."

Then, she asked, "What are you planning?"

"To buy 301." Justin smiled and said, "If you ever move in, we can be neighbors."

"... You must be sick in the head," said Nora.

"Yeah, why don't you treat my illness?" Justin immediately quipped.

Nora: "..."

The corners of her lips spasmed. She got into the jeep and said, "Get in the car. I'll take you guys home."

Justin picked up Cherry and got in the backseat. When Nora, who had gotten into the driver's seat, saw them, she couldn't help but say, "She has already grown up, yet you're still holding her?"

"There's no child seat. It's not safe."

Justin briefly explained.

Nora curled her lips disdainfully. "She's already used to riding in the car by herself."

"Mommy, that was because no one doted on me back then! I'm not used to it anymore!"

Cherry protested weakly. However, as soon as she said that, she saw Nora's stern eyes in the rearview mirror. She was so scared that she shrank back and hastily said, "Yes, I'm very used to it. Why don't you put me down, Daddy? Don't hold me so tightly~"

Despite saying that, she didn't get off Justin's legs but instead hugged his neck tighter.

Nora: "..."

Justin chuckled and stroked Cherry's hair. He didn't expose her, but instead supported her and said, "Be good. Don't listen to your Mommy, she's just jealous."

Cherry was puzzled. "What's she jealous of?"

“That I’m hugging you, of course.”

This was an ambiguous statement.

First, it meant that she was jealous of Cherry.

Second, it meant that she was jealous of Justin.

That scumbag was really taking advantage of her every moment of the day.

The corners of Nora’s lips spasmed. She couldn’t be bothered with the two of them, so she instead asked detachedly, “When are you and Pete switching back, Cherry?”

Cherry panicked at once. She said, “Mommy, I really miss you very much. I miss you super much! I miss the way you sleep, the way you get ready to go to bed, the way you doze off while you eat…”

She couldn’t come up with any more. After being stuck for a while, she finally said, “But Pete needs you more! After all, you haven’t seen each other for five years, so I won’t disturb your bonding session, okay?”

“…”

That clever little fellow obviously didn’t want to come back anymore after Justin spoiled her so much, so she made up so many excuses.

She sneered, “Shall I thank you on behalf of Pete?”

“It’s fine~” Cherry said shyly, “What can I do? I’m his little sister, after all, so I have to give in to my elder brother~”

“…”

It seemed like Cherry had become more thick-skinned than before.

She glared at Justin. It really was like what they said—one was marked by the company they kept!

After Nora took Cherry and Justin to the Hunts, while Cherry was getting out of the car, she asked, “Mommy, when are you and Daddy taking Pete and me to the amusement park?”

“Another day.”

Nora answered.

Cherry, however, persisted. She asked, “When is that?”

“... The day after tomorrow!”

Nora had no choice but to give her an answer.

“Yay!” Cherry raised her eyebrows at Justin triumphantly. Then, she bounced off while holding his hand and entered the manor.

Nora returned to the Smiths after that.

Unexpectedly, right after she got out of the car, Quentin came out of nowhere and blocked her way. He said, “You don’t have to pretend anymore, Nora! I know your secret now!”

Nora’s pupils shrank!

Surely her identity as Big Sister hadn’t been exposed, had it?

She asked calmly, “What secret?”

“Did you go to the martial arts tournament because you heard something?”

A resigned Nora nodded. “That’s right.”

“I knew it. You even changed and put on a mask, so I didn’t recognize you.” Quentin looked around after he spoke. Then he said, “Since you were at the tournament, then you must have heard of me, right? ”

Nora: “?”

Quentin said, “Didn’t I already tell you? I’m the best fighter in the family and am ranked third in New York. I will definitely shine in the tournament! Do you know who I am?”

“... No, I don’t.”

Quentin the dimwit immediately looked around. Then, he said, "I'll tell you and you alone since you're my cousin, Nora. You're the only one I'm telling, get it? Even Joel doesn't know the alias I'm using in the tournament!"

He straightened his back, raised his chin, and declared, "I am Smithin!"

"..."

However, when he didn't see any reaction from Nora, Quentin glanced at her and frowned. "Haven't you heard of that name? Then do you know the famous Team Third In The World?"

Be it Smithin or Team Third In The World, both had actually become very famous in the underground arena recently. Anyone who had been there would have heard of him.

But...

Nora decided to tease him and deliberately said, "I'm new there, so I only heard them talking about Victor."

Quentin: "..."

No one in the family knew that he was participating in the martial arts tournament, so he couldn't show off. Now that he had finally found a cousin who was interested in the tournament, how could she be kept unaware of his greatness?

Quentin was very puzzled, very much so. "Victor is nothing. He's just a piece of trash who lost to me two years ago. Even if you have never heard of Smithin, surely you've heard of Team Third In The World, right?!"

He hadn't competed in his own name, so it was normal that she hadn't heard of him. But how come she hadn't heard of the famous Team Third In The World, either?

Nora walked toward the house. "And then?"

"What do you mean by 'and then'?!" Quentin became anxious. He gritted his teeth, steeled his resolve, and said, "Forget it, I'll let you in on another big secret!"

Nora looked back at him.

Quentin said, “But you have to swear that you won’t tell anyone! I promised that I wouldn’t reveal her identity casually to outsiders. I’m only telling you because you’re my cousin.”

Nora had a vague idea what he was going to say next when she heard that. Sure enough, the next moment, he asked, “Do you know who that woman in the red dress in Team Third In The World is?”

Nora: “...”

“She’s Big Sister! The Big Sister of the Quinn School of Martial Arts!!!”

Quentin said triumphantly, “Do you see now? Even Big Sister has teamed up with me. She approached me because she thought that I was talented and fought pretty well... Surely you’ve at least heard of Big Sister, right?”

“... Yeah, I have.”

Quentin was satisfied at last. He said, “So, don’t you feel very honored that Big Sister has seen something in your elder brother? But don’t you get ahead of yourself. You absolutely mustn’t say anything about this to outsiders. Big Sister’s identity is confidential.”

“...”

“Is that look in your eyes envy? Actually, you don’t have to be envious that Big Sister has seen something in me. Uncle Ian picked me out of everyone in the family to practice martial arts when I was a child, so I’ve been practicing ever since. I heard that you used to be obese, and were even in poor health in the past, so you must not have practiced martial arts much before, right? By the way, which class are you in now?”

Nora: “...”

She knew how eager Quentin was to show off and bask in the limelight, so she knew that she didn’t need to say anything. Sure enough, Quentin said, “My team is already in Class D now. Once we win another five matches tomorrow, we’ll advance to Class E. We’ll be able to advance to Class F the day after tomorrow!”

“... Wow, how amazing.”

“Isn’t it? I think so, too.” Quentin folded his arms and said triumphantly, “But don’t you dare think it’s because I’m piggybacking off Big Sister. I can still compete by myself without any problems even without Big Sister. Why are you walking so fast? Forget it, I won’t say any more, lest you become jealous. But don’t worry, if someone bullies you in the arena, you can just use the name Smithin to scare them off!”

“ ... ”

Nora suddenly felt like she’d better not let the young man with eighth-grader syndrome know her true identity after all. If she did, she reckoned that she’ll never have any peace anymore.

The corners of her lips spasmed and she went upstairs.

When she entered the bedroom, she realized that Pete had already returned from school and was obediently working on his Mathematical Olympiad problems.

Nora glanced at his workbook. The Mathematical Olympiad problems he was doing were almost at high school standard now. The five-year-old’s IQ was simply terrifying.

“Mommy.”

Pete greeted her obediently.

Nora made a sound of acknowledgment and stepped forward. She stroked his hair, and then bent over and gave him a kiss on the forehead. She said, “Let’s go downstairs for dinner after you’re done with that.”

Pete nodded and continued to bury his head into the workbook.

Nora picked up her cell phone and saw a voice message from Tanya: ‘Have you given your son a kiss?’

Nora replied: ‘... Yes, I have.’

Tanya: “Yeah, Pete’s sense of security still leaves a little to be desired. It can’t be compared with Cherry’s at all. After all, the role a mother plays is simply too crucial when one is growing up. You have to have more physical contact with Pete, get it?”

Nora: 'Yeah, yeah. I know.'

Tanya sighed emotionally again and said: "Don't think of me as being too long-winded. After all... I also wish I could give mine a kiss."

When Nora heard the message, she immediately knew that Tanya had thought of her missing child again.

She didn't know how she should comfort her. After all, she had also experienced the pain of losing her own child.

Nora kept quiet for a while before she replied: "You'll definitely find him or her one day."

Tanya: 'Yeah.'

Since she had fallen silent, Nora didn't send her any more messages. She turned to her son. Suddenly, she felt like something was amiss. "Where's Mia?" She asked.

By right, Pete and Mia should be playing with each other at this time!

Without even lifting his head, Pete replied, "She's having dance classes at God-mom's!"

"..."

In the villa in the suburbs.

Mia's forehead was covered in perspiration as she did leg stretches.

The small and thin five-year-old looked as if she was only four years old. Tanya went over and gave her a few pointers.

Mia glanced at Tanya.

Her teacher was very strict, but for some reason, she wasn't scared of her at all. When Tanya lowered her head toward her, Mia even suddenly kissed her on the cheek.

Tanya was stunned. She looked at Mia in disbelief, upon which Mia said, "Didn't you want a kiss, Ms. Turner? I'll give you a kiss."

An acerbic feeling suddenly welled up in Tanya, and she felt a mix of emotions come over her.

It seemed like she could still feel the warmth from the soft lips on her cheek.

Tanya touched her cheek and looked at the small, timid Mia in front of her. Suddenly, a feeling welled up in her—would it also feel like this if her child kissed her?

She spaced out and kept quiet for a while.

Seeing her freeze, Mia became frightened. Her eyes reddened and she hastily asked, “Are you mad, Ms. Turner?”

Tanya didn’t know whether she should be angry or not.

In fact, she even felt like her decision to teach Mia dancing was a mistake in itself!

The child she had with Joel was missing.

Yet, here she was, teaching Joel’s daughter how to dance. In fact, when she kissed her, she hadn’t even pushed her away. It was as if she had already accepted her.

How could she do that?!

Tanya was originally helping Mia with her leg stretches, but she suddenly stood up. She wanted to say coldly, ‘Don’t kiss me again in the future.’

But when she looked at Mia’s round eyes and small pointed face, she simply couldn’t bring herself to say it. In fact, the words at the tip of her tongue even changed. She said, “No, I’m not.”

Mia nodded. “Then, are you happy?”

Tanya wanted to say that she wasn’t, but when she saw the hopeful look in Mia’s eyes, she instead replied impulsively, “Yes.”

Her answer made Mia’s eyes instantly light up.

She said timidly, “My mother said that I can’t kiss her so casually, Ms. Turner. She would also become unhappy if I made physical contact with her, so I

thought you were unhappy, too. I only kissed you because I heard you say that you wanted a kiss. Are you really not mad at me?"

Her mother didn't allow her to touch her?

Tanya was dumbfounded.

She didn't know how other mothers behaved, but if it were her daughter, she would never tire of giving her kisses. Besides, whenever she was out, she always saw a lot of children who behaved very intimately with their mothers.

Little did she expect a tiny little girl like Mia to be so pitiful?

With that thought in mind, she said, "It's true, I really am happy. Ms. Turner likes to keep close contact with children."

"That's great!"

Mia stood up straight and grabbed Tanya's hand. She made her lower her head and then kissed her on the cheek again. She said, "I will make you happy every day from now on, Ms. Turner!"

She pursed her lips and gave her a bashful smile.

Tanya simply couldn't bring herself to say any words of rejection when faced with such a well-behaved and adorable little girl!

She ruffled Mia's hair and asked, "Doesn't it hurt when you stretch?"

Mia immediately nodded. "It does!"

"Then why didn't you say anything?" Tanya asked curiously.

After she decided to take Mia as her student, she had added an hour of class for her after school every day. As there wasn't a suitable location in the kindergarten, she had brought her to her home.

Fine beads of perspiration had formed on Mia's forehead when she was dancing, yet she hadn't complained about being tired.

After dancing, Tanya had even told her to do leg stretches.

One must always do their stretches properly after exercise. Besides, Mia was already five. To be honest, it was already a bit of a late start for a dancer because the body would no longer be flexible enough anymore. Thus, Tanya had also taught her a few difficult moves such as bending over backward.

Despite that, Mia hadn't made even a single sound from beginning to end.

Just as she was wondering whether it was because the girl's pain receptors were less sensitive than others, Mia replied, "I can't complain that it hurts."

Tanya was taken aback. "Why?"

When she was a child, she would always cry out even at the slightest bit of pain when she was practicing. This way, the teacher would show her some mercy.

Mia replied, "Because Daddy will be unhappy if I'm in pain. If Daddy is unhappy, Mommy will also be unhappy."

Unhappy?

Tanya frowned. Suddenly, she started to feel sorry for the girl.

Although she lived in a wealthy family and had both her parents with her, she led too frustrating a life. While other five-year-olds from ordinary families were blissfully unaware, she didn't even have the right to complain when she was in pain!

Tanya suddenly became a little angry with Joel.

How could he treat a child like that?

No matter what, children were angels of the world. They were the most innocent!!

Tanya said to Mia, "Mia, you can speak freely without holding back in Ms. Turner's home in the future. If you're tired from practice, you can say so. If you're in pain because of stretching, you can also cry out. If you're thirsty or hungry, you can tell me that too. I will prepare everything for you."

Mia's eyes lit up. "Really?"

"Yeah."

Mia hesitated for a while. Then, she hung her head and asked somewhat embarrassedly, "Then... can you bake me a cake?"

Bake her a cake?

Tanya found the request rather odd but nevertheless agreed. "You must be hungry after practicing for so long. Alright, let's go downstairs."

Tanya used to be really bad at housework, but when she went abroad and lived by herself, she had to cook for herself, so her culinary skills had improved over the years.

Baking a cake was no problem for her.

Sometime later, she walked out of the kitchen with a simple cupcake in her hands. She was a little embarrassed as she said, "I can only bake simple stuff like this, Mia. You don't mind, right?"

Mia immediately shook her head. "Of course not, Ms. Turner!"

Tanya smiled and said, "You can dig in now."

Mia picked up the fork. She was about to eat when she suddenly said, "I'll give you half, Ms. Turner."

"No, it's fine."

A smiling Tanya went back to the kitchen and then came out with another cupcake. "I made a few. Come on, let's eat!"

Mia stared at the cupcake. Suddenly, she clasped her hands together, closed her eyes, and seemingly thought about something. Only then did she start to eat the cupcake.

Tanya looked at her, feeling rather amused. The girl actually had the sense to say a prayer before eating.

The two of them dug into their respective cupcakes with gusto.

When Tanya saw the little girl's cheeks all puffed up from eating, she felt a sense of accomplishment come over her, especially when Mia finished more than one cupcake from the batch she had baked.

She ate so much that even her belly had swelled up.

After they were done eating, she went to the kitchen to do the dishes. Then, she told Mia, “You can come here for dance practice every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday in the future. You can go and play the rest of the time. You’re still young, so you shouldn’t restrain yourself.”

Mia pursed her lips and smiled at her as she nodded. “Okay, Ms. Turner.”

All of a sudden, the doorbell rang.

Tanya knew that it must be Joel here to pick Mia up.

She looked at the clock in surprise—sure enough, it was already seven. She hadn’t expected time to pass so fast. Somewhat reluctantly, she helped Mia carry her schoolbag and then walked over to the door.

Sure enough, Joel was standing outside when she opened the door.

Tanya didn’t look at him. Instead, she waved at Mia and said, “See you in school tomorrow, Mia~”

“Okie-Dokie. See you tomorrow, Ms. Turner~”

Mia took Joel’s hand after she spoke. Just as she was about to leave, she suddenly looked back at Tanya and said, “Thank you for the birthday cake today, Ms. Turner. It was really yummy!”

Birthday cake?

Tanya was taken aback. Then, she heard Joel say, “It’s Mia’s birthday today.”

Birthday...

Tanya felt like a bomb had suddenly gone off in her head.

It was Mia’s birthday. No wonder she had asked Tanya to bake her a cake, and even said a prayer before eating it.

Oh, right.

He had slept with Hillary right after he slept with her back then, hadn’t he?

It was all too normal that their children's birthdays would be so close to each other's.

She bit her lip.

It had also been her child's birthday five days ago!

She didn't even know where her child might be wandering lost in the world, yet here she was, celebrating Mia's birthday?

Indescribable pain and misery made Tanya's expression instantly change.

She stared at Mia blankly.

Mia was terribly nervous. The puzzled girl looked at Tanya and asked, "W-what's wrong, Ms. Turner? Are you upset?"

She pushed Joel and said, "Daddy, hurry up and kiss Ms. Turner! She'll cheer up if you do that!"

Joel: "..."

Tanya: "..."

Joel didn't know the reason for Tanya's sudden change in behavior, but he knew that she likely held a grudge against Mia's existence all this time.

He lowered his head and slowly said, "I'm sorry."

He was sorry.

Five years ago, he had felt even more apologetic toward her.

If he hadn't gotten himself drunk, become muddleheaded, and ended up sleeping with Hillary, how would he have gotten her pregnant and ended up letting her give birth to Mia?

No, to be honest, he hadn't even known that she was pregnant.

Hillary understood him very well. She knew that he would definitely make her abort the child if he were to know, so she had secretly gone into hiding.

It wasn't until ten months later that she had finally returned with Mia.

He had done a DNA test when he saw the child—she was indeed his daughter. As such, he could only acknowledge her. That was probably the one and only time he had acted so spinelessly.

His heart had softened when he saw the child.

It was as if the child had a lot of affinity with him.

When Tanya heard his apology, her shame and anger made her eyes redden. She was about to yell at him when Mia suddenly held her hand and said, “I’ll kiss you if Daddy won’t, Ms. Turner. Don’t be mad anymore, okay?”

Tanya lowered her head. When her eyes met Mia’s timid eyes that looked as if she was trying to please her, her fury instantly extinguished.

Indeed.

She had only lost her child because she hadn’t kept an eye on it. What did it have to do with Joel or Mia?

In fact, Joel didn’t even know that she had given birth to his child!

Tanya lowered her head and stared at Mia.

She was just a pitiful little girl.

Tanya suddenly said, “Wait a minute.”

She turned and went upstairs.

In addition to her own bedroom, she had also prepared another two children’s rooms on the upper floor. One was a boy’s room and the other a girl’s.

This was because she didn’t know whether her missing child was a boy or a girl.

Regardless, she would always prepare clothes for her son or daughter every year. The clothes currently in the closets were for five-year-olds, and on the bed in the girl’s room was also a gift box.

It was the birthday gift she had bought five days ago for her child.

There was also one in the boy’s room.

She picked up the gift box. Inside was an exquisite Barbie doll wearing a pink dress. Next to it were all kinds of doll clothing that one could dress up the doll with.

She touched the bedsheets and murmured silently, "I don't know where you are, my child, but I believe you'll be willing to make another child like yourself happy, right?"

She took the gift box and went downstairs.

Before she reached the door, she saw Mia nervously asking Joel, "Daddy, why did Ms. Turner suddenly get mad? Is it because it's Mia's birthday? Daddy, I won't celebrate my birthday anymore, okay? I like Ms. Turner, I don't want to make her mad..."

Joel stroked her hair. His voice was soft and gentle as he said, "It's not your fault. Daddy's the one who made Ms. Turner angry."

Mia then said seriously, "Daddy, you should apologize to Ms. Turner if you made her mad. Are you too embarrassed to say sorry, Daddy?"

Joel: "..."

He sighed. "I've already told her I'm sorry, but she won't accept my apology."

"Then say it a few more times!"

A child's world was very simple. For Mia, if her father had done something wrong, then he should apologize until Ms. Turner forgave him.

Joel sighed. "Okay."

When Mia wanted to say something again, she suddenly spotted Tanya, who had just returned. Her eyes lit up and she immediately called out, "Ms. Turner!"

Tanya handed her the gift box with the Barbie and said, "Happy birthday."

Mia's eyes instantly became even brighter. "Thank you, Ms. Turner!"

The little girl stretched out her hands and took the Barbie doll from her.

The Barbie was half her height, so it was very heavy for the small and thin girl.

Joel reached out to carry it for her.

However, Mia ducked and said, "I can do it, Daddy!"

This was a gift from Ms. Turner. She liked it very much.

Joel nodded. Then, he looked at Tanya. He was about to speak when Tanya sneered, "You must be very busy with work, right, Mr. Smith?"

Joel was overjoyed when he heard what she said. He thought that Tanya was showing him concern, so he nodded and replied, "It's alright."

"Hah." Tanya gave him a mocking smile and said, "Since it's alright, then shouldn't you learn how to be a qualified father, Mr. Smith?"

Joel was taken aback.

Tanya knew that there were some things she shouldn't say in front of Mia, so she merely gave him a subtle reminder. Then, she said, "Bye, Mia."

Mia replied softly, "Bye, Ms. Turner."

When Joel took Mia into the car, he received a call from Hillary. When he answered, the woman said, "Joel, it's Mia's birthday today. Can you let me see her? I miss her. I think Mia would also want her family to be together."

Joel's expression turned cold. He was about to say something when Hillary spoke again. She said, "I'm Mia's mother, after all, Joel. I really miss her. I should think that she misses me, too! You can't stop us from meeting when we're mother and daughter. Mia will resent you for it in the future if you do that.

"I know you hate me, but my love for Mia is true. I am the one who has been taking care of Mia ever since she was born. You should know how dependent she is on me. Joel, all I want is really just to see my daughter. I don't have any other intentions... Please?"

Joel looked at Mia.

He suddenly asked, "Do you want to meet your mother, Mia?"

Mia's eyes immediately flickered when she heard him.

Her mom had told her before that she had to reply that she wanted to meet her if Daddy ever asked. Otherwise, her mom would hate her very much.

But she thought of how Ms. Turner had told her not to keep things to herself, and to voice her thoughts if she had any. She had said that she could cry out if she was in pain, or cry if she wanted to...

When she thought of what Ms.. Turner had told her, the little Mia seemed to have suddenly found her courage.

Just as Mia was about to say something, Hillary's voice rang out through the phone. "Do you miss Mommy, Mia?"

The little Mia trembled a little when she heard Hillary's voice. In the end, she nodded and replied weakly, "Yes."

"Did you hear that, Joel?"

Hillary tried her best to convince him, "Mia wants to see me!"

Joel heaved a huge sigh.

He didn't want to let Mia and Hillary come into contact anymore, but if Mia wanted to see her mother, he couldn't stop her.

Therefore, Hillary immediately knew that Joel must have relented when she heard him sigh. She asked tentatively, "Can I go back to the Smiths' tonight? I heard that you've just found your younger sister, so I can also take the chance to pay her a visit."

Chapter 357 - The Plan of Saving Nora Novel Free

Nora sat in the backseat in the end. Justin didn't mind, either. He drove off with her and Cherry.

In the car park.

Quentin stood in front of the jeep after watching Big Sister get into the car with her husband and daughter. However, even after waiting for a long while, he didn't see his cousin coming out. He frowned and looked into the jeep through the window.

The car's chassis was very high. When he looked at the backseat, he noticed two pieces of clothing that had been placed there.

Quentin was taken aback.

Weren't those the clothes that Nora was wearing when she was treating Uncle Ian in the hospital?

Why were they in the backseat?

No, wait...

Quentin suddenly understood something, and he immediately smiled.

Nora left with Justin. She waited until Quentin left before she finally went back to her car.

She got into the car and changed in the backseat. After casually tossing the red dress onto the backseat, she finally opened the door to go to the driver's seat.

Before she went over, Justin chuckled and said, "If you really want to hide your identity, you should change your car too."

He tossed his car key to Nora and suggested, "Why don't you drive this car instead for now?"

Nora glanced at his car.

From the outside, it was just an ordinary Volkswagen.

But once one entered, they would realize that it wasn't as simple as it looked on the inside.

Be it the engine or the leather seats, all of them were the best. Remodeling a car cost a lot. In addition, even if she had the money, time was needed to remodel a car at the last minute.

Thus, after thinking about it for a while, she didn't turn him down. She took the car keys from him and said, "I won't stand on ceremony, then."

Nora drove the jeep while Justin drove the 'ordinary' Volkswagen. The two left the building one after the other, and subsequently entered a high-end residential complex.

After getting Justin to park the Volkswagen in the residential complex, Nora said, "I've bought an apartment here. This is the parking lot for the apartment."

Justin looked upstairs. "What's your apartment number?"

Nora was a little surprised, but nevertheless answered, "302."

Then, she asked, "What are you planning?"

"To buy 301." Justin smiled and said, "If you ever move in, we can be neighbors."

"... You must be sick in the head," said Nora.

"Yeah, why don't you treat my illness?" Justin immediately quipped.

Nora: "..."

The corners of her lips spasmed. She got into the jeep and said, "Get in the car. I'll take you guys home."

Justin picked up Cherry and got in the backseat. When Nora, who had gotten into the driver's seat, saw them, she couldn't help but say, "She has already grown up, yet you're still holding her?"

"There's no child seat. It's not safe."

Justin briefly explained.

Nora curled her lips disdainfully. "She's already used to riding in the car by herself."

"Mommy, that was because no one doted on me back then! I'm not used to it anymore!"

Cherry protested weakly. However, as soon as she said that, she saw Nora's stern eyes in the rearview mirror. She was so scared that she shrank back and hastily said, "Yes, I'm very used to it. Why don't you put me down, Daddy? Don't hold me so tightly~"

Despite saying that, she didn't get off Justin's legs but instead hugged his neck tighter.

Nora: "..."

Justin chuckled and stroked Cherry's hair. He didn't expose her, but instead supported her and said, "Be good. Don't listen to your Mommy, she's just jealous."

Cherry was puzzled. "What's she jealous of?"

"That I'm hugging you, of course."

This was an ambiguous statement.

First, it meant that she was jealous of Cherry.

Second, it meant that she was jealous of Justin.

That scumbag was really taking advantage of her every moment of the day.

The corners of Nora's lips spasmed. She couldn't be bothered with the two of them, so she instead asked detachedly, "When are you and Pete switching back, Cherry?"

Cherry panicked at once. She said, "Mommy, I really miss you very much. I miss you super much! I miss the way you sleep, the way you get ready to go to bed, the way you doze off while you eat..."

She couldn't come up with any more. After being stuck for a while, she finally said, "But Pete needs you more! After all, you haven't seen each other for five years, so I won't disturb your bonding session, okay?"

"..."

That clever little fellow obviously didn't want to come back anymore after Justin spoiled her so much, so she made up so many excuses.

She sneered, "Shall I thank you on behalf of Pete?"

"It's fine~" Cherry said shyly, "What can I do? I'm his little sister, after all, so I have to give in to my elder brother~"

“ ... ”

It seemed like Cherry had become more thick-skinned than before.

She glared at Justin. It really was like what they said—one was marked by the company they kept!

After Nora took Cherry and Justin to the Hunts, while Cherry was getting out of the car, she asked, “Mommy, when are you and Daddy taking Pete and me to the amusement park?”

“Another day.”

Nora answered.

Cherry, however, persisted. She asked, “When is that?”

“... The day after tomorrow!”

Nora had no choice but to give her an answer.

“Yay!” Cherry raised her eyebrows at Justin triumphantly. Then, she bounced off while holding his hand and entered the manor.

Nora returned to the Smiths after that.

Unexpectedly, right after she got out of the car, Quentin came out of nowhere and blocked her way. He said, “You don’t have to pretend anymore, Nora! I know your secret now!”

Nora’s pupils shrank!

Surely her identity as Big Sister hadn’t been exposed, had it?

She asked calmly, “What secret?”

“Did you go to the martial arts tournament because you heard something?”

A resigned Nora nodded. “That’s right.”

“I knew it. You even changed and put on a mask, so I didn’t recognize you.” Quentin looked around after he spoke. Then he said, “Since you were at the tournament, then you must have heard of me, right? ”

Nora: “?”

Quentin said, “Didn’t I already tell you? I’m the best fighter in the family and am ranked third in New York. I will definitely shine in the tournament! Do you know who I am?”

“... No, I don’t.”

Quentin the dimwit immediately looked around. Then, he said, “I’ll tell you and you alone since you’re my cousin, Nora. You’re the only one I’m telling, get it? Even Joel doesn’t know the alias I’m using in the tournament!”

He straightened his back, raised his chin, and declared, “I am Smithin!”

“...”

However, when he didn’t see any reaction from Nora, Quentin glanced at her and frowned. “Haven’t you heard of that name? Then do you know the famous Team Third In The World?”

Be it Smithin or Team Third In The World, both had actually become very famous in the underground arena recently. Anyone who had been there would have heard of him.

But...

Nora decided to tease him and deliberately said, “I’m new there, so I only heard them talking about Victor.”

Quentin: “...”

No one in the family knew that he was participating in the martial arts tournament, so he couldn’t show off. Now that he had finally found a cousin who was interested in the tournament, how could she be kept unaware of his greatness?

Quentin was very puzzled, very much so. “Victor is nothing. He’s just a piece of trash who lost to me two years ago. Even if you have never heard of Smithin, surely you’ve heard of Team Third In The World, right?!”

He hadn’t competed in his own name, so it was normal that she hadn’t heard of him. But how come she hadn’t heard of the famous Team Third In The World, either?

Nora walked toward the house. “And then?”

“What do you mean by ‘and then’?!” Quentin became anxious. He gritted his teeth, steeled his resolve, and said, “Forget it, I’ll let you in on another big secret!”

Nora looked back at him.

Quentin said, “But you have to swear that you won’t tell anyone! I promised that I wouldn’t reveal her identity casually to outsiders. I’m only telling you because you’re my cousin.”

Nora had a vague idea what he was going to say next when she heard that. Sure enough, the next moment, he asked, “Do you know who that woman in the red dress in Team Third In The World is?”

Nora: “...”

“She’s Big Sister! The Big Sister of the Quinn School of Martial Arts!!!”

Quentin said triumphantly, “Do you see now? Even Big Sister has teamed up with me. She approached me because she thought that I was talented and fought pretty well... Surely you’ve at least heard of Big Sister, right?”

“... Yeah, I have.”

Quentin was satisfied at last. He said, “So, don’t you feel very honored that Big Sister has seen something in your elder brother? But don’t you get ahead of yourself. You absolutely mustn’t say anything about this to outsiders. Big Sister’s identity is confidential.”

“...”

“Is that look in your eyes envy? Actually, you don’t have to be envious that Big Sister has seen something in me. Uncle Ian picked me out of everyone in the family to practice martial arts when I was a child, so I’ve been practicing ever since. I heard that you used to be obese, and were even in poor health in the past, so you must not have practiced martial arts much before, right? By the way, which class are you in now?”

Nora: “...”

She knew how eager Quentin was to show off and bask in the limelight, so she knew that she didn't need to say anything. Sure enough, Quentin said, "My team is already in Class D now. Once we win another five matches tomorrow, we'll advance to Class E. We'll be able to advance to Class F the day after tomorrow!"

"... Wow, how amazing."

"Isn't it? I think so, too." Quentin folded his arms and said triumphantly, "But don't you dare think it's because I'm piggybacking off Big Sister. I can still compete by myself without any problems even without Big Sister. Why are you walking so fast? Forget it, I won't say any more, lest you become jealous. But don't worry, if someone bullies you in the arena, you can just use the name Smithin to scare them off!"

"..."

Nora suddenly felt like she'd better not let the young man with eighth-grader syndrome know her true identity after all. If she did, she reckoned that she'll never have any peace anymore.

The corners of her lips spasmed and she went upstairs.

When she entered the bedroom, she realized that Pete had already returned from school and was obediently working on his Mathematical Olympiad problems.

Nora glanced at his workbook. The Mathematical Olympiad problems he was doing were almost at high school standard now. The five-year-old's IQ was simply terrifying.

"Mommy."

Pete greeted her obediently.

Nora made a sound of acknowledgment and stepped forward. She stroked his hair, and then bent over and gave him a kiss on the forehead. She said, "Let's go downstairs for dinner after you're done with that."

Pete nodded and continued to bury his head into the workbook.

Nora picked up her cell phone and saw a voice message from Tanya: 'Have you given your son a kiss?'

Nora replied: '... Yes, I have.'

Tanya: "Yeah, Pete's sense of security still leaves a little to be desired. It can't be compared with Cherry's at all. After all, the role a mother plays is simply too crucial when one is growing up. You have to have more physical contact with Pete, get it?"

Nora: 'Yeah, yeah. I know.'

Tanya sighed emotionally again and said: "Don't think of me as being too long-winded. After all... I also wish I could give mine a kiss."

When Nora heard the message, she immediately knew that Tanya had thought of her missing child again.

She didn't know how she should comfort her. After all, she had also experienced the pain of losing her own child.

Nora kept quiet for a while before she replied: "You'll definitely find him or her one day."

Tanya: 'Yeah.'

Since she had fallen silent, Nora didn't send her any more messages. She turned to her son. Suddenly, she felt like something was amiss. "Where's Mia?" She asked.

By right, Pete and Mia should be playing with each other at this time!

Without even lifting his head, Pete replied, "She's having dance classes at God-mom's!"

"..."

In the villa in the suburbs.

Mia's forehead was covered in perspiration as she did leg stretches.

The small and thin five-year-old looked as if she was only four years old. Tanya went over and gave her a few pointers.

Mia glanced at Tanya.

Her teacher was very strict, but for some reason, she wasn't scared of her at all. When Tanya lowered her head toward her, Mia even suddenly kissed her on the cheek.

Tanya was stunned. She looked at Mia in disbelief, upon which Mia said, "Didn't you want a kiss, Ms. Turner? I'll give you a kiss."

An acerbic feeling suddenly welled up in Tanya, and she felt a mix of emotions come over her.

It seemed like she could still feel the warmth from the soft lips on her cheek.

Tanya touched her cheek and looked at the small, timid Mia in front of her. Suddenly, a feeling welled up in her—would it also feel like this if her child kissed her?

She spaced out and kept quiet for a while.

Seeing her freeze, Mia became frightened. Her eyes reddened and she hastily asked, "Are you mad, Ms. Turner?"

Tanya didn't know whether she should be angry or not.

In fact, she even felt like her decision to teach Mia dancing was a mistake in itself!

The child she had with Joel was missing.

Yet, here she was, teaching Joel's daughter how to dance. In fact, when she kissed her, she hadn't even pushed her away. It was as if she had already accepted her.

How could she do that?!

Tanya was originally helping Mia with her leg stretches, but she suddenly stood up. She wanted to say coldly, 'Don't kiss me again in the future.'

But when she looked at Mia's round eyes and small pointed face, she simply couldn't bring herself to say it. In fact, the words at the tip of her tongue even changed. She said, "No, I'm not."

Mia nodded. "Then, are you happy?"

Tanya wanted to say that she wasn't, but when she saw the hopeful look in Mia's eyes, she instead replied impulsively, "Yes."

Her answer made Mia's eyes instantly light up.

She said timidly, "My mother said that I can't kiss her so casually, Ms. Turner. She would also become unhappy if I made physical contact with her, so I thought you were unhappy, too. I only kissed you because I heard you say that you wanted a kiss. Are you really not mad at me?"

Her mother didn't allow her to touch her?

Tanya was dumbfounded.

She didn't know how other mothers behaved, but if it were her daughter, she would never tire of giving her kisses. Besides, whenever she was out, she always saw a lot of children who behaved very intimately with their mothers.

Little did she expect a tiny little girl like Mia to be so pitiful?

With that thought in mind, she said, "It's true, I really am happy. Ms. Turner likes to keep close contact with children."

"That's great!"

Mia stood up straight and grabbed Tanya's hand. She made her lower her head and then kissed her on the cheek again. She said, "I will make you happy every day from now on, Ms. Turner!"

She pursed her lips and gave her a bashful smile.

Tanya simply couldn't bring herself to say any words of rejection when faced with such a well-behaved and adorable little girl!

She ruffled Mia's hair and asked, "Doesn't it hurt when you stretch?"

Mia immediately nodded. "It does!"

"Then why didn't you say anything?" Tanya asked curiously.

After she decided to take Mia as her student, she had added an hour of class for her after school every day. As there wasn't a suitable location in the kindergarten, she had brought her to her home.

Fine beads of perspiration had formed on Mia's forehead when she was dancing, yet she hadn't complained about being tired.

After dancing, Tanya had even told her to do leg stretches.

One must always do their stretches properly after exercise. Besides, Mia was already five. To be honest, it was already a bit of a late start for a dancer because the body would no longer be flexible enough anymore. Thus, Tanya had also taught her a few difficult moves such as bending over backward.

Despite that, Mia hadn't made even a single sound from beginning to end.

Just as she was wondering whether it was because the girl's pain receptors were less sensitive than others, Mia replied, "I can't complain that it hurts."

Tanya was taken aback. "Why?"

When she was a child, she would always cry out even at the slightest bit of pain when she was practicing. This way, the teacher would show her some mercy.

Mia replied, "Because Daddy will be unhappy if I'm in pain. If Daddy is unhappy, Mommy will also be unhappy."

Unhappy?

Tanya frowned. Suddenly, she started to feel sorry for the girl.

Although she lived in a wealthy family and had both her parents with her, she led too frustrating a life. While other five-year-olds from ordinary families were blissfully unaware, she didn't even have the right to complain when she was in pain!

Tanya suddenly became a little angry with Joel.

How could he treat a child like that?

No matter what, children were angels of the world. They were the most innocent!!

Tanya said to Mia, "Mia, you can speak freely without holding back in Ms. Turner's home in the future. If you're tired from practice, you can say so. If you're in pain because of stretching, you can also cry out. If you're thirsty or hungry, you can tell me that too. I will prepare everything for you."

Mia's eyes lit up. "Really?"

"Yeah."

Mia hesitated for a while. Then, she hung her head and asked somewhat embarrassedly, "Then... can you bake me a cake?"

Bake her a cake?

Tanya found the request rather odd but nevertheless agreed. "You must be hungry after practicing for so long. Alright, let's go downstairs."

Tanya used to be really bad at housework, but when she went abroad and lived by herself, she had to cook for herself, so her culinary skills had improved over the years.

Baking a cake was no problem for her.

Sometime later, she walked out of the kitchen with a simple cupcake in her hands. She was a little embarrassed as she said, "I can only bake simple stuff like this, Mia. You don't mind, right?"

Mia immediately shook her head. "Of course not, Ms. Turner!"

Tanya smiled and said, "You can dig in now."

Mia picked up the fork. She was about to eat when she suddenly said, "I'll give you half, Ms. Turner."

"No, it's fine."

A smiling Tanya went back to the kitchen and then came out with another cupcake. "I made a few. Come on, let's eat!"

Mia stared at the cupcake. Suddenly, she clasped her hands together, closed her eyes, and seemingly thought about something. Only then did she start to eat the cupcake.

Tanya looked at her, feeling rather amused. The girl actually had the sense to say a prayer before eating.

The two of them dug into their respective cupcakes with gusto.

When Tanya saw the little girl's cheeks all puffed up from eating, she felt a sense of accomplishment come over her, especially when Mia finished more than one cupcake from the batch she had baked.

She ate so much that even her belly had swelled up.

After they were done eating, she went to the kitchen to do the dishes. Then, she told Mia, "You can come here for dance practice every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday in the future. You can go and play the rest of the time. You're still young, so you shouldn't restrain yourself."

Mia pursed her lips and smiled at her as she nodded. "Okay, Ms. Turner."

All of a sudden, the doorbell rang.

Tanya knew that it must be Joel here to pick Mia up.

She looked at the clock in surprise—sure enough, it was already seven. She hadn't expected time to pass so fast. Somewhat reluctantly, she helped Mia carry her schoolbag and then walked over to the door.

Sure enough, Joel was standing outside when she opened the door.

Tanya didn't look at him. Instead, she waved at Mia and said, "See you in school tomorrow, Mia~"

"Okie-Dokie. See you tomorrow, Ms. Turner~"

Mia took Joel's hand after she spoke. Just as she was about to leave, she suddenly looked back at Tanya and said, "Thank you for the birthday cake today, Ms. Turner. It was really yummy!"

Birthday cake?

Tanya was taken aback. Then, she heard Joel say, "It's Mia's birthday today."

Birthday...

Tanya felt like a bomb had suddenly gone off in her head.

It was Mia's birthday. No wonder she had asked Tanya to bake her a cake, and even said a prayer before eating it.

Oh, right.

He had slept with Hillary right after he slept with her back then, hadn't he?

It was all too normal that their children's birthdays would be so close to each other's.

She bit her lip.

It had also been her child's birthday five days ago!

She didn't even know where her child might be wandering lost in the world, yet here she was, celebrating Mia's birthday?

Indescribable pain and misery made Tanya's expression instantly change.

She stared at Mia blankly.

Mia was terribly nervous. The puzzled girl looked at Tanya and asked, "W-what's wrong, Ms. Turner? Are you upset?"

She pushed Joel and said, "Daddy, hurry up and kiss Ms. Turner! She'll cheer up if you do that!"

Joel: "..."

Tanya: "..."

Joel didn't know the reason for Tanya's sudden change in behavior, but he knew that she likely held a grudge against Mia's existence all this time.

He lowered his head and slowly said, "I'm sorry."

He was sorry.

Five years ago, he had felt even more apologetic toward her.

If he hadn't gotten himself drunk, become muddleheaded, and ended up sleeping with Hillary, how would he have gotten her pregnant and ended up letting her give birth to Mia?

No, to be honest, he hadn't even known that she was pregnant.

Hillary understood him very well. She knew that he would definitely make her abort the child if he were to know, so she had secretly gone into hiding.

It wasn't until ten months later that she had finally returned with Mia.

He had done a DNA test when he saw the child—she was indeed his daughter. As such, he could only acknowledge her. That was probably the one and only time he had acted so spinelessly.

His heart had softened when he saw the child.

It was as if the child had a lot of affinity with him.

When Tanya heard his apology, her shame and anger made her eyes redden. She was about to yell at him when Mia suddenly held her hand and said, "I'll kiss you if Daddy won't, Ms. Turner. Don't be mad anymore, okay?"

Tanya lowered her head. When her eyes met Mia's timid eyes that looked as if she was trying to please her, her fury instantly extinguished.

Indeed.

She had only lost her child because she hadn't kept an eye on it. What did it have to do with Joel or Mia?

In fact, Joel didn't even know that she had given birth to his child!

Tanya lowered her head and stared at Mia.

She was just a pitiful little girl.

Tanya suddenly said, "Wait a minute."

She turned and went upstairs.

In addition to her own bedroom, she had also prepared another two children's rooms on the upper floor. One was a boy's room and the other a girl's.

This was because she didn't know whether her missing child was a boy or a girl.

Regardless, she would always prepare clothes for her son or daughter every year. The clothes currently in the closets were for five-year-olds, and on the bed in the girl's room was also a gift box.

It was the birthday gift she had bought five days ago for her child.

There was also one in the boy's room.

She picked up the gift box. Inside was an exquisite Barbie doll wearing a pink dress. Next to it were all kinds of doll clothing that one could dress up the doll with.

She touched the bedsheets and murmured silently, "I don't know where you are, my child, but I believe you'll be willing to make another child like yourself happy, right?"

She took the gift box and went downstairs.

Before she reached the door, she saw Mia nervously asking Joel, "Daddy, why did Ms. Turner suddenly get mad? Is it because it's Mia's birthday? Daddy, I won't celebrate my birthday anymore, okay? I like Ms. Turner, I don't want to make her mad..."

Joel stroked her hair. His voice was soft and gentle as he said, "It's not your fault. Daddy's the one who made Ms. Turner angry."

Mia then said seriously, "Daddy, you should apologize to Ms. Turner if you made her mad. Are you too embarrassed to say sorry, Daddy?"

Joel: "..."

He sighed. "I've already told her I'm sorry, but she won't accept my apology."

"Then say it a few more times!"

A child's world was very simple. For Mia, if her father had done something wrong, then he should apologize until Ms. Turner forgave him.

Joel sighed. "Okay."

When Mia wanted to say something again, she suddenly spotted Tanya, who had just returned. Her eyes lit up and she immediately called out, "Ms. Turner!"

Tanya handed her the gift box with the Barbie and said, "Happy birthday."

Mia's eyes instantly became even brighter. "Thank you, Ms. Turner!"

The little girl stretched out her hands and took the Barbie doll from her.

The Barbie was half her height, so it was very heavy for the small and thin girl.

Joel reached out to carry it for her.

However, Mia ducked and said, "I can do it, Daddy!"

This was a gift from Ms. Turner. She liked it very much.

Joel nodded. Then, he looked at Tanya. He was about to speak when Tanya sneered, "You must be very busy with work, right, Mr. Smith?"

Joel was overjoyed when he heard what she said. He thought that Tanya was showing him concern, so he nodded and replied, "It's alright."

"Hah." Tanya gave him a mocking smile and said, "Since it's alright, then shouldn't you learn how to be a qualified father, Mr. Smith?"

Joel was taken aback.

Tanya knew that there were some things she shouldn't say in front of Mia, so she merely gave him a subtle reminder. Then, she said, "Bye, Mia."

Mia replied softly, "Bye, Ms. Turner."

When Joel took Mia into the car, he received a call from Hillary. When he answered, the woman said, "Joel, it's Mia's birthday today. Can you let me see her? I miss her. I think Mia would also want her family to be together."

Joel's expression turned cold. He was about to say something when Hillary spoke again. She said, "I'm Mia's mother, after all, Joel. I really miss her. I should think that she misses me, too! You can't stop us from meeting when we're mother and daughter. Mia will resent you for it in the future if you do that."

“I know you hate me, but my love for Mia is true. I am the one who has been taking care of Mia ever since she was born. You should know how dependent she is on me. Joel, all I want is really just to see my daughter. I don’t have any other intentions... Please?”

Joel looked at Mia.

He suddenly asked, “Do you want to meet your mother, Mia?”

Mia’s eyes immediately flickered when she heard him.

Her mom had told her before that she had to reply that she wanted to meet her if Daddy ever asked. Otherwise, her mom would hate her very much.

But she thought of how Ms. Turner had told her not to keep things to herself, and to voice her thoughts if she had any. She had said that she could cry out if she was in pain, or cry if she wanted to...

When she thought of what Ms.. Turner had told her, the little Mia seemed to have suddenly found her courage.

Just as Mia was about to say something, Hillary’s voice rang out through the phone. “Do you miss Mommy, Mia?”

The little Mia trembled a little when she heard Hillary’s voice. In the end, she nodded and replied weakly, “Yes.”

“Did you hear that, Joel?”

Hillary tried her best to convince him, “Mia wants to see me!”

Joel heaved a huge sigh.

He didn’t want to let Mia and Hillary come into contact anymore, but if Mia wanted to see her mother, he couldn’t stop her.

Therefore, Hillary immediately knew that Joel must have relented when she heard him sigh. She asked tentatively, “Can I go back to the Smiths’ tonight? I heard that you’ve just found your younger sister, so I can also take the chance to pay her a visit.”

Chapter 358 - The Plan of Saving Nora Novel Free

“... No, I don’t.”

Quentin the dimwit immediately looked around. Then, he said, “I’ll tell you and you alone since you’re my cousin, Nora. You’re the only one I’m telling, get it? Even Joel doesn’t know the alias I’m using in the tournament!”

He straightened his back, raised his chin, and declared, “I am Smithin!”

“...”

However, when he didn’t see any reaction from Nora, Quentin glanced at her and frowned. “Haven’t you heard of that name? Then do you know the famous Team Third In The World?”

Be it Smithin or Team Third In The World, both had actually become very famous in the underground arena recently. Anyone who had been there would have heard of him.

But...

Nora decided to tease him and deliberately said, “I’m new there, so I only heard them talking about Victor.”

Quentin: “...”

No one in the family knew that he was participating in the martial arts tournament, so he couldn’t show off. Now that he had finally found a cousin who was interested in the tournament, how could she be kept unaware of his greatness?

Quentin was very puzzled, very much so. “Victor is nothing. He’s just a piece of trash who lost to me two years ago. Even if you have never heard of Smithin, surely you’ve heard of Team Third In The World, right?!”

He hadn’t competed in his own name, so it was normal that she hadn’t heard of him. But how come she hadn’t heard of the famous Team Third In The World, either?

Nora walked toward the house. “And then?”

“What do you mean by ‘and then’?!” Quentin became anxious. He gritted his teeth, steeled his resolve, and said, “Forget it, I’ll let you in on another big secret!”

Nora looked back at him.

Quentin said, “But you have to swear that you won’t tell anyone! I promised that I wouldn’t reveal her identity casually to outsiders. I’m only telling you because you’re my cousin.”

Nora had a vague idea what he was going to say next when she heard that. Sure enough, the next moment, he asked, “Do you know who that woman in the red dress in Team Third In The World is?”

Nora: “...”

“She’s Big Sister! The Big Sister of the Quinn School of Martial Arts!!!”

Quentin said triumphantly, “Do you see now? Even Big Sister has teamed up with me. She approached me because she thought that I was talented and fought pretty well... Surely you’ve at least heard of Big Sister, right?”

“... Yeah, I have.”

Quentin was satisfied at last. He said, “So, don’t you feel very honored that Big Sister has seen something in your elder brother? But don’t you get ahead of yourself. You absolutely mustn’t say anything about this to outsiders. Big Sister’s identity is confidential.”

“...”

“Is that look in your eyes envy? Actually, you don’t have to be envious that Big Sister has seen something in me. Uncle Ian picked me out of everyone in the family to practice martial arts when I was a child, so I’ve been practicing ever since. I heard that you used to be obese, and were even in poor health in the past, so you must not have practiced martial arts much before, right? By the way, which class are you in now?”

Nora: “...”

She knew how eager Quentin was to show off and bask in the limelight, so she knew that she didn’t need to say anything. Sure enough, Quentin said, “My team is already in Class D now. Once we win another five matches tomorrow, we’ll advance to Class E. We’ll be able to advance to Class F the day after tomorrow!”

“... Wow, how amazing.”

“Isn’t it? I think so, too.” Quentin folded his arms and said triumphantly, “But don’t you dare think it’s because I’m piggybacking off Big Sister. I can still compete by myself without any problems even without Big Sister. Why are you walking so fast? Forget it, I won’t say any more, lest you become jealous. But don’t worry, if someone bullies you in the arena, you can just use the name Smithin to scare them off!”

“ ... ”

Nora suddenly felt like she’d better not let the young man with eighth-grader syndrome know her true identity after all. If she did, she reckoned that she’ll never have any peace anymore.

The corners of her lips spasmed and she went upstairs.

When she entered the bedroom, she realized that Pete had already returned from school and was obediently working on his Mathematical Olympiad problems.

Nora glanced at his workbook. The Mathematical Olympiad problems he was doing were almost at high school standard now. The five-year-old’s IQ was simply terrifying.

“Mommy.”

Pete greeted her obediently.

Nora made a sound of acknowledgment and stepped forward. She stroked his hair, and then bent over and gave him a kiss on the forehead. She said, “Let’s go downstairs for dinner after you’re done with that.”

Pete nodded and continued to bury his head into the workbook.

Nora picked up her cell phone and saw a voice message from Tanya: ‘Have you given your son a kiss?’

Nora replied: ‘... Yes, I have.’

Tanya: “Yeah, Pete’s sense of security still leaves a little to be desired. It can’t be compared with Cherry’s at all. After all, the role a mother plays is simply

too crucial when one is growing up. You have to have more physical contact with Pete, get it?"

Nora: 'Yeah, yeah. I know.'

Tanya sighed emotionally again and said: "Don't think of me as being too long-winded. After all... I also wish I could give mine a kiss."

When Nora heard the message, she immediately knew that Tanya had thought of her missing child again.

She didn't know how she should comfort her. After all, she had also experienced the pain of losing her own child.

Nora kept quiet for a while before she replied: "You'll definitely find him or her one day."

Tanya: 'Yeah.'

Since she had fallen silent, Nora didn't send her any more messages. She turned to her son. Suddenly, she felt like something was amiss. "Where's Mia?" She asked.

By right, Pete and Mia should be playing with each other at this time!

Without even lifting his head, Pete replied, "She's having dance classes at God-mom's!"

"..."

In the villa in the suburbs.

Mia's forehead was covered in perspiration as she did leg stretches.

The small and thin five-year-old looked as if she was only four years old. Tanya went over and gave her a few pointers.

Mia glanced at Tanya.

Her teacher was very strict, but for some reason, she wasn't scared of her at all. When Tanya lowered her head toward her, Mia even suddenly kissed her on the cheek.

Tanya was stunned. She looked at Mia in disbelief, upon which Mia said, “Didn’t you want a kiss, Ms. Turner? I’ll give you a kiss.”

An acerbic feeling suddenly welled up in Tanya, and she felt a mix of emotions come over her.

It seemed like she could still feel the warmth from the soft lips on her cheek.

Tanya touched her cheek and looked at the small, timid Mia in front of her. Suddenly, a feeling welled up in her—would it also feel like this if her child kissed her?

She spaced out and kept quiet for a while.

Seeing her freeze, Mia became frightened. Her eyes reddened and she hastily asked, “Are you mad, Ms. Turner?”

Tanya didn’t know whether she should be angry or not.

In fact, she even felt like her decision to teach Mia dancing was a mistake in itself!

The child she had with Joel was missing.

Yet, here she was, teaching Joel’s daughter how to dance. In fact, when she kissed her, she hadn’t even pushed her away. It was as if she had already accepted her.

How could she do that?!

Tanya was originally helping Mia with her leg stretches, but she suddenly stood up. She wanted to say coldly, ‘Don’t kiss me again in the future.’

But when she looked at Mia’s round eyes and small pointed face, she simply couldn’t bring herself to say it. In fact, the words at the tip of her tongue even changed. She said, “No, I’m not.”

Mia nodded. “Then, are you happy?”

Tanya wanted to say that she wasn’t, but when she saw the hopeful look in Mia’s eyes, she instead replied impulsively, “Yes.”

Her answer made Mia’s eyes instantly light up.

She said timidly, "My mother said that I can't kiss her so casually, Ms. Turner. She would also become unhappy if I made physical contact with her, so I thought you were unhappy, too. I only kissed you because I heard you say that you wanted a kiss. Are you really not mad at me?"

Her mother didn't allow her to touch her?

Tanya was dumbfounded.

She didn't know how other mothers behaved, but if it were her daughter, she would never tire of giving her kisses. Besides, whenever she was out, she always saw a lot of children who behaved very intimately with their mothers.

Little did she expect a tiny little girl like Mia to be so pitiful?

With that thought in mind, she said, "It's true, I really am happy. Ms. Turner likes to keep close contact with children."

"That's great!"

Mia stood up straight and grabbed Tanya's hand. She made her lower her head and then kissed her on the cheek again. She said, "I will make you happy every day from now on, Ms. Turner!"

She pursed her lips and gave her a bashful smile.

Tanya simply couldn't bring herself to say any words of rejection when faced with such a well-behaved and adorable little girl!

She ruffled Mia's hair and asked, "Doesn't it hurt when you stretch?"

Mia immediately nodded. "It does!"

"Then why didn't you say anything?" Tanya asked curiously.

After she decided to take Mia as her student, she had added an hour of class for her after school every day. As there wasn't a suitable location in the kindergarten, she had brought her to her home.

Fine beads of perspiration had formed on Mia's forehead when she was dancing, yet she hadn't complained about being tired.

After dancing, Tanya had even told her to do leg stretches.

One must always do their stretches properly after exercise. Besides, Mia was already five. To be honest, it was already a bit of a late start for a dancer because the body would no longer be flexible enough anymore. Thus, Tanya had also taught her a few difficult moves such as bending over backward.

Despite that, Mia hadn't made even a single sound from beginning to end.

Just as she was wondering whether it was because the girl's pain receptors were less sensitive than others, Mia replied, "I can't complain that it hurts."

Tanya was taken aback. "Why?"

When she was a child, she would always cry out even at the slightest bit of pain when she was practicing. This way, the teacher would show her some mercy.

Mia replied, "Because Daddy will be unhappy if I'm in pain. If Daddy is unhappy, Mommy will also be unhappy."

Unhappy?

Tanya frowned. Suddenly, she started to feel sorry for the girl.

Although she lived in a wealthy family and had both her parents with her, she led too frustrating a life. While other five-year-olds from ordinary families were blissfully unaware, she didn't even have the right to complain when she was in pain!

Tanya suddenly became a little angry with Joel.

How could he treat a child like that?

No matter what, children were angels of the world. They were the most innocent!!

Tanya said to Mia, "Mia, you can speak freely without holding back in Ms. Turner's home in the future. If you're tired from practice, you can say so. If you're in pain because of stretching, you can also cry out. If you're thirsty or hungry, you can tell me that too. I will prepare everything for you."

Mia's eyes lit up. "Really?"

"Yeah."

Mia hesitated for a while. Then, she hung her head and asked somewhat embarrassedly, "Then... can you bake me a cake?"

Bake her a cake?

Tanya found the request rather odd but nevertheless agreed. "You must be hungry after practicing for so long. Alright, let's go downstairs."

Tanya used to be really bad at housework, but when she went abroad and lived by herself, she had to cook for herself, so her culinary skills had improved over the years.

Baking a cake was no problem for her.

Sometime later, she walked out of the kitchen with a simple cupcake in her hands. She was a little embarrassed as she said, "I can only bake simple stuff like this, Mia. You don't mind, right?"

Mia immediately shook her head. "Of course not, Ms. Turner!"

Tanya smiled and said, "You can dig in now."

Mia picked up the fork. She was about to eat when she suddenly said, "I'll give you half, Ms. Turner."

"No, it's fine."

A smiling Tanya went back to the kitchen and then came out with another cupcake. "I made a few. Come on, let's eat!"

Mia stared at the cupcake. Suddenly, she clasped her hands together, closed her eyes, and seemingly thought about something. Only then did she start to eat the cupcake.

Tanya looked at her, feeling rather amused. The girl actually had the sense to say a prayer before eating.

The two of them dug into their respective cupcakes with gusto.

When Tanya saw the little girl's cheeks all puffed up from eating, she felt a sense of accomplishment come over her, especially when Mia finished more than one cupcake from the batch she had baked.

She ate so much that even her belly had swelled up.

After they were done eating, she went to the kitchen to do the dishes. Then, she told Mia, “You can come here for dance practice every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday in the future. You can go and play the rest of the time. You’re still young, so you shouldn’t restrain yourself.”

Mia pursed her lips and smiled at her as she nodded. “Okay, Ms. Turner.”

All of a sudden, the doorbell rang.

Tanya knew that it must be Joel here to pick Mia up.

She looked at the clock in surprise—sure enough, it was already seven. She hadn’t expected time to pass so fast. Somewhat reluctantly, she helped Mia carry her schoolbag and then walked over to the door.

Sure enough, Joel was standing outside when she opened the door.

Tanya didn’t look at him. Instead, she waved at Mia and said, “See you in school tomorrow, Mia~”

“Okie-Dokie. See you tomorrow, Ms. Turner~”

Mia took Joel’s hand after she spoke. Just as she was about to leave, she suddenly looked back at Tanya and said, “Thank you for the birthday cake today, Ms. Turner. It was really yummy!”

Birthday cake?

Tanya was taken aback. Then, she heard Joel say, “It’s Mia’s birthday today.”

Birthday...

Tanya felt like a bomb had suddenly gone off in her head.

It was Mia’s birthday. No wonder she had asked Tanya to bake her a cake, and even said a prayer before eating it.

Oh, right.

He had slept with Hillary right after he slept with her back then, hadn’t he?

It was all too normal that their children's birthdays would be so close to each other's.

She bit her lip.

It had also been her child's birthday five days ago!

She didn't even know where her child might be wandering lost in the world, yet here she was, celebrating Mia's birthday?

Indescribable pain and misery made Tanya's expression instantly change.

She stared at Mia blankly.

Mia was terribly nervous. The puzzled girl looked at Tanya and asked, "W-what's wrong, Ms. Turner? Are you upset?"

She pushed Joel and said, "Daddy, hurry up and kiss Ms. Turner! She'll cheer up if you do that!"

Joel: "..."

Tanya: "..."

Joel didn't know the reason for Tanya's sudden change in behavior, but he knew that she likely held a grudge against Mia's existence all this time.

He lowered his head and slowly said, "I'm sorry."

He was sorry.

Five years ago, he had felt even more apologetic toward her.

If he hadn't gotten himself drunk, become muddleheaded, and ended up sleeping with Hillary, how would he have gotten her pregnant and ended up letting her give birth to Mia?

No, to be honest, he hadn't even known that she was pregnant.

Hillary understood him very well. She knew that he would definitely make her abort the child if he were to know, so she had secretly gone into hiding.

It wasn't until ten months later that she had finally returned with Mia.

He had done a DNA test when he saw the child—she was indeed his daughter. As such, he could only acknowledge her. That was probably the one and only time he had acted so spinelessly.

His heart had softened when he saw the child.

It was as if the child had a lot of affinity with him.

When Tanya heard his apology, her shame and anger made her eyes redden. She was about to yell at him when Mia suddenly held her hand and said, “I’ll kiss you if Daddy won’t, Ms. Turner. Don’t be mad anymore, okay?”

Tanya lowered her head. When her eyes met Mia’s timid eyes that looked as if she was trying to please her, her fury instantly extinguished.

Indeed.

She had only lost her child because she hadn’t kept an eye on it. What did it have to do with Joel or Mia?

In fact, Joel didn’t even know that she had given birth to his child!

Tanya lowered her head and stared at Mia.

She was just a pitiful little girl.

Tanya suddenly said, “Wait a minute.”

She turned and went upstairs.

In addition to her own bedroom, she had also prepared another two children’s rooms on the upper floor. One was a boy’s room and the other a girl’s.

This was because she didn’t know whether her missing child was a boy or a girl.

Regardless, she would always prepare clothes for her son or daughter every year. The clothes currently in the closets were for five-year-olds, and on the bed in the girl’s room was also a gift box.

It was the birthday gift she had bought five days ago for her child.

There was also one in the boy’s room.

She picked up the gift box. Inside was an exquisite Barbie doll wearing a pink dress. Next to it were all kinds of doll clothing that one could dress up the doll with.

She touched the bedsheets and murmured silently, "I don't know where you are, my child, but I believe you'll be willing to make another child like yourself happy, right?"

She took the gift box and went downstairs.

Before she reached the door, she saw Mia nervously asking Joel, "Daddy, why did Ms. Turner suddenly get mad? Is it because it's Mia's birthday? Daddy, I won't celebrate my birthday anymore, okay? I like Ms. Turner, I don't want to make her mad..."

Joel stroked her hair. His voice was soft and gentle as he said, "It's not your fault. Daddy's the one who made Ms. Turner angry."

Mia then said seriously, "Daddy, you should apologize to Ms. Turner if you made her mad. Are you too embarrassed to say sorry, Daddy?"

Joel: "..."

He sighed. "I've already told her I'm sorry, but she won't accept my apology."

"Then say it a few more times!"

A child's world was very simple. For Mia, if her father had done something wrong, then he should apologize until Ms. Turner forgave him.

Joel sighed. "Okay."

When Mia wanted to say something again, she suddenly spotted Tanya, who had just returned. Her eyes lit up and she immediately called out, "Ms. Turner!"

Tanya handed her the gift box with the Barbie and said, "Happy birthday."

Mia's eyes instantly became even brighter. "Thank you, Ms. Turner!"

The little girl stretched out her hands and took the Barbie doll from her.

The Barbie was half her height, so it was very heavy for the small and thin girl.

Joel reached out to carry it for her.

However, Mia ducked and said, "I can do it, Daddy!"

This was a gift from Ms. Turner. She liked it very much.

Joel nodded. Then, he looked at Tanya. He was about to speak when Tanya sneered, "You must be very busy with work, right, Mr. Smith?"

Joel was overjoyed when he heard what she said. He thought that Tanya was showing him concern, so he nodded and replied, "It's alright."

"Hah." Tanya gave him a mocking smile and said, "Since it's alright, then shouldn't you learn how to be a qualified father, Mr. Smith?"

Joel was taken aback.

Tanya knew that there were some things she shouldn't say in front of Mia, so she merely gave him a subtle reminder. Then, she said, "Bye, Mia."

Mia replied softly, "Bye, Ms. Turner."

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"I know you hate me, but my love for Mia is true. I am the one who has been taking care of Mia ever since she was born. You should know how dependent she is on me. Joel, all I want is really just to see my daughter. I don't have any other intentions... Please?"

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Just as Mia was about to say something, Hillary's voice rang out through the phone. "Do you miss Mommy, Mia?"

The little Mia trembled a little when she heard Hillary's voice. In the end, she nodded and replied weakly, "Yes."

"Did you hear that, Joel?"

Hillary tried her best to convince him, "Mia wants to see me!"

Joel heaved a huge sigh.

He didn't want to let Mia and Hillary come into contact anymore, but if Mia wanted to see her mother, he couldn't stop her.

Therefore, Hillary immediately knew that Joel must have relented when she heard him sigh. She asked tentatively, "Can I go back to the Smiths' tonight? I heard that you've just found your younger sister, so I can also take the chance to pay her a visit."

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Tanya didn't look at him. Instead, she waved at Mia and said, "See you in school tomorrow, Mia~"

"Okie-Dokie. See you tomorrow, Ms. Turner~"

Mia took Joel's hand after she spoke. Just as she was about to leave, she suddenly looked back at Tanya and said, "Thank you for the birthday cake today, Ms. Turner. It was really yummy!"

Birthday cake?

Tanya was taken aback. Then, she heard Joel say, "It's Mia's birthday today."

Birthday...

Tanya felt like a bomb had suddenly gone off in her head.

It was Mia's birthday. No wonder she had asked Tanya to bake her a cake, and even said a prayer before eating it.

Oh, right.

He had slept with Hillary right after he slept with her back then, hadn't he?

It was all too normal that their children's birthdays would be so close to each other's.

She bit her lip.

It had also been her child's birthday five days ago!

She didn't even know where her child might be wandering lost in the world, yet here she was, celebrating Mia's birthday?

Indescribable pain and misery made Tanya's expression instantly change.

She stared at Mia blankly.

Mia was terribly nervous. The puzzled girl looked at Tanya and asked, "W-what's wrong, Ms. Turner? Are you upset?"

She pushed Joel and said, "Daddy, hurry up and kiss Ms. Turner! She'll cheer up if you do that!"

Joel: "..."

Tanya: "..."

Joel didn't know the reason for Tanya's sudden change in behavior, but he knew that she likely held a grudge against Mia's existence all this time.

He lowered his head and slowly said, "I'm sorry."

He was sorry.

Five years ago, he had felt even more apologetic toward her.

If he hadn't gotten himself drunk, become muddleheaded, and ended up sleeping with Hillary, how would he have gotten her pregnant and ended up letting her give birth to Mia?

No, to be honest, he hadn't even known that she was pregnant.

Hillary understood him very well. She knew that he would definitely make her abort the child if he were to know, so she had secretly gone into hiding.

It wasn't until ten months later that she had finally returned with Mia.

He had done a DNA test when he saw the child—she was indeed his daughter. As such, he could only acknowledge her. That was probably the one and only time he had acted so spinelessly.

His heart had softened when he saw the child.

It was as if the child had a lot of affinity with him.

When Tanya heard his apology, her shame and anger made her eyes redden. She was about to yell at him when Mia suddenly held her hand and said, "I'll kiss you if Daddy won't, Ms. Turner. Don't be mad anymore, okay?"

Tanya lowered her head. When her eyes met Mia's timid eyes that looked as if she was trying to please her, her fury instantly extinguished.

Indeed.

She had only lost her child because she hadn't kept an eye on it. What did it have to do with Joel or Mia?

In fact, Joel didn't even know that she had given birth to his child!

Tanya lowered her head and stared at Mia.

She was just a pitiful little girl.

Tanya suddenly said, "Wait a minute."

She turned and went upstairs.

In addition to her own bedroom, she had also prepared another two children's rooms on the upper floor. One was a boy's room and the other a girl's.

This was because she didn't know whether her missing child was a boy or a girl.

Regardless, she would always prepare clothes for her son or daughter every year. The clothes currently in the closets were for five-year-olds, and on the bed in the girl's room was also a gift box.

It was the birthday gift she had bought five days ago for her child.

There was also one in the boy's room.

She picked up the gift box. Inside was an exquisite Barbie doll wearing a pink dress. Next to it were all kinds of doll clothing that one could dress up the doll with.

She touched the bedsheets and murmured silently, "I don't know where you are, my child, but I believe you'll be willing to make another child like yourself happy, right?"

She took the gift box and went downstairs.

Before she reached the door, she saw Mia nervously asking Joel, "Daddy, why did Ms. Turner suddenly get mad? Is it because it's Mia's birthday? Daddy, I won't celebrate my birthday anymore, okay? I like Ms. Turner, I don't want to make her mad..."

Joel stroked her hair. His voice was soft and gentle as he said, "It's not your fault. Daddy's the one who made Ms. Turner angry."

Mia then said seriously, "Daddy, you should apologize to Ms. Turner if you made her mad. Are you too embarrassed to say sorry, Daddy?"

Joel: "..."

He sighed. "I've already told her I'm sorry, but she won't accept my apology."

"Then say it a few more times!"

A child's world was very simple. For Mia, if her father had done something wrong, then he should apologize until Ms. Turner forgave him.

Joel sighed. "Okay."

When Mia wanted to say something again, she suddenly spotted Tanya, who had just returned. Her eyes lit up and she immediately called out, "Ms. Turner!"

Tanya handed her the gift box with the Barbie and said, "Happy birthday."

Mia's eyes instantly became even brighter. "Thank you, Ms. Turner!"

The little girl stretched out her hands and took the Barbie doll from her.

The Barbie was half her height, so it was very heavy for the small and thin girl.

Joel reached out to carry it for her.

However, Mia ducked and said, "I can do it, Daddy!"

This was a gift from Ms. Turner. She liked it very much.

Joel nodded. Then, he looked at Tanya. He was about to speak when Tanya sneered, "You must be very busy with work, right, Mr. Smith?"

Joel was overjoyed when he heard what she said. He thought that Tanya was showing him concern, so he nodded and replied, "It's alright."

"Hah." Tanya gave him a mocking smile and said, "Since it's alright, then shouldn't you learn how to be a qualified father, Mr. Smith?"

Joel was taken aback.

Tanya knew that there were some things she shouldn't say in front of Mia, so she merely gave him a subtle reminder. Then, she said, "Bye, Mia."

Mia replied softly, "Bye, Ms. Turner."

When Joel took Mia into the car, he received a call from Hillary. When he answered, the woman said, "Joel, it's Mia's birthday today. Can you let me see her? I miss her. I think Mia would also want her family to be together."

Joel's expression turned cold. He was about to say something when Hillary spoke again. She said, "I'm Mia's mother, after all, Joel. I really miss her. I should think that she misses me, too! You can't stop us from meeting when we're mother and daughter. Mia will resent you for it in the future if you do that.

"I know you hate me, but my love for Mia is true. I am the one who has been taking care of Mia ever since she was born. You should know how dependent she is on me. Joel, all I want is really just to see my daughter. I don't have any other intentions... Please?"

Joel looked at Mia.

He suddenly asked, "Do you want to meet your mother, Mia?"

Mia's eyes immediately flickered when she heard him.

Her mom had told her before that she had to reply that she wanted to meet her if Daddy ever asked. Otherwise, her mom would hate her very much.

But she thought of how Ms. Turner had told her not to keep things to herself, and to voice her thoughts if she had any. She had said that she could cry out if she was in pain, or cry if she wanted to...

When she thought of what Ms. Turner had told her, the little Mia seemed to have suddenly found her courage.

Just as Mia was about to say something, Hillary's voice rang out through the phone. "Do you miss Mommy, Mia?"

The little Mia trembled a little when she heard Hillary's voice. In the end, she nodded and replied weakly, "Yes."

"Did you hear that, Joel?"

Hillary tried her best to convince him, "Mia wants to see me!"

Joel heaved a huge sigh.

He didn't want to let Mia and Hillary come into contact anymore, but if Mia wanted to see her mother, he couldn't stop her.

Therefore, Hillary immediately knew that Joel must have relented when she heard him sigh. She asked tentatively, "Can I go back to the Smiths' tonight? I heard that you've just found your younger sister, so I can also take the chance to pay her a visit."

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