

Chapter 361 - The Plan of Saving Nora Novel Free

Joel had a very cold look in his eyes. "You're never returning to the Smiths. If you want to meet Mia, then I will bring her to you."

Hillary was a little taken aback. "Alright, then."

After hanging up, Joel took Mia to the residential complex where Hillary lived. However, he stayed at the door and refrained from entering.

After informing Hillary that he had arrived, she came out and invited Joel and Mia into the villa. She said, "Grandma misses you, Mia. Let's go in?"

Mia didn't like that grandmother of hers, either.

She always pointed at her and scolded her for being a girl, and kept saying that if she were a boy, her parents would already have gotten together long ago.

She grabbed Joel's sleeve.

Joel said, "Let's just stay here."

Seeing that he wasn't giving in, Hillary could only sigh and say, "Okay. Mia, this is Mommy's birthday gift for you. Do you like it?"

Hillary had prepared a toy car for Mia.

Mia looked at the toy car and took it.

Joel wanted to take her away, but Hillary suddenly said, "Let's take a family picture, Joel! It's been really long since we were last together."

Joel sneered, "We're not a family. You're just Mia's mother."

Hillary bit her lip. "Alright, I won't make things difficult for you, even if you won't acknowledge me. But I'm ultimately still Mia's mother, so can I take a picture with her?"

Joel was about to refuse when Hillary said, "I've already put up with how you refuse to let me see my daughter. Are you going to deny me this, too? All I can do now is spend my days looking at photos of my daughter."

Joel fell silent but didn't reject her request anymore.

Hillary squatted down and hugged Mia. She picked up her phone and said, "Mia, look at the camera~"

Then, she snapped a photo.

After the photo was taken, Mia returned to Joel. Joel took his daughter and left straightaway.

After leaving Hillary, the little Mia subconsciously breathed a sigh of relief and relaxed.

The two went to a restaurant and had dinner.

Neither of them noticed that Hillary had been following them since they left the residential complex. When they entered the restaurant, she finally took a photo.

Tanya sat in the living room after seeing the two of them off.

She felt terribly troubled.

Mia really was very lovable. She liked her very much. Not only had she inherited her talent in dancing, but the two had even hit it off the moment they met. She had liked Mia from the bottom of her heart from the moment she met her.

Where had they gone to celebrate Mia's birthday after they left?

She was wondering about that when her cell phone suddenly beeped, indicating that she had received a message.

It was a photo of two hands, one big and one small, clasped together.

It was from Joel.

Tanya was taken aback. After thinking for a while, she replied with a question mark: '?'

Joel then sent a text message: "I'm celebrating Mia's birthday with her. The cake is too big for the two of us, so we can't finish it. Would you like to come and have some?"

The two of them were celebrating Mia's birthday?

Tanya knew that Mia's mother, Hillary, had been driven out of the Smiths. But had they not gone to Hillary even on a day like this?

For some reason, Tanya actually found herself overjoyed.

But right after that, she couldn't help but be disgusted with herself.

What was the matter with her?

Was she really thinking of going back to him?

There was no longer anything between her and Joel!!

With that in mind, she replied: 'No.'

The man then sent her an audio message, which surprised Tanya. She was actually very afraid of hearing Joel's voice right now.

But when she played the message after long hesitation, it was instead Mia's voice. She said, "The cake is really delicious, Ms. Turner. I'll save a piece for you and put it in the fridge later. Shall I bring it to school tomorrow so that you can eat it?"

Mia's voice was very soft and pleasant to the ear.

Tanya couldn't bear to refuse, so she replied: "Okay."

Even her mood couldn't help but become better, as though her heart had been coated in honey before she even ate the cake.

Then, she couldn't help but open her Facebook account.

But when she did, she saw that Hillary had posted something.

They were a couple of photos.

One was of her and Mia in a residential complex with a man standing behind them. Although only his trousers could be seen in the photo, it was obvious at a glance that he was Joel.

The other was taken in a restaurant. Joel and Mia were seated nearby while she took a selfie.

Tanya's heart sank abruptly, and an acerbic feeling welled up inside her at once!

She clenched her fists and suddenly let out a cold laugh.

Indeed.

Here she was, treating Mia like her own daughter, but in truth, she had a mother!

Also, what exactly was Joel trying to do?

He was sending her vague and ambiguous messages while also showing off how happy and blissful a family of three he, Hillary, and Mia were? Was there any point in doing that?!

Tanya was so mad that she stopped looking at it altogether and threw the phone aside!

The next day.

As a dance teacher, Tanya would also pick up students at the entrance.

Mia and Pete got out of the car together and greeted the teachers. Joel was holding a food container with the cake from the night before. He handed it to Tanya and said, "Ms. Turner, this is from Mia."

Tanya cast her eyes down and said coldly and distantly, "No, thanks, Mr. Smith. I'm not fond of sweets."

Then, she led Mia and Pete straight into the school.

Joel: "?"

Things had clearly not been this awkward between them the previous evening. What was the matter with her today?

Tanya went back to the entrance after taking Mia and Pete to the classroom, planning to pick up the rest of the children. However, when she arrived at the door, she saw that Joel was still there.

She walked over with a cold look on her face.

Joel asked, "What's the matter? Are you in a bad mood today? Is it the time of the month?"

The time of the month?

Tanya flushed with embarrassment. She immediately replied coldly, "I don't think it's suitable for us to talk about such an intimate topic, Mr. Smith!"

Joel was taken aback. "Okay, I take back my words. But can you tell me why you're upset?"

Tanya had always been a straightforward person. She didn't like keeping things to herself. Thus, she lifted her head and looked straight at Joel. She took out her cell phone, opened up Hillary's Facebook post, and pushed the phone right into his face. She sneered, "Why I'm upset? What exactly are you trying to do, Mr. Smith? You were clearly enjoying your precious family time last night, yet you still sent me such ambiguous messages while you're having fun with your family? Can you be a little more responsible toward Mia? Also, what are you trying to do by treating me like this? Are you planning to practice polygamy? Have your cake and eat it too? Even if that's what you want, have you asked me if I agree to it?"

As Tanya's words became more and more unpleasant, Joel's expression also turned more and more awful.

He looked at Tanya's phone.. When he saw the photos that Hillary had posted, he was stunned.

Joel's expression suddenly turned extremely awful. He said anxiously, "Tanya, I can explain."

"Keep that for your daughter instead, Mr. Smith. Our relationship is not at the point where you need to explain anything to me! Goodbye!"

Tanya turned and went back into the school angrily.

Fury and panic arose in Joel as he looked at her from behind.

He turned and got into his car.

"To the company, Mr. Smith?" The chauffeur asked.

Joel was practically gnashing his teeth in fury as he said, "To Hillary's!"

He took out his cell phone and looked at his own Facebook timeline. However, he didn't see Hillary's post. This meant that the post had been hidden from him!

He stretched out his hand to the chauffeur and said, "Give me your cell phone."

His chauffeur also had Hillary as a friend on Facebook.

He took a look after the chauffeur handed him his phone. Sure enough, he found the post.

Hillary practically couldn't get any sneakier!

The two arrived at Hillary's residence. When Hillary heard that Joel was there to look for her, she happily went downstairs. However, the moment she went down, she instead saw a furious Joel.

Hillary asked timidly, "Joel, what's the matter?"

"Can you explain this Facebook post of yours to me?!"

Joel pushed the chauffeur's phone right into her face!

Hillary froze when she saw the post.

She bit her lip, forced a smile, and replied, "Isn't that just an ordinary Facebook post, Joel? What's wrong?"

Joel demanded furiously, "You followed us to the restaurant?"

Hillary lowered her gaze. "I... I just missed Mia so much, so I followed the two of you. Let me explain, Joel... I didn't mean anything else with the post. I just didn't want other people to know that I couldn't even celebrate my daughter's birthday with her... They will look down on me if they ever find out..."

Those words of hers couldn't get any more pretentious.

Even the chauffeur felt that it was understandable why she would do that.

Unfortunately, it was Joel whom she was up against.

Joel didn't accept her nonsense at all. He stepped forward and grabbed her chin. "So, you want to have cake with your daughter on her birthday?"

Hillary nodded. "Yes."

"Okay."

He picked up the container with the cake that Tanya had rejected. He opened it, took the cake out, and smashed it onto Hillary's face. He said coldly, "Have a good taste of it, then!"

Hillary: "!!"

She took a step back and wiped the cake off her face with her hands. She lifted her head and looked at Joel incredulously. "Joel, you—"

She couldn't bring herself to say the rest of what she wanted to say, though, because the look in Joel's eyes was simply too terrifying.

The way he looked as if he wanted to kill her made her unable to utter a single word.

Joel's icy-cold voice rang out. "Don't you dare play any tricks from now on, or else!"

Hillary wanted to speak, but he added, "You should thank your lucky stars that you're Mia's mother. Otherwise, you'd have been dead a long time ago."

His words stunned Hillary.

As they had made plans to go to the amusement park the next day, Nora woke up a little late. She stretched and went downstairs.

In the afternoon, Nora gave Lily the leftover drink that she had taken from Victor at the arena the day before and told her to go to a laboratory and check if there were any unidentified chemicals in it. Nora also instructed her to personally do the test herself.

Ever since Lily returned to the States to help her, she had been terribly busy. She left immediately after picking up the leftover drink and receiving Nora's instructions.

Nora, however, went back to sleep after that.

What was she to do? The amusement park date would take up the whole day, which was to say that she would have to get up early in the morning the next day. Thus, she had to make up for the next day's worth of sleep in advance.

By the time she woke up again, it was already dark outside.

She got up, got dressed, and went downstairs to the car park. She was about to go to the car when Quentin appeared behind her and said, "Why don't you come with me in my car today, Nora?"

Nora: "?"

She glanced at him.

Quentin said, "If you go in with me, I can show you how intimidating I am in the arena. You'll get special privileges that way."

Nora had always enjoyed special privileges from the very moment she was No. 028. She didn't have any idea what it was like for ordinary people.

However, since Quentin was inviting her to go along with him so enthusiastically, Nora thought for a while and simply replied, "Alright, then."

This way, she wouldn't need to drive, either.

She could even nap a little while on the way there.

She carried a bag in her hand. Inside was the red dress and silver mask she usually wore.

However, it was only after she got in the car that she realized that catching up on sleep in the car was too indulgent an idea—because Quentin couldn't stop talking while they were on the road.

"Why don't I introduce you to Big Sister later? Do you also admire Big Sister a lot? I can even ask her to give you an autograph."

Nora: "?"

She said lazily, "Can you even get one for yourself?"

“Of course. I’ve participated in several matches with her by now, so she’ll definitely show me that bit of courtesy. Besides, Big Sister thinks exceptionally highly of me. Oh, she has even acknowledged me as her younger brother!”

Nora: “?”

When had she ever acknowledged him as a younger brother?

While she was hesitating, Quentin spoke again. “Are you jealous? To be honest, what she values in me is my capability. You know I’m ranked third in New York’s martial arts circle, right? Apart from Big Sister and Big Brother, I’m the strongest here!”

“ ... ”

“Do you want to take a photo with Big Sister later? If so, you can leave that to me, too!”

Nora’s lip corners spasmed. “It’s fine.”

“Are you embarrassed? There’s nothing embarrassing about chasing after idols. Also, Big Sister is actually not that perfect.”

Nora: “?”

Was he starting to speak ill of her?

While she was thinking about it, Quentin said, “She doesn’t really have a good eye for people. Her husband is not that great. He looks just like a useless pretty boy.”

Nora: “ ... ”

“But no one is perfect, after all. Given Big Sister’s status, it’s understandable even if looks are the only thing she considers when choosing a husband. It’s not that bad having a gigolo, either.”

“ ... ”

“I intend to persuade Big Sister to give him up, though.”

The corners of Nora’s lips spasmed as she said, “That’s impossible.”

“Why not? My words hold a lot of weight with Big Sister. If I tell her to break up with him, she’ll definitely consider it. After all, we’re big shots in the martial arts circle...”

Quentin kept chatting all the way till they arrived at the arena.

Quentin was about to get out of the car when he noticed that Nora hadn’t moved. The confused man asked, “Aren’t you getting out of the car?”

“Oh, I have to change.”

Quentin was about to tease her for being vain and changing when there wasn’t a need for her to, when Nora took out a red dress and a familiar-looking silver mask from her bag.

Quentin: “...”

A dumbfounded Quentin stared at her incredulously. He swallowed and said, “N-Nora, don’t... don’t joke around anymore.”

Nora glanced at him. “Get out.”

Quentin got out of the car obediently. He didn’t dare look into the car, even though the car windows were tinted—so one would only be able to look out from the inside, but not the other way.

A minute later, the car door opened and Nora got out wearing the red dress. Then, she put on the mask.

The person in front of him seemed to have suddenly changed.

From his little hillbilly cousin, she turned into the mysterious martial arts expert, Big Sister.

Quentin: “...”

He felt that he must have opened his eyes the wrong way when he woke up in the morning!

How could this be?!

He had been following the woman ever since Joel started having doubts about Nora's identity. Despite how so much time had already gone by, how come he hadn't realized that she was actually Big Sister?!

While he was in a daze, Nora asked, "So, you're my younger brother?"

Quentin: "!!!"

He suddenly thought of how he had bragged and claimed just now that Big Sister had acknowledged him as her younger brother. After all, Big Sister had a mask on all the time, and her daughter was already five. Thus, he had subconsciously assumed that Big Sister must be older than him. Never would he have expected Big Sister to suddenly turn into his little cousin!

How he wished he could dig a hole and bury himself in it!

He tried his best to sift through his memories—he hadn't said anything else, right?

He suddenly thought of what he had said when he first met her. That time, he had said very proudly, "Heh, even though you're proof of the shame that Uncle Ian had suffered, you can rest assured that I will still protect you. I won't let any of the Smiths die an untimely death."

It was then followed by:

"Can you stop running about all over the place? Without me, the world's third-best fighter, protecting you, you'll die before you even know it!"

"Are you also taking part in the martial arts tournament? Do you want to meet Big Sister? I'm on really good terms with her!"

"Do you want to take a photo with Big Sister?"

"..."

Quentin felt like his cheeks had flushed even redder.

He suddenly asked, "There are three different types of death. Do you know what they are?"

Nora raised her eyebrows. "What are they?"

“The first is clinical death, that is to say, the body dies.

“The second is psychological death, where someone loses all hope and doesn’t wish to live anymore.

“The third is social death.”

Quentin looked at her and said, “Nora, you’ve just made me experience the third type of death.”

“...”

Nora laughed and passed by him. “Let’s go in.”

“I don’t want to go in.” Quentin said expressionlessly, “I wanna die.”

Nora didn’t pay any more attention to him. Instead, she started walking toward the arena. Two steps later, she heard footsteps behind her. Quentin’s voice then reached her. “Why are you hiding your identity, Nora? Isn’t the identity of Big Sister really cool?!”

Nora replied, “It’s bothersome.”

Bothersome?

Quentin thought for a moment. “Are you worried that others will bother you once they know who you are? Well, that’s true. After all, Big Sister is a well-known figure... Don’t worry, Nora, I can keep secrets really well. I will never tell anyone about it!”

“Oh.”

Nora had always adhered to her mother’s last words telling her not to expose her identity and to live in mediocrity. This was why she hadn’t exposed her identity all this time.

However, Quentin was simply too annoying.

Moreover, now that he was aware that she had come to the arena, given his tracking abilities, it was simply too much trouble to throw him off her trail. Thus, she had decided to reveal her identity.

Besides, even though Quentin had eighth-grader syndrome, he was the leader of the Smiths' secret forces. He wasn't stupid.

Nora followed Quentin into the arena.

As soon as they entered, Quentin suddenly said, "Big Sister, I've suddenly discovered a problem!"

Nora: "?"

Quentin said, "I didn't expect you to actually have a pretty boy outside behind Justin's back! No. 820 must be Cherry's biological father, right?"

Nora: "??"

She hadn't thought of that.

She wasn't sure whether she could reveal Justin's identity, so she simply uttered a sound of acknowledgment and admitted to it.

In the end, Quentin looked at her with bright and shiny eyes and said, "You're so awesome!"

"You actually dare to cuckold even Justin!"

Nora: "..."

Forget it, he could just think of it however he wanted to.

They had five matches that night, so time was rather tight for them. Nora looked around and asked, "He isn't here yet?"

Quentin also looked around.

While the two of them were looking around, a man's low and deep voice suddenly rang out. "Are you guys Team Third In The World?"

The two of them looked over in unison to see a man wearing a mask with an eagle's design walking toward them. He was big and tall and was dressed in a black suit. When he walked, it was as though he had an aura of justice around him.

Additionally, he had deliberately lowered his voice, so no one could tell what his actual voice really sounded like.

Nora didn't say anything. Instead, she glanced at Quentin.

Only then did something click in Quentin's head. He answered, "Yes, that's right. You are?"

"No. 007."

As soon as he gave them his alias, Quentin instantly realized something. He asked, "You're the first runner-up of the previous tournament?"

The other party kept quiet for a moment before he replied, "Yeah, you can say that."

Quentin took the opportunity to give Nora an explanation. He said, "B... Sis, No. 007 is an amazing martial arts master who came out of nowhere in the last tournament. He advanced all the way to Class F that time. Both he and Big Brother were very impressive, and he even became one of the favorites for the title of champion. It was just a shame that he didn't turn up for the finals, so the title of champion went to Big Brother while No.007 became the first runner-up."

After explaining, Quentin looked at No.007 and asked, "Why didn't you turn up for the finals?"

No. 007's gaze swept across the two of them. "I had to take a mission at the last minute."

Quentin and Nora sensitively caught a hint of something from his use of the word 'mission'.

Quentin then said, "Oh, what a shame. Is this your first time here this year, though?"

With the exception of Big Brother in Class F, all the other martial arts experts from the previous tournament had been downgraded to Class E this year. Thus, if they wanted to advance in rank, they would also have to defeat fellow Class E contestants.

The fact that an expert like No. 007 hadn't caused any noise this year was indicative of something—this was his first time here.

Sure enough, No. 007 nodded and replied, "Yeah, I also had something on previously. It seems like there's a surge in martial arts experts this year, though."

He glanced at the Benevolence Hall disciples seated in the VIP dining area. They were in a class of their own and seemed out of place among the people around them.

Quentin didn't say anything. No. 007, however, looked at Nora and asked, "What do you think?"

Nora: "??"

Quentin was undoubtedly very strong in Team Third In The World, and she had been very low-profile all this while. Why was he suddenly directing his attention to her?

She raised her eyebrows and nodded. "It seems that way, yes."

After she spoke, her cell phone in her pocket suddenly vibrated. Nora nodded to Quentin and No. 007, walked to the side, and took it out.. She opened it and saw a text message from Lily: 'The test results are out.'

Lily was referring to the chemical composition test for the solution that Victor and the others were drinking.

Nora sent a reply: 'The results?'

Lily responded very quickly: "It's just an ordinary sports drink. The only thing different about it from normal sports drinks is the fact that it's more concentrated. Even martial arts practitioners wouldn't need that many nutrients, no matter how much energy they use up, let alone the average person."

The results didn't disappoint Nora.

If Victor and the others had indeed only become this strong because they had taken some kind of drug, then said drug was undoubtedly a prohibited

substance. On top of that, they were also acting very mysteriously about it. It was impossible for them to consume it at the arena itself.

But a highly-concentrated sports drink...

When she was thinking about it, elsewhere, No. 007 was looking around. Quentin asked, "Are you looking for Big Brother?"

There hadn't been a winner between the two during the last tournament.

He would definitely be out for revenge this year, right?

Unexpectedly, No. 007 instead said, "I came late this year. Which of the contestants here is Big Sister?"

Nora abruptly raised her head and looked at him when she heard the words 'Big Sister'.

Quentin subconsciously glanced at Nora before he replied, "Oh, Big Sister is resting in her lounge. You can look for her there if you need anything. She's the very big and muscular woman in there."

Nora: "..."

No. 007 was a little taken aback. "She's very big and muscular? That's impossible."

Quentin: "?"

No. 007 went on. "Big Sister does regular martial arts training, so it's impossible that she would be really big. All strong martial artists need physiques that move smoothly. I heard that there are people here who impersonate Big Sister to make money and stuff like that."

No. 007 then looked at Nora. "Big Sister's figure should be like No. 028's instead."

Nora: "..."

She took a long look at No. 007, thinking that it was likely that he might have already noticed something. However, he didn't press the issue, so Nora didn't say anything.

She still needed to keep her identity a secret.

Quentin lifted his chin and became very proud. "You have good foresight!"

No. 007 chuckled. Then, he pointed to the dining area next to them and suggested, "Let's sit down and have a bite? I think it's your match soon."

Before Nora could say anything, another low and deep voice reached them. "No, it's fine."

The few of them looked over and saw Justin walking over with Cherry in his arms.

Cherry was still wearing her half-mask and was holding a lollipop. Her big eyes blinked as she looked at them.

Justin walked over, stopped in front of Nora, and faced No. 007. "Thanks."

Then, he took out a chocolate bar and handed it to Nora. "This will replenish your energy quickly if you're hungry."

Nora: "..."

Next to them, Quentin's lip corners spasmed.

Before this, he had felt that the pretty boy wasn't worthy of Big Sister, but now that he knew that his cousin was Big Sister, his requirements for his cousin-in-law had immediately become even higher.

He tapped Justin's shoulder.

Justin looked at him.

Quentin sneered, "Aren't you being a little too jealous? I can sense it even from a long distance."

"..."

Justin didn't say anything. Quentin lowered his voice and said, "Kid, you're pretty bold, huh!"

Justin raised his eyebrows. "Oh?"

Quentin glanced at Nora. “Do you know her true identity?”

“Yes.”

Quentin clicked his tongue a couple of times and said, “You’re pretty bold to have the guts to cuckold Justin Hunt. You gotta protect your personal information, though, get it? Otherwise, even my cousin won’t be able to protect you! There are only two people in New York whom no one must ever mess with—one of them is Joel Smith, my cousin, and the other is Justin Hunt!”

Justin: “...”

Him cuckolding himself... Yep, if it wasn’t because he was his cousin-in-law, he really felt like punching Quentin. But now... well, this was quite alright, too.

The next five matches they played sent them straight into Class E.

The five matches were no sweat for the three of them. After all, with Big Sister and Big Brother, as well as the third-best fighter in the world, they completely crushed everyone else.

While they were crushing their opponents here, Victor’s team also won two matches and gave their opponents crushing defeats.

After finishing the five matches in succession, Nora yawned and stepped out of the ring.

As soon as they got out, Quentin said, “B... Sis, No. 007 has been staring at you.”

Nora: “??”

She followed his gaze and looked over. Sure enough, Nora found No. 007 sitting at the bottom of the ring. However, he was staring straight at her and making no secret about it. There was admiration—as well as scrutiny—in his eyes.

Nora raised her brows.

Quentin then went to Justin. “It’s a love rival, bro!”

Justin was speechless when he saw how eager Quentin was to throw the world into chaos.

No. 007 got up and walked straight toward them after the match.

However, before he could even come close, Nora and Justin had turned around very naturally and walked to the door. They didn't give him any chance to get close to them.

This took No. 007 by surprise. He smiled wryly, stopped in his tracks, and took the hint. He didn't chase after them anymore.

But just as the two of them were about to leave the arena, Victor and the other two men in his team suddenly rushed over. They moved very quickly. When they were passing by, Victor suddenly whispered, "You're the real Big Sister, aren't you?"

Nora was taken aback. Then, she narrowed her eyes and looked at him. Her lips curled into a smile, but she didn't admit to it. "I don't know what you're trying to say."

However, Victor was sure of her identity. He sneered, "I can accept losing to you, then. But it won't be the same next time!"

The few of them then left.

Nora ignored him. While she and Justin continued walking toward the exit, another man wearing a white feathered mask entered.

He looked rather unique, and coughed a few times with every two steps he took. He looked ill.

In addition, he coughed very hard. It sounded as though he was about to cough up his lungs.

A man was supporting him at the side.

Someone whispered, "He came to the arena even when he's so sick and so weak? He must be here just to join in the fun and watch the show, right?"

Unexpectedly, the man walked up to the registration counter. As he coughed, a rich and mellow voice rang out. "Sorry, I have already signed up, but I only

just came to participate in the tournament today. I wonder if my eligibility still stands?”

The staff member replied, “This is a little difficult. It’s already been so long...”

During the exchange, the black-clad bodyguard supporting the man handed the guy a check.

The guy accepted the check in a very practiced manner, and immediately changed his tone without any principles whatsoever. “Of course, it still stands... What’s your registration number?”

“...”

The corners of Nora’s lips spasmed.

The martial arts association must be as poor as church mice now, right? They really took all the money they could get.

After bidding farewell to Justin in the car park, Nora took Quentin’s car back home.

On the way, Quentin suddenly said, “Nora, someone’s following us.”

Someone was following them?

Nora looked at the back through the rearview mirror—it was filled with cars.

Quentin lived up to his identity as a man in secret forces. His senses were sharper and keener than even hers. She also sensed it after Quentin brought it up.

“Can you throw them off?” Nora asked.

“Of course.” Quentin said triumphantly, “Don’t you know whose car you’re in right now? How dare they tail me. They sure think really highly of themselves!”

He sneered, “I’m the only one who can tail other people in New York. No one can tail me!”

He suddenly turned the steering wheel all the way to the side at the traffic light and drifted straight into a small side road.

Nora looked at the rearview mirror—two black cars clearly looked a little confused because they hadn't expected him to suddenly break the traffic rules and go somewhere else.

However, another two cars soon followed after them from the side.

Quentin discovered their presence earlier than she did. He sneered, "Tsk, it seems like there are a lot of people interested in Big Sister, Nora! Don't worry, I will definitely keep you safe!"

He changed the direction he was going in again.

The car went back and forth in the familiar New York streets. Quentin was very professional. Half an hour later, when he turned to another side road, there were no longer any cars following them at the back.

Obviously, Quentin had successfully thrown them all off.

Quentin looked at her. He looked as if he was asking for praise as he asked, "How was that?"

He lifted his chin.

Nora gave him a thumbs up. "Fantastic."

Quentin couldn't suppress the smile at the corners of his lips.

His idol was none other than Big Sister. It simply felt too blissful to be praised by his idol. He must do even better than this!

While Quentin was getting fired up, his cell phone suddenly rang.

When he answered, Joel's voice came from the other side. "Where is Nora?"

Quentin looked at the woman in the backseat. "She's in the car with me. What's up?"

Joel said, "Come to the hospital right away!"

Quentin: "?"

He subconsciously asked, "Is there something wrong with Uncle Ian?"

Joel sighed. "You'll know once you're here."

"Okay."

Quentin immediately took a U-turn and raced to the hospital.

When Nora heard the call from Joel, she knew at once that something must have happened in the hospital.

When the two arrived at the hospital, sure enough, they saw Joel pacing back and forth nervously in the corridor. When he heard their footsteps, he immediately looked at Nora and said, "Quick, Nora, go into the operating room and save him!"

Nora entered the operating room right away.

It was only after she went in that Quentin asked, "What happened?"

Joel replied, "Uncle Ian's heart suddenly stopped beating. They are trying to save him now."

Quentin was stunned. His heart sank.

In all honesty, he had never taken Ian's illness seriously because Ian had always been ill for as long as he could remember.

Therefore, he hadn't panicked even when Nora operated on Ian previously.

But when he heard that Ian had a cardiac arrest, he couldn't help but blank out. He immediately said, "That's impossible! It's impossible that anything would go wrong when B... Nora's the one operating on him!"

Had Nora just been Anti, Quentin might still have had doubts.

But she was Big Sister.

She was the famous Big Sister in the martial arts circle. There was no way she would do anything she wasn't confident about!

Joel glanced at him when he heard him.

Based on his understanding of Quentin, Quentin should have already formed doubts about Nora a long time ago. Yet he was so sure about it at the moment...

It wasn't the time for him to be thinking about that, though. He said, "It's Uncle Ian himself who... suddenly pulled out the IV needle when he woke up."

Quentin: "..."

Joel sighed. "Uncle Ian still doesn't have any will to live. He doesn't want to live anymore."

Quentin was in such a panic that he was going around in circles. "What should we do? Didn't you tell Uncle Ian that Nora is his daughter?"

Joel said, "That's exactly why I asked you guys to come. I'm hoping that Nora can find a way to keep him alive."

Quentin nodded.

It was unknown just how much time went by before the operating room's lights finally went out.

The attending doctor then came out and looked at the two of them.

Both Joel and Quentin looked at him hopefully but instead saw the doctor shake his head instead.

Joel and Quentin were dumbfounded.

The doctor said, "Anti lives up to her name as a master surgeon. She once again pulled the old gentleman back from the brink of death. He's awake now, but..."

The doctor sighed. "He still does not have the will to live."

No will to live... even though he was awake...

Joel panicked. "Didn't Nora tell him that she is his daughter?"

"She did, but it wasn't of any use."

The attending doctor then stepped aside. "You... Why don't you go in and see him for the last time?"

Joel and Ian put on sterile gowns and entered the operating room.

Ian lay on the bed. The thin man looked just like a sheet of paper, which easily showed that he hadn't been eating well. He was ridiculously thin.

Nora was standing next to him blankly. Her eyes were full of perplexity and doubts as if she couldn't understand anything. She asked, "Why don't you want to live? Even if it's for my sake?"

Ian's voice was very thin. He said weakly, "I'm sorry."

He coughed and slowly said, "I'm very happy that Yvette didn't betray me... but when I think of how she has been all by herself in that lonely world for so long, I feel so awful. I should have figured it out earlier. I should have gone to keep her company earlier. Nora..."

He reached out a trembling hand to Nora.

Nora pursed her lips and held his hand. He said, "Please forgive Dad for being so selfish. I was waiting all this time for the truth to surface, waiting to find out why she had left me back then. But now that I finally know it, I suddenly feel guilty and blame myself for it. It's no longer important why she had done what she did. Back then, no matter what the reason for her departure was, I shouldn't have doubted her. She must have had reasons that she couldn't tell me. All I could do for her back then was to let go of her, and now, the only thing I can do for her is to go and keep her company..."

He looked at Joel and Quentin who had entered.

Joel and Quentin's eyes were all red. They took a step forward. Ian said to the two of them, "Joel, Quentin, Nora is my daughter. I put her in your care now."

Joel choked up and shouted, "Uncle Ian, you should take care of your daughter yourself!"

Ian smiled wryly and said, "I'm tired. I really am. I've spent all these years like a walking dead. Leaving is the greatest relief I can ever have."

All three youngsters looked at him blankly.

All of them were dumbfounded.

No one, no matter who, had ever imagined that letting Ian know that Nora was his daughter would be the last straw to break the camel's back and send him to his death.

Nora clenched her fists.

Were they going to be separated by death when they had only just reunited as father and daughter?

No!

Nora would never allow such a thing to happen!

Quentin's eyes were red and swollen as he shouted, "Uncle Ian, take care of your daughter yourself! Live and get up. Otherwise, I'll beat her up every day..."

Joel, who had always been a steady person, could not help but say, "Uncle Ian, aren't you afraid that I will be selfish in the future and take over the Smiths without giving Nora anything? Also, Nora is going to marry Justin. Aren't you afraid that she will be bullied if she marries over? She's without her father and even comes from the countryside. Now, the Hunts look down on her! She needs your support!"

Ian muttered in a weak voice with his eyes closed, "Joel, Quentin, you won't..."

"I will! I really will! Uncle Ian, wake up. You can't die!"

"Uncle Ian! Get up..."

Joel and Quentin shouted as their tears fell like rain.

The person lying on the bed had been exceptionally powerful since they were young. But now, he was weak and had been sick most of the year, he was very dispirited and would not wake up. It was as if nothing gave him hope for life.

However, the two of them would never forget that when their parents had abandoned them, it was Uncle Ian who came forward to raise them, calling them good children!

Especially Joel...

If not for Uncle Ian, he would have been chased out of the Smiths when he was three years old. He would have become like a stray dog and starved to death on the streets!

It was Uncle Ian... Not only had he given him the honor of being a man of the Smiths, but he had also let him take over the Smiths.

Everything Joel had now was given to him by Uncle Ian.

Joel held Uncle Ian's hand tightly. "Uncle Ian..."

Just as the two of them were thinking of ways to make him stay, a cold voice suddenly sounded. "Can I speak to him alone?"

Joel and Quentin looked at the person in a daze. It was Nora.

She stood at the side. Perhaps it was because they had not known each other since they were young, but her current expression was a little cold and distant.

The stunned expression in her eyes had disappeared as she stared at the man on the bed.

Even though her voice was emotionless and she appeared too calm, Joel and Quentin looked at each other. The two of them stood up and walked out together.

Before leaving, Joel took one last look inside.

He watched as the girl suddenly walked to the bed and said, "You're very good to them."

Ian smiled bitterly. "I didn't do my part as a father."

Nora suddenly said, "Now, you have a chance to fulfill your responsibilities."

After saying this, she suddenly lowered her head and whispered into Ian's ear. Ian's eyes widened suddenly.

When Joel closed the door, he heard Ian's last sentence. His voice trembled as he asked, "Are... are you serious?"

Two minutes later.

The door to the operating room was opened. Nora pushed Ian's bed out of the operating room.

Ian was lying there with his eyes closed.

Joel's heart sank. He exchanged glances with Quentin and the two of them looked at Nora. Quentin even swallowed his saliva and asked, "Uncle Ian, he..."

"He's not dead."

Nora's words sounded very calm, making Joel and Quentin heave a sigh of relief.

Quentin asked tentatively, "Then he's..."

"I gave him two injections and he fell asleep. He needs to rest. In the next few days, don't disturb him in any case. No matter how powerful this lion is, his body has been hollowed out. His body needs to be raised from the roots."

With that, she looked at Joel. "I have a few medicinal recipes here. I'll write them down for you later."

Joel hurriedly nodded. "I'll arrange for someone to cook for Uncle Ian every day."

The three of them walked into the VIP ward together.

After entering the ward, Nora checked Ian's vital signs. After everything was normal, she said, "He won't die for the time being."

Joel probed, "Then... after the time being..."

Nora: "If you follow the schedule I'm giving you and are obedient, he can live out his natural life."

Joel heaved a sigh of relief.

Nora took out her phone and opened the memo. Her slender fingers quickly typed something on it for a while. She sent Joel the things to take note of and future treatment plans.

Joel took a look and realized that it was all basic care. The staff in the hospital could do it.

Quentin asked curiously, "Aren't you going to take care of Uncle Ian personally in the future?"

Nora glanced at him. "I don't know how to take care of people."

Quentin: "..."

After doing all this, Nora walked out. "I'm going to see Old Maddy."

Ever since Old Maddy was rescued, he had been in the hospital for treatment. After all, he had been too severely poisoned. Furthermore, Old Maddy had never recovered from his crazy illness.

Nora went to Old Maddy's ward again. When she was about to go home, she saw Quentin.

She raised her eyebrows and asked, "What are you doing here?"

Quentin coughed. "I'm waiting for you to take you home."

"..."

Nora said helplessly, "Alright."

After the two of them returned home, Nora went upstairs and saw Pete. She kissed her son's forehead and was about to take a shower when Pete suddenly said mysteriously, "Mommy, did you know? Uncle Joel came to pick Mia and me up just now. But he then later got the chauffeur to bring us back and went to chase after God-mom Tanya."

Nora: "??"

When she went to see Old Maddy, Joel had arranged for the medical staff to pick up Mia and Pete from school. She did not expect him to go after Tanya?

Why was he looking for Tanya?

Nora raised her eyebrows.

She smiled and touched Pete's head. "I understand."

Pete blinked and suddenly said, "Mommy, is God-mom Tanya going to be my aunt soon?"

Nora: "?"

This little fellow knew quite a lot. She asked, "Do you want her to be your aunt?"

"Yes!"

Pete nodded seriously. "God-mom treats Mia well."

Nora sensed something. "You mean, Mia's mommy isn't good to her?"

Pete thought for a moment. "No, she isn't."

Nora frowned and pulled a chair over casually. She sat in front of Pete with interest. "Come, talk properly."

Pete's expression was stern as he said seriously, "These are all my speculations."

Nora had always thought that Mia's mother treated her well. After all, who would be cruel to their own daughter? It was because Hillary and Joel were on bad terms that the two of them did not get together.

However, she did not expect Pete's next words to completely subvert her understanding.

Pete said, "Mommy, if I liked mathematics very much, would you stop me from learning it?"

Nora: "Of course not."

Everyone knew that Cherry liked to play games. In order to make Cherry happy, she had agreed to let her play. She only limited the time spent on playing games.

Pete nodded. "Mia's mother knows she likes to dance, but she doesn't let her learn. Moreover, Mia is very afraid of her mother."

Afraid?

No child should be afraid of their mother, right?

Nora felt that Pete might have used the wrong word. "Is it because her mommy is very strict?"

Pete shook his head. "No."

He thought for a moment and said, "The tyrant is very strict too, but I know that he does it for my own good. Sometimes, I go on a hunger strike to fight against him because I know he will eventually give in."

"But Mia's fear of her mommy comes from the fact that she's not sure her mommy would ever give in.

Nora was stunned.

Although Pete's words were messy, she understood them.

Because Justin was his father, even if he was stern every day or even hit Pete, Pete still respected Justin and was not afraid of him.

But Mia's mother was like a stranger and a bad person to Mia. Mia didn't even feel safe with her.

She frowned. "Did Mia tell you all this?"

Pete shook his head. "I observed it myself."

Nora frowned.

If what Pete said was true, Nora would really have to reconsider this matter. However, Pete was only five years old. His conclusion could not be trusted so easily.

Nora said seriously, "Okay, Pete. I understand. I'll take note of this and observe Mia. If it's true, I'll tell your uncle."

At the same time, she frowned.

Was there really a mother in this world who abused her own child?

In the suburbs.

Tanya drove in and looked at the shameless man.

After work, he took the opportunity while she had yet to lock the car to suddenly open the back door and sneak into her car.

She wanted to scold him back then, but his words made her shut her mouth. "Keep arguing If you want everyone to know about our relationship. If you don't, then drive."

Tanya: "..."

She was speechless and anxious.

However, as a kindergarten teacher, she did not want to make a scene in school. She gritted her teeth in anger, but she still drove home. On the way, she switched on her mocking mode. "Mr. Smith, may I ask what my relationship with you is?"

Joel: "I'm your ex-boyfriend."

"..."

"Or rather, it's because I can't forget my ex-girlfriend."

When Tanya heard this, for some reason, her face turned red. She shook her head and sneered. "Mr. Smith, you have a fiancée and daughter now. You're harassing me like this, understand?"

Joel lowered his eyes. "Tanya, you were so angry yesterday. Were you jealous?"

Jealous?

Tanya choked on his words.

However, she immediately realized that from the moment she saw Hillary's Facebook post, she had indeed started to feel angry and humiliated.

Previously, she had been deceived by Mia and Joel.

Even after the two of them had left, she still felt happy for a while.

It was Hillary's post that had brought her back to reality. She suddenly realized that Mia was Joel and Hillary's daughter, not hers!

Why was she so excited about Mia's birthday?

She did not sleep much that night.

Before she returned, as she thought about her plans after returning to the country, she had told herself not to contact Joel ever again. But why were they involved again?

She was angry with herself and even more furious with Joel for teasing her.

He was making her sink deeper into it step by step.

She did not say anything else along the way until they arrived at the villa. However, after stopping the car, she did not get out. Instead, she said calmly, "Yes, I was jealous."

Joel was taken aback.

Tanya lowered her head. He could not see the girl's expression, but he could see that her shoulders were trembling slightly. She had never cried much since she was young.

Why was she crying now?

As he was thinking, she chuckled. "I admit it. Are you satisfied?"

She looked up and asked with a smile, "Mr. Smith, are you satisfied with me admitting that I'm a b*tch who covets someone else's fiancé?"

"You just had to make me admit that I'll always be lowly in front of you. Are you satisfied?"

The three "are you satisfied?" encompassed everything she had suffered all these years!

In Switzerland, she had no lack of suitors, but she did not like anyone. What she was unwilling to admit was that she had never let go of this man.

Even if this man was with the sister she hated the most.

As she smiled, tears suddenly fell down.

The teardrop was crystal clear as it slid down the corner of her eye and landed on her leg.

At this moment, a warm hand pressed down on her shoulder. With a huge reaction, she suddenly reached out and pushed the hand away!

She got out of the car angrily.

Joel chased after her. "Tanya!"

Tanya pushed him away and opened the door.

Joel hugged her tightly. "Tanya."

Tanya was furious and shouted angrily, "Joel, what are you trying to do? Let me tell you, even if I haven't completely forgotten about you, I won't be your mistress! I may be spineless, but I still have this bottom line! Let go. If you don't, I'll call the police!"

However, the man behind her did not let go. Just as Tanya angrily picked up her phone and was about to call the police, Joel's voice suddenly sounded. "Uncle Ian is critically ill."

Tanya paused.

Tanya knew who his uncle was. She also knew how important this uncle was to Joel.

She said nothing.

Joel continued, "After Uncle Ian and Yvette separated more than twenty years ago, they never saw each other again. His greatest regret in this life is that he couldn't be with her. Even though he knows that Nora is his daughter, he still wants to follow Yvette to the afterlife."

"Tanya, we're so lucky to meet again. This time, I won't let go."

At the Smiths.

After taking a shower, Nora prepared to go downstairs to eat something.

But as soon as she opened the door, she saw Quentin in front of it.

Although the man was already 26 years old, he still looked very young. His thin body leaned against the wall, and he instantly stood up when he saw her.

Nora raised her eyebrows. "What's the matter?"

Quentin nodded and asked curiously, "Nora, what did you tell Uncle Ian that suddenly gave him the will to survive?"

When Nora heard this, she was silent for a moment.

She suddenly said, "Do you really want to know?"

Quentin nodded.

Nora looked away.

She was not planning to say these words. After all, her mother's last words were filled with danger. Now, she did not even know who or where the enemy was.

She said, "Do you know why I hid my identity as Big Sister?"

Quentin shook his head.

Nora said, "Because my mother said that if I stand out, people might come after me."

Quentin narrowed his eyes at these words.

Nora looked at him. "I told him this."

She was referring to Ian.

They had just reunited, but she was not used to calling that person "father." She could not bring herself to call him "father."

Quentin understood.

Ian felt that Joel and Quentin could protect her well and that she would live well. Therefore, he had lost the will to live and wanted to reunite with Yvette.

But when he found out that his daughter was in danger, as a father, how could he leave?

He had to live and help her get rid of all obstacles!

Especially that danger... Ian subconsciously felt that it had something to do with Yvette leaving him back then!

This was Nora's guess.

Yvette had suddenly run away from home and told the public that she had eloped with someone, but she had given birth to her. In addition to the organization Morris had mentioned...

She felt that Yvette's departure back then might have been to protect Ian.

Ian clearly thought of this as well, and Nora told him, "The first DNA test showed that my genes have mutated. Logically speaking, we could never acknowledge each other. But Mother left my umbilical cord blood behind."

Yvette had preserved Nora's umbilical cord blood because she wanted to have a contingency plan when she was at her wit's end.

If Nora was to ever get involved in this, Ian could protect her appropriately and fulfill his responsibility as a father.

Even if Nora did not need his protection, if this responsibility could make Ian want to live, she did not mind being protected.

However, Quentin suddenly understood something. He looked at Nora seriously. "Nora, don't worry. I will help you guard your identity!"

If there was any danger, he would protect his cousin!

Nora: "?"

In the suburbs.

Joel was hugging Tanya. "I don't know what Nora said to make Uncle Ian want to live, but I know that I can't lose you again, Tanya."

When Uncle Ian lay on the hospital bed and recalled what had happened back then, he said the thing he regretted the most was not insisting on being with Yvette. At that time, Joel had thought of Tanya.

He did not want the tragedy to repeat itself.

When Tanya heard this, she stopped struggling. She closed her eyes tightly as tears started pouring. “Even if I don’t mind Mia’s existence, what about Hillary?”

“Hillary doesn’t matter.”

Joel said, “Tanya, back then, I was tricked into being with her. But all these years, apart from Mia, there’s nothing between us. I gave her the title of fiancée because I didn’t want Mia to not have a mother. But I told her long ago that when Mia turned five and became sensible, we would end the engagement. The last time I chased her away from the Smiths, it was to end the engagement.

Tanya was stunned.

Hillary was clearly saying that they were very loving.

However, compared to Hillary, she trusted Joel more.

She was not a romantic. The reason she chose to believe Joel was because she understood Hillary’s character!

But even so, she did not expect such a misunderstanding to have happened back then.

She asked again, “But her Facebook post...”

Joel explained again, “It was Mia’s birthday yesterday. I took a gift from her at the entrance of her house and left. As for the restaurant, it was only me and Mia. She followed us there by herself.”

Tanya was stunned.

Joel hugged her. “Tanya, I don’t know what else I need to do to make you forgive me, but do you know how happy I was when I heard you say that you were jealous?”

The man no longer had the aura he had in front of outsiders. At this moment, he was as happy as a child who had eaten candy. "At that time, I was thinking that even if you hate me or resent me, I won't let you go this time."

"..."

The wind around them seemed to have stopped.

The birds and insects were all silent.

Tanya only felt that at this moment, her broken heart seemed to have been filled with healing medicine as he comforted her.

She did not know what to say.

She did not know if she should forgive this man for that night.

Even if it was not his fault that he had been schemed against...

She did not know if she could be a good stepmother, either...

She did not even know if it was right for her to pursue happiness like this before her child was found...

Before she could think, the man suddenly held her shoulder and made her slowly turn her head.

The man stopped talking and lowered his head to cover her lips.

That familiar cool breath suddenly invaded her mouth, making her brain explode.

The memories in her body seemed to have returned before her rationality, making her almost give in without any resistance...

She was in a sorry state and quickly retreated.

However, he continued to press her hard and domineeringly. It was as if he wanted to claim sovereignty over every part of her mouth.

"Agh!"

Suddenly, a voice was heard.

The two of them froze and hurriedly looked at the door. They saw Mdm. Florence covering her eyes. "Goodness, Miss Tanya, Mrs. Hunt asked me to see if you were around. You... you two lovebirds can continue. Pretend I didn't see you!"

With that, she ran off in a hurry.

Tanya: "..."

Joel: "..."

The two of them were feeling a little awkward. It did not seem appropriate to continue what had just happened. However, if they did not continue, they would be at a loss if they just stood there.

Tanya said, "Let's talk inside."

She turned and opened the door.

Joel followed behind her obediently. He did not look like the tycoon who ran the business world at all.

After the two of them entered the room, Joel took the initiative to say, "You haven't eaten yet, right? I'll cook something for you."

Tanya nodded in a daze. At that moment, she seemed to have completely forgotten that this was her house.

When Joel entered the kitchen, Tanya had yet to return to her senses.

At this moment, her phone suddenly rang.

She picked up the call without even looking at it and accidentally put it on speaker. Hillary's voice came from the other end. "Tanya, do you think Joel will return to your side just because you're back? Let me tell you, the person he loves is me. He's right beside me now.. Our family of three is going to eat together. Stop daydreaming!"

Daydreaming...

Tanya looked into the kitchen and felt like she was really dreaming.

When she had left sadly five years ago, she thought that she would never have the chance to be with this man in her life. This man was going to disappear from her life.

Who would have thought that five years later, he would be cooking food for her?

As Tanya was thinking, Hillary's voice was heard again. "Why aren't you saying anything? Are you really going to degrade yourself to be a third wheel and come between us? Let me tell you, you better return to Switzerland. Joel chose me five years ago, he'll definitely choose me again. When that time comes, how embarrassed would you be?"

As she spoke, Joel had already walked out of the kitchen.

The villa was very quiet, and there were no car horns around.

Joel had heard the voice on the phone from the beginning.

He looked at Tanya.

Tanya was also looking at him. The slender girl just stood there, her body a little thin from dancing for a long time.

She looked at Joel with her deep eyes and suddenly raised her eyebrows. "She said I'm the third wheel. May I ask Mr. Smith, what's your relationship with Madam Hillary now?"

As soon as she said this, Hillary's voice stopped. However, she then sneered. "What are you doing? Do you think you can scare me like this? Let me tell you, I'm with Joel. If you want to talk to him, I can help you send a message..."

Amidst her chattering, Joel's originally angry eyes froze for a moment when they met the Tanya's. All his anger seemed to dissipate with an evil smile on her lips.

He took a step forward and said, "I have nothing to do with Madam Hillary. The engagement has been broken off. Madam Tanya, what kind of braised noodles do you want to eat? Tomato eggs or green pepper pork?"

The voice on the phone instantly fell silent!

Hillary: “!!”

The entire villa fell silent. Tanya smiled and said, “Green pepper pork. But no ginger, you remember my preferences, right?”

Joel nodded. “Of course. Just wait 10 minutes.”

With that, he glanced at the phone. Just as he was about to return to the kitchen, Hillary smiled mockingly. “Tanya, are you lying to me? How can Joel cook? I’ve been with him for five years, but I’ve never seen him cook! He doesn’t know how to cook at all! Did you find someone with a similar voice to anger me? I’m telling you, I won’t fall for it!”

Tanya recalled how Hillary had deliberately chased him to the restaurant and taken a photo to post on her Facebook. She was not surprised by her way of thinking.

She only smiled and suddenly turned on the camera. She raised her phone and aimed it at Joel. “Here, let me show you. The man I’m looking at not only has a similar voice to Joel, but his appearance is also very similar!”

Her voice was filled with mockery.

When Hillary saw Joel wearing an apron, she was stunned.

She had stayed with the Smiths for five years. Joel had never allowed her to enter his room, and every time she saw him, he was always the high and mighty leader who could stir up New York’s economic scene with just a move of his finger.

Since when was that man willing to fall from grace and start doing housework?

Furthermore, he was holding a tomato in one hand and green pepper in the other. He was clearly cooking!

As Tanya had turned on the camera, he looked up.

His light eyes, which were always smiling, suddenly became sharp as he stared at the camera.

He said calmly, “Miss Hillary, is there anything else?”

Tanya looked at the camera and saw that the camera on Hillary's side suddenly shook and fell to the ground. Her hands must have gone soft from shock.

This woman had been like this since she was young. She was a fox exploiting the tiger's might and was extremely hypocritical.

Tanya could not be bothered to talk to her anymore and hung up.

She chuckled softly. She looked up and realized that Joel had not entered the kitchen but was staring at her.

The man was wearing a white shirt and an apron, looking just like he did five years ago.

Tanya suddenly realized that the five years overseas seemed to have lost their distance.

As she was thinking, she saw Joel's eyes gradually turn deep and hot, making her heart beat wildly.

She hurriedly looked away and said, "There are still eight minutes!"

Only then did Joel retract his gaze and nod.

After he left, Tanya hurriedly patted her chest and cheeks.

She must stay alert!

She could not be attracted by his stunning beauty!

Eight minutes later, the noodles were done.

Tanya went upstairs and had already changed into her casual home clothes. Looking at the two bowls of steaming noodles on the dining table, she picked up her fork. Just as she was about to eat, she heard Joel say, "Wait a minute."

She paused and realized that Joel had brought a bottle of hot sauce over.

Tanya stared at the bottle and suddenly thought of a time five years ago.

At that time, she was still in university. As the living expenses from her mother were not enough, she often had to cook for herself.

Noodles were her favorite.

However, she only had one pot back then, so it was inconvenient to stir-fry vegetables. Therefore, every time, she would add a sufficient amount of noodles and vegetables before adding hot sauce.

Joel had always known this habit of hers.

In the past five years, after she went overseas, the thing she was most unused to was eating. Occasionally, she would want to eat noodles, but without hot sauce, it was as if something was missing.

While she was in a daze, Joel opened the bottle and handed it to her.

She dug a big spoonful and put it in the bowl of noodles. The thick sauce immediately floated on it and the fragrance wafted over.

She picked some noodles up with her fork and took a bite excitedly—but she was stunned.

She looked up slowly at the bottle of hot sauce.

The packaging had already changed.

As for the taste of the sauce, although it was still her favorite flavor, it was no longer the same as before.

For some reason, her heart suddenly sank.

A broken mood instantly attacked her, making her lower her head.

Indeed.

In five years, everything familiar had changed.

Nothing would stand there and wait for her.

It was like losing her child.

Even if she had returned to the country and she and Joel were still the same as they were five years ago, this fact could not be hidden.

She became depressed.

Joel looked at her and panic surged in his heart. He asked carefully, "What's wrong? The noodles don't taste good?"

A hot tear fell into the bowl.

Tanya suddenly looked up.. "There's something I need to tell you."

Joel saw her grave expression and put down his fork. He stared at her. "What?"

His heart suddenly pounded violently.

He didn't know what Tanya was going to say, much less what she was thinking... but he suddenly felt that what she was going to say next was very important.

Tanya looked at the man and said impulsively, "We had a..."

The word "child" hovered around her mouth for a moment, but she could not say it.

Joel was stunned. "What?"

He searched his memory hard. They had an agreement? An oath? Or what?

He was afraid that he would anger the girl in front of him if he did not remember.

Tanya opened her mouth.

She suddenly thought of the parents who had been searching for their children overseas.

Some mothers broke down, and some fathers were very calm. However, she had seen them turn around and cry secretly in a corner after comforting their wives.

She suddenly asked, "You love Mia very much, right?"

Joel did not know why she had suddenly changed the topic, but he still followed along and said, "Yes, I love her very much."

He suddenly reached out and held her hand. "I know that I will never let you down in this matter. Her existence is something I cannot control, but her existence makes me feel warm. Tanya, that is a kind of satisfaction from family ties. You understand me, right?"

How could Tanya not understand?

After all, she and Joel were both children who lacked love!

Even though Joel was born in the Smiths, his parents did not like him. There was even a time when they thought of abandoning him, making him feel very insecure.

As for Tanya...

After her mother remarried, she lost her home.

When the two of them walked together back then, didn't it feel like they were hugging each other for warmth?

That was why she was so happy when she gave birth to that little angel and thought that she finally had a family in this world and someone with her blood.

That was why she had searched the entire world for her child like a madman without even having seen the child once.

When Joel saw that she was in a strange mood, he mistakenly thought that Tanya would mind if he mentioned Mia. He thought about it and said, "I know it's very selfish of me to make you accept Mia, but Tanya, Mia is really a very obedient child. You'll fall in love with her. Really..."

He was afraid that Tanya would suggest sending the child away.

No matter how much he loved Tanya, he could not do that.

After all, he was a father!

Seeing that he had misunderstood, Tanya waved her hand and said, "That's not what I meant."

As soon as she said this, Joel heaved a sigh of relief. It was obvious how much he liked Mia.

Tanya asked again, "Do you like children?"

Joel nodded. "Of course. If it was our child, I would like it even more."

These words made Tanya's heart ache again.

She lowered her head and took a bite of noodles.

The hot noodles slid into her mouth, but she took another bite as if she did not know it was hot.

She ate mouthful after mouthful. When she was done, she looked up.

Joel probed, "What did you say we have?"

Tanya took out a tissue and wiped her mouth before replying, "It's nothing."

Joel immediately tried to recall any vow the two had made. However, after thinking for a while, he still could not remember it.

After he ate the noodles, Tanya took his bowl and washed it in the kitchen. Then, she said, "It's getting late, you should go back."

Joel: "..."

He actually did not want to leave tonight, but since Tanya had said so, if he insisted on staying, it would only make Tanya feel annoyed.

At the thought of this, Joel decided that he had to take things slow and not get things done in one go.

He took out his car keys and walked slowly to the door. "Good night."

"Good night."

Tanya replied softly in the kitchen.

She heard Joel walk to the door and stand there for a long time. Finally, he pushed the door open. When she heard the door close with a bang, she turned off the tap.

She stood in the kitchen for a long time before walking out.

Looking at the neat apron hanging in the living room, she thought of Joel's OCD personality and couldn't help but lower her eyes.

She sighed heavily and went upstairs.

She lay on the sofa and quietly stared at the night sky.

She did not know where her child was in the world right now, if he was hungry, or if he had any clothes to wear. She did not know how long she was thinking when her phone suddenly rang.

She picked it up and took a look. It was a call from Hillary.

She picked up the call and Hillary's calm voice was heard. "Are you two still together?"

Tanya sneered and said softly, "Yes, he's taking a shower. Why?"

"You're lying!"

Hillary suddenly smiled and said, "I just called Mia and she said Dad has come home! Tanya, I'm warning you. Stay away from Joel! Even if you seduced him now and he still likes you, Mia is the person he loves the most!"

Tanya clenched her fists.

She lowered her eyes. Before she could say anything, Hillary said, "Mia is everything to him! So what if you two still have feelings for each other? At the end of the night, won't he still go home obediently and coax the child to sleep? Tanya, if you know what's good for you, you better leave him!"

Tanya's voice was very low. "What if I don't?"

"You don't? Do you know that everyone outside knows that he and I are engaged and that Mia is our daughter?! Mia's sake, he won't even announce our separation to the public. In front of outsiders, I will always be Madam Smith! And you, Tanya, are just one of his lovers! What makes you think your status is enough to make him give up his reputation?"

The Jones.

After Hillary shouted this in anger, she finally felt at ease. She sneered and said, "No matter what, I will always be the wife, and you are just a mistress!"

Just like it was back then, I'm the daughter of a wealthy family, and you're just a fake daughter!"

With that, she hung up.

She had been chased out of the Smiths for so long. There were many guesses outside, but because of Mia, the Smiths had never spread the news that they had broken off the engagement.

She wanted to use this matter to agitate Tanya and let her know that she was nothing to Joel!

Any woman would mind this, right?

As she was thinking about this, the doorbell rang.

The servant went to open the door and exclaimed in surprise, "Mr. Smith?"

Hillary was stunned. She turned around and saw Joel walking in from the door!

It was already so late. Why was he at the Jones' residence?!

Hillary recalled that when she called Tanya today, Joel was also there. Later on, he did not pursue the matter, but now, he was here...

Her heart sank, but her face was still filled with smiles as she walked over. "Joel, you're here..."

When the Joneses heard the servant's words, they hurriedly walked down from the study upstairs to welcome him. "Mr. Smith, what brings you here? If there's anything you need, you can call us to the Smiths."

Joel was still smiling. His eyes were curved, and when he did not speak, he looked very gentle, like a smiling tiger.

However, Hillary could see the coldness in his eyes.

She swallowed and jolted.

Joel looked at her and slowly said, "I came personally today because I thought that after my engagement with Miss Hillary was broken off, she seemed to have been dishonest."

As soon as he said this, Hillary's father was stunned. He looked directly at Hillary. "What? When did you guys break off the engagement?"

Joel lowered his eyes and said indifferently, "Why? Didn't Miss Hillary tell you?"

Hillary had been chased back this time and stayed for a few days now, but she had not mentioned the engagement at all.

Mr. Jones looked at Hillary. "Hillary, what's going on?"

Madam Jones said, "Mr. Smith, did Hillary do something wrong to make you angry? Tell us, we'll get her to change. How can you suddenly call off the engagement?"

Joel looked at Madam Jones.

To be precise, she was also Tanya's mother.

Back then, Tanya's mother had remarried and given birth to Hillary.

Hillary was a year younger than Tanya, but their identities were completely different.

One was a burden who had been brought along into her marriage with a wealthy family, and the other was a daughter of a wealthy family. Hillary had looked down on Tanya since she was young.

As for Tanya, she had a stubborn personality. After being slandered by Hillary a few times, Madam Jones had determined that Tanya's personality was naughty and mischievous, like that of her father, who had disappeared. Therefore, she would hit and scold her!

Joel's attitude toward Madam Jones was distant and cold. He did not bother being polite with her. "Madam Jones, you can discipline her further for her mistakes. Now, we're talking about breaking off the engagement."

He took out the agreement he had signed with Hillary back then. "In the agreement back then, we said that when Mia turns five, the engagement would be automatically broken off. Now, it's time."

The Jones parents were stunned. They looked at Hillary in disbelief. "Hillary, you..."

Hillary bit her lip and cried. "Joel, I was wrong. I really know I was wrong. I didn't go looking for Tanya on purpose. I was just indignant. You chased me out of the Smiths because she suddenly returned, right?"

Tanya?

Madam Jones instantly became even more furious. "What do you mean? Did Tanya cross into your family again? Joel, you can't treat Hillary like this. Tanya was born to be a bad hooligan!"

As soon as she said this, Joel suddenly reached out and smashed the teacup on the table to the ground!

Smash!

The sound of the teacup shattering resounded throughout the living room, causing the crying Hillary and Madam Jones, who was scolding Tanya, to stop abruptly.

Everyone looked at Joel in disbelief.

Joel lowered his eyes. "I've already contacted the reporters. They will announce that I have broken off my engagement with Miss Hillary tomorrow..."

As soon as he said this, Mr. Jones said, "Mr. Smith, is there no room for change in this matter?"

Joel looked at him and said firmly, "No."

Mr. Jones sighed heavily.

Hillary and Madam Jones still wanted to say something, but Mr. Jones shook his head at them.

The two of them could only shut their mouths.

Mr. Jones began to complain. "Mr. Smith, we understand that you don't like Hillary. We won't force you. We can break off the engagement, but Mia is her biological daughter. You can't stop them from meeting."

Hillary and Madam Jones looked at each other.

Yes.

As long as Mia was still around, Hillary could interfere in Joel and Tanya's lives. As long as she could, Joel and Tanya could forget about living a quiet life!

Hillary clenched her fists tightly. She was already thinking that if Mia fell ill in the future, she would definitely have to stay with the Smiths and take care of her.

If Mia was hurt, she would definitely ask Tanya why she abused her child!

As she was thinking about her future plans, Joel seemed to have seen through her thoughts and said directly, "Yes, I won't stop them from meeting. Every six months, I'll send Mia overseas to meet with Miss Hillary."

Mr. Jones was stunned.

Hillary was stunned. "Go overseas? You don't have to go overseas. I'm just in the country... You don't have to send Mia anywhere. I can just meet her at the Smiths..."

However, the moment she said this, she heard Joel say, "After our engagement is broken off, you'll be in a bad mood, and will go overseas for a vacation. You won't accept our financial support and will travel for five years. After five years, you can return to the country."

Mr. Jones was stunned. "She won't accept financial support? Then how is she going to live?"

Joel glanced at Mr. Jones and said casually, "Aren't so many international students still alive?"

Madam Jones shouted angrily, "No! Hillary has never suffered like this in her entire life! She can't go overseas!"

She had never suffered before, but Tanya could suffer?

Joel had investigated before. Tanya did not have any living expenses overseas. Everything was earned by working part-time!

His attitude was still very calm, and there was even a smile on his face. He looked directly at Mr. Jones. "President Jones, is the collaboration between the Joneses and Smiths going well?"

Mr. Jones: !!!

He immediately understood that Joel was threatening him!

If they did not send Hillary away, the Smiths would terminate all cooperation with the Joneses!

The Joneses had been prospering these years because they had relied on the Smiths. After leaving the Smiths... Joel would definitely let everyone in New York know that the Joneses had offended him.

At that time, even without Joel personally making a move, someone might help him deal with the Joneses!

He gulped and hurriedly stood up. "I understand what you mean, Mr. Smith. I'll handle Hillary's matters here. She'll go overseas."

Joel stood up. "It's good that Mr. Jones understands. I'll leave, then."

He did not even look at Hillary as he left the house.

Hillary was stunned on the spot.

Five years...

Another five years!

Tanya had been overseas for more than five years!

Hillary understood. Joel had arranged everything for her!

He was going to send her overseas for five years to help Tanya vent her anger!

She roared, "Joel! I gave birth to Mia for you! How can you treat me like this?!"

Joel stopped in his tracks and turned to look at her. "If you hadn't given birth to Mia, do you think you would have had the chance to go overseas?"

Upon hearing this, Hillary jolted.

She swallowed.

Mia was her protective charm!

At the Smiths.

After Nora finished showering, she walked out and saw Pete standing there, looking at her seriously. "Mommy, we're going to the amusement park to play tomorrow. Can we bring Mia along?"

Nora asked, "Why?"

Pete said, "I didn't even know it was Mia's birthday yesterday. I didn't give her a gift either. I want to take her out to play tomorrow."

Birthday?

Nora was stunned.

She remembered clearly that Tanya's child's birthday was five days ago.

Mia was only five days away from that child's birthday...

Was this... a coincidence?

She narrowed her eyes.

Was Mia really Hillary's daughter?

The reason why Nora knew about the birthday of the children was that on that day every year, Tanya would be in low spirits.

When she was overseas, no matter where Nora was, she would always be by Tanya's side on this day.

The two of them did nothing. Nora would sleep while Tanya would be in the room, dancing to the birthday gift she had bought long ago.

Usually, when she woke up, Tanya would be covered in sweat, but she would not feel tired. If she continued like this, she would eventually collapse.

Every year, she would fall seriously ill.

It was as if she wanted to use this method to vent her longing for her child for the next year.

Therefore, Nora remembered her child's birthday very clearly.

She couldn't help but doubt Mia's identity.

Tanya's child and Mia were both Joel's children. Furthermore, they were only five days apart...

She narrowed her eyes and began to think about the relationship between Mia and Tanya...

"Mommy, can I?"

Pete's words interrupted Nora's thoughts.

She looked at him and nodded. "Alright, I'll ask your uncle when he comes back."

If she took Mia out to play, she would definitely ask Joel.

With that, she yawned loudly and turned to walk to the bed. "It's already so late. Why isn't he back yet? I'll lie down and wait for him!"

Pete: "..."

As expected, half an hour later, there were uniform breathing sounds on the bed.

Pete sighed helplessly and put down the pen in his hand.

He walked to the bed and gently covered Nora with the blanket. Then, he went out and downstairs to sit on the sofa in the living room.

When Joel returned home, this was the scene he saw.

Pete was clearly sleepy and anxious. His little head was nodding off, but he had still forced himself not to sleep.

Joel looked at the time. It was already 11 PM. He walked over and asked, "What's wrong?"

Pete woke up suddenly and said excitedly, "Uncle, you're finally back!"

He jumped off the sofa and looked at Joel. "Tomorrow, Dad and Mom will take me and Cherry... to the amusement park. I want to bring Mia along, okay?"

Joel looked at him and touched his head. After some thought, he said, "Okay."

Pete heaved a sigh of relief.

Joel bent down and picked him up before carrying him upstairs.

After taking him to the bedroom, he asked, "Where's your mother?"

Pete said helplessly, "Mommy said that she would lie down and wait for you to come back to ask you. In the end, she fell asleep..."

Joel: "..."

Joel brought Pete to his room and watched him shower and change into his pajamas. Then, he sent Pete to Nora's bedroom.

He watched as he tiptoed in and returned to the bedroom in relief.

At the same time, he could not help but think that Nora was such a worry-free mother. Be it with Cherry or Pete, they were both so sensible and independent.

After returning to his room, he washed up and lay on the bed. He took out his phone and opened Tanya's Facebook.

Her profile picture was of a mature grape.

Joel stared at his phone screen for a long time, not knowing what to send her. Just as he was in a daze, he suddenly saw the words "Typing..." on the dialog box.

Joel was instantly delighted.

What was Tanya going to say to him?

However, after waiting for more than ten minutes, she did not say anything.

Joel couldn't help but send a message: "?"

Tanya replied: "?"

Joel: "Where's the small composition?"

Tanya: "What small composition?"

Joel smiled and typed: "You've been typing for almost twenty minutes. You should have written a small composition with 800 words by now? Where is it?"

Tanya: "!!!"

Tanya: "I wasn't sending you a message!"

Tanya: "You're mistaken!"

Tanya: "Oh, I was watching television and accidentally opened your chat window."

Seeing that she was not being honest, Joel continued to type with a smile. "What are you watching?"

Tanya: "A show on FOX TV."

Chapter 362 - The Plan of Saving Nora Novel Free

As Tanya's words became more and more unpleasant, Joel's expression also turned more and more awful.

He looked at Tanya's phone.. When he saw the photos that Hillary had posted, he was stunned.

Joel's expression suddenly turned extremely awful. He said anxiously, "Tanya, I can explain."

"Keep that for your daughter instead, Mr. Smith. Our relationship is not at the point where you need to explain anything to me! Goodbye!"

Tanya turned and went back into the school angrily.

Fury and panic arose in Joel as he looked at her from behind.

He turned and got into his car.

“To the company, Mr. Smith?” The chauffeur asked.

Joel was practically gnashing his teeth in fury as he said, “To Hillary’s!”

He took out his cell phone and looked at his own Facebook timeline. However, he didn’t see Hillary’s post. This meant that the post had been hidden from him!

He stretched out his hand to the chauffeur and said, “Give me your cell phone.”

His chauffeur also had Hillary as a friend on Facebook.

He took a look after the chauffeur handed him his phone. Sure enough, he found the post.

Hillary practically couldn’t get any sneakier!

The two arrived at Hillary’s residence. When Hillary heard that Joel was there to look for her, she happily went downstairs. However, the moment she went down, she instead saw a furious Joel.

Hillary asked timidly, “Joel, what’s the matter?”

“Can you explain this Facebook post of yours to me?!”

Joel pushed the chauffeur’s phone right into her face!

Hillary froze when she saw the post.

She bit her lip, forced a smile, and replied, “Isn’t that just an ordinary Facebook post, Joel? What’s wrong?”

Joel demanded furiously, “You followed us to the restaurant?”

Hillary lowered her gaze. “I... I just missed Mia so much, so I followed the two of you. Let me explain, Joel... I didn’t mean anything else with the post. I just didn’t want other people to know that I couldn’t even celebrate my daughter’s birthday with her... They will look down on me if they ever find out...”

Those words of hers couldn't get any more pretentious.

Even the chauffeur felt that it was understandable why she would do that.

Unfortunately, it was Joel whom she was up against.

Joel didn't accept her nonsense at all. He stepped forward and grabbed her chin. "So, you want to have cake with your daughter on her birthday?"

Hillary nodded. "Yes."

"Okay."

He picked up the container with the cake that Tanya had rejected. He opened it, took the cake out, and smashed it onto Hillary's face. He said coldly, "Have a good taste of it, then!"

Hillary: "!!"

She took a step back and wiped the cake off her face with her hands. She lifted her head and looked at Joel incredulously. "Joel, you—"

She couldn't bring herself to say the rest of what she wanted to say, though, because the look in Joel's eyes was simply too terrifying.

The way he looked as if he wanted to kill her made her unable to utter a single word.

Joel's icy-cold voice rang out. "Don't you dare play any tricks from now on, or else!"

Hillary wanted to speak, but he added, "You should thank your lucky stars that you're Mia's mother. Otherwise, you'd have been dead a long time ago."

His words stunned Hillary.

As they had made plans to go to the amusement park the next day, Nora woke up a little late. She stretched and went downstairs.

In the afternoon, Nora gave Lily the leftover drink that she had taken from Victor at the arena the day before and told her to go to a laboratory and check if there were any unidentified chemicals in it. Nora also instructed her to personally do the test herself.

Ever since Lily returned to the States to help her, she had been terribly busy. She left immediately after picking up the leftover drink and receiving Nora's instructions.

Nora, however, went back to sleep after that.

What was she to do? The amusement park date would take up the whole day, which was to say that she would have to get up early in the morning the next day. Thus, she had to make up for the next day's worth of sleep in advance.

By the time she woke up again, it was already dark outside.

She got up, got dressed, and went downstairs to the car park. She was about to go to the car when Quentin appeared behind her and said, "Why don't you come with me in my car today, Nora?"

Nora: "?"

She glanced at him.

Quentin said, "If you go in with me, I can show you how intimidating I am in the arena. You'll get special privileges that way."

Nora had always enjoyed special privileges from the very moment she was No. 028. She didn't have any idea what it was like for ordinary people.

However, since Quentin was inviting her to go along with him so enthusiastically, Nora thought for a while and simply replied, "Alright, then."

This way, she wouldn't need to drive, either.

She could even nap a little while on the way there.

She carried a bag in her hand. Inside was the red dress and silver mask she usually wore.

However, it was only after she got in the car that she realized that catching up on sleep in the car was too indulgent an idea—because Quentin couldn't stop talking while they were on the road.

"Why don't I introduce you to Big Sister later? Do you also admire Big Sister a lot? I can even ask her to give you an autograph."

Nora: “?”

She said lazily, “Can you even get one for yourself?”

“Of course. I’ve participated in several matches with her by now, so she’ll definitely show me that bit of courtesy. Besides, Big Sister thinks exceptionally highly of me. Oh, she has even acknowledged me as her younger brother!”

Nora: “?”

When had she ever acknowledged him as a younger brother?

While she was hesitating, Quentin spoke again. “Are you jealous? To be honest, what she values in me is my capability. You know I’m ranked third in New York’s martial arts circle, right? Apart from Big Sister and Big Brother, I’m the strongest here!”

“ ... ”

“Do you want to take a photo with Big Sister later? If so, you can leave that to me, too!”

Nora’s lip corners spasmed. “It’s fine.”

“Are you embarrassed? There’s nothing embarrassing about chasing after idols. Also, Big Sister is actually not that perfect.”

Nora: “?”

Was he starting to speak ill of her?

While she was thinking about it, Quentin said, “She doesn’t really have a good eye for people. Her husband is not that great. He looks just like a useless pretty boy.”

Nora: “ ... ”

“But no one is perfect, after all. Given Big Sister’s status, it’s understandable even if looks are the only thing she considers when choosing a husband. It’s not that bad having a gigolo, either.”

“ ... ”

“I intend to persuade Big Sister to give him up, though.”

The corners of Nora’s lips spasmed as she said, “That’s impossible.”

“Why not? My words hold a lot of weight with Big Sister. If I tell her to break up with him, she’ll definitely consider it. After all, we’re big shots in the martial arts circle...”

Quentin kept chatting all the way till they arrived at the arena.

Quentin was about to get out of the car when he noticed that Nora hadn’t moved. The confused man asked, “Aren’t you getting out of the car?”

“Oh, I have to change.”

Quentin was about to tease her for being vain and changing when there wasn’t a need for her to, when Nora took out a red dress and a familiar-looking silver mask from her bag.

Quentin: “...”

A dumbfounded Quentin stared at her incredulously. He swallowed and said, “N-Nora, don’t... don’t joke around anymore.”

Nora glanced at him. “Get out.”

Quentin got out of the car obediently. He didn’t dare look into the car, even though the car windows were tinted—so one would only be able to look out from the inside, but not the other way.

A minute later, the car door opened and Nora got out wearing the red dress. Then, she put on the mask.

The person in front of him seemed to have suddenly changed.

From his little hillbilly cousin, she turned into the mysterious martial arts expert, Big Sister.

Quentin: “...”

He felt that he must have opened his eyes the wrong way when he woke up in the morning!

How could this be?!

He had been following the woman ever since Joel started having doubts about Nora's identity. Despite how so much time had already gone by, how come he hadn't realized that she was actually Big Sister?!

While he was in a daze, Nora asked, "So, you're my younger brother?"

Quentin: "!!!"

He suddenly thought of how he had bragged and claimed just now that Big Sister had acknowledged him as her younger brother. After all, Big Sister had a mask on all the time, and her daughter was already five. Thus, he had subconsciously assumed that Big Sister must be older than him. Never would he have expected Big Sister to suddenly turn into his little cousin!

How he wished he could dig a hole and bury himself in it!

He tried his best to sift through his memories—he hadn't said anything else, right?

He suddenly thought of what he had said when he first met her. That time, he had said very proudly, "Heh, even though you're proof of the shame that Uncle Ian had suffered, you can rest assured that I will still protect you. I won't let any of the Smiths die an untimely death."

It was then followed by:

"Can you stop running about all over the place? Without me, the world's third-best fighter, protecting you, you'll die before you even know it!"

"Are you also taking part in the martial arts tournament? Do you want to meet Big Sister? I'm on really good terms with her!"

"Do you want to take a photo with Big Sister?"

"..."

Quentin felt like his cheeks had flushed even redder.

He suddenly asked, "There are three different types of death. Do you know what they are?"

Nora raised her eyebrows. "What are they?"

"The first is clinical death, that is to say, the body dies.

"The second is psychological death, where someone loses all hope and doesn't wish to live anymore.

"The third is social death."

Quentin looked at her and said, "Nora, you've just made me experience the third type of death."

"..."

Nora laughed and passed by him. "Let's go in."

"I don't want to go in." Quentin said expressionlessly, "I wanna die."

Nora didn't pay any more attention to him. Instead, she started walking toward the arena. Two steps later, she heard footsteps behind her. Quentin's voice then reached her. "Why are you hiding your identity, Nora? Isn't the identity of Big Sister really cool?!"

Nora replied, "It's bothersome."

Bothersome?

Quentin thought for a moment. "Are you worried that others will bother you once they know who you are? Well, that's true. After all, Big Sister is a well-known figure... Don't worry, Nora, I can keep secrets really well. I will never tell anyone about it!"

"Oh."

Nora had always adhered to her mother's last words telling her not to expose her identity and to live in mediocrity. This was why she hadn't exposed her identity all this time.

However, Quentin was simply too annoying.

Moreover, now that he was aware that she had come to the arena, given his tracking abilities, it was simply too much trouble to throw him off her trail. Thus, she had decided to reveal her identity.

Besides, even though Quentin had eighth-grader syndrome, he was the leader of the Smiths' secret forces. He wasn't stupid.

Nora followed Quentin into the arena.

As soon as they entered, Quentin suddenly said, "Big Sister, I've suddenly discovered a problem!"

Nora: "?"

Quentin said, "I didn't expect you to actually have a pretty boy outside behind Justin's back! No. 820 must be Cherry's biological father, right?"

Nora: "??"

She hadn't thought of that.

She wasn't sure whether she could reveal Justin's identity, so she simply uttered a sound of acknowledgment and admitted to it.

In the end, Quentin looked at her with bright and shiny eyes and said, "You're so awesome!"

"You actually dare to cuckold even Justin!"

Nora: "..."

Forget it, he could just think of it however he wanted to.

They had five matches that night, so time was rather tight for them. Nora looked around and asked, "He isn't here yet?"

Quentin also looked around.

While the two of them were looking around, a man's low and deep voice suddenly rang out. "Are you guys Team Third In The World?"

The two of them looked over in unison to see a man wearing a mask with an eagle's design walking toward them. He was big and tall and was dressed in a black suit. When he walked, it was as though he had an aura of justice around him.

Additionally, he had deliberately lowered his voice, so no one could tell what his actual voice really sounded like.

Nora didn't say anything. Instead, she glanced at Quentin.

Only then did something click in Quentin's head. He answered, "Yes, that's right. You are?"

"No. 007."

As soon as he gave them his alias, Quentin instantly realized something. He asked, "You're the first runner-up of the previous tournament?"

The other party kept quiet for a moment before he replied, "Yeah, you can say that."

Quentin took the opportunity to give Nora an explanation. He said, "B... Sis, No. 007 is an amazing martial arts master who came out of nowhere in the last tournament. He advanced all the way to Class F that time. Both he and Big Brother were very impressive, and he even became one of the favorites for the title of champion. It was just a shame that he didn't turn up for the finals, so the title of champion went to Big Brother while No.007 became the first runner-up."

After explaining, Quentin looked at No.007 and asked, "Why didn't you turn up for the finals?"

No. 007's gaze swept across the two of them. "I had to take a mission at the last minute."

Quentin and Nora sensitively caught a hint of something from his use of the word 'mission'.

Quentin then said, "Oh, what a shame. Is this your first time here this year, though?"

With the exception of Big Brother in Class F, all the other martial arts experts from the previous tournament had been downgraded to Class E this year. Thus, if they wanted to advance in rank, they would also have to defeat fellow Class E contestants.

The fact that an expert like No. 007 hadn't caused any noise this year was indicative of something—this was his first time here.

Sure enough, No. 007 nodded and replied, "Yeah, I also had something on previously. It seems like there's a surge in martial arts experts this year, though."

He glanced at the Benevolence Hall disciples seated in the VIP dining area. They were in a class of their own and seemed out of place among the people around them.

Quentin didn't say anything. No. 007, however, looked at Nora and asked, "What do you think?"

Nora: "??"

Quentin was undoubtedly very strong in Team Third In The World, and she had been very low-profile all this while. Why was he suddenly directing his attention to her?

She raised her eyebrows and nodded. "It seems that way, yes."

After she spoke, her cell phone in her pocket suddenly vibrated. Nora nodded to Quentin and No. 007, walked to the side, and took it out.. She opened it and saw a text message from Lily: 'The test results are out.'

Lily was referring to the chemical composition test for the solution that Victor and the others were drinking.

Nora sent a reply: 'The results?'

Lily responded very quickly: "It's just an ordinary sports drink. The only thing different about it from normal sports drinks is the fact that it's more concentrated. Even martial arts practitioners wouldn't need that many nutrients, no matter how much energy they use up, let alone the average person."

The results didn't disappoint Nora.

If Victor and the others had indeed only become this strong because they had taken some kind of drug, then said drug was undoubtedly a prohibited

substance. On top of that, they were also acting very mysteriously about it. It was impossible for them to consume it at the arena itself.

But a highly-concentrated sports drink...

When she was thinking about it, elsewhere, No. 007 was looking around. Quentin asked, "Are you looking for Big Brother?"

There hadn't been a winner between the two during the last tournament.

He would definitely be out for revenge this year, right?

Unexpectedly, No. 007 instead said, "I came late this year. Which of the contestants here is Big Sister?"

Nora abruptly raised her head and looked at him when she heard the words 'Big Sister'.

Quentin subconsciously glanced at Nora before he replied, "Oh, Big Sister is resting in her lounge. You can look for her there if you need anything. She's the very big and muscular woman in there."

Nora: "..."

No. 007 was a little taken aback. "She's very big and muscular? That's impossible."

Quentin: "?"

No. 007 went on. "Big Sister does regular martial arts training, so it's impossible that she would be really big. All strong martial artists need physiques that move smoothly. I heard that there are people here who impersonate Big Sister to make money and stuff like that."

No. 007 then looked at Nora. "Big Sister's figure should be like No. 028's instead."

Nora: "..."

She took a long look at No. 007, thinking that it was likely that he might have already noticed something. However, he didn't press the issue, so Nora didn't say anything.

She still needed to keep her identity a secret.

Quentin lifted his chin and became very proud. "You have good foresight!"

No. 007 chuckled. Then, he pointed to the dining area next to them and suggested, "Let's sit down and have a bite? I think it's your match soon."

Before Nora could say anything, another low and deep voice reached them. "No, it's fine."

The few of them looked over and saw Justin walking over with Cherry in his arms.

Cherry was still wearing her half-mask and was holding a lollipop. Her big eyes blinked as she looked at them.

Justin walked over, stopped in front of Nora, and faced No. 007. "Thanks."

Then, he took out a chocolate bar and handed it to Nora. "This will replenish your energy quickly if you're hungry."

Nora: "..."

Next to them, Quentin's lip corners spasmed.

Before this, he had felt that the pretty boy wasn't worthy of Big Sister, but now that he knew that his cousin was Big Sister, his requirements for his cousin-in-law had immediately become even higher.

He tapped Justin's shoulder.

Justin looked at him.

Quentin sneered, "Aren't you being a little too jealous? I can sense it even from a long distance."

"..."

Justin didn't say anything. Quentin lowered his voice and said, "Kid, you're pretty bold, huh!"

Justin raised his eyebrows. "Oh?"

Quentin glanced at Nora. “Do you know her true identity?”

“Yes.”

Quentin clicked his tongue a couple of times and said, “You’re pretty bold to have the guts to cuckold Justin Hunt. You gotta protect your personal information, though, get it? Otherwise, even my cousin won’t be able to protect you! There are only two people in New York whom no one must ever mess with—one of them is Joel Smith, my cousin, and the other is Justin Hunt!”

Justin: “...”

Him cuckolding himself... Yep, if it wasn’t because he was his cousin-in-law, he really felt like punching Quentin. But now... well, this was quite alright, too.

The next five matches they played sent them straight into Class E.

The five matches were no sweat for the three of them. After all, with Big Sister and Big Brother, as well as the third-best fighter in the world, they completely crushed everyone else.

While they were crushing their opponents here, Victor’s team also won two matches and gave their opponents crushing defeats.

After finishing the five matches in succession, Nora yawned and stepped out of the ring.

As soon as they got out, Quentin said, “B... Sis, No. 007 has been staring at you.”

Nora: “??”

She followed his gaze and looked over. Sure enough, Nora found No. 007 sitting at the bottom of the ring. However, he was staring straight at her and making no secret about it. There was admiration—as well as scrutiny—in his eyes.

Nora raised her brows.

Quentin then went to Justin. “It’s a love rival, bro!”

Justin was speechless when he saw how eager Quentin was to throw the world into chaos.

No. 007 got up and walked straight toward them after the match.

However, before he could even come close, Nora and Justin had turned around very naturally and walked to the door. They didn't give him any chance to get close to them.

This took No. 007 by surprise. He smiled wryly, stopped in his tracks, and took the hint. He didn't chase after them anymore.

But just as the two of them were about to leave the arena, Victor and the other two men in his team suddenly rushed over. They moved very quickly. When they were passing by, Victor suddenly whispered, "You're the real Big Sister, aren't you?"

Nora was taken aback. Then, she narrowed her eyes and looked at him. Her lips curled into a smile, but she didn't admit to it. "I don't know what you're trying to say."

However, Victor was sure of her identity. He sneered, "I can accept losing to you, then. But it won't be the same next time!"

The few of them then left.

Nora ignored him. While she and Justin continued walking toward the exit, another man wearing a white feathered mask entered.

He looked rather unique, and coughed a few times with every two steps he took. He looked ill.

In addition, he coughed very hard. It sounded as though he was about to cough up his lungs.

A man was supporting him at the side.

Someone whispered, "He came to the arena even when he's so sick and so weak? He must be here just to join in the fun and watch the show, right?"

Unexpectedly, the man walked up to the registration counter. As he coughed, a rich and mellow voice rang out. "Sorry, I have already signed up, but I only

just came to participate in the tournament today. I wonder if my eligibility still stands?”

The staff member replied, “This is a little difficult. It’s already been so long...”

During the exchange, the black-clad bodyguard supporting the man handed the guy a check.

The guy accepted the check in a very practiced manner, and immediately changed his tone without any principles whatsoever. “Of course, it still stands... What’s your registration number?”

“...”

The corners of Nora’s lips spasmed.

The martial arts association must be as poor as church mice now, right? They really took all the money they could get.

After bidding farewell to Justin in the car park, Nora took Quentin’s car back home.

On the way, Quentin suddenly said, “Nora, someone’s following us.”

Someone was following them?

Nora looked at the back through the rearview mirror—it was filled with cars.

Quentin lived up to his identity as a man in secret forces. His senses were sharper and keener than even hers. She also sensed it after Quentin brought it up.

“Can you throw them off?” Nora asked.

“Of course.” Quentin said triumphantly, “Don’t you know whose car you’re in right now? How dare they tail me. They sure think really highly of themselves!”

He sneered, “I’m the only one who can tail other people in New York. No one can tail me!”

He suddenly turned the steering wheel all the way to the side at the traffic light and drifted straight into a small side road.

Nora looked at the rearview mirror—two black cars clearly looked a little confused because they hadn't expected him to suddenly break the traffic rules and go somewhere else.

However, another two cars soon followed after them from the side.

Quentin discovered their presence earlier than she did. He sneered, "Tsk, it seems like there are a lot of people interested in Big Sister, Nora! Don't worry, I will definitely keep you safe!"

He changed the direction he was going in again.

The car went back and forth in the familiar New York streets. Quentin was very professional. Half an hour later, when he turned to another side road, there were no longer any cars following them at the back.

Obviously, Quentin had successfully thrown them all off.

Quentin looked at her. He looked as if he was asking for praise as he asked, "How was that?"

He lifted his chin.

Nora gave him a thumbs up. "Fantastic."

Quentin couldn't suppress the smile at the corners of his lips.

His idol was none other than Big Sister. It simply felt too blissful to be praised by his idol. He must do even better than this!

While Quentin was getting fired up, his cell phone suddenly rang.

When he answered, Joel's voice came from the other side. "Where is Nora?"

Quentin looked at the woman in the backseat. "She's in the car with me. What's up?"

Joel said, "Come to the hospital right away!"

Quentin: "?"

He subconsciously asked, "Is there something wrong with Uncle Ian?"

Joel sighed. "You'll know once you're here."

"Okay."

Quentin immediately took a U-turn and raced to the hospital.

When Nora heard the call from Joel, she knew at once that something must have happened in the hospital.

When the two arrived at the hospital, sure enough, they saw Joel pacing back and forth nervously in the corridor. When he heard their footsteps, he immediately looked at Nora and said, "Quick, Nora, go into the operating room and save him!"

Nora entered the operating room right away.

It was only after she went in that Quentin asked, "What happened?"

Joel replied, "Uncle Ian's heart suddenly stopped beating. They are trying to save him now."

Quentin was stunned. His heart sank.

In all honesty, he had never taken Ian's illness seriously because Ian had always been ill for as long as he could remember.

Therefore, he hadn't panicked even when Nora operated on Ian previously.

But when he heard that Ian had a cardiac arrest, he couldn't help but blank out. He immediately said, "That's impossible! It's impossible that anything would go wrong when B... Nora's the one operating on him!"

Had Nora just been Anti, Quentin might still have had doubts.

But she was Big Sister.

She was the famous Big Sister in the martial arts circle. There was no way she would do anything she wasn't confident about!

Joel glanced at him when he heard him.

Based on his understanding of Quentin, Quentin should have already formed doubts about Nora a long time ago. Yet he was so sure about it at the moment...

It wasn't the time for him to be thinking about that, though. He said, "It's Uncle Ian himself who... suddenly pulled out the IV needle when he woke up."

Quentin: "..."

Joel sighed. "Uncle Ian still doesn't have any will to live. He doesn't want to live anymore."

Quentin was in such a panic that he was going around in circles. "What should we do? Didn't you tell Uncle Ian that Nora is his daughter?"

Joel said, "That's exactly why I asked you guys to come. I'm hoping that Nora can find a way to keep him alive."

Quentin nodded.

It was unknown just how much time went by before the operating room's lights finally went out.

The attending doctor then came out and looked at the two of them.

Both Joel and Quentin looked at him hopefully but instead saw the doctor shake his head instead.

Joel and Quentin were dumbfounded.

The doctor said, "Anti lives up to her name as a master surgeon. She once again pulled the old gentleman back from the brink of death. He's awake now, but..."

The doctor sighed. "He still does not have the will to live."

No will to live... even though he was awake...

Joel panicked. "Didn't Nora tell him that she is his daughter?"

"She did, but it wasn't of any use."

The attending doctor then stepped aside. "You... Why don't you go in and see him for the last time?"

Joel and Ian put on sterile gowns and entered the operating room.

Ian lay on the bed. The thin man looked just like a sheet of paper, which easily showed that he hadn't been eating well. He was ridiculously thin.

Nora was standing next to him blankly. Her eyes were full of perplexity and doubts as if she couldn't understand anything. She asked, "Why don't you want to live? Even if it's for my sake?"

Ian's voice was very thin. He said weakly, "I'm sorry."

He coughed and slowly said, "I'm very happy that Yvette didn't betray me... but when I think of how she has been all by herself in that lonely world for so long, I feel so awful. I should have figured it out earlier. I should have gone to keep her company earlier. Nora..."

He reached out a trembling hand to Nora.

Nora pursed her lips and held his hand. He said, "Please forgive Dad for being so selfish. I was waiting all this time for the truth to surface, waiting to find out why she had left me back then. But now that I finally know it, I suddenly feel guilty and blame myself for it. It's no longer important why she had done what she did. Back then, no matter what the reason for her departure was, I shouldn't have doubted her. She must have had reasons that she couldn't tell me. All I could do for her back then was to let go of her, and now, the only thing I can do for her is to go and keep her company..."

He looked at Joel and Quentin who had entered.

Joel and Quentin's eyes were all red. They took a step forward. Ian said to the two of them, "Joel, Quentin, Nora is my daughter. I put her in your care now."

Joel choked up and shouted, "Uncle Ian, you should take care of your daughter yourself!"

Ian smiled wryly and said, "I'm tired. I really am. I've spent all these years like a walking dead. Leaving is the greatest relief I can ever have."

All three youngsters looked at him blankly.

All of them were dumbfounded.

No one, no matter who, had ever imagined that letting Ian know that Nora was his daughter would be the last straw to break the camel's back and send him to his death.

Nora clenched her fists.

Were they going to be separated by death when they had only just reunited as father and daughter?

No!

Nora would never allow such a thing to happen!

Quentin's eyes were red and swollen as he shouted, "Uncle Ian, take care of your daughter yourself! Live and get up. Otherwise, I'll beat her up every day..."

Joel, who had always been a steady person, could not help but say, "Uncle Ian, aren't you afraid that I will be selfish in the future and take over the Smiths without giving Nora anything? Also, Nora is going to marry Justin. Aren't you afraid that she will be bullied if she marries over? She's without her father and even comes from the countryside. Now, the Hunts look down on her! She needs your support!"

Ian muttered in a weak voice with his eyes closed, "Joel, Quentin, you won't..."

"I will! I really will! Uncle Ian, wake up. You can't die!"

"Uncle Ian! Get up..."

Joel and Quentin shouted as their tears fell like rain.

The person lying on the bed had been exceptionally powerful since they were young. But now, he was weak and had been sick most of the year, he was very dispirited and would not wake up. It was as if nothing gave him hope for life.

However, the two of them would never forget that when their parents had abandoned them, it was Uncle Ian who came forward to raise them, calling them good children!

Especially Joel...

If not for Uncle Ian, he would have been chased out of the Smiths when he was three years old. He would have become like a stray dog and starved to death on the streets!

It was Uncle Ian... Not only had he given him the honor of being a man of the Smiths, but he had also let him take over the Smiths.

Everything Joel had now was given to him by Uncle Ian.

Joel held Uncle Ian's hand tightly. "Uncle Ian..."

Just as the two of them were thinking of ways to make him stay, a cold voice suddenly sounded. "Can I speak to him alone?"

Joel and Quentin looked at the person in a daze. It was Nora.

She stood at the side. Perhaps it was because they had not known each other since they were young, but her current expression was a little cold and distant.

The stunned expression in her eyes had disappeared as she stared at the man on the bed.

Even though her voice was emotionless and she appeared too calm, Joel and Quentin looked at each other. The two of them stood up and walked out together.

Before leaving, Joel took one last look inside.

He watched as the girl suddenly walked to the bed and said, "You're very good to them."

Ian smiled bitterly. "I didn't do my part as a father."

Nora suddenly said, "Now, you have a chance to fulfill your responsibilities."

After saying this, she suddenly lowered her head and whispered into Ian's ear. Ian's eyes widened suddenly.

When Joel closed the door, he heard Ian's last sentence. His voice trembled as he asked, "Are... are you serious?"

Two minutes later.

The door to the operating room was opened. Nora pushed Ian's bed out of the operating room.

Ian was lying there with his eyes closed.

Joel's heart sank. He exchanged glances with Quentin and the two of them looked at Nora. Quentin even swallowed his saliva and asked, "Uncle Ian, he..."

"He's not dead."

Nora's words sounded very calm, making Joel and Quentin heave a sigh of relief.

Quentin asked tentatively, "Then he's..."

"I gave him two injections and he fell asleep. He needs to rest. In the next few days, don't disturb him in any case. No matter how powerful this lion is, his body has been hollowed out. His body needs to be raised from the roots."

With that, she looked at Joel. "I have a few medicinal recipes here. I'll write them down for you later."

Joel hurriedly nodded. "I'll arrange for someone to cook for Uncle Ian every day."

The three of them walked into the VIP ward together.

After entering the ward, Nora checked Ian's vital signs. After everything was normal, she said, "He won't die for the time being."

Joel probed, "Then... after the time being..."

Nora: "If you follow the schedule I'm giving you and are obedient, he can live out his natural life."

Joel heaved a sigh of relief.

Nora took out her phone and opened the memo. Her slender fingers quickly typed something on it for a while. She sent Joel the things to take note of and future treatment plans.

Joel took a look and realized that it was all basic care. The staff in the hospital could do it.

Quentin asked curiously, "Aren't you going to take care of Uncle Ian personally in the future?"

Nora glanced at him. "I don't know how to take care of people."

Quentin: "..."

After doing all this, Nora walked out. "I'm going to see Old Maddy."

Ever since Old Maddy was rescued, he had been in the hospital for treatment. After all, he had been too severely poisoned. Furthermore, Old Maddy had never recovered from his crazy illness.

Nora went to Old Maddy's ward again. When she was about to go home, she saw Quentin.

She raised her eyebrows and asked, "What are you doing here?"

Quentin coughed. "I'm waiting for you to take you home."

"..."

Nora said helplessly, "Alright."

After the two of them returned home, Nora went upstairs and saw Pete. She kissed her son's forehead and was about to take a shower when Pete suddenly said mysteriously, "Mommy, did you know? Uncle Joel came to pick Mia and me up just now. But he then later got the chauffeur to bring us back and went to chase after God-mom Tanya."

Nora: "??"

When she went to see Old Maddy, Joel had arranged for the medical staff to pick up Mia and Pete from school. She did not expect him to go after Tanya?

Why was he looking for Tanya?

Nora raised her eyebrows.

She smiled and touched Pete's head. "I understand."

Pete blinked and suddenly said, "Mommy, is God-mom Tanya going to be my aunt soon?"

Nora: "?"

This little fellow knew quite a lot. She asked, "Do you want her to be your aunt?"

"Yes!"

Pete nodded seriously. "God-mom treats Mia well."

Nora sensed something. "You mean, Mia's mommy isn't good to her?"

Pete thought for a moment. "No, she isn't."

Nora frowned and pulled a chair over casually. She sat in front of Pete with interest. "Come, talk properly."

Pete's expression was stern as he said seriously, "These are all my speculations."

Nora had always thought that Mia's mother treated her well. After all, who would be cruel to their own daughter? It was because Hillary and Joel were on bad terms that the two of them did not get together.

However, she did not expect Pete's next words to completely subvert her understanding.

Pete said, "Mommy, if I liked mathematics very much, would you stop me from learning it?"

Nora: "Of course not."

Everyone knew that Cherry liked to play games. In order to make Cherry happy, she had agreed to let her play. She only limited the time spent on playing games.

Pete nodded. "Mia's mother knows she likes to dance, but she doesn't let her learn. Moreover, Mia is very afraid of her mother."

Afraid?

No child should be afraid of their mother, right?

Nora felt that Pete might have used the wrong word. "Is it because her mommy is very strict?"

Pete shook his head. "No."

He thought for a moment and said, "The tyrant is very strict too, but I know that he does it for my own good. Sometimes, I go on a hunger strike to fight against him because I know he will eventually give in."

"But Mia's fear of her mommy comes from the fact that she's not sure her mommy would ever give in.

Nora was stunned.

Although Pete's words were messy, she understood them.

Because Justin was his father, even if he was stern every day or even hit Pete, Pete still respected Justin and was not afraid of him.

But Mia's mother was like a stranger and a bad person to Mia. Mia didn't even feel safe with her.

She frowned. "Did Mia tell you all this?"

Pete shook his head. "I observed it myself."

Nora frowned.

If what Pete said was true, Nora would really have to reconsider this matter. However, Pete was only five years old. His conclusion could not be trusted so easily.

Nora said seriously, "Okay, Pete. I understand. I'll take note of this and observe Mia. If it's true, I'll tell your uncle."

At the same time, she frowned.

Was there really a mother in this world who abused her own child?

In the suburbs.

Tanya drove in and looked at the shameless man.

After work, he took the opportunity while she had yet to lock the car to suddenly open the back door and sneak into her car.

She wanted to scold him back then, but his words made her shut her mouth. "Keep arguing If you want everyone to know about our relationship. If you don't, then drive."

Tanya: "..."

She was speechless and anxious.

However, as a kindergarten teacher, she did not want to make a scene in school. She gritted her teeth in anger, but she still drove home. On the way, she switched on her mocking mode. "Mr. Smith, may I ask what my relationship with you is?"

Joel: "I'm your ex-boyfriend."

"..."

"Or rather, it's because I can't forget my ex-girlfriend."

When Tanya heard this, for some reason, her face turned red. She shook her head and sneered. "Mr. Smith, you have a fiancée and daughter now. You're harassing me like this, understand?"

Joel lowered his eyes. "Tanya, you were so angry yesterday. Were you jealous?"

Jealous?

Tanya choked on his words.

However, she immediately realized that from the moment she saw Hillary's Facebook post, she had indeed started to feel angry and humiliated.

Previously, she had been deceived by Mia and Joel.

Even after the two of them had left, she still felt happy for a while.

It was Hillary's post that had brought her back to reality. She suddenly realized that Mia was Joel and Hillary's daughter, not hers!

Why was she so excited about Mia's birthday?

She did not sleep much that night.

Before she returned, as she thought about her plans after returning to the country, she had told herself not to contact Joel ever again. But why were they involved again?

She was angry with herself and even more furious with Joel for teasing her.

He was making her sink deeper into it step by step.

She did not say anything else along the way until they arrived at the villa. However, after stopping the car, she did not get out. Instead, she said calmly, "Yes, I was jealous."

Joel was taken aback.

Tanya lowered her head. He could not see the girl's expression, but he could see that her shoulders were trembling slightly. She had never cried much since she was young.

Why was she crying now?

As he was thinking, she chuckled. "I admit it. Are you satisfied?"

She looked up and asked with a smile, "Mr. Smith, are you satisfied with me admitting that I'm a b*tch who covets someone else's fiancé?"

"You just had to make me admit that I'll always be lowly in front of you. Are you satisfied?"

The three "are you satisfied?" encompassed everything she had suffered all these years!

In Switzerland, she had no lack of suitors, but she did not like anyone. What she was unwilling to admit was that she had never let go of this man.

Even if this man was with the sister she hated the most.

As she smiled, tears suddenly fell down.

The teardrop was crystal clear as it slid down the corner of her eye and landed on her leg.

At this moment, a warm hand pressed down on her shoulder. With a huge reaction, she suddenly reached out and pushed the hand away!

She got out of the car angrily.

Joel chased after her. "Tanya!"

Tanya pushed him away and opened the door.

Joel hugged her tightly. "Tanya."

Tanya was furious and shouted angrily, "Joel, what are you trying to do? Let me tell you, even if I haven't completely forgotten about you, I won't be your mistress! I may be spineless, but I still have this bottom line! Let go. If you don't, I'll call the police!"

However, the man behind her did not let go. Just as Tanya angrily picked up her phone and was about to call the police, Joel's voice suddenly sounded. "Uncle Ian is critically ill."

Tanya paused.

Tanya knew who his uncle was. She also knew how important this uncle was to Joel.

She said nothing.

Joel continued, "After Uncle Ian and Yvette separated more than twenty years ago, they never saw each other again. His greatest regret in this life is that he couldn't be with her. Even though he knows that Nora is his daughter, he still wants to follow Yvette to the afterlife."

"Tanya, we're so lucky to meet again. This time, I won't let go."

At the Smiths.

After taking a shower, Nora prepared to go downstairs to eat something.

But as soon as she opened the door, she saw Quentin in front of it.

Although the man was already 26 years old, he still looked very young. His thin body leaned against the wall, and he instantly stood up when he saw her.

Nora raised her eyebrows. "What's the matter?"

Quentin nodded and asked curiously, "Nora, what did you tell Uncle Ian that suddenly gave him the will to survive?"

When Nora heard this, she was silent for a moment.

She suddenly said, "Do you really want to know?"

Quentin nodded.

Nora looked away.

She was not planning to say these words. After all, her mother's last words were filled with danger. Now, she did not even know who or where the enemy was.

She said, "Do you know why I hid my identity as Big Sister?"

Quentin shook his head.

Nora said, "Because my mother said that if I stand out, people might come after me."

Quentin narrowed his eyes at these words.

Nora looked at him. "I told him this."

She was referring to Ian.

They had just reunited, but she was not used to calling that person "father." She could not bring herself to call him "father."

Quentin understood.

Ian felt that Joel and Quentin could protect her well and that she would live well. Therefore, he had lost the will to live and wanted to reunite with Yvette.

But when he found out that his daughter was in danger, as a father, how could he leave?

He had to live and help her get rid of all obstacles!

Especially that danger... Ian subconsciously felt that it had something to do with Yvette leaving him back then!

This was Nora's guess.

Yvette had suddenly run away from home and told the public that she had eloped with someone, but she had given birth to her. In addition to the organization Morris had mentioned...

She felt that Yvette's departure back then might have been to protect Ian.

Ian clearly thought of this as well, and Nora told him, "The first DNA test showed that my genes have mutated. Logically speaking, we could never acknowledge each other. But Mother left my umbilical cord blood behind."

Yvette had preserved Nora's umbilical cord blood because she wanted to have a contingency plan when she was at her wit's end.

If Nora was to ever get involved in this, Ian could protect her appropriately and fulfill his responsibility as a father.

Even if Nora did not need his protection, if this responsibility could make Ian want to live, she did not mind being protected.

However, Quentin suddenly understood something. He looked at Nora seriously. "Nora, don't worry. I will help you guard your identity!"

If there was any danger, he would protect his cousin!

Nora: "?"

In the suburbs.

Joel was hugging Tanya. "I don't know what Nora said to make Uncle Ian want to live, but I know that I can't lose you again, Tanya."

When Uncle Ian lay on the hospital bed and recalled what had happened back then, he said the thing he regretted the most was not insisting on being with Yvette. At that time, Joel had thought of Tanya.

He did not want the tragedy to repeat itself.

When Tanya heard this, she stopped struggling. She closed her eyes tightly as tears started pouring. “Even if I don’t mind Mia’s existence, what about Hillary?”

“Hillary doesn’t matter.”

Joel said, “Tanya, back then, I was tricked into being with her. But all these years, apart from Mia, there’s nothing between us. I gave her the title of fiancée because I didn’t want Mia to not have a mother. But I told her long ago that when Mia turned five and became sensible, we would end the engagement. The last time I chased her away from the Smiths, it was to end the engagement.

Tanya was stunned.

Hillary was clearly saying that they were very loving.

However, compared to Hillary, she trusted Joel more.

She was not a romantic. The reason she chose to believe Joel was because she understood Hillary’s character!

But even so, she did not expect such a misunderstanding to have happened back then.

She asked again, “But her Facebook post...”

Joel explained again, “It was Mia’s birthday yesterday. I took a gift from her at the entrance of her house and left. As for the restaurant, it was only me and Mia. She followed us there by herself.”

Tanya was stunned.

Joel hugged her. “Tanya, I don’t know what else I need to do to make you forgive me, but do you know how happy I was when I heard you say that you were jealous?”

The man no longer had the aura he had in front of outsiders. At this moment, he was as happy as a child who had eaten candy. "At that time, I was thinking that even if you hate me or resent me, I won't let you go this time."

"..."

The wind around them seemed to have stopped.

The birds and insects were all silent.

Tanya only felt that at this moment, her broken heart seemed to have been filled with healing medicine as he comforted her.

She did not know what to say.

She did not know if she should forgive this man for that night.

Even if it was not his fault that he had been schemed against...

She did not know if she could be a good stepmother, either...

She did not even know if it was right for her to pursue happiness like this before her child was found...

Before she could think, the man suddenly held her shoulder and made her slowly turn her head.

The man stopped talking and lowered his head to cover her lips.

That familiar cool breath suddenly invaded her mouth, making her brain explode.

The memories in her body seemed to have returned before her rationality, making her almost give in without any resistance...

She was in a sorry state and quickly retreated.

However, he continued to press her hard and domineeringly. It was as if he wanted to claim sovereignty over every part of her mouth.

"Agh!"

Suddenly, a voice was heard.

The two of them froze and hurriedly looked at the door. They saw Mdm. Florence covering her eyes. "Goodness, Miss Tanya, Mrs. Hunt asked me to see if you were around. You... you two lovebirds can continue. Pretend I didn't see you!"

With that, she ran off in a hurry.

Tanya: "..."

Joel: "..."

The two of them were feeling a little awkward. It did not seem appropriate to continue what had just happened. However, if they did not continue, they would be at a loss if they just stood there.

Tanya said, "Let's talk inside."

She turned and opened the door.

Joel followed behind her obediently. He did not look like the tycoon who ran the business world at all.

After the two of them entered the room, Joel took the initiative to say, "You haven't eaten yet, right? I'll cook something for you."

Tanya nodded in a daze. At that moment, she seemed to have completely forgotten that this was her house.

When Joel entered the kitchen, Tanya had yet to return to her senses.

At this moment, her phone suddenly rang.

She picked up the call without even looking at it and accidentally put it on speaker. Hillary's voice came from the other end. "Tanya, do you think Joel will return to your side just because you're back? Let me tell you, the person he loves is me. He's right beside me now.. Our family of three is going to eat together. Stop daydreaming!"

Daydreaming...

Tanya looked into the kitchen and felt like she was really dreaming.

When she had left sadly five years ago, she thought that she would never have the chance to be with this man in her life. This man was going to disappear from her life.

Who would have thought that five years later, he would be cooking food for her?

As Tanya was thinking, Hillary's voice was heard again. "Why aren't you saying anything? Are you really going to degrade yourself to be a third wheel and come between us? Let me tell you, you better return to Switzerland. Joel chose me five years ago, he'll definitely choose me again. When that time comes, how embarrassed would you be?"

As she spoke, Joel had already walked out of the kitchen.

The villa was very quiet, and there were no car horns around.

Joel had heard the voice on the phone from the beginning.

He looked at Tanya.

Tanya was also looking at him. The slender girl just stood there, her body a little thin from dancing for a long time.

She looked at Joel with her deep eyes and suddenly raised her eyebrows. "She said I'm the third wheel. May I ask Mr. Smith, what's your relationship with Madam Hillary now?"

As soon as she said this, Hillary's voice stopped. However, she then sneered. "What are you doing? Do you think you can scare me like this? Let me tell you, I'm with Joel. If you want to talk to him, I can help you send a message..."

Amidst her chattering, Joel's originally angry eyes froze for a moment when they met the Tanya's. All his anger seemed to dissipate with an evil smile on her lips.

He took a step forward and said, "I have nothing to do with Madam Hillary. The engagement has been broken off. Madam Tanya, what kind of braised noodles do you want to eat? Tomato eggs or green pepper pork?"

The voice on the phone instantly fell silent!

Hillary: “!!”

The entire villa fell silent. Tanya smiled and said, “Green pepper pork. But no ginger, you remember my preferences, right?”

Joel nodded. “Of course. Just wait 10 minutes.”

With that, he glanced at the phone. Just as he was about to return to the kitchen, Hillary smiled mockingly. “Tanya, are you lying to me? How can Joel cook? I’ve been with him for five years, but I’ve never seen him cook! He doesn’t know how to cook at all! Did you find someone with a similar voice to anger me? I’m telling you, I won’t fall for it!”

Tanya recalled how Hillary had deliberately chased him to the restaurant and taken a photo to post on her Facebook. She was not surprised by her way of thinking.

She only smiled and suddenly turned on the camera. She raised her phone and aimed it at Joel. “Here, let me show you. The man I’m looking at not only has a similar voice to Joel, but his appearance is also very similar!”

Her voice was filled with mockery.

When Hillary saw Joel wearing an apron, she was stunned.

She had stayed with the Smiths for five years. Joel had never allowed her to enter his room, and every time she saw him, he was always the high and mighty leader who could stir up New York’s economic scene with just a move of his finger.

Since when was that man willing to fall from grace and start doing housework?

Furthermore, he was holding a tomato in one hand and green pepper in the other. He was clearly cooking!

As Tanya had turned on the camera, he looked up.

His light eyes, which were always smiling, suddenly became sharp as he stared at the camera.

He said calmly, “Miss Hillary, is there anything else?”

Tanya looked at the camera and saw that the camera on Hillary's side suddenly shook and fell to the ground. Her hands must have gone soft from shock.

This woman had been like this since she was young. She was a fox exploiting the tiger's might and was extremely hypocritical.

Tanya could not be bothered to talk to her anymore and hung up.

She chuckled softly. She looked up and realized that Joel had not entered the kitchen but was staring at her.

The man was wearing a white shirt and an apron, looking just like he did five years ago.

Tanya suddenly realized that the five years overseas seemed to have lost their distance.

As she was thinking, she saw Joel's eyes gradually turn deep and hot, making her heart beat wildly.

She hurriedly looked away and said, "There are still eight minutes!"

Only then did Joel retract his gaze and nod.

After he left, Tanya hurriedly patted her chest and cheeks.

She must stay alert!

She could not be attracted by his stunning beauty!

Eight minutes later, the noodles were done.

Tanya went upstairs and had already changed into her casual home clothes. Looking at the two bowls of steaming noodles on the dining table, she picked up her fork. Just as she was about to eat, she heard Joel say, "Wait a minute."

She paused and realized that Joel had brought a bottle of hot sauce over.

Tanya stared at the bottle and suddenly thought of a time five years ago.

At that time, she was still in university. As the living expenses from her mother were not enough, she often had to cook for herself.

Noodles were her favorite.

However, she only had one pot back then, so it was inconvenient to stir-fry vegetables. Therefore, every time, she would add a sufficient amount of noodles and vegetables before adding hot sauce.

Joel had always known this habit of hers.

In the past five years, after she went overseas, the thing she was most unused to was eating. Occasionally, she would want to eat noodles, but without hot sauce, it was as if something was missing.

While she was in a daze, Joel opened the bottle and handed it to her.

She dug a big spoonful and put it in the bowl of noodles. The thick sauce immediately floated on it and the fragrance wafted over.

She picked some noodles up with her fork and took a bite excitedly—but she was stunned.

She looked up slowly at the bottle of hot sauce.

The packaging had already changed.

As for the taste of the sauce, although it was still her favorite flavor, it was no longer the same as before.

For some reason, her heart suddenly sank.

A broken mood instantly attacked her, making her lower her head.

Indeed.

In five years, everything familiar had changed.

Nothing would stand there and wait for her.

It was like losing her child.

Even if she had returned to the country and she and Joel were still the same as they were five years ago, this fact could not be hidden.

She became depressed.

Joel looked at her and panic surged in his heart. He asked carefully, "What's wrong? The noodles don't taste good?"

A hot tear fell into the bowl.

Tanya suddenly looked up.. "There's something I need to tell you."

Joel saw her grave expression and put down his fork. He stared at her. "What?"

His heart suddenly pounded violently.

He didn't know what Tanya was going to say, much less what she was thinking... but he suddenly felt that what she was going to say next was very important.

Tanya looked at the man and said impulsively, "We had a..."

The word "child" hovered around her mouth for a moment, but she could not say it.

Joel was stunned. "What?"

He searched his memory hard. They had an agreement? An oath? Or what?

He was afraid that he would anger the girl in front of him if he did not remember.

Tanya opened her mouth.

She suddenly thought of the parents who had been searching for their children overseas.

Some mothers broke down, and some fathers were very calm. However, she had seen them turn around and cry secretly in a corner after comforting their wives.

She suddenly asked, "You love Mia very much, right?"

Joel did not know why she had suddenly changed the topic, but he still followed along and said, "Yes, I love her very much."

He suddenly reached out and held her hand. "I know that I will never let you down in this matter. Her existence is something I cannot control, but her existence makes me feel warm. Tanya, that is a kind of satisfaction from family ties. You understand me, right?"

How could Tanya not understand?

After all, she and Joel were both children who lacked love!

Even though Joel was born in the Smiths, his parents did not like him. There was even a time when they thought of abandoning him, making him feel very insecure.

As for Tanya...

After her mother remarried, she lost her home.

When the two of them walked together back then, didn't it feel like they were hugging each other for warmth?

That was why she was so happy when she gave birth to that little angel and thought that she finally had a family in this world and someone with her blood.

That was why she had searched the entire world for her child like a madman without even having seen the child once.

When Joel saw that she was in a strange mood, he mistakenly thought that Tanya would mind if he mentioned Mia. He thought about it and said, "I know it's very selfish of me to make you accept Mia, but Tanya, Mia is really a very obedient child. You'll fall in love with her. Really..."

He was afraid that Tanya would suggest sending the child away.

No matter how much he loved Tanya, he could not do that.

After all, he was a father!

Seeing that he had misunderstood, Tanya waved her hand and said, "That's not what I meant."

As soon as she said this, Joel heaved a sigh of relief. It was obvious how much he liked Mia.

Tanya asked again, "Do you like children?"

Joel nodded. "Of course. If it was our child, I would like it even more."

These words made Tanya's heart ache again.

She lowered her head and took a bite of noodles.

The hot noodles slid into her mouth, but she took another bite as if she did not know it was hot.

She ate mouthful after mouthful. When she was done, she looked up.

Joel probed, "What did you say we have?"

Tanya took out a tissue and wiped her mouth before replying, "It's nothing."

Joel immediately tried to recall any vow the two had made. However, after thinking for a while, he still could not remember it.

After he ate the noodles, Tanya took his bowl and washed it in the kitchen. Then, she said, "It's getting late, you should go back."

Joel: "..."

He actually did not want to leave tonight, but since Tanya had said so, if he insisted on staying, it would only make Tanya feel annoyed.

At the thought of this, Joel decided that he had to take things slow and not get things done in one go.

He took out his car keys and walked slowly to the door. "Good night."

"Good night."

Tanya replied softly in the kitchen.

She heard Joel walk to the door and stand there for a long time. Finally, he pushed the door open. When she heard the door close with a bang, she turned off the tap.

She stood in the kitchen for a long time before walking out.

Looking at the neat apron hanging in the living room, she thought of Joel's OCD personality and couldn't help but lower her eyes.

She sighed heavily and went upstairs.

She lay on the sofa and quietly stared at the night sky.

She did not know where her child was in the world right now, if he was hungry, or if he had any clothes to wear. She did not know how long she was thinking when her phone suddenly rang.

She picked it up and took a look. It was a call from Hillary.

She picked up the call and Hillary's calm voice was heard. "Are you two still together?"

Tanya sneered and said softly, "Yes, he's taking a shower. Why?"

"You're lying!"

Hillary suddenly smiled and said, "I just called Mia and she said Dad has come home! Tanya, I'm warning you. Stay away from Joel! Even if you seduced him now and he still likes you, Mia is the person he loves the most!"

Tanya clenched her fists.

She lowered her eyes. Before she could say anything, Hillary said, "Mia is everything to him! So what if you two still have feelings for each other? At the end of the night, won't he still go home obediently and coax the child to sleep? Tanya, if you know what's good for you, you better leave him!"

Tanya's voice was very low. "What if I don't?"

"You don't? Do you know that everyone outside knows that he and I are engaged and that Mia is our daughter?! Mia's sake, he won't even announce our separation to the public. In front of outsiders, I will always be Madam Smith! And you, Tanya, are just one of his lovers! What makes you think your status is enough to make him give up his reputation?"

The Jones.

After Hillary shouted this in anger, she finally felt at ease. She sneered and said, "No matter what, I will always be the wife, and you are just a mistress!"

Just like it was back then, I'm the daughter of a wealthy family, and you're just a fake daughter!"

With that, she hung up.

She had been chased out of the Smiths for so long. There were many guesses outside, but because of Mia, the Smiths had never spread the news that they had broken off the engagement.

She wanted to use this matter to agitate Tanya and let her know that she was nothing to Joel!

Any woman would mind this, right?

As she was thinking about this, the doorbell rang.

The servant went to open the door and exclaimed in surprise, "Mr. Smith?"

Hillary was stunned. She turned around and saw Joel walking in from the door!

It was already so late. Why was he at the Jones' residence?!

Hillary recalled that when she called Tanya today, Joel was also there. Later on, he did not pursue the matter, but now, he was here...

Her heart sank, but her face was still filled with smiles as she walked over. "Joel, you're here..."

When the Joneses heard the servant's words, they hurriedly walked down from the study upstairs to welcome him. "Mr. Smith, what brings you here? If there's anything you need, you can call us to the Smiths."

Joel was still smiling. His eyes were curved, and when he did not speak, he looked very gentle, like a smiling tiger.

However, Hillary could see the coldness in his eyes.

She swallowed and jolted.

Joel looked at her and slowly said, "I came personally today because I thought that after my engagement with Miss Hillary was broken off, she seemed to have been dishonest."

As soon as he said this, Hillary's father was stunned. He looked directly at Hillary. "What? When did you guys break off the engagement?"

Joel lowered his eyes and said indifferently, "Why? Didn't Miss Hillary tell you?"

Hillary had been chased back this time and stayed for a few days now, but she had not mentioned the engagement at all.

Mr. Jones looked at Hillary. "Hillary, what's going on?"

Madam Jones said, "Mr. Smith, did Hillary do something wrong to make you angry? Tell us, we'll get her to change. How can you suddenly call off the engagement?"

Joel looked at Madam Jones.

To be precise, she was also Tanya's mother.

Back then, Tanya's mother had remarried and given birth to Hillary.

Hillary was a year younger than Tanya, but their identities were completely different.

One was a burden who had been brought along into her marriage with a wealthy family, and the other was a daughter of a wealthy family. Hillary had looked down on Tanya since she was young.

As for Tanya, she had a stubborn personality. After being slandered by Hillary a few times, Madam Jones had determined that Tanya's personality was naughty and mischievous, like that of her father, who had disappeared. Therefore, she would hit and scold her!

Joel's attitude toward Madam Jones was distant and cold. He did not bother being polite with her. "Madam Jones, you can discipline her further for her mistakes. Now, we're talking about breaking off the engagement."

He took out the agreement he had signed with Hillary back then. "In the agreement back then, we said that when Mia turns five, the engagement would be automatically broken off. Now, it's time."

The Jones parents were stunned. They looked at Hillary in disbelief. "Hillary, you..."

Hillary bit her lip and cried. "Joel, I was wrong. I really know I was wrong. I didn't go looking for Tanya on purpose. I was just indignant. You chased me out of the Smiths because she suddenly returned, right?"

Tanya?

Madam Jones instantly became even more furious. "What do you mean? Did Tanya cross into your family again? Joel, you can't treat Hillary like this. Tanya was born to be a bad hooligan!"

As soon as she said this, Joel suddenly reached out and smashed the teacup on the table to the ground!

Smash!

The sound of the teacup shattering resounded throughout the living room, causing the crying Hillary and Madam Jones, who was scolding Tanya, to stop abruptly.

Everyone looked at Joel in disbelief.

Joel lowered his eyes. "I've already contacted the reporters. They will announce that I have broken off my engagement with Miss Hillary tomorrow..."

As soon as he said this, Mr. Jones said, "Mr. Smith, is there no room for change in this matter?"

Joel looked at him and said firmly, "No."

Mr. Jones sighed heavily.

Hillary and Madam Jones still wanted to say something, but Mr. Jones shook his head at them.

The two of them could only shut their mouths.

Mr. Jones began to complain. "Mr. Smith, we understand that you don't like Hillary. We won't force you. We can break off the engagement, but Mia is her biological daughter. You can't stop them from meeting."

Hillary and Madam Jones looked at each other.

Yes.

As long as Mia was still around, Hillary could interfere in Joel and Tanya's lives. As long as she could, Joel and Tanya could forget about living a quiet life!

Hillary clenched her fists tightly. She was already thinking that if Mia fell ill in the future, she would definitely have to stay with the Smiths and take care of her.

If Mia was hurt, she would definitely ask Tanya why she abused her child!

As she was thinking about her future plans, Joel seemed to have seen through her thoughts and said directly, "Yes, I won't stop them from meeting. Every six months, I'll send Mia overseas to meet with Miss Hillary."

Mr. Jones was stunned.

Hillary was stunned. "Go overseas? You don't have to go overseas. I'm just in the country... You don't have to send Mia anywhere. I can just meet her at the Smiths..."

However, the moment she said this, she heard Joel say, "After our engagement is broken off, you'll be in a bad mood, and will go overseas for a vacation. You won't accept our financial support and will travel for five years. After five years, you can return to the country."

Mr. Jones was stunned. "She won't accept financial support? Then how is she going to live?"

Joel glanced at Mr. Jones and said casually, "Aren't so many international students still alive?"

Madam Jones shouted angrily, "No! Hillary has never suffered like this in her entire life! She can't go overseas!"

She had never suffered before, but Tanya could suffer?

Joel had investigated before. Tanya did not have any living expenses overseas. Everything was earned by working part-time!

His attitude was still very calm, and there was even a smile on his face. He looked directly at Mr. Jones. "President Jones, is the collaboration between the Joneses and Smiths going well?"

Mr. Jones: !!!

He immediately understood that Joel was threatening him!

If they did not send Hillary away, the Smiths would terminate all cooperation with the Joneses!

The Joneses had been prospering these years because they had relied on the Smiths. After leaving the Smiths... Joel would definitely let everyone in New York know that the Joneses had offended him.

At that time, even without Joel personally making a move, someone might help him deal with the Joneses!

He gulped and hurriedly stood up. "I understand what you mean, Mr. Smith. I'll handle Hillary's matters here. She'll go overseas."

Joel stood up. "It's good that Mr. Jones understands. I'll leave, then."

He did not even look at Hillary as he left the house.

Hillary was stunned on the spot.

Five years...

Another five years!

Tanya had been overseas for more than five years!

Hillary understood. Joel had arranged everything for her!

He was going to send her overseas for five years to help Tanya vent her anger!

She roared, "Joel! I gave birth to Mia for you! How can you treat me like this?!"

Joel stopped in his tracks and turned to look at her. "If you hadn't given birth to Mia, do you think you would have had the chance to go overseas?"

Upon hearing this, Hillary jolted.

She swallowed.

Mia was her protective charm!

At the Smiths.

After Nora finished showering, she walked out and saw Pete standing there, looking at her seriously. "Mommy, we're going to the amusement park to play tomorrow. Can we bring Mia along?"

Nora asked, "Why?"

Pete said, "I didn't even know it was Mia's birthday yesterday. I didn't give her a gift either. I want to take her out to play tomorrow."

Birthday?

Nora was stunned.

She remembered clearly that Tanya's child's birthday was five days ago.

Mia was only five days away from that child's birthday...

Was this... a coincidence?

She narrowed her eyes.

Was Mia really Hillary's daughter?

The reason why Nora knew about the birthday of the children was that on that day every year, Tanya would be in low spirits.

When she was overseas, no matter where Nora was, she would always be by Tanya's side on this day.

The two of them did nothing. Nora would sleep while Tanya would be in the room, dancing to the birthday gift she had bought long ago.

Usually, when she woke up, Tanya would be covered in sweat, but she would not feel tired. If she continued like this, she would eventually collapse.

Every year, she would fall seriously ill.

It was as if she wanted to use this method to vent her longing for her child for the next year.

Therefore, Nora remembered her child's birthday very clearly.

She couldn't help but doubt Mia's identity.

Tanya's child and Mia were both Joel's children. Furthermore, they were only five days apart...

She narrowed her eyes and began to think about the relationship between Mia and Tanya...

"Mommy, can I?"

Pete's words interrupted Nora's thoughts.

She looked at him and nodded. "Alright, I'll ask your uncle when he comes back."

If she took Mia out to play, she would definitely ask Joel.

With that, she yawned loudly and turned to walk to the bed. "It's already so late. Why isn't he back yet? I'll lie down and wait for him!"

Pete: "..."

As expected, half an hour later, there were uniform breathing sounds on the bed.

Pete sighed helplessly and put down the pen in his hand.

He walked to the bed and gently covered Nora with the blanket. Then, he went out and downstairs to sit on the sofa in the living room.

When Joel returned home, this was the scene he saw.

Pete was clearly sleepy and anxious. His little head was nodding off, but he had still forced himself not to sleep.

Joel looked at the time. It was already 11 PM. He walked over and asked, "What's wrong?"

Pete woke up suddenly and said excitedly, "Uncle, you're finally back!"

He jumped off the sofa and looked at Joel. "Tomorrow, Dad and Mom will take me and Cherry... to the amusement park. I want to bring Mia along, okay?"

Joel looked at him and touched his head. After some thought, he said, "Okay."

Pete heaved a sigh of relief.

Joel bent down and picked him up before carrying him upstairs.

After taking him to the bedroom, he asked, "Where's your mother?"

Pete said helplessly, "Mommy said that she would lie down and wait for you to come back to ask you. In the end, she fell asleep..."

Joel: "..."

Joel brought Pete to his room and watched him shower and change into his pajamas. Then, he sent Pete to Nora's bedroom.

He watched as he tiptoed in and returned to the bedroom in relief.

At the same time, he could not help but think that Nora was such a worry-free mother. Be it with Cherry or Pete, they were both so sensible and independent.

After returning to his room, he washed up and lay on the bed. He took out his phone and opened Tanya's Facebook.

Her profile picture was of a mature grape.

Joel stared at his phone screen for a long time, not knowing what to send her. Just as he was in a daze, he suddenly saw the words "Typing..." on the dialog box.

Joel was instantly delighted.

What was Tanya going to say to him?

However, after waiting for more than ten minutes, she did not say anything.

Joel couldn't help but send a message: "?"

Tanya replied: "?"

Joel: "Where's the small composition?"

Tanya: "What small composition?"

Joel smiled and typed: "You've been typing for almost twenty minutes. You should have written a small composition with 800 words by now? Where is it?"

Tanya: "!!!"

Tanya: "I wasn't sending you a message!"

Tanya: "You're mistaken!"

Tanya: "Oh, I was watching television and accidentally opened your chat window."

Seeing that she was not being honest, Joel continued to type with a smile. "What are you watching?"

Tanya: "A show on FOX TV."

Chapter 363 - The Plan of Saving Nora Novel Free

A dumbfounded Quentin stared at her incredulously. He swallowed and said, "N-Nora, don't... don't joke around anymore."

Nora glanced at him. "Get out."

Quentin got out of the car obediently. He didn't dare look into the car, even though the car windows were tinted—so one would only be able to look out from the inside, but not the other way.

A minute later, the car door opened and Nora got out wearing the red dress. Then, she put on the mask.

The person in front of him seemed to have suddenly changed.

From his little hillbilly cousin, she turned into the mysterious martial arts expert, Big Sister.

Quentin: "..."

He felt that he must have opened his eyes the wrong way when he woke up in the morning!

How could this be?!

He had been following the woman ever since Joel started having doubts about Nora's identity. Despite how so much time had already gone by, how come he hadn't realized that she was actually Big Sister?!

While he was in a daze, Nora asked, "So, you're my younger brother?"

Quentin: "!!!"

He suddenly thought of how he had bragged and claimed just now that Big Sister had acknowledged him as her younger brother. After all, Big Sister had a mask on all the time, and her daughter was already five. Thus, he had subconsciously assumed that Big Sister must be older than him. Never would he have expected Big Sister to suddenly turn into his little cousin!

How he wished he could dig a hole and bury himself in it!

He tried his best to sift through his memories—he hadn't said anything else, right?

He suddenly thought of what he had said when he first met her. That time, he had said very proudly, "Heh, even though you're proof of the shame that Uncle Ian had suffered, you can rest assured that I will still protect you. I won't let any of the Smiths die an untimely death."

It was then followed by:

"Can you stop running about all over the place? Without me, the world's third-best fighter, protecting you, you'll die before you even know it!"

"Are you also taking part in the martial arts tournament? Do you want to meet Big Sister? I'm on really good terms with her!"

"Do you want to take a photo with Big Sister?"

“ ... ”

Quentin felt like his cheeks had flushed even redder.

He suddenly asked, “There are three different types of death. Do you know what they are?”

Nora raised her eyebrows. “What are they?”

“The first is clinical death, that is to say, the body dies.

“The second is psychological death, where someone loses all hope and doesn’t wish to live anymore.

“The third is social death.”

Quentin looked at her and said, “Nora, you’ve just made me experience the third type of death.”

“ ... ”

Nora laughed and passed by him. “Let’s go in.”

“I don’t want to go in.” Quentin said expressionlessly, “I wanna die.”

Nora didn’t pay any more attention to him. Instead, she started walking toward the arena. Two steps later, she heard footsteps behind her. Quentin’s voice then reached her. “Why are you hiding your identity, Nora? Isn’t the identity of Big Sister really cool?!”

Nora replied, “It’s bothersome.”

Bothersome?

Quentin thought for a moment. “Are you worried that others will bother you once they know who you are? Well, that’s true. After all, Big Sister is a well-known figure... Don’t worry, Nora, I can keep secrets really well. I will never tell anyone about it!”

“Oh.”

Nora had always adhered to her mother's last words telling her not to expose her identity and to live in mediocrity. This was why she hadn't exposed her identity all this time.

However, Quentin was simply too annoying.

Moreover, now that he was aware that she had come to the arena, given his tracking abilities, it was simply too much trouble to throw him off her trail. Thus, she had decided to reveal her identity.

Besides, even though Quentin had eighth-grader syndrome, he was the leader of the Smiths' secret forces. He wasn't stupid.

Nora followed Quentin into the arena.

As soon as they entered, Quentin suddenly said, "Big Sister, I've suddenly discovered a problem!"

Nora: "?"

Quentin said, "I didn't expect you to actually have a pretty boy outside behind Justin's back! No. 820 must be Cherry's biological father, right?"

Nora: "??"

She hadn't thought of that.

She wasn't sure whether she could reveal Justin's identity, so she simply uttered a sound of acknowledgment and admitted to it.

In the end, Quentin looked at her with bright and shiny eyes and said, "You're so awesome!"

"You actually dare to cuckold even Justin!"

Nora: "..."

Forget it, he could just think of it however he wanted to.

They had five matches that night, so time was rather tight for them. Nora looked around and asked, "He isn't here yet?"

Quentin also looked around.

While the two of them were looking around, a man's low and deep voice suddenly rang out. "Are you guys Team Third In The World?"

The two of them looked over in unison to see a man wearing a mask with an eagle's design walking toward them. He was big and tall and was dressed in a black suit. When he walked, it was as though he had an aura of justice around him.

Additionally, he had deliberately lowered his voice, so no one could tell what his actual voice really sounded like.

Nora didn't say anything. Instead, she glanced at Quentin.

Only then did something click in Quentin's head. He answered, "Yes, that's right. You are?"

"No. 007."

As soon as he gave them his alias, Quentin instantly realized something. He asked, "You're the first runner-up of the previous tournament?"

The other party kept quiet for a moment before he replied, "Yeah, you can say that."

Quentin took the opportunity to give Nora an explanation. He said, "B... Sis, No. 007 is an amazing martial arts master who came out of nowhere in the last tournament. He advanced all the way to Class F that time. Both he and Big Brother were very impressive, and he even became one of the favorites for the title of champion. It was just a shame that he didn't turn up for the finals, so the title of champion went to Big Brother while No.007 became the first runner-up."

After explaining, Quentin looked at No.007 and asked, "Why didn't you turn up for the finals?"

No. 007's gaze swept across the two of them. "I had to take a mission at the last minute."

Quentin and Nora sensitively caught a hint of something from his use of the word 'mission'.

Quentin then said, “Oh, what a shame. Is this your first time here this year, though?”

With the exception of Big Brother in Class F, all the other martial arts experts from the previous tournament had been downgraded to Class E this year. Thus, if they wanted to advance in rank, they would also have to defeat fellow Class E contestants.

The fact that an expert like No. 007 hadn’t caused any noise this year was indicative of something—this was his first time here.

Sure enough, No. 007 nodded and replied, “Yeah, I also had something on previously. It seems like there’s a surge in martial arts experts this year, though.”

He glanced at the Benevolence Hall disciples seated in the VIP dining area. They were in a class of their own and seemed out of place among the people around them.

Quentin didn’t say anything. No. 007, however, looked at Nora and asked, “What do you think?”

Nora: “??”

Quentin was undoubtedly very strong in Team Third In The World, and she had been very low-profile all this while. Why was he suddenly directing his attention to her?

She raised her eyebrows and nodded. “It seems that way, yes.”

After she spoke, her cell phone in her pocket suddenly vibrated. Nora nodded to Quentin and No. 007, walked to the side, and took it out.. She opened it and saw a text message from Lily: ‘The test results are out.’

Lily was referring to the chemical composition test for the solution that Victor and the others were drinking.

Nora sent a reply: ‘The results?’

Lily responded very quickly: “It’s just an ordinary sports drink. The only thing different about it from normal sports drinks is the fact that it’s more concentrated. Even martial arts practitioners wouldn’t need that many

nutrients, no matter how much energy they use up, let alone the average person.”

The results didn't disappoint Nora.

If Victor and the others had indeed only become this strong because they had taken some kind of drug, then said drug was undoubtedly a prohibited substance. On top of that, they were also acting very mysteriously about it. It was impossible for them to consume it at the arena itself.

But a highly-concentrated sports drink...

When she was thinking about it, elsewhere, No. 007 was looking around. Quentin asked, “Are you looking for Big Brother?”

There hadn't been a winner between the two during the last tournament.

He would definitely be out for revenge this year, right?

Unexpectedly, No. 007 instead said, “I came late this year. Which of the contestants here is Big Sister?”

Nora abruptly raised her head and looked at him when she heard the words ‘Big Sister’.

Quentin subconsciously glanced at Nora before he replied, “Oh, Big Sister is resting in her lounge. You can look for her there if you need anything. She's the very big and muscular woman in there.”

Nora: “...”

No. 007 was a little taken aback. “She's very big and muscular? That's impossible.”

Quentin: “?”

No. 007 went on. “Big Sister does regular martial arts training, so it's impossible that she would be really big. All strong martial artists need physiques that move smoothly. I heard that there are people here who impersonate Big Sister to make money and stuff like that.”

No. 007 then looked at Nora. “Big Sister's figure should be like No. 028's instead.”

Nora: "..."

She took a long look at No. 007, thinking that it was likely that he might have already noticed something. However, he didn't press the issue, so Nora didn't say anything.

She still needed to keep her identity a secret.

Quentin lifted his chin and became very proud. "You have good foresight!"

No. 007 chuckled. Then, he pointed to the dining area next to them and suggested, "Let's sit down and have a bite? I think it's your match soon."

Before Nora could say anything, another low and deep voice reached them. "No, it's fine."

The few of them looked over and saw Justin walking over with Cherry in his arms.

Cherry was still wearing her half-mask and was holding a lollipop. Her big eyes blinked as she looked at them.

Justin walked over, stopped in front of Nora, and faced No. 007. "Thanks."

Then, he took out a chocolate bar and handed it to Nora. "This will replenish your energy quickly if you're hungry."

Nora: "..."

Next to them, Quentin's lip corners spasmed.

Before this, he had felt that the pretty boy wasn't worthy of Big Sister, but now that he knew that his cousin was Big Sister, his requirements for his cousin-in-law had immediately become even higher.

He tapped Justin's shoulder.

Justin looked at him.

Quentin sneered, "Aren't you being a little too jealous? I can sense it even from a long distance."

"..."

Justin didn't say anything. Quentin lowered his voice and said, "Kid, you're pretty bold, huh!"

Justin raised his eyebrows. "Oh?"

Quentin glanced at Nora. "Do you know her true identity?"

"Yes."

Quentin clicked his tongue a couple of times and said, "You're pretty bold to have the guts to cuckold Justin Hunt. You gotta protect your personal information, though, get it? Otherwise, even my cousin won't be able to protect you! There are only two people in New York whom no one must ever mess with—one of them is Joel Smith, my cousin, and the other is Justin Hunt!"

Justin: "..."

Him cuckolding himself... Yep, if it wasn't because he was his cousin-in-law, he really felt like punching Quentin. But now... well, this was quite alright, too.

The next five matches they played sent them straight into Class E.

The five matches were no sweat for the three of them. After all, with Big Sister and Big Brother, as well as the third-best fighter in the world, they completely crushed everyone else.

While they were crushing their opponents here, Victor's team also won two matches and gave their opponents crushing defeats.

After finishing the five matches in succession, Nora yawned and stepped out of the ring.

As soon as they got out, Quentin said, "B... Sis, No. 007 has been staring at you."

Nora: "??"

She followed his gaze and looked over. Sure enough, Nora found No. 007 sitting at the bottom of the ring. However, he was staring straight at her and making no secret about it. There was admiration—as well as scrutiny—in his eyes.

Nora raised her brows.

Quentin then went to Justin. "It's a love rival, bro!"

Justin was speechless when he saw how eager Quentin was to throw the world into chaos.

No. 007 got up and walked straight toward them after the match.

However, before he could even come close, Nora and Justin had turned around very naturally and walked to the door. They didn't give him any chance to get close to them.

This took No. 007 by surprise. He smiled wryly, stopped in his tracks, and took the hint. He didn't chase after them anymore.

But just as the two of them were about to leave the arena, Victor and the other two men in his team suddenly rushed over. They moved very quickly. When they were passing by, Victor suddenly whispered, "You're the real Big Sister, aren't you?"

Nora was taken aback. Then, she narrowed her eyes and looked at him. Her lips curled into a smile, but she didn't admit to it. "I don't know what you're trying to say."

However, Victor was sure of her identity. He sneered, "I can accept losing to you, then. But it won't be the same next time!"

The few of them then left.

Nora ignored him. While she and Justin continued walking toward the exit, another man wearing a white feathered mask entered.

He looked rather unique, and coughed a few times with every two steps he took. He looked ill.

In addition, he coughed very hard. It sounded as though he was about to cough up his lungs.

A man was supporting him at the side.

Someone whispered, "He came to the arena even when he's so sick and so weak? He must be here just to join in the fun and watch the show, right?"

Unexpectedly, the man walked up to the registration counter. As he coughed, a rich and mellow voice rang out. “Sorry, I have already signed up, but I only just came to participate in the tournament today. I wonder if my eligibility still stands?”

The staff member replied, “This is a little difficult. It’s already been so long...”

During the exchange, the black-clad bodyguard supporting the man handed the guy a check.

The guy accepted the check in a very practiced manner, and immediately changed his tone without any principles whatsoever. “Of course, it still stands... What’s your registration number?”

“...”

The corners of Nora’s lips spasmed.

The martial arts association must be as poor as church mice now, right? They really took all the money they could get.

After bidding farewell to Justin in the car park, Nora took Quentin’s car back home.

On the way, Quentin suddenly said, “Nora, someone’s following us.”

Someone was following them?

Nora looked at the back through the rearview mirror—it was filled with cars.

Quentin lived up to his identity as a man in secret forces. His senses were sharper and keener than even hers. She also sensed it after Quentin brought it up.

“Can you throw them off?” Nora asked.

“Of course.” Quentin said triumphantly, “Don’t you know whose car you’re in right now? How dare they tail me. They sure think really highly of themselves!”

He sneered, “I’m the only one who can tail other people in New York. No one can tail me!”

He suddenly turned the steering wheel all the way to the side at the traffic light and drifted straight into a small side road.

Nora looked at the rearview mirror—two black cars clearly looked a little confused because they hadn't expected him to suddenly break the traffic rules and go somewhere else.

However, another two cars soon followed after them from the side.

Quentin discovered their presence earlier than she did. He sneered, "Tsk, it seems like there are a lot of people interested in Big Sister, Nora! Don't worry, I will definitely keep you safe!"

He changed the direction he was going in again.

The car went back and forth in the familiar New York streets. Quentin was very professional. Half an hour later, when he turned to another side road, there were no longer any cars following them at the back.

Obviously, Quentin had successfully thrown them all off.

Quentin looked at her. He looked as if he was asking for praise as he asked, "How was that?"

He lifted his chin.

Nora gave him a thumbs up. "Fantastic."

Quentin couldn't suppress the smile at the corners of his lips.

His idol was none other than Big Sister. It simply felt too blissful to be praised by his idol. He must do even better than this!

While Quentin was getting fired up, his cell phone suddenly rang.

When he answered, Joel's voice came from the other side. "Where is Nora?"

Quentin looked at the woman in the backseat. "She's in the car with me. What's up?"

Joel said, "Come to the hospital right away!"

Quentin: "?"

He subconsciously asked, "Is there something wrong with Uncle Ian?"

Joel sighed. "You'll know once you're here."

"Okay."

Quentin immediately took a U-turn and raced to the hospital.

When Nora heard the call from Joel, she knew at once that something must have happened in the hospital.

When the two arrived at the hospital, sure enough, they saw Joel pacing back and forth nervously in the corridor. When he heard their footsteps, he immediately looked at Nora and said, "Quick, Nora, go into the operating room and save him!"

Nora entered the operating room right away.

It was only after she went in that Quentin asked, "What happened?"

Joel replied, "Uncle Ian's heart suddenly stopped beating. They are trying to save him now."

Quentin was stunned. His heart sank.

In all honesty, he had never taken Ian's illness seriously because Ian had always been ill for as long as he could remember.

Therefore, he hadn't panicked even when Nora operated on Ian previously.

But when he heard that Ian had a cardiac arrest, he couldn't help but blank out. He immediately said, "That's impossible! It's impossible that anything would go wrong when B... Nora's the one operating on him!"

Had Nora just been Anti, Quentin might still have had doubts.

But she was Big Sister.

She was the famous Big Sister in the martial arts circle. There was no way she would do anything she wasn't confident about!

Joel glanced at him when he heard him.

Based on his understanding of Quentin, Quentin should have already formed doubts about Nora a long time ago. Yet he was so sure about it at the moment...

It wasn't the time for him to be thinking about that, though. He said, "It's Uncle Ian himself who... suddenly pulled out the IV needle when he woke up."

Quentin: "..."

Joel sighed. "Uncle Ian still doesn't have any will to live. He doesn't want to live anymore."

Quentin was in such a panic that he was going around in circles. "What should we do? Didn't you tell Uncle Ian that Nora is his daughter?"

Joel said, "That's exactly why I asked you guys to come. I'm hoping that Nora can find a way to keep him alive."

Quentin nodded.

It was unknown just how much time went by before the operating room's lights finally went out.

The attending doctor then came out and looked at the two of them.

Both Joel and Quentin looked at him hopefully but instead saw the doctor shake his head instead.

Joel and Quentin were dumbfounded.

The doctor said, "Anti lives up to her name as a master surgeon. She once again pulled the old gentleman back from the brink of death. He's awake now, but..."

The doctor sighed. "He still does not have the will to live."

No will to live... even though he was awake...

Joel panicked. "Didn't Nora tell him that she is his daughter?"

"She did, but it wasn't of any use."

The attending doctor then stepped aside. "You... Why don't you go in and see him for the last time?"

Joel and Ian put on sterile gowns and entered the operating room.

Ian lay on the bed. The thin man looked just like a sheet of paper, which easily showed that he hadn't been eating well. He was ridiculously thin.

Nora was standing next to him blankly. Her eyes were full of perplexity and doubts as if she couldn't understand anything. She asked, "Why don't you want to live? Even if it's for my sake?"

Ian's voice was very thin. He said weakly, "I'm sorry."

He coughed and slowly said, "I'm very happy that Yvette didn't betray me... but when I think of how she has been all by herself in that lonely world for so long, I feel so awful. I should have figured it out earlier. I should have gone to keep her company earlier. Nora..."

He reached out a trembling hand to Nora.

Nora pursed her lips and held his hand. He said, "Please forgive Dad for being so selfish. I was waiting all this time for the truth to surface, waiting to find out why she had left me back then. But now that I finally know it, I suddenly feel guilty and blame myself for it. It's no longer important why she had done what she did. Back then, no matter what the reason for her departure was, I shouldn't have doubted her. She must have had reasons that she couldn't tell me. All I could do for her back then was to let go of her, and now, the only thing I can do for her is to go and keep her company..."

He looked at Joel and Quentin who had entered.

Joel and Quentin's eyes were all red. They took a step forward. Ian said to the two of them, "Joel, Quentin, Nora is my daughter. I put her in your care now."

Joel choked up and shouted, "Uncle Ian, you should take care of your daughter yourself!"

Ian smiled wryly and said, "I'm tired. I really am. I've spent all these years like a walking dead. Leaving is the greatest relief I can ever have."

All three youngsters looked at him blankly.

All of them were dumbfounded.

No one, no matter who, had ever imagined that letting Ian know that Nora was his daughter would be the last straw to break the camel's back and send him to his death.

Nora clenched her fists.

Were they going to be separated by death when they had only just reunited as father and daughter?

No!

Nora would never allow such a thing to happen!

Quentin's eyes were red and swollen as he shouted, "Uncle Ian, take care of your daughter yourself! Live and get up. Otherwise, I'll beat her up every day..."

Joel, who had always been a steady person, could not help but say, "Uncle Ian, aren't you afraid that I will be selfish in the future and take over the Smiths without giving Nora anything? Also, Nora is going to marry Justin. Aren't you afraid that she will be bullied if she marries over? She's without her father and even comes from the countryside. Now, the Hunts look down on her! She needs your support!"

Ian muttered in a weak voice with his eyes closed, "Joel, Quentin, you won't..."

"I will! I really will! Uncle Ian, wake up. You can't die!"

"Uncle Ian! Get up..."

Joel and Quentin shouted as their tears fell like rain.

The person lying on the bed had been exceptionally powerful since they were young. But now, he was weak and had been sick most of the year, he was very dispirited and would not wake up. It was as if nothing gave him hope for life.

However, the two of them would never forget that when their parents had abandoned them, it was Uncle Ian who came forward to raise them, calling them good children!

Especially Joel...

If not for Uncle Ian, he would have been chased out of the Smiths when he was three years old. He would have become like a stray dog and starved to death on the streets!

It was Uncle Ian... Not only had he given him the honor of being a man of the Smiths, but he had also let him take over the Smiths.

Everything Joel had now was given to him by Uncle Ian.

Joel held Uncle Ian's hand tightly. "Uncle Ian..."

Just as the two of them were thinking of ways to make him stay, a cold voice suddenly sounded. "Can I speak to him alone?"

Joel and Quentin looked at the person in a daze. It was Nora.

She stood at the side. Perhaps it was because they had not known each other since they were young, but her current expression was a little cold and distant.

The stunned expression in her eyes had disappeared as she stared at the man on the bed.

Even though her voice was emotionless and she appeared too calm, Joel and Quentin looked at each other. The two of them stood up and walked out together.

Before leaving, Joel took one last look inside.

He watched as the girl suddenly walked to the bed and said, "You're very good to them."

Ian smiled bitterly. "I didn't do my part as a father."

Nora suddenly said, "Now, you have a chance to fulfill your responsibilities."

After saying this, she suddenly lowered her head and whispered into Ian's ear. Ian's eyes widened suddenly.

When Joel closed the door, he heard Ian's last sentence. His voice trembled as he asked, "Are... are you serious?"

Two minutes later.

The door to the operating room was opened. Nora pushed Ian's bed out of the operating room.

Ian was lying there with his eyes closed.

Joel's heart sank. He exchanged glances with Quentin and the two of them looked at Nora. Quentin even swallowed his saliva and asked, "Uncle Ian, he..."

"He's not dead."

Nora's words sounded very calm, making Joel and Quentin heave a sigh of relief.

Quentin asked tentatively, "Then he's..."

"I gave him two injections and he fell asleep. He needs to rest. In the next few days, don't disturb him in any case. No matter how powerful this lion is, his body has been hollowed out. His body needs to be raised from the roots."

With that, she looked at Joel. "I have a few medicinal recipes here. I'll write them down for you later."

Joel hurriedly nodded. "I'll arrange for someone to cook for Uncle Ian every day."

The three of them walked into the VIP ward together.

After entering the ward, Nora checked Ian's vital signs. After everything was normal, she said, "He won't die for the time being."

Joel probed, "Then... after the time being..."

Nora: "If you follow the schedule I'm giving you and are obedient, he can live out his natural life."

Joel heaved a sigh of relief.

Nora took out her phone and opened the memo. Her slender fingers quickly typed something on it for a while. She sent Joel the things to take note of and future treatment plans.

Joel took a look and realized that it was all basic care. The staff in the hospital could do it.

Quentin asked curiously, "Aren't you going to take care of Uncle Ian personally in the future?"

Nora glanced at him. "I don't know how to take care of people."

Quentin: "..."

After doing all this, Nora walked out. "I'm going to see Old Maddy."

Ever since Old Maddy was rescued, he had been in the hospital for treatment. After all, he had been too severely poisoned. Furthermore, Old Maddy had never recovered from his crazy illness.

Nora went to Old Maddy's ward again. When she was about to go home, she saw Quentin.

She raised her eyebrows and asked, "What are you doing here?"

Quentin coughed. "I'm waiting for you to take you home."

"..."

Nora said helplessly, "Alright."

After the two of them returned home, Nora went upstairs and saw Pete. She kissed her son's forehead and was about to take a shower when Pete suddenly said mysteriously, "Mommy, did you know? Uncle Joel came to pick Mia and me up just now. But he then later got the chauffeur to bring us back and went to chase after God-mom Tanya."

Nora: "??"

When she went to see Old Maddy, Joel had arranged for the medical staff to pick up Mia and Pete from school. She did not expect him to go after Tanya?

Why was he looking for Tanya?

Nora raised her eyebrows.

She smiled and touched Pete's head. "I understand."

Pete blinked and suddenly said, “Mommy, is God-mom Tanya going to be my aunt soon?”

Nora: “?”

This little fellow knew quite a lot. She asked, “Do you want her to be your aunt?”

“Yes!”

Pete nodded seriously. “God-mom treats Mia well.”

Nora sensed something. “You mean, Mia’s mommy isn’t good to her?”

Pete thought for a moment. “No, she isn’t.”

Nora frowned and pulled a chair over casually. She sat in front of Pete with interest. “Come, talk properly.”

Pete’s expression was stern as he said seriously, “These are all my speculations.”

Nora had always thought that Mia’s mother treated her well. After all, who would be cruel to their own daughter? It was because Hillary and Joel were on bad terms that the two of them did not get together.

However, she did not expect Pete’s next words to completely subvert her understanding.

Pete said, “Mommy, if I liked mathematics very much, would you stop me from learning it?”

Nora: “Of course not.”

Everyone knew that Cherry liked to play games. In order to make Cherry happy, she had agreed to let her play. She only limited the time spent on playing games.

Pete nodded. “Mia’s mother knows she likes to dance, but she doesn’t let her learn. Moreover, Mia is very afraid of her mother.”

Afraid?

No child should be afraid of their mother, right?

Nora felt that Pete might have used the wrong word. "Is it because her mommy is very strict?"

Pete shook his head. "No."

He thought for a moment and said, "The tyrant is very strict too, but I know that he does it for my own good. Sometimes, I go on a hunger strike to fight against him because I know he will eventually give in."

"But Mia's fear of her mommy comes from the fact that she's not sure her mommy would ever give in.

Nora was stunned.

Although Pete's words were messy, she understood them.

Because Justin was his father, even if he was stern every day or even hit Pete, Pete still respected Justin and was not afraid of him.

But Mia's mother was like a stranger and a bad person to Mia. Mia didn't even feel safe with her.

She frowned. "Did Mia tell you all this?"

Pete shook his head. "I observed it myself."

Nora frowned.

If what Pete said was true, Nora would really have to reconsider this matter. However, Pete was only five years old. His conclusion could not be trusted so easily.

Nora said seriously, "Okay, Pete. I understand. I'll take note of this and observe Mia. If it's true, I'll tell your uncle."

At the same time, she frowned.

Was there really a mother in this world who abused her own child?

In the suburbs.

Tanya drove in and looked at the shameless man.

After work, he took the opportunity while she had yet to lock the car to suddenly open the back door and sneak into her car.

She wanted to scold him back then, but his words made her shut her mouth. "Keep arguing if you want everyone to know about our relationship. If you don't, then drive."

Tanya: "..."

She was speechless and anxious.

However, as a kindergarten teacher, she did not want to make a scene in school. She gritted her teeth in anger, but she still drove home. On the way, she switched on her mocking mode. "Mr. Smith, may I ask what my relationship with you is?"

Joel: "I'm your ex-boyfriend."

"..."

"Or rather, it's because I can't forget my ex-girlfriend."

When Tanya heard this, for some reason, her face turned red. She shook her head and sneered. "Mr. Smith, you have a fiancée and daughter now. You're harassing me like this, understand?"

Joel lowered his eyes. "Tanya, you were so angry yesterday. Were you jealous?"

Jealous?

Tanya choked on his words.

However, she immediately realized that from the moment she saw Hillary's Facebook post, she had indeed started to feel angry and humiliated.

Previously, she had been deceived by Mia and Joel.

Even after the two of them had left, she still felt happy for a while.

It was Hillary's post that had brought her back to reality. She suddenly realized that Mia was Joel and Hillary's daughter, not hers!

Why was she so excited about Mia's birthday?

She did not sleep much that night.

Before she returned, as she thought about her plans after returning to the country, she had told herself not to contact Joel ever again. But why were they involved again?

She was angry with herself and even more furious with Joel for teasing her.

He was making her sink deeper into it step by step.

She did not say anything else along the way until they arrived at the villa. However, after stopping the car, she did not get out. Instead, she said calmly, "Yes, I was jealous."

Joel was taken aback.

Tanya lowered her head. He could not see the girl's expression, but he could see that her shoulders were trembling slightly. She had never cried much since she was young.

Why was she crying now?

As he was thinking, she chuckled. "I admit it. Are you satisfied?"

She looked up and asked with a smile, "Mr. Smith, are you satisfied with me admitting that I'm a b*tch who covets someone else's fiancé?"

"You just had to make me admit that I'll always be lowly in front of you. Are you satisfied?"

The three "are you satisfied?" encompassed everything she had suffered all these years!

In Switzerland, she had no lack of suitors, but she did not like anyone. What she was unwilling to admit was that she had never let go of this man.

Even if this man was with the sister she hated the most.

As she smiled, tears suddenly fell down.

The teardrop was crystal clear as it slid down the corner of her eye and landed on her leg.

At this moment, a warm hand pressed down on her shoulder. With a huge reaction, she suddenly reached out and pushed the hand away!

She got out of the car angrily.

Joel chased after her. "Tanya!"

Tanya pushed him away and opened the door.

Joel hugged her tightly. "Tanya."

Tanya was furious and shouted angrily, "Joel, what are you trying to do? Let me tell you, even if I haven't completely forgotten about you, I won't be your mistress! I may be spineless, but I still have this bottom line! Let go. If you don't, I'll call the police!"

However, the man behind her did not let go. Just as Tanya angrily picked up her phone and was about to call the police, Joel's voice suddenly sounded. "Uncle Ian is critically ill."

Tanya paused.

Tanya knew who his uncle was. She also knew how important this uncle was to Joel.

She said nothing.

Joel continued, "After Uncle Ian and Yvette separated more than twenty years ago, they never saw each other again. His greatest regret in this life is that he couldn't be with her. Even though he knows that Nora is his daughter, he still wants to follow Yvette to the afterlife."

"Tanya, we're so lucky to meet again. This time, I won't let go."

At the Smiths.

After taking a shower, Nora prepared to go downstairs to eat something.

But as soon as she opened the door, she saw Quentin in front of it.

Although the man was already 26 years old, he still looked very young. His thin body leaned against the wall, and he instantly stood up when he saw her.

Nora raised her eyebrows. "What's the matter?"

Quentin nodded and asked curiously, "Nora, what did you tell Uncle Ian that suddenly gave him the will to survive?"

When Nora heard this, she was silent for a moment.

She suddenly said, "Do you really want to know?"

Quentin nodded.

Nora looked away.

She was not planning to say these words. After all, her mother's last words were filled with danger. Now, she did not even know who or where the enemy was.

She said, "Do you know why I hid my identity as Big Sister?"

Quentin shook his head.

Nora said, "Because my mother said that if I stand out, people might come after me."

Quentin narrowed his eyes at these words.

Nora looked at him. "I told him this."

She was referring to Ian.

They had just reunited, but she was not used to calling that person "father." She could not bring herself to call him "father."

Quentin understood.

Ian felt that Joel and Quentin could protect her well and that she would live well. Therefore, he had lost the will to live and wanted to reunite with Yvette.

But when he found out that his daughter was in danger, as a father, how could he leave?

He had to live and help her get rid of all obstacles!

Especially that danger... Ian subconsciously felt that it had something to do with Yvette leaving him back then!

This was Nora's guess.

Yvette had suddenly run away from home and told the public that she had eloped with someone, but she had given birth to her. In addition to the organization Morris had mentioned...

She felt that Yvette's departure back then might have been to protect Ian.

Ian clearly thought of this as well, and Nora told him, "The first DNA test showed that my genes have mutated. Logically speaking, we could never acknowledge each other. But Mother left my umbilical cord blood behind."

Yvette had preserved Nora's umbilical cord blood because she wanted to have a contingency plan when she was at her wit's end.

If Nora was to ever get involved in this, Ian could protect her appropriately and fulfill his responsibility as a father.

Even if Nora did not need his protection, if this responsibility could make Ian want to live, she did not mind being protected.

However, Quentin suddenly understood something. He looked at Nora seriously. "Nora, don't worry. I will help you guard your identity!"

If there was any danger, he would protect his cousin!

Nora: "?"

In the suburbs.

Joel was hugging Tanya. "I don't know what Nora said to make Uncle Ian want to live, but I know that I can't lose you again, Tanya."

When Uncle Ian lay on the hospital bed and recalled what had happened back then, he said the thing he regretted the most was not insisting on being with Yvette. At that time, Joel had thought of Tanya.

He did not want the tragedy to repeat itself.

When Tanya heard this, she stopped struggling. She closed her eyes tightly as tears started pouring. “Even if I don’t mind Mia’s existence, what about Hillary?”

“Hillary doesn’t matter.”

Joel said, “Tanya, back then, I was tricked into being with her. But all these years, apart from Mia, there’s nothing between us. I gave her the title of fiancée because I didn’t want Mia to not have a mother. But I told her long ago that when Mia turned five and became sensible, we would end the engagement. The last time I chased her away from the Smiths, it was to end the engagement.

Tanya was stunned.

Hillary was clearly saying that they were very loving.

However, compared to Hillary, she trusted Joel more.

She was not a romantic. The reason she chose to believe Joel was because she understood Hillary’s character!

But even so, she did not expect such a misunderstanding to have happened back then.

She asked again, “But her Facebook post...”

Joel explained again, “It was Mia’s birthday yesterday. I took a gift from her at the entrance of her house and left. As for the restaurant, it was only me and Mia. She followed us there by herself.”

Tanya was stunned.

Joel hugged her. “Tanya, I don’t know what else I need to do to make you forgive me, but do you know how happy I was when I heard you say that you were jealous?”

The man no longer had the aura he had in front of outsiders. At this moment, he was as happy as a child who had eaten candy. "At that time, I was thinking that even if you hate me or resent me, I won't let you go this time."

"..."

The wind around them seemed to have stopped.

The birds and insects were all silent.

Tanya only felt that at this moment, her broken heart seemed to have been filled with healing medicine as he comforted her.

She did not know what to say.

She did not know if she should forgive this man for that night.

Even if it was not his fault that he had been schemed against...

She did not know if she could be a good stepmother, either...

She did not even know if it was right for her to pursue happiness like this before her child was found...

Before she could think, the man suddenly held her shoulder and made her slowly turn her head.

The man stopped talking and lowered his head to cover her lips.

That familiar cool breath suddenly invaded her mouth, making her brain explode.

The memories in her body seemed to have returned before her rationality, making her almost give in without any resistance...

She was in a sorry state and quickly retreated.

However, he continued to press her hard and domineeringly. It was as if he wanted to claim sovereignty over every part of her mouth.

"Agh!"

Suddenly, a voice was heard.

The two of them froze and hurriedly looked at the door. They saw Mdm. Florence covering her eyes. "Goodness, Miss Tanya, Mrs. Hunt asked me to see if you were around. You... you two lovebirds can continue. Pretend I didn't see you!"

With that, she ran off in a hurry.

Tanya: "..."

Joel: "..."

The two of them were feeling a little awkward. It did not seem appropriate to continue what had just happened. However, if they did not continue, they would be at a loss if they just stood there.

Tanya said, "Let's talk inside."

She turned and opened the door.

Joel followed behind her obediently. He did not look like the tycoon who ran the business world at all.

After the two of them entered the room, Joel took the initiative to say, "You haven't eaten yet, right? I'll cook something for you."

Tanya nodded in a daze. At that moment, she seemed to have completely forgotten that this was her house.

When Joel entered the kitchen, Tanya had yet to return to her senses.

At this moment, her phone suddenly rang.

She picked up the call without even looking at it and accidentally put it on speaker. Hillary's voice came from the other end. "Tanya, do you think Joel will return to your side just because you're back? Let me tell you, the person he loves is me. He's right beside me now.. Our family of three is going to eat together. Stop daydreaming!"

Daydreaming...

Tanya looked into the kitchen and felt like she was really dreaming.

When she had left sadly five years ago, she thought that she would never have the chance to be with this man in her life. This man was going to disappear from her life.

Who would have thought that five years later, he would be cooking food for her?

As Tanya was thinking, Hillary's voice was heard again. "Why aren't you saying anything? Are you really going to degrade yourself to be a third wheel and come between us? Let me tell you, you better return to Switzerland. Joel chose me five years ago, he'll definitely choose me again. When that time comes, how embarrassed would you be?"

As she spoke, Joel had already walked out of the kitchen.

The villa was very quiet, and there were no car horns around.

Joel had heard the voice on the phone from the beginning.

He looked at Tanya.

Tanya was also looking at him. The slender girl just stood there, her body a little thin from dancing for a long time.

She looked at Joel with her deep eyes and suddenly raised her eyebrows. "She said I'm the third wheel. May I ask Mr. Smith, what's your relationship with Madam Hillary now?"

As soon as she said this, Hillary's voice stopped. However, she then sneered. "What are you doing? Do you think you can scare me like this? Let me tell you, I'm with Joel. If you want to talk to him, I can help you send a message..."

Amidst her chattering, Joel's originally angry eyes froze for a moment when they met the Tanya's. All his anger seemed to dissipate with an evil smile on her lips.

He took a step forward and said, "I have nothing to do with Madam Hillary. The engagement has been broken off. Madam Tanya, what kind of braised noodles do you want to eat? Tomato eggs or green pepper pork?"

The voice on the phone instantly fell silent!

Hillary: “!!”

The entire villa fell silent. Tanya smiled and said, “Green pepper pork. But no ginger, you remember my preferences, right?”

Joel nodded. “Of course. Just wait 10 minutes.”

With that, he glanced at the phone. Just as he was about to return to the kitchen, Hillary smiled mockingly. “Tanya, are you lying to me? How can Joel cook? I’ve been with him for five years, but I’ve never seen him cook! He doesn’t know how to cook at all! Did you find someone with a similar voice to anger me? I’m telling you, I won’t fall for it!”

Tanya recalled how Hillary had deliberately chased him to the restaurant and taken a photo to post on her Facebook. She was not surprised by her way of thinking.

She only smiled and suddenly turned on the camera. She raised her phone and aimed it at Joel. “Here, let me show you. The man I’m looking at not only has a similar voice to Joel, but his appearance is also very similar!”

Her voice was filled with mockery.

When Hillary saw Joel wearing an apron, she was stunned.

She had stayed with the Smiths for five years. Joel had never allowed her to enter his room, and every time she saw him, he was always the high and mighty leader who could stir up New York’s economic scene with just a move of his finger.

Since when was that man willing to fall from grace and start doing housework?

Furthermore, he was holding a tomato in one hand and green pepper in the other. He was clearly cooking!

As Tanya had turned on the camera, he looked up.

His light eyes, which were always smiling, suddenly became sharp as he stared at the camera.

He said calmly, “Miss Hillary, is there anything else?”

Tanya looked at the camera and saw that the camera on Hillary's side suddenly shook and fell to the ground. Her hands must have gone soft from shock.

This woman had been like this since she was young. She was a fox exploiting the tiger's might and was extremely hypocritical.

Tanya could not be bothered to talk to her anymore and hung up.

She chuckled softly. She looked up and realized that Joel had not entered the kitchen but was staring at her.

The man was wearing a white shirt and an apron, looking just like he did five years ago.

Tanya suddenly realized that the five years overseas seemed to have lost their distance.

As she was thinking, she saw Joel's eyes gradually turn deep and hot, making her heart beat wildly.

She hurriedly looked away and said, "There are still eight minutes!"

Only then did Joel retract his gaze and nod.

After he left, Tanya hurriedly patted her chest and cheeks.

She must stay alert!

She could not be attracted by his stunning beauty!

Eight minutes later, the noodles were done.

Tanya went upstairs and had already changed into her casual home clothes. Looking at the two bowls of steaming noodles on the dining table, she picked up her fork. Just as she was about to eat, she heard Joel say, "Wait a minute."

She paused and realized that Joel had brought a bottle of hot sauce over.

Tanya stared at the bottle and suddenly thought of a time five years ago.

At that time, she was still in university. As the living expenses from her mother were not enough, she often had to cook for herself.

Noodles were her favorite.

However, she only had one pot back then, so it was inconvenient to stir-fry vegetables. Therefore, every time, she would add a sufficient amount of noodles and vegetables before adding hot sauce.

Joel had always known this habit of hers.

In the past five years, after she went overseas, the thing she was most unused to was eating. Occasionally, she would want to eat noodles, but without hot sauce, it was as if something was missing.

While she was in a daze, Joel opened the bottle and handed it to her.

She dug a big spoonful and put it in the bowl of noodles. The thick sauce immediately floated on it and the fragrance wafted over.

She picked some noodles up with her fork and took a bite excitedly—but she was stunned.

She looked up slowly at the bottle of hot sauce.

The packaging had already changed.

As for the taste of the sauce, although it was still her favorite flavor, it was no longer the same as before.

For some reason, her heart suddenly sank.

A broken mood instantly attacked her, making her lower her head.

Indeed.

In five years, everything familiar had changed.

Nothing would stand there and wait for her.

It was like losing her child.

Even if she had returned to the country and she and Joel were still the same as they were five years ago, this fact could not be hidden.

She became depressed.

Joel looked at her and panic surged in his heart. He asked carefully, "What's wrong? The noodles don't taste good?"

A hot tear fell into the bowl.

Tanya suddenly looked up.. "There's something I need to tell you."

Joel saw her grave expression and put down his fork. He stared at her. "What?"

His heart suddenly pounded violently.

He didn't know what Tanya was going to say, much less what she was thinking... but he suddenly felt that what she was going to say next was very important.

Tanya looked at the man and said impulsively, "We had a..."

The word "child" hovered around her mouth for a moment, but she could not say it.

Joel was stunned. "What?"

He searched his memory hard. They had an agreement? An oath? Or what?

He was afraid that he would anger the girl in front of him if he did not remember.

Tanya opened her mouth.

She suddenly thought of the parents who had been searching for their children overseas.

Some mothers broke down, and some fathers were very calm. However, she had seen them turn around and cry secretly in a corner after comforting their wives.

She suddenly asked, "You love Mia very much, right?"

Joel did not know why she had suddenly changed the topic, but he still followed along and said, "Yes, I love her very much."

He suddenly reached out and held her hand. "I know that I will never let you down in this matter. Her existence is something I cannot control, but her existence makes me feel warm. Tanya, that is a kind of satisfaction from family ties. You understand me, right?"

How could Tanya not understand?

After all, she and Joel were both children who lacked love!

Even though Joel was born in the Smiths, his parents did not like him. There was even a time when they thought of abandoning him, making him feel very insecure.

As for Tanya...

After her mother remarried, she lost her home.

When the two of them walked together back then, didn't it feel like they were hugging each other for warmth?

That was why she was so happy when she gave birth to that little angel and thought that she finally had a family in this world and someone with her blood.

That was why she had searched the entire world for her child like a madman without even having seen the child once.

When Joel saw that she was in a strange mood, he mistakenly thought that Tanya would mind if he mentioned Mia. He thought about it and said, "I know it's very selfish of me to make you accept Mia, but Tanya, Mia is really a very obedient child. You'll fall in love with her. Really..."

He was afraid that Tanya would suggest sending the child away.

No matter how much he loved Tanya, he could not do that.

After all, he was a father!

Seeing that he had misunderstood, Tanya waved her hand and said, "That's not what I meant."

As soon as she said this, Joel heaved a sigh of relief. It was obvious how much he liked Mia.

Tanya asked again, "Do you like children?"

Joel nodded. "Of course. If it was our child, I would like it even more."

These words made Tanya's heart ache again.

She lowered her head and took a bite of noodles.

The hot noodles slid into her mouth, but she took another bite as if she did not know it was hot.

She ate mouthful after mouthful. When she was done, she looked up.

Joel probed, "What did you say we have?"

Tanya took out a tissue and wiped her mouth before replying, "It's nothing."

Joel immediately tried to recall any vow the two had made. However, after thinking for a while, he still could not remember it.

After he ate the noodles, Tanya took his bowl and washed it in the kitchen. Then, she said, "It's getting late, you should go back."

Joel: "..."

He actually did not want to leave tonight, but since Tanya had said so, if he insisted on staying, it would only make Tanya feel annoyed.

At the thought of this, Joel decided that he had to take things slow and not get things done in one go.

He took out his car keys and walked slowly to the door. "Good night."

"Good night."

Tanya replied softly in the kitchen.

She heard Joel walk to the door and stand there for a long time. Finally, he pushed the door open. When she heard the door close with a bang, she turned off the tap.

She stood in the kitchen for a long time before walking out.

Looking at the neat apron hanging in the living room, she thought of Joel's OCD personality and couldn't help but lower her eyes.

She sighed heavily and went upstairs.

She lay on the sofa and quietly stared at the night sky.

She did not know where her child was in the world right now, if he was hungry, or if he had any clothes to wear. She did not know how long she was thinking when her phone suddenly rang.

She picked it up and took a look. It was a call from Hillary.

She picked up the call and Hillary's calm voice was heard. "Are you two still together?"

Tanya sneered and said softly, "Yes, he's taking a shower. Why?"

"You're lying!"

Hillary suddenly smiled and said, "I just called Mia and she said Dad has come home! Tanya, I'm warning you. Stay away from Joel! Even if you seduced him now and he still likes you, Mia is the person he loves the most!"

Tanya clenched her fists.

She lowered her eyes. Before she could say anything, Hillary said, "Mia is everything to him! So what if you two still have feelings for each other? At the end of the night, won't he still go home obediently and coax the child to sleep? Tanya, if you know what's good for you, you better leave him!"

Tanya's voice was very low. "What if I don't?"

"You don't? Do you know that everyone outside knows that he and I are engaged and that Mia is our daughter?! Mia's sake, he won't even announce our separation to the public. In front of outsiders, I will always be Madam Smith! And you, Tanya, are just one of his lovers! What makes you think your status is enough to make him give up his reputation?"

The Jones.

After Hillary shouted this in anger, she finally felt at ease. She sneered and said, "No matter what, I will always be the wife, and you are just a mistress!"

Just like it was back then, I'm the daughter of a wealthy family, and you're just a fake daughter!"

With that, she hung up.

She had been chased out of the Smiths for so long. There were many guesses outside, but because of Mia, the Smiths had never spread the news that they had broken off the engagement.

She wanted to use this matter to agitate Tanya and let her know that she was nothing to Joel!

Any woman would mind this, right?

As she was thinking about this, the doorbell rang.

The servant went to open the door and exclaimed in surprise, "Mr. Smith?"

Hillary was stunned. She turned around and saw Joel walking in from the door!

It was already so late. Why was he at the Jones' residence?!

Hillary recalled that when she called Tanya today, Joel was also there. Later on, he did not pursue the matter, but now, he was here...

Her heart sank, but her face was still filled with smiles as she walked over. "Joel, you're here..."

When the Joneses heard the servant's words, they hurriedly walked down from the study upstairs to welcome him. "Mr. Smith, what brings you here? If there's anything you need, you can call us to the Smiths."

Joel was still smiling. His eyes were curved, and when he did not speak, he looked very gentle, like a smiling tiger.

However, Hillary could see the coldness in his eyes.

She swallowed and jolted.

Joel looked at her and slowly said, "I came personally today because I thought that after my engagement with Miss Hillary was broken off, she seemed to have been dishonest."

As soon as he said this, Hillary's father was stunned. He looked directly at Hillary. "What? When did you guys break off the engagement?"

Joel lowered his eyes and said indifferently, "Why? Didn't Miss Hillary tell you?"

Hillary had been chased back this time and stayed for a few days now, but she had not mentioned the engagement at all.

Mr. Jones looked at Hillary. "Hillary, what's going on?"

Madam Jones said, "Mr. Smith, did Hillary do something wrong to make you angry? Tell us, we'll get her to change. How can you suddenly call off the engagement?"

Joel looked at Madam Jones.

To be precise, she was also Tanya's mother.

Back then, Tanya's mother had remarried and given birth to Hillary.

Hillary was a year younger than Tanya, but their identities were completely different.

One was a burden who had been brought along into her marriage with a wealthy family, and the other was a daughter of a wealthy family. Hillary had looked down on Tanya since she was young.

As for Tanya, she had a stubborn personality. After being slandered by Hillary a few times, Madam Jones had determined that Tanya's personality was naughty and mischievous, like that of her father, who had disappeared. Therefore, she would hit and scold her!

Joel's attitude toward Madam Jones was distant and cold. He did not bother being polite with her. "Madam Jones, you can discipline her further for her mistakes. Now, we're talking about breaking off the engagement."

He took out the agreement he had signed with Hillary back then. "In the agreement back then, we said that when Mia turns five, the engagement would be automatically broken off. Now, it's time."

The Jones parents were stunned. They looked at Hillary in disbelief. "Hillary, you..."

Hillary bit her lip and cried. "Joel, I was wrong. I really know I was wrong. I didn't go looking for Tanya on purpose. I was just indignant. You chased me out of the Smiths because she suddenly returned, right?"

Tanya?

Madam Jones instantly became even more furious. "What do you mean? Did Tanya cross into your family again? Joel, you can't treat Hillary like this. Tanya was born to be a bad hooligan!"

As soon as she said this, Joel suddenly reached out and smashed the teacup on the table to the ground!

Smash!

The sound of the teacup shattering resounded throughout the living room, causing the crying Hillary and Madam Jones, who was scolding Tanya, to stop abruptly.

Everyone looked at Joel in disbelief.

Joel lowered his eyes. "I've already contacted the reporters. They will announce that I have broken off my engagement with Miss Hillary tomorrow..."

As soon as he said this, Mr. Jones said, "Mr. Smith, is there no room for change in this matter?"

Joel looked at him and said firmly, "No."

Mr. Jones sighed heavily.

Hillary and Madam Jones still wanted to say something, but Mr. Jones shook his head at them.

The two of them could only shut their mouths.

Mr. Jones began to complain. "Mr. Smith, we understand that you don't like Hillary. We won't force you. We can break off the engagement, but Mia is her biological daughter. You can't stop them from meeting."

Hillary and Madam Jones looked at each other.

Yes.

As long as Mia was still around, Hillary could interfere in Joel and Tanya's lives. As long as she could, Joel and Tanya could forget about living a quiet life!

Hillary clenched her fists tightly. She was already thinking that if Mia fell ill in the future, she would definitely have to stay with the Smiths and take care of her.

If Mia was hurt, she would definitely ask Tanya why she abused her child!

As she was thinking about her future plans, Joel seemed to have seen through her thoughts and said directly, "Yes, I won't stop them from meeting. Every six months, I'll send Mia overseas to meet with Miss Hillary."

Mr. Jones was stunned.

Hillary was stunned. "Go overseas? You don't have to go overseas. I'm just in the country... You don't have to send Mia anywhere. I can just meet her at the Smiths..."

However, the moment she said this, she heard Joel say, "After our engagement is broken off, you'll be in a bad mood, and will go overseas for a vacation. You won't accept our financial support and will travel for five years. After five years, you can return to the country."

Mr. Jones was stunned. "She won't accept financial support? Then how is she going to live?"

Joel glanced at Mr. Jones and said casually, "Aren't so many international students still alive?"

Madam Jones shouted angrily, "No! Hillary has never suffered like this in her entire life! She can't go overseas!"

She had never suffered before, but Tanya could suffer?

Joel had investigated before. Tanya did not have any living expenses overseas. Everything was earned by working part-time!

His attitude was still very calm, and there was even a smile on his face. He looked directly at Mr. Jones. "President Jones, is the collaboration between the Joneses and Smiths going well?"

Mr. Jones: !!!

He immediately understood that Joel was threatening him!

If they did not send Hillary away, the Smiths would terminate all cooperation with the Joneses!

The Joneses had been prospering these years because they had relied on the Smiths. After leaving the Smiths... Joel would definitely let everyone in New York know that the Joneses had offended him.

At that time, even without Joel personally making a move, someone might help him deal with the Joneses!

He gulped and hurriedly stood up. "I understand what you mean, Mr. Smith. I'll handle Hillary's matters here. She'll go overseas."

Joel stood up. "It's good that Mr. Jones understands. I'll leave, then."

He did not even look at Hillary as he left the house.

Hillary was stunned on the spot.

Five years...

Another five years!

Tanya had been overseas for more than five years!

Hillary understood. Joel had arranged everything for her!

He was going to send her overseas for five years to help Tanya vent her anger!

She roared, "Joel! I gave birth to Mia for you! How can you treat me like this?!"

Joel stopped in his tracks and turned to look at her. "If you hadn't given birth to Mia, do you think you would have had the chance to go overseas?"

Upon hearing this, Hillary jolted.

She swallowed.

Mia was her protective charm!

At the Smiths.

After Nora finished showering, she walked out and saw Pete standing there, looking at her seriously. "Mommy, we're going to the amusement park to play tomorrow. Can we bring Mia along?"

Nora asked, "Why?"

Pete said, "I didn't even know it was Mia's birthday yesterday. I didn't give her a gift either. I want to take her out to play tomorrow."

Birthday?

Nora was stunned.

She remembered clearly that Tanya's child's birthday was five days ago.

Mia was only five days away from that child's birthday...

Was this... a coincidence?

She narrowed her eyes.

Was Mia really Hillary's daughter?

The reason why Nora knew about the birthday of the children was that on that day every year, Tanya would be in low spirits.

When she was overseas, no matter where Nora was, she would always be by Tanya's side on this day.

The two of them did nothing. Nora would sleep while Tanya would be in the room, dancing to the birthday gift she had bought long ago.

Usually, when she woke up, Tanya would be covered in sweat, but she would not feel tired. If she continued like this, she would eventually collapse.

Every year, she would fall seriously ill.

It was as if she wanted to use this method to vent her longing for her child for the next year.

Therefore, Nora remembered her child's birthday very clearly.

She couldn't help but doubt Mia's identity.

Tanya's child and Mia were both Joel's children. Furthermore, they were only five days apart...

She narrowed her eyes and began to think about the relationship between Mia and Tanya...

"Mommy, can I?"

Pete's words interrupted Nora's thoughts.

She looked at him and nodded. "Alright, I'll ask your uncle when he comes back."

If she took Mia out to play, she would definitely ask Joel.

With that, she yawned loudly and turned to walk to the bed. "It's already so late. Why isn't he back yet? I'll lie down and wait for him!"

Pete: "..."

As expected, half an hour later, there were uniform breathing sounds on the bed.

Pete sighed helplessly and put down the pen in his hand.

He walked to the bed and gently covered Nora with the blanket. Then, he went out and downstairs to sit on the sofa in the living room.

When Joel returned home, this was the scene he saw.

Pete was clearly sleepy and anxious. His little head was nodding off, but he had still forced himself not to sleep.

Joel looked at the time. It was already 11 PM. He walked over and asked, "What's wrong?"

Pete woke up suddenly and said excitedly, "Uncle, you're finally back!"

He jumped off the sofa and looked at Joel. "Tomorrow, Dad and Mom will take me and Cherry... to the amusement park. I want to bring Mia along, okay?"

Joel looked at him and touched his head. After some thought, he said, "Okay."

Pete heaved a sigh of relief.

Joel bent down and picked him up before carrying him upstairs.

After taking him to the bedroom, he asked, "Where's your mother?"

Pete said helplessly, "Mommy said that she would lie down and wait for you to come back to ask you. In the end, she fell asleep..."

Joel: "..."

Joel brought Pete to his room and watched him shower and change into his pajamas. Then, he sent Pete to Nora's bedroom.

He watched as he tiptoed in and returned to the bedroom in relief.

At the same time, he could not help but think that Nora was such a worry-free mother. Be it with Cherry or Pete, they were both so sensible and independent.

After returning to his room, he washed up and lay on the bed. He took out his phone and opened Tanya's Facebook.

Her profile picture was of a mature grape.

Joel stared at his phone screen for a long time, not knowing what to send her. Just as he was in a daze, he suddenly saw the words "Typing..." on the dialog box.

Joel was instantly delighted.

What was Tanya going to say to him?

However, after waiting for more than ten minutes, she did not say anything.

Joel couldn't help but send a message: "?"

Tanya replied: "?"

Joel: "Where's the small composition?"

Tanya: "What small composition?"

Joel smiled and typed: "You've been typing for almost twenty minutes. You should have written a small composition with 800 words by now? Where is it?"

Tanya: "!!!"

Tanya: "I wasn't sending you a message!"

Tanya: "You're mistaken!"

Tanya: "Oh, I was watching television and accidentally opened your chat window."

Seeing that she was not being honest, Joel continued to type with a smile. "What are you watching?"

Tanya: "A show on FOX TV."

Chapter 364 - The Plan of Saving Nora Novel Free

No. 007 was a little taken aback. "She's very big and muscular? That's impossible."

Quentin: "?"

No. 007 went on. "Big Sister does regular martial arts training, so it's impossible that she would be really big. All strong martial artists need physiques that move smoothly. I heard that there are people here who impersonate Big Sister to make money and stuff like that."

No. 007 then looked at Nora. "Big Sister's figure should be like No. 028's instead."

Nora: "..."

She took a long look at No. 007, thinking that it was likely that he might have already noticed something. However, he didn't press the issue, so Nora didn't say anything.

She still needed to keep her identity a secret.

Quentin lifted his chin and became very proud. "You have good foresight!"

No. 007 chuckled. Then, he pointed to the dining area next to them and suggested, "Let's sit down and have a bite? I think it's your match soon."

Before Nora could say anything, another low and deep voice reached them. "No, it's fine."

The few of them looked over and saw Justin walking over with Cherry in his arms.

Cherry was still wearing her half-mask and was holding a lollipop. Her big eyes blinked as she looked at them.

Justin walked over, stopped in front of Nora, and faced No. 007. "Thanks."

Then, he took out a chocolate bar and handed it to Nora. "This will replenish your energy quickly if you're hungry."

Nora: "..."

Next to them, Quentin's lip corners spasmed.

Before this, he had felt that the pretty boy wasn't worthy of Big Sister, but now that he knew that his cousin was Big Sister, his requirements for his cousin-in-law had immediately become even higher.

He tapped Justin's shoulder.

Justin looked at him.

Quentin sneered, "Aren't you being a little too jealous? I can sense it even from a long distance."

"..."

Justin didn't say anything. Quentin lowered his voice and said, "Kid, you're pretty bold, huh!"

Justin raised his eyebrows. "Oh?"

Quentin glanced at Nora. "Do you know her true identity?"

"Yes."

Quentin clicked his tongue a couple of times and said, "You're pretty bold to have the guts to cuckold Justin Hunt. You gotta protect your personal information, though, get it? Otherwise, even my cousin won't be able to protect you! There are only two people in New York whom no one must ever mess with—one of them is Joel Smith, my cousin, and the other is Justin Hunt!"

Justin: "..."

Him cuckolding himself... Yep, if it wasn't because he was his cousin-in-law, he really felt like punching Quentin. But now... well, this was quite alright, too.

The next five matches they played sent them straight into Class E.

The five matches were no sweat for the three of them. After all, with Big Sister and Big Brother, as well as the third-best fighter in the world, they completely crushed everyone else.

While they were crushing their opponents here, Victor's team also won two matches and gave their opponents crushing defeats.

After finishing the five matches in succession, Nora yawned and stepped out of the ring.

As soon as they got out, Quentin said, "B... Sis, No. 007 has been staring at you."

Nora: "??"

She followed his gaze and looked over. Sure enough, Nora found No. 007 sitting at the bottom of the ring. However, he was staring straight at her and making no secret about it. There was admiration—as well as scrutiny—in his eyes.

Nora raised her brows.

Quentin then went to Justin. "It's a love rival, bro!"

Justin was speechless when he saw how eager Quentin was to throw the world into chaos.

No. 007 got up and walked straight toward them after the match.

However, before he could even come close, Nora and Justin had turned around very naturally and walked to the door. They didn't give him any chance to get close to them.

This took No. 007 by surprise. He smiled wryly, stopped in his tracks, and took the hint. He didn't chase after them anymore.

But just as the two of them were about to leave the arena, Victor and the other two men in his team suddenly rushed over. They moved very quickly. When they were passing by, Victor suddenly whispered, "You're the real Big Sister, aren't you?"

Nora was taken aback. Then, she narrowed her eyes and looked at him. Her lips curled into a smile, but she didn't admit to it. "I don't know what you're trying to say."

However, Victor was sure of her identity. He sneered, "I can accept losing to you, then. But it won't be the same next time!"

The few of them then left.

Nora ignored him. While she and Justin continued walking toward the exit, another man wearing a white feathered mask entered.

He looked rather unique, and coughed a few times with every two steps he took. He looked ill.

In addition, he coughed very hard. It sounded as though he was about to cough up his lungs.

A man was supporting him at the side.

Someone whispered, "He came to the arena even when he's so sick and so weak? He must be here just to join in the fun and watch the show, right?"

Unexpectedly, the man walked up to the registration counter. As he coughed, a rich and mellow voice rang out. “Sorry, I have already signed up, but I only just came to participate in the tournament today. I wonder if my eligibility still stands?”

The staff member replied, “This is a little difficult. It’s already been so long...”

During the exchange, the black-clad bodyguard supporting the man handed the guy a check.

The guy accepted the check in a very practiced manner, and immediately changed his tone without any principles whatsoever. “Of course, it still stands... What’s your registration number?”

“...”

The corners of Nora’s lips spasmed.

The martial arts association must be as poor as church mice now, right? They really took all the money they could get.

After bidding farewell to Justin in the car park, Nora took Quentin’s car back home.

On the way, Quentin suddenly said, “Nora, someone’s following us.”

Someone was following them?

Nora looked at the back through the rearview mirror—it was filled with cars.

Quentin lived up to his identity as a man in secret forces. His senses were sharper and keener than even hers. She also sensed it after Quentin brought it up.

“Can you throw them off?” Nora asked.

“Of course.” Quentin said triumphantly, “Don’t you know whose car you’re in right now? How dare they tail me. They sure think really highly of themselves!”

He sneered, “I’m the only one who can tail other people in New York. No one can tail me!”

He suddenly turned the steering wheel all the way to the side at the traffic light and drifted straight into a small side road.

Nora looked at the rearview mirror—two black cars clearly looked a little confused because they hadn't expected him to suddenly break the traffic rules and go somewhere else.

However, another two cars soon followed after them from the side.

Quentin discovered their presence earlier than she did. He sneered, "Tsk, it seems like there are a lot of people interested in Big Sister, Nora! Don't worry, I will definitely keep you safe!"

He changed the direction he was going in again.

The car went back and forth in the familiar New York streets. Quentin was very professional. Half an hour later, when he turned to another side road, there were no longer any cars following them at the back.

Obviously, Quentin had successfully thrown them all off.

Quentin looked at her. He looked as if he was asking for praise as he asked, "How was that?"

He lifted his chin.

Nora gave him a thumbs up. "Fantastic."

Quentin couldn't suppress the smile at the corners of his lips.

His idol was none other than Big Sister. It simply felt too blissful to be praised by his idol. He must do even better than this!

While Quentin was getting fired up, his cell phone suddenly rang.

When he answered, Joel's voice came from the other side. "Where is Nora?"

Quentin looked at the woman in the backseat. "She's in the car with me. What's up?"

Joel said, "Come to the hospital right away!"

Quentin: "?"

He subconsciously asked, "Is there something wrong with Uncle Ian?"

Joel sighed. "You'll know once you're here."

"Okay."

Quentin immediately took a U-turn and raced to the hospital.

When Nora heard the call from Joel, she knew at once that something must have happened in the hospital.

When the two arrived at the hospital, sure enough, they saw Joel pacing back and forth nervously in the corridor. When he heard their footsteps, he immediately looked at Nora and said, "Quick, Nora, go into the operating room and save him!"

Nora entered the operating room right away.

It was only after she went in that Quentin asked, "What happened?"

Joel replied, "Uncle Ian's heart suddenly stopped beating. They are trying to save him now."

Quentin was stunned. His heart sank.

In all honesty, he had never taken Ian's illness seriously because Ian had always been ill for as long as he could remember.

Therefore, he hadn't panicked even when Nora operated on Ian previously.

But when he heard that Ian had a cardiac arrest, he couldn't help but blank out. He immediately said, "That's impossible! It's impossible that anything would go wrong when B... Nora's the one operating on him!"

Had Nora just been Anti, Quentin might still have had doubts.

But she was Big Sister.

She was the famous Big Sister in the martial arts circle. There was no way she would do anything she wasn't confident about!

Joel glanced at him when he heard him.

Based on his understanding of Quentin, Quentin should have already formed doubts about Nora a long time ago. Yet he was so sure about it at the moment...

It wasn't the time for him to be thinking about that, though. He said, "It's Uncle Ian himself who... suddenly pulled out the IV needle when he woke up."

Quentin: "..."

Joel sighed. "Uncle Ian still doesn't have any will to live. He doesn't want to live anymore."

Quentin was in such a panic that he was going around in circles. "What should we do? Didn't you tell Uncle Ian that Nora is his daughter?"

Joel said, "That's exactly why I asked you guys to come. I'm hoping that Nora can find a way to keep him alive."

Quentin nodded.

It was unknown just how much time went by before the operating room's lights finally went out.

The attending doctor then came out and looked at the two of them.

Both Joel and Quentin looked at him hopefully but instead saw the doctor shake his head instead.

Joel and Quentin were dumbfounded.

The doctor said, "Anti lives up to her name as a master surgeon. She once again pulled the old gentleman back from the brink of death. He's awake now, but..."

The doctor sighed. "He still does not have the will to live."

No will to live... even though he was awake...

Joel panicked. "Didn't Nora tell him that she is his daughter?"

"She did, but it wasn't of any use."

The attending doctor then stepped aside. "You... Why don't you go in and see him for the last time?"

Joel and Ian put on sterile gowns and entered the operating room.

Ian lay on the bed. The thin man looked just like a sheet of paper, which easily showed that he hadn't been eating well. He was ridiculously thin.

Nora was standing next to him blankly. Her eyes were full of perplexity and doubts as if she couldn't understand anything. She asked, "Why don't you want to live? Even if it's for my sake?"

Ian's voice was very thin. He said weakly, "I'm sorry."

He coughed and slowly said, "I'm very happy that Yvette didn't betray me... but when I think of how she has been all by herself in that lonely world for so long, I feel so awful. I should have figured it out earlier. I should have gone to keep her company earlier. Nora..."

He reached out a trembling hand to Nora.

Nora pursed her lips and held his hand. He said, "Please forgive Dad for being so selfish. I was waiting all this time for the truth to surface, waiting to find out why she had left me back then. But now that I finally know it, I suddenly feel guilty and blame myself for it. It's no longer important why she had done what she did. Back then, no matter what the reason for her departure was, I shouldn't have doubted her. She must have had reasons that she couldn't tell me. All I could do for her back then was to let go of her, and now, the only thing I can do for her is to go and keep her company..."

He looked at Joel and Quentin who had entered.

Joel and Quentin's eyes were all red. They took a step forward. Ian said to the two of them, "Joel, Quentin, Nora is my daughter. I put her in your care now."

Joel choked up and shouted, "Uncle Ian, you should take care of your daughter yourself!"

Ian smiled wryly and said, "I'm tired. I really am. I've spent all these years like a walking dead. Leaving is the greatest relief I can ever have."

All three youngsters looked at him blankly.

All of them were dumbfounded.

No one, no matter who, had ever imagined that letting Ian know that Nora was his daughter would be the last straw to break the camel's back and send him to his death.

Nora clenched her fists.

Were they going to be separated by death when they had only just reunited as father and daughter?

No!

Nora would never allow such a thing to happen!

Quentin's eyes were red and swollen as he shouted, "Uncle Ian, take care of your daughter yourself! Live and get up. Otherwise, I'll beat her up every day..."

Joel, who had always been a steady person, could not help but say, "Uncle Ian, aren't you afraid that I will be selfish in the future and take over the Smiths without giving Nora anything? Also, Nora is going to marry Justin. Aren't you afraid that she will be bullied if she marries over? She's without her father and even comes from the countryside. Now, the Hunts look down on her! She needs your support!"

Ian muttered in a weak voice with his eyes closed, "Joel, Quentin, you won't..."

"I will! I really will! Uncle Ian, wake up. You can't die!"

"Uncle Ian! Get up..."

Joel and Quentin shouted as their tears fell like rain.

The person lying on the bed had been exceptionally powerful since they were young. But now, he was weak and had been sick most of the year, he was very dispirited and would not wake up. It was as if nothing gave him hope for life.

However, the two of them would never forget that when their parents had abandoned them, it was Uncle Ian who came forward to raise them, calling them good children!

Especially Joel...

If not for Uncle Ian, he would have been chased out of the Smiths when he was three years old. He would have become like a stray dog and starved to death on the streets!

It was Uncle Ian... Not only had he given him the honor of being a man of the Smiths, but he had also let him take over the Smiths.

Everything Joel had now was given to him by Uncle Ian.

Joel held Uncle Ian's hand tightly. "Uncle Ian..."

Just as the two of them were thinking of ways to make him stay, a cold voice suddenly sounded. "Can I speak to him alone?"

Joel and Quentin looked at the person in a daze. It was Nora.

She stood at the side. Perhaps it was because they had not known each other since they were young, but her current expression was a little cold and distant.

The stunned expression in her eyes had disappeared as she stared at the man on the bed.

Even though her voice was emotionless and she appeared too calm, Joel and Quentin looked at each other. The two of them stood up and walked out together.

Before leaving, Joel took one last look inside.

He watched as the girl suddenly walked to the bed and said, "You're very good to them."

Ian smiled bitterly. "I didn't do my part as a father."

Nora suddenly said, "Now, you have a chance to fulfill your responsibilities."

After saying this, she suddenly lowered her head and whispered into Ian's ear. Ian's eyes widened suddenly.

When Joel closed the door, he heard Ian's last sentence. His voice trembled as he asked, "Are... are you serious?"

Two minutes later.

The door to the operating room was opened. Nora pushed Ian's bed out of the operating room.

Ian was lying there with his eyes closed.

Joel's heart sank. He exchanged glances with Quentin and the two of them looked at Nora. Quentin even swallowed his saliva and asked, "Uncle Ian, he..."

"He's not dead."

Nora's words sounded very calm, making Joel and Quentin heave a sigh of relief.

Quentin asked tentatively, "Then he's..."

"I gave him two injections and he fell asleep. He needs to rest. In the next few days, don't disturb him in any case. No matter how powerful this lion is, his body has been hollowed out. His body needs to be raised from the roots."

With that, she looked at Joel. "I have a few medicinal recipes here. I'll write them down for you later."

Joel hurriedly nodded. "I'll arrange for someone to cook for Uncle Ian every day."

The three of them walked into the VIP ward together.

After entering the ward, Nora checked Ian's vital signs. After everything was normal, she said, "He won't die for the time being."

Joel probed, "Then... after the time being..."

Nora: "If you follow the schedule I'm giving you and are obedient, he can live out his natural life."

Joel heaved a sigh of relief.

Nora took out her phone and opened the memo. Her slender fingers quickly typed something on it for a while. She sent Joel the things to take note of and future treatment plans.

Joel took a look and realized that it was all basic care. The staff in the hospital could do it.

Quentin asked curiously, "Aren't you going to take care of Uncle Ian personally in the future?"

Nora glanced at him. "I don't know how to take care of people."

Quentin: "..."

After doing all this, Nora walked out. "I'm going to see Old Maddy."

Ever since Old Maddy was rescued, he had been in the hospital for treatment. After all, he had been too severely poisoned. Furthermore, Old Maddy had never recovered from his crazy illness.

Nora went to Old Maddy's ward again. When she was about to go home, she saw Quentin.

She raised her eyebrows and asked, "What are you doing here?"

Quentin coughed. "I'm waiting for you to take you home."

"..."

Nora said helplessly, "Alright."

After the two of them returned home, Nora went upstairs and saw Pete. She kissed her son's forehead and was about to take a shower when Pete suddenly said mysteriously, "Mommy, did you know? Uncle Joel came to pick Mia and me up just now. But he then later got the chauffeur to bring us back and went to chase after God-mom Tanya."

Nora: "??"

When she went to see Old Maddy, Joel had arranged for the medical staff to pick up Mia and Pete from school. She did not expect him to go after Tanya?

Why was he looking for Tanya?

Nora raised her eyebrows.

She smiled and touched Pete's head. "I understand."

Pete blinked and suddenly said, "Mommy, is God-mom Tanya going to be my aunt soon?"

Nora: "?"

This little fellow knew quite a lot. She asked, "Do you want her to be your aunt?"

"Yes!"

Pete nodded seriously. "God-mom treats Mia well."

Nora sensed something. "You mean, Mia's mommy isn't good to her?"

Pete thought for a moment. "No, she isn't."

Nora frowned and pulled a chair over casually. She sat in front of Pete with interest. "Come, talk properly."

Pete's expression was stern as he said seriously, "These are all my speculations."

Nora had always thought that Mia's mother treated her well. After all, who would be cruel to their own daughter? It was because Hillary and Joel were on bad terms that the two of them did not get together.

However, she did not expect Pete's next words to completely subvert her understanding.

Pete said, "Mommy, if I liked mathematics very much, would you stop me from learning it?"

Nora: "Of course not."

Everyone knew that Cherry liked to play games. In order to make Cherry happy, she had agreed to let her play. She only limited the time spent on playing games.

Pete nodded. "Mia's mother knows she likes to dance, but she doesn't let her learn. Moreover, Mia is very afraid of her mother."

Afraid?

No child should be afraid of their mother, right?

Nora felt that Pete might have used the wrong word. "Is it because her mommy is very strict?"

Pete shook his head. "No."

He thought for a moment and said, "The tyrant is very strict too, but I know that he does it for my own good. Sometimes, I go on a hunger strike to fight against him because I know he will eventually give in."

"But Mia's fear of her mommy comes from the fact that she's not sure her mommy would ever give in.

Nora was stunned.

Although Pete's words were messy, she understood them.

Because Justin was his father, even if he was stern every day or even hit Pete, Pete still respected Justin and was not afraid of him.

But Mia's mother was like a stranger and a bad person to Mia. Mia didn't even feel safe with her.

She frowned. "Did Mia tell you all this?"

Pete shook his head. "I observed it myself."

Nora frowned.

If what Pete said was true, Nora would really have to reconsider this matter. However, Pete was only five years old. His conclusion could not be trusted so easily.

Nora said seriously, "Okay, Pete. I understand. I'll take note of this and observe Mia. If it's true, I'll tell your uncle."

At the same time, she frowned.

Was there really a mother in this world who abused her own child?

In the suburbs.

Tanya drove in and looked at the shameless man.

After work, he took the opportunity while she had yet to lock the car to suddenly open the back door and sneak into her car.

She wanted to scold him back then, but his words made her shut her mouth. "Keep arguing if you want everyone to know about our relationship. If you don't, then drive."

Tanya: "..."

She was speechless and anxious.

However, as a kindergarten teacher, she did not want to make a scene in school. She gritted her teeth in anger, but she still drove home. On the way, she switched on her mocking mode. "Mr. Smith, may I ask what my relationship with you is?"

Joel: "I'm your ex-boyfriend."

"..."

"Or rather, it's because I can't forget my ex-girlfriend."

When Tanya heard this, for some reason, her face turned red. She shook her head and sneered. "Mr. Smith, you have a fiancée and daughter now. You're harassing me like this, understand?"

Joel lowered his eyes. "Tanya, you were so angry yesterday. Were you jealous?"

Jealous?

Tanya choked on his words.

However, she immediately realized that from the moment she saw Hillary's Facebook post, she had indeed started to feel angry and humiliated.

Previously, she had been deceived by Mia and Joel.

Even after the two of them had left, she still felt happy for a while.

It was Hillary's post that had brought her back to reality. She suddenly realized that Mia was Joel and Hillary's daughter, not hers!

Why was she so excited about Mia's birthday?

She did not sleep much that night.

Before she returned, as she thought about her plans after returning to the country, she had told herself not to contact Joel ever again. But why were they involved again?

She was angry with herself and even more furious with Joel for teasing her.

He was making her sink deeper into it step by step.

She did not say anything else along the way until they arrived at the villa. However, after stopping the car, she did not get out. Instead, she said calmly, "Yes, I was jealous."

Joel was taken aback.

Tanya lowered her head. He could not see the girl's expression, but he could see that her shoulders were trembling slightly. She had never cried much since she was young.

Why was she crying now?

As he was thinking, she chuckled. "I admit it. Are you satisfied?"

She looked up and asked with a smile, "Mr. Smith, are you satisfied with me admitting that I'm a b*tch who covets someone else's fiancé?"

"You just had to make me admit that I'll always be lowly in front of you. Are you satisfied?"

The three "are you satisfied?" encompassed everything she had suffered all these years!

In Switzerland, she had no lack of suitors, but she did not like anyone. What she was unwilling to admit was that she had never let go of this man.

Even if this man was with the sister she hated the most.

As she smiled, tears suddenly fell down.

The teardrop was crystal clear as it slid down the corner of her eye and landed on her leg.

At this moment, a warm hand pressed down on her shoulder. With a huge reaction, she suddenly reached out and pushed the hand away!

She got out of the car angrily.

Joel chased after her. "Tanya!"

Tanya pushed him away and opened the door.

Joel hugged her tightly. "Tanya."

Tanya was furious and shouted angrily, "Joel, what are you trying to do? Let me tell you, even if I haven't completely forgotten about you, I won't be your mistress! I may be spineless, but I still have this bottom line! Let go. If you don't, I'll call the police!"

However, the man behind her did not let go. Just as Tanya angrily picked up her phone and was about to call the police, Joel's voice suddenly sounded. "Uncle Ian is critically ill."

Tanya paused.

Tanya knew who his uncle was. She also knew how important this uncle was to Joel.

She said nothing.

Joel continued, "After Uncle Ian and Yvette separated more than twenty years ago, they never saw each other again. His greatest regret in this life is that he couldn't be with her. Even though he knows that Nora is his daughter, he still wants to follow Yvette to the afterlife."

"Tanya, we're so lucky to meet again. This time, I won't let go."

At the Smiths.

After taking a shower, Nora prepared to go downstairs to eat something.

But as soon as she opened the door, she saw Quentin in front of it.

Although the man was already 26 years old, he still looked very young. His thin body leaned against the wall, and he instantly stood up when he saw her.

Nora raised her eyebrows. "What's the matter?"

Quentin nodded and asked curiously, "Nora, what did you tell Uncle Ian that suddenly gave him the will to survive?"

When Nora heard this, she was silent for a moment.

She suddenly said, "Do you really want to know?"

Quentin nodded.

Nora looked away.

She was not planning to say these words. After all, her mother's last words were filled with danger. Now, she did not even know who or where the enemy was.

She said, "Do you know why I hid my identity as Big Sister?"

Quentin shook his head.

Nora said, "Because my mother said that if I stand out, people might come after me."

Quentin narrowed his eyes at these words.

Nora looked at him. "I told him this."

She was referring to Ian.

They had just reunited, but she was not used to calling that person "father." She could not bring herself to call him "father."

Quentin understood.

Ian felt that Joel and Quentin could protect her well and that she would live well. Therefore, he had lost the will to live and wanted to reunite with Yvette.

But when he found out that his daughter was in danger, as a father, how could he leave?

He had to live and help her get rid of all obstacles!

Especially that danger... Ian subconsciously felt that it had something to do with Yvette leaving him back then!

This was Nora's guess.

Yvette had suddenly run away from home and told the public that she had eloped with someone, but she had given birth to her. In addition to the organization Morris had mentioned...

She felt that Yvette's departure back then might have been to protect Ian.

Ian clearly thought of this as well, and Nora told him, "The first DNA test showed that my genes have mutated. Logically speaking, we could never acknowledge each other. But Mother left my umbilical cord blood behind."

Yvette had preserved Nora's umbilical cord blood because she wanted to have a contingency plan when she was at her wit's end.

If Nora was to ever get involved in this, Ian could protect her appropriately and fulfill his responsibility as a father.

Even if Nora did not need his protection, if this responsibility could make Ian want to live, she did not mind being protected.

However, Quentin suddenly understood something. He looked at Nora seriously. "Nora, don't worry. I will help you guard your identity!"

If there was any danger, he would protect his cousin!

Nora: "?"

In the suburbs.

Joel was hugging Tanya. "I don't know what Nora said to make Uncle Ian want to live, but I know that I can't lose you again, Tanya."

When Uncle Ian lay on the hospital bed and recalled what had happened back then, he said the thing he regretted the most was not insisting on being with Yvette. At that time, Joel had thought of Tanya.

He did not want the tragedy to repeat itself.

When Tanya heard this, she stopped struggling. She closed her eyes tightly as tears started pouring. “Even if I don’t mind Mia’s existence, what about Hillary?”

“Hillary doesn’t matter.”

Joel said, “Tanya, back then, I was tricked into being with her. But all these years, apart from Mia, there’s nothing between us. I gave her the title of fiancée because I didn’t want Mia to not have a mother. But I told her long ago that when Mia turned five and became sensible, we would end the engagement. The last time I chased her away from the Smiths, it was to end the engagement.

Tanya was stunned.

Hillary was clearly saying that they were very loving.

However, compared to Hillary, she trusted Joel more.

She was not a romantic. The reason she chose to believe Joel was because she understood Hillary’s character!

But even so, she did not expect such a misunderstanding to have happened back then.

She asked again, “But her Facebook post...”

Joel explained again, “It was Mia’s birthday yesterday. I took a gift from her at the entrance of her house and left. As for the restaurant, it was only me and Mia. She followed us there by herself.”

Tanya was stunned.

Joel hugged her. “Tanya, I don’t know what else I need to do to make you forgive me, but do you know how happy I was when I heard you say that you were jealous?”

The man no longer had the aura he had in front of outsiders. At this moment, he was as happy as a child who had eaten candy. "At that time, I was thinking that even if you hate me or resent me, I won't let you go this time."

"..."

The wind around them seemed to have stopped.

The birds and insects were all silent.

Tanya only felt that at this moment, her broken heart seemed to have been filled with healing medicine as he comforted her.

She did not know what to say.

She did not know if she should forgive this man for that night.

Even if it was not his fault that he had been schemed against...

She did not know if she could be a good stepmother, either...

She did not even know if it was right for her to pursue happiness like this before her child was found...

Before she could think, the man suddenly held her shoulder and made her slowly turn her head.

The man stopped talking and lowered his head to cover her lips.

That familiar cool breath suddenly invaded her mouth, making her brain explode.

The memories in her body seemed to have returned before her rationality, making her almost give in without any resistance...

She was in a sorry state and quickly retreated.

However, he continued to press her hard and domineeringly. It was as if he wanted to claim sovereignty over every part of her mouth.

"Agh!"

Suddenly, a voice was heard.

The two of them froze and hurriedly looked at the door. They saw Mdm. Florence covering her eyes. "Goodness, Miss Tanya, Mrs. Hunt asked me to see if you were around. You... you two lovebirds can continue. Pretend I didn't see you!"

With that, she ran off in a hurry.

Tanya: "..."

Joel: "..."

The two of them were feeling a little awkward. It did not seem appropriate to continue what had just happened. However, if they did not continue, they would be at a loss if they just stood there.

Tanya said, "Let's talk inside."

She turned and opened the door.

Joel followed behind her obediently. He did not look like the tycoon who ran the business world at all.

After the two of them entered the room, Joel took the initiative to say, "You haven't eaten yet, right? I'll cook something for you."

Tanya nodded in a daze. At that moment, she seemed to have completely forgotten that this was her house.

When Joel entered the kitchen, Tanya had yet to return to her senses.

At this moment, her phone suddenly rang.

She picked up the call without even looking at it and accidentally put it on speaker. Hillary's voice came from the other end. "Tanya, do you think Joel will return to your side just because you're back? Let me tell you, the person he loves is me. He's right beside me now.. Our family of three is going to eat together. Stop daydreaming!"

Daydreaming...

Tanya looked into the kitchen and felt like she was really dreaming.

When she had left sadly five years ago, she thought that she would never have the chance to be with this man in her life. This man was going to disappear from her life.

Who would have thought that five years later, he would be cooking food for her?

As Tanya was thinking, Hillary's voice was heard again. "Why aren't you saying anything? Are you really going to degrade yourself to be a third wheel and come between us? Let me tell you, you better return to Switzerland. Joel chose me five years ago, he'll definitely choose me again. When that time comes, how embarrassed would you be?"

As she spoke, Joel had already walked out of the kitchen.

The villa was very quiet, and there were no car horns around.

Joel had heard the voice on the phone from the beginning.

He looked at Tanya.

Tanya was also looking at him. The slender girl just stood there, her body a little thin from dancing for a long time.

She looked at Joel with her deep eyes and suddenly raised her eyebrows. "She said I'm the third wheel. May I ask Mr. Smith, what's your relationship with Madam Hillary now?"

As soon as she said this, Hillary's voice stopped. However, she then sneered. "What are you doing? Do you think you can scare me like this? Let me tell you, I'm with Joel. If you want to talk to him, I can help you send a message..."

Amidst her chattering, Joel's originally angry eyes froze for a moment when they met the Tanya's. All his anger seemed to dissipate with an evil smile on her lips.

He took a step forward and said, "I have nothing to do with Madam Hillary. The engagement has been broken off. Madam Tanya, what kind of braised noodles do you want to eat? Tomato eggs or green pepper pork?"

The voice on the phone instantly fell silent!

Hillary: “!!”

The entire villa fell silent. Tanya smiled and said, “Green pepper pork. But no ginger, you remember my preferences, right?”

Joel nodded. “Of course. Just wait 10 minutes.”

With that, he glanced at the phone. Just as he was about to return to the kitchen, Hillary smiled mockingly. “Tanya, are you lying to me? How can Joel cook? I’ve been with him for five years, but I’ve never seen him cook! He doesn’t know how to cook at all! Did you find someone with a similar voice to anger me? I’m telling you, I won’t fall for it!”

Tanya recalled how Hillary had deliberately chased him to the restaurant and taken a photo to post on her Facebook. She was not surprised by her way of thinking.

She only smiled and suddenly turned on the camera. She raised her phone and aimed it at Joel. “Here, let me show you. The man I’m looking at not only has a similar voice to Joel, but his appearance is also very similar!”

Her voice was filled with mockery.

When Hillary saw Joel wearing an apron, she was stunned.

She had stayed with the Smiths for five years. Joel had never allowed her to enter his room, and every time she saw him, he was always the high and mighty leader who could stir up New York’s economic scene with just a move of his finger.

Since when was that man willing to fall from grace and start doing housework?

Furthermore, he was holding a tomato in one hand and green pepper in the other. He was clearly cooking!

As Tanya had turned on the camera, he looked up.

His light eyes, which were always smiling, suddenly became sharp as he stared at the camera.

He said calmly, “Miss Hillary, is there anything else?”

Tanya looked at the camera and saw that the camera on Hillary's side suddenly shook and fell to the ground. Her hands must have gone soft from shock.

This woman had been like this since she was young. She was a fox exploiting the tiger's might and was extremely hypocritical.

Tanya could not be bothered to talk to her anymore and hung up.

She chuckled softly. She looked up and realized that Joel had not entered the kitchen but was staring at her.

The man was wearing a white shirt and an apron, looking just like he did five years ago.

Tanya suddenly realized that the five years overseas seemed to have lost their distance.

As she was thinking, she saw Joel's eyes gradually turn deep and hot, making her heart beat wildly.

She hurriedly looked away and said, "There are still eight minutes!"

Only then did Joel retract his gaze and nod.

After he left, Tanya hurriedly patted her chest and cheeks.

She must stay alert!

She could not be attracted by his stunning beauty!

Eight minutes later, the noodles were done.

Tanya went upstairs and had already changed into her casual home clothes. Looking at the two bowls of steaming noodles on the dining table, she picked up her fork. Just as she was about to eat, she heard Joel say, "Wait a minute."

She paused and realized that Joel had brought a bottle of hot sauce over.

Tanya stared at the bottle and suddenly thought of a time five years ago.

At that time, she was still in university. As the living expenses from her mother were not enough, she often had to cook for herself.

Noodles were her favorite.

However, she only had one pot back then, so it was inconvenient to stir-fry vegetables. Therefore, every time, she would add a sufficient amount of noodles and vegetables before adding hot sauce.

Joel had always known this habit of hers.

In the past five years, after she went overseas, the thing she was most unused to was eating. Occasionally, she would want to eat noodles, but without hot sauce, it was as if something was missing.

While she was in a daze, Joel opened the bottle and handed it to her.

She dug a big spoonful and put it in the bowl of noodles. The thick sauce immediately floated on it and the fragrance wafted over.

She picked some noodles up with her fork and took a bite excitedly—but she was stunned.

She looked up slowly at the bottle of hot sauce.

The packaging had already changed.

As for the taste of the sauce, although it was still her favorite flavor, it was no longer the same as before.

For some reason, her heart suddenly sank.

A broken mood instantly attacked her, making her lower her head.

Indeed.

In five years, everything familiar had changed.

Nothing would stand there and wait for her.

It was like losing her child.

Even if she had returned to the country and she and Joel were still the same as they were five years ago, this fact could not be hidden.

She became depressed.

Joel looked at her and panic surged in his heart. He asked carefully, "What's wrong? The noodles don't taste good?"

A hot tear fell into the bowl.

Tanya suddenly looked up.. "There's something I need to tell you."

Joel saw her grave expression and put down his fork. He stared at her. "What?"

His heart suddenly pounded violently.

He didn't know what Tanya was going to say, much less what she was thinking... but he suddenly felt that what she was going to say next was very important.

Tanya looked at the man and said impulsively, "We had a..."

The word "child" hovered around her mouth for a moment, but she could not say it.

Joel was stunned. "What?"

He searched his memory hard. They had an agreement? An oath? Or what?

He was afraid that he would anger the girl in front of him if he did not remember.

Tanya opened her mouth.

She suddenly thought of the parents who had been searching for their children overseas.

Some mothers broke down, and some fathers were very calm. However, she had seen them turn around and cry secretly in a corner after comforting their wives.

She suddenly asked, "You love Mia very much, right?"

Joel did not know why she had suddenly changed the topic, but he still followed along and said, "Yes, I love her very much."

He suddenly reached out and held her hand. "I know that I will never let you down in this matter. Her existence is something I cannot control, but her existence makes me feel warm. Tanya, that is a kind of satisfaction from family ties. You understand me, right?"

How could Tanya not understand?

After all, she and Joel were both children who lacked love!

Even though Joel was born in the Smiths, his parents did not like him. There was even a time when they thought of abandoning him, making him feel very insecure.

As for Tanya...

After her mother remarried, she lost her home.

When the two of them walked together back then, didn't it feel like they were hugging each other for warmth?

That was why she was so happy when she gave birth to that little angel and thought that she finally had a family in this world and someone with her blood.

That was why she had searched the entire world for her child like a madman without even having seen the child once.

When Joel saw that she was in a strange mood, he mistakenly thought that Tanya would mind if he mentioned Mia. He thought about it and said, "I know it's very selfish of me to make you accept Mia, but Tanya, Mia is really a very obedient child. You'll fall in love with her. Really..."

He was afraid that Tanya would suggest sending the child away.

No matter how much he loved Tanya, he could not do that.

After all, he was a father!

Seeing that he had misunderstood, Tanya waved her hand and said, "That's not what I meant."

As soon as she said this, Joel heaved a sigh of relief. It was obvious how much he liked Mia.

Tanya asked again, "Do you like children?"

Joel nodded. "Of course. If it was our child, I would like it even more."

These words made Tanya's heart ache again.

She lowered her head and took a bite of noodles.

The hot noodles slid into her mouth, but she took another bite as if she did not know it was hot.

She ate mouthful after mouthful. When she was done, she looked up.

Joel probed, "What did you say we have?"

Tanya took out a tissue and wiped her mouth before replying, "It's nothing."

Joel immediately tried to recall any vow the two had made. However, after thinking for a while, he still could not remember it.

After he ate the noodles, Tanya took his bowl and washed it in the kitchen. Then, she said, "It's getting late, you should go back."

Joel: "..."

He actually did not want to leave tonight, but since Tanya had said so, if he insisted on staying, it would only make Tanya feel annoyed.

At the thought of this, Joel decided that he had to take things slow and not get things done in one go.

He took out his car keys and walked slowly to the door. "Good night."

"Good night."

Tanya replied softly in the kitchen.

She heard Joel walk to the door and stand there for a long time. Finally, he pushed the door open. When she heard the door close with a bang, she turned off the tap.

She stood in the kitchen for a long time before walking out.

Looking at the neat apron hanging in the living room, she thought of Joel's OCD personality and couldn't help but lower her eyes.

She sighed heavily and went upstairs.

She lay on the sofa and quietly stared at the night sky.

She did not know where her child was in the world right now, if he was hungry, or if he had any clothes to wear. She did not know how long she was thinking when her phone suddenly rang.

She picked it up and took a look. It was a call from Hillary.

She picked up the call and Hillary's calm voice was heard. "Are you two still together?"

Tanya sneered and said softly, "Yes, he's taking a shower. Why?"

"You're lying!"

Hillary suddenly smiled and said, "I just called Mia and she said Dad has come home! Tanya, I'm warning you. Stay away from Joel! Even if you seduced him now and he still likes you, Mia is the person he loves the most!"

Tanya clenched her fists.

She lowered her eyes. Before she could say anything, Hillary said, "Mia is everything to him! So what if you two still have feelings for each other? At the end of the night, won't he still go home obediently and coax the child to sleep? Tanya, if you know what's good for you, you better leave him!"

Tanya's voice was very low. "What if I don't?"

"You don't? Do you know that everyone outside knows that he and I are engaged and that Mia is our daughter?! Mia's sake, he won't even announce our separation to the public. In front of outsiders, I will always be Madam Smith! And you, Tanya, are just one of his lovers! What makes you think your status is enough to make him give up his reputation?"

The Jones.

After Hillary shouted this in anger, she finally felt at ease. She sneered and said, "No matter what, I will always be the wife, and you are just a mistress!"

Just like it was back then, I'm the daughter of a wealthy family, and you're just a fake daughter!"

With that, she hung up.

She had been chased out of the Smiths for so long. There were many guesses outside, but because of Mia, the Smiths had never spread the news that they had broken off the engagement.

She wanted to use this matter to agitate Tanya and let her know that she was nothing to Joel!

Any woman would mind this, right?

As she was thinking about this, the doorbell rang.

The servant went to open the door and exclaimed in surprise, "Mr. Smith?"

Hillary was stunned. She turned around and saw Joel walking in from the door!

It was already so late. Why was he at the Jones' residence?!

Hillary recalled that when she called Tanya today, Joel was also there. Later on, he did not pursue the matter, but now, he was here...

Her heart sank, but her face was still filled with smiles as she walked over. "Joel, you're here..."

When the Joneses heard the servant's words, they hurriedly walked down from the study upstairs to welcome him. "Mr. Smith, what brings you here? If there's anything you need, you can call us to the Smiths."

Joel was still smiling. His eyes were curved, and when he did not speak, he looked very gentle, like a smiling tiger.

However, Hillary could see the coldness in his eyes.

She swallowed and jolted.

Joel looked at her and slowly said, "I came personally today because I thought that after my engagement with Miss Hillary was broken off, she seemed to have been dishonest."

As soon as he said this, Hillary's father was stunned. He looked directly at Hillary. "What? When did you guys break off the engagement?"

Joel lowered his eyes and said indifferently, "Why? Didn't Miss Hillary tell you?"

Hillary had been chased back this time and stayed for a few days now, but she had not mentioned the engagement at all.

Mr. Jones looked at Hillary. "Hillary, what's going on?"

Madam Jones said, "Mr. Smith, did Hillary do something wrong to make you angry? Tell us, we'll get her to change. How can you suddenly call off the engagement?"

Joel looked at Madam Jones.

To be precise, she was also Tanya's mother.

Back then, Tanya's mother had remarried and given birth to Hillary.

Hillary was a year younger than Tanya, but their identities were completely different.

One was a burden who had been brought along into her marriage with a wealthy family, and the other was a daughter of a wealthy family. Hillary had looked down on Tanya since she was young.

As for Tanya, she had a stubborn personality. After being slandered by Hillary a few times, Madam Jones had determined that Tanya's personality was naughty and mischievous, like that of her father, who had disappeared. Therefore, she would hit and scold her!

Joel's attitude toward Madam Jones was distant and cold. He did not bother being polite with her. "Madam Jones, you can discipline her further for her mistakes. Now, we're talking about breaking off the engagement."

He took out the agreement he had signed with Hillary back then. "In the agreement back then, we said that when Mia turns five, the engagement would be automatically broken off. Now, it's time."

The Jones parents were stunned. They looked at Hillary in disbelief. "Hillary, you..."

Hillary bit her lip and cried. "Joel, I was wrong. I really know I was wrong. I didn't go looking for Tanya on purpose. I was just indignant. You chased me out of the Smiths because she suddenly returned, right?"

Tanya?

Madam Jones instantly became even more furious. "What do you mean? Did Tanya cross into your family again? Joel, you can't treat Hillary like this. Tanya was born to be a bad hooligan!"

As soon as she said this, Joel suddenly reached out and smashed the teacup on the table to the ground!

Smash!

The sound of the teacup shattering resounded throughout the living room, causing the crying Hillary and Madam Jones, who was scolding Tanya, to stop abruptly.

Everyone looked at Joel in disbelief.

Joel lowered his eyes. "I've already contacted the reporters. They will announce that I have broken off my engagement with Miss Hillary tomorrow..."

As soon as he said this, Mr. Jones said, "Mr. Smith, is there no room for change in this matter?"

Joel looked at him and said firmly, "No."

Mr. Jones sighed heavily.

Hillary and Madam Jones still wanted to say something, but Mr. Jones shook his head at them.

The two of them could only shut their mouths.

Mr. Jones began to complain. "Mr. Smith, we understand that you don't like Hillary. We won't force you. We can break off the engagement, but Mia is her biological daughter. You can't stop them from meeting."

Hillary and Madam Jones looked at each other.

Yes.

As long as Mia was still around, Hillary could interfere in Joel and Tanya's lives. As long as she could, Joel and Tanya could forget about living a quiet life!

Hillary clenched her fists tightly. She was already thinking that if Mia fell ill in the future, she would definitely have to stay with the Smiths and take care of her.

If Mia was hurt, she would definitely ask Tanya why she abused her child!

As she was thinking about her future plans, Joel seemed to have seen through her thoughts and said directly, "Yes, I won't stop them from meeting. Every six months, I'll send Mia overseas to meet with Miss Hillary."

Mr. Jones was stunned.

Hillary was stunned. "Go overseas? You don't have to go overseas. I'm just in the country... You don't have to send Mia anywhere. I can just meet her at the Smiths..."

However, the moment she said this, she heard Joel say, "After our engagement is broken off, you'll be in a bad mood, and will go overseas for a vacation. You won't accept our financial support and will travel for five years. After five years, you can return to the country."

Mr. Jones was stunned. "She won't accept financial support? Then how is she going to live?"

Joel glanced at Mr. Jones and said casually, "Aren't so many international students still alive?"

Madam Jones shouted angrily, "No! Hillary has never suffered like this in her entire life! She can't go overseas!"

She had never suffered before, but Tanya could suffer?

Joel had investigated before. Tanya did not have any living expenses overseas. Everything was earned by working part-time!

His attitude was still very calm, and there was even a smile on his face. He looked directly at Mr. Jones. "President Jones, is the collaboration between the Joneses and Smiths going well?"

Mr. Jones: !!!

He immediately understood that Joel was threatening him!

If they did not send Hillary away, the Smiths would terminate all cooperation with the Joneses!

The Joneses had been prospering these years because they had relied on the Smiths. After leaving the Smiths... Joel would definitely let everyone in New York know that the Joneses had offended him.

At that time, even without Joel personally making a move, someone might help him deal with the Joneses!

He gulped and hurriedly stood up. "I understand what you mean, Mr. Smith. I'll handle Hillary's matters here. She'll go overseas."

Joel stood up. "It's good that Mr. Jones understands. I'll leave, then."

He did not even look at Hillary as he left the house.

Hillary was stunned on the spot.

Five years...

Another five years!

Tanya had been overseas for more than five years!

Hillary understood. Joel had arranged everything for her!

He was going to send her overseas for five years to help Tanya vent her anger!

She roared, "Joel! I gave birth to Mia for you! How can you treat me like this?!"

Joel stopped in his tracks and turned to look at her. "If you hadn't given birth to Mia, do you think you would have had the chance to go overseas?"

Upon hearing this, Hillary jolted.

She swallowed.

Mia was her protective charm!

At the Smiths.

After Nora finished showering, she walked out and saw Pete standing there, looking at her seriously. "Mommy, we're going to the amusement park to play tomorrow. Can we bring Mia along?"

Nora asked, "Why?"

Pete said, "I didn't even know it was Mia's birthday yesterday. I didn't give her a gift either. I want to take her out to play tomorrow."

Birthday?

Nora was stunned.

She remembered clearly that Tanya's child's birthday was five days ago.

Mia was only five days away from that child's birthday...

Was this... a coincidence?

She narrowed her eyes.

Was Mia really Hillary's daughter?

The reason why Nora knew about the birthday of the children was that on that day every year, Tanya would be in low spirits.

When she was overseas, no matter where Nora was, she would always be by Tanya's side on this day.

The two of them did nothing. Nora would sleep while Tanya would be in the room, dancing to the birthday gift she had bought long ago.

Usually, when she woke up, Tanya would be covered in sweat, but she would not feel tired. If she continued like this, she would eventually collapse.

Every year, she would fall seriously ill.

It was as if she wanted to use this method to vent her longing for her child for the next year.

Therefore, Nora remembered her child's birthday very clearly.

She couldn't help but doubt Mia's identity.

Tanya's child and Mia were both Joel's children. Furthermore, they were only five days apart...

She narrowed her eyes and began to think about the relationship between Mia and Tanya...

"Mommy, can I?"

Pete's words interrupted Nora's thoughts.

She looked at him and nodded. "Alright, I'll ask your uncle when he comes back."

If she took Mia out to play, she would definitely ask Joel.

With that, she yawned loudly and turned to walk to the bed. "It's already so late. Why isn't he back yet? I'll lie down and wait for him!"

Pete: "..."

As expected, half an hour later, there were uniform breathing sounds on the bed.

Pete sighed helplessly and put down the pen in his hand.

He walked to the bed and gently covered Nora with the blanket. Then, he went out and downstairs to sit on the sofa in the living room.

When Joel returned home, this was the scene he saw.

Pete was clearly sleepy and anxious. His little head was nodding off, but he had still forced himself not to sleep.

Joel looked at the time. It was already 11 PM. He walked over and asked, "What's wrong?"

Pete woke up suddenly and said excitedly, "Uncle, you're finally back!"

He jumped off the sofa and looked at Joel. "Tomorrow, Dad and Mom will take me and Cherry... to the amusement park. I want to bring Mia along, okay?"

Joel looked at him and touched his head. After some thought, he said, "Okay."

Pete heaved a sigh of relief.

Joel bent down and picked him up before carrying him upstairs.

After taking him to the bedroom, he asked, "Where's your mother?"

Pete said helplessly, "Mommy said that she would lie down and wait for you to come back to ask you. In the end, she fell asleep..."

Joel: "..."

Joel brought Pete to his room and watched him shower and change into his pajamas. Then, he sent Pete to Nora's bedroom.

He watched as he tiptoed in and returned to the bedroom in relief.

At the same time, he could not help but think that Nora was such a worry-free mother. Be it with Cherry or Pete, they were both so sensible and independent.

After returning to his room, he washed up and lay on the bed. He took out his phone and opened Tanya's Facebook.

Her profile picture was of a mature grape.

Joel stared at his phone screen for a long time, not knowing what to send her. Just as he was in a daze, he suddenly saw the words "Typing..." on the dialog box.

Joel was instantly delighted.

What was Tanya going to say to him?

However, after waiting for more than ten minutes, she did not say anything.

Joel couldn't help but send a message: "?"

Tanya replied: "?"

Joel: "Where's the small composition?"

Tanya: "What small composition?"

Joel smiled and typed: "You've been typing for almost twenty minutes. You should have written a small composition with 800 words by now? Where is it?"

Tanya: "!!!"

Tanya: "I wasn't sending you a message!"

Tanya: "You're mistaken!"

Tanya: "Oh, I was watching television and accidentally opened your chat window."

Seeing that she was not being honest, Joel continued to type with a smile. "What are you watching?"

Tanya: "A show on FOX TV."

Chapter 365 - The Plan of Saving Nora Novel Free

Nora entered the operating room right away.

It was only after she went in that Quentin asked, "What happened?"

Joel replied, "Uncle Ian's heart suddenly stopped beating. They are trying to save him now."

Quentin was stunned. His heart sank.

In all honesty, he had never taken Ian's illness seriously because Ian had always been ill for as long as he could remember.

Therefore, he hadn't panicked even when Nora operated on Ian previously.

But when he heard that Ian had a cardiac arrest, he couldn't help but blank out. He immediately said, "That's impossible! It's impossible that anything would go wrong when B... Nora's the one operating on him!"

Had Nora just been Anti, Quentin might still have had doubts.

But she was Big Sister.

She was the famous Big Sister in the martial arts circle. There was no way she would do anything she wasn't confident about!

Joel glanced at him when he heard him.

Based on his understanding of Quentin, Quentin should have already formed doubts about Nora a long time ago. Yet he was so sure about it at the moment...

It wasn't the time for him to be thinking about that, though. He said, "It's Uncle Ian himself who... suddenly pulled out the IV needle when he woke up."

Quentin: "..."

Joel sighed. "Uncle Ian still doesn't have any will to live. He doesn't want to live anymore."

Quentin was in such a panic that he was going around in circles. "What should we do? Didn't you tell Uncle Ian that Nora is his daughter?"

Joel said, "That's exactly why I asked you guys to come. I'm hoping that Nora can find a way to keep him alive."

Quentin nodded.

It was unknown just how much time went by before the operating room's lights finally went out.

The attending doctor then came out and looked at the two of them.

Both Joel and Quentin looked at him hopefully but instead saw the doctor shake his head instead.

Joel and Quentin were dumbfounded.

The doctor said, "Anti lives up to her name as a master surgeon. She once again pulled the old gentleman back from the brink of death. He's awake now, but..."

The doctor sighed. "He still does not have the will to live."

No will to live... even though he was awake...

Joel panicked. "Didn't Nora tell him that she is his daughter?"

"She did, but it wasn't of any use."

The attending doctor then stepped aside. "You... Why don't you go in and see him for the last time?"

Joel and Ian put on sterile gowns and entered the operating room.

Ian lay on the bed. The thin man looked just like a sheet of paper, which easily showed that he hadn't been eating well. He was ridiculously thin.

Nora was standing next to him blankly. Her eyes were full of perplexity and doubts as if she couldn't understand anything. She asked, "Why don't you want to live? Even if it's for my sake?"

Ian's voice was very thin. He said weakly, "I'm sorry."

He coughed and slowly said, "I'm very happy that Yvette didn't betray me... but when I think of how she has been all by herself in that lonely world for so long, I feel so awful. I should have figured it out earlier. I should have gone to keep her company earlier. Nora..."

He reached out a trembling hand to Nora.

Nora pursed her lips and held his hand. He said, "Please forgive Dad for being so selfish. I was waiting all this time for the truth to surface, waiting to find out why she had left me back then. But now that I finally know it, I suddenly feel guilty and blame myself for it. It's no longer important why she had done what she did. Back then, no matter what the reason for her departure was, I shouldn't have doubted her. She must have had reasons that she couldn't tell me. All I could do for her back then was to let go of her, and now, the only thing I can do for her is to go and keep her company..."

He looked at Joel and Quentin who had entered.

Joel and Quentin's eyes were all red. They took a step forward. Ian said to the two of them, "Joel, Quentin, Nora is my daughter. I put her in your care now."

Joel choked up and shouted, "Uncle Ian, you should take care of your daughter yourself!"

Ian smiled wryly and said, "I'm tired. I really am. I've spent all these years like a walking dead. Leaving is the greatest relief I can ever have."

All three youngsters looked at him blankly.

All of them were dumbfounded.

No one, no matter who, had ever imagined that letting Ian know that Nora was his daughter would be the last straw to break the camel's back and send him to his death.

Nora clenched her fists.

Were they going to be separated by death when they had only just reunited as father and daughter?

No!

Nora would never allow such a thing to happen!

Quentin's eyes were red and swollen as he shouted, "Uncle Ian, take care of your daughter yourself! Live and get up. Otherwise, I'll beat her up every day..."

Joel, who had always been a steady person, could not help but say, "Uncle Ian, aren't you afraid that I will be selfish in the future and take over the Smiths without giving Nora anything? Also, Nora is going to marry Justin. Aren't you afraid that she will be bullied if she marries over? She's without her father and even comes from the countryside. Now, the Hunts look down on her! She needs your support!"

Ian muttered in a weak voice with his eyes closed, "Joel, Quentin, you won't..."

"I will! I really will! Uncle Ian, wake up. You can't die!"

"Uncle Ian! Get up..."

Joel and Quentin shouted as their tears fell like rain.

The person lying on the bed had been exceptionally powerful since they were young. But now, he was weak and had been sick most of the year, he was very dispirited and would not wake up. It was as if nothing gave him hope for life.

However, the two of them would never forget that when their parents had abandoned them, it was Uncle Ian who came forward to raise them, calling them good children!

Especially Joel...

If not for Uncle Ian, he would have been chased out of the Smiths when he was three years old. He would have become like a stray dog and starved to death on the streets!

It was Uncle Ian... Not only had he given him the honor of being a man of the Smiths, but he had also let him take over the Smiths.

Everything Joel had now was given to him by Uncle Ian.

Joel held Uncle Ian's hand tightly. "Uncle Ian..."

Just as the two of them were thinking of ways to make him stay, a cold voice suddenly sounded. "Can I speak to him alone?"

Joel and Quentin looked at the person in a daze. It was Nora.

She stood at the side. Perhaps it was because they had not known each other since they were young, but her current expression was a little cold and distant.

The stunned expression in her eyes had disappeared as she stared at the man on the bed.

Even though her voice was emotionless and she appeared too calm, Joel and Quentin looked at each other. The two of them stood up and walked out together.

Before leaving, Joel took one last look inside.

He watched as the girl suddenly walked to the bed and said, "You're very good to them."

Ian smiled bitterly. "I didn't do my part as a father."

Nora suddenly said, "Now, you have a chance to fulfill your responsibilities."

After saying this, she suddenly lowered her head and whispered into Ian's ear. Ian's eyes widened suddenly.

When Joel closed the door, he heard Ian's last sentence. His voice trembled as he asked, "Are... are you serious?"

Two minutes later.

The door to the operating room was opened. Nora pushed Ian's bed out of the operating room.

Ian was lying there with his eyes closed.

Joel's heart sank. He exchanged glances with Quentin and the two of them looked at Nora. Quentin even swallowed his saliva and asked, "Uncle Ian, he..."

"He's not dead."

Nora's words sounded very calm, making Joel and Quentin heave a sigh of relief.

Quentin asked tentatively, "Then he's..."

"I gave him two injections and he fell asleep. He needs to rest. In the next few days, don't disturb him in any case. No matter how powerful this lion is, his body has been hollowed out. His body needs to be raised from the roots."

With that, she looked at Joel. "I have a few medicinal recipes here. I'll write them down for you later."

Joel hurriedly nodded. "I'll arrange for someone to cook for Uncle Ian every day."

The three of them walked into the VIP ward together.

After entering the ward, Nora checked Ian's vital signs. After everything was normal, she said, "He won't die for the time being."

Joel probed, "Then... after the time being..."

Nora: "If you follow the schedule I'm giving you and are obedient, he can live out his natural life."

Joel heaved a sigh of relief.

Nora took out her phone and opened the memo. Her slender fingers quickly typed something on it for a while. She sent Joel the things to take note of and future treatment plans.

Joel took a look and realized that it was all basic care. The staff in the hospital could do it.

Quentin asked curiously, "Aren't you going to take care of Uncle Ian personally in the future?"

Nora glanced at him. "I don't know how to take care of people."

Quentin: "..."

After doing all this, Nora walked out. "I'm going to see Old Maddy."

Ever since Old Maddy was rescued, he had been in the hospital for treatment. After all, he had been too severely poisoned. Furthermore, Old Maddy had never recovered from his crazy illness.

Nora went to Old Maddy's ward again. When she was about to go home, she saw Quentin.

She raised her eyebrows and asked, "What are you doing here?"

Quentin coughed. "I'm waiting for you to take you home."

"..."

Nora said helplessly, "Alright."

After the two of them returned home, Nora went upstairs and saw Pete. She kissed her son's forehead and was about to take a shower when Pete suddenly said mysteriously, "Mommy, did you know? Uncle Joel came to pick Mia and me up just now. But he then later got the chauffeur to bring us back and went to chase after God-mom Tanya."

Nora: “??”

When she went to see Old Maddy, Joel had arranged for the medical staff to pick up Mia and Pete from school. She did not expect him to go after Tanya?

Why was he looking for Tanya?

Nora raised her eyebrows.

She smiled and touched Pete’s head. “I understand.”

Pete blinked and suddenly said, “Mommy, is God-mom Tanya going to be my aunt soon?”

Nora: “?”

This little fellow knew quite a lot. She asked, “Do you want her to be your aunt?”

“Yes!”

Pete nodded seriously. “God-mom treats Mia well.”

Nora sensed something. “You mean, Mia’s mommy isn’t good to her?”

Pete thought for a moment. “No, she isn’t.”

Nora frowned and pulled a chair over casually. She sat in front of Pete with interest. “Come, talk properly.”

Pete’s expression was stern as he said seriously, “These are all my speculations.”

Nora had always thought that Mia’s mother treated her well. After all, who would be cruel to their own daughter? It was because Hillary and Joel were on bad terms that the two of them did not get together.

However, she did not expect Pete’s next words to completely subvert her understanding.

Pete said, “Mommy, if I liked mathematics very much, would you stop me from learning it?”

Nora: "Of course not."

Everyone knew that Cherry liked to play games. In order to make Cherry happy, she had agreed to let her play. She only limited the time spent on playing games.

Pete nodded. "Mia's mother knows she likes to dance, but she doesn't let her learn. Moreover, Mia is very afraid of her mother."

Afraid?

No child should be afraid of their mother, right?

Nora felt that Pete might have used the wrong word. "Is it because her mommy is very strict?"

Pete shook his head. "No."

He thought for a moment and said, "The tyrant is very strict too, but I know that he does it for my own good. Sometimes, I go on a hunger strike to fight against him because I know he will eventually give in."

"But Mia's fear of her mommy comes from the fact that she's not sure her mommy would ever give in."

Nora was stunned.

Although Pete's words were messy, she understood them.

Because Justin was his father, even if he was stern every day or even hit Pete, Pete still respected Justin and was not afraid of him.

But Mia's mother was like a stranger and a bad person to Mia. Mia didn't even feel safe with her.

She frowned. "Did Mia tell you all this?"

Pete shook his head. "I observed it myself."

Nora frowned.

If what Pete said was true, Nora would really have to reconsider this matter. However, Pete was only five years old. His conclusion could not be trusted so easily.

Nora said seriously, "Okay, Pete. I understand. I'll take note of this and observe Mia. If it's true, I'll tell your uncle."

At the same time, she frowned.

Was there really a mother in this world who abused her own child?

In the suburbs.

Tanya drove in and looked at the shameless man.

After work, he took the opportunity while she had yet to lock the car to suddenly open the back door and sneak into her car.

She wanted to scold him back then, but his words made her shut her mouth. "Keep arguing If you want everyone to know about our relationship. If you don't, then drive."

Tanya: "..."

She was speechless and anxious.

However, as a kindergarten teacher, she did not want to make a scene in school. She gritted her teeth in anger, but she still drove home. On the way, she switched on her mocking mode. "Mr. Smith, may I ask what my relationship with you is?"

Joel: "I'm your ex-boyfriend."

"..."

"Or rather, it's because I can't forget my ex-girlfriend."

When Tanya heard this, for some reason, her face turned red. She shook her head and sneered. "Mr. Smith, you have a fiancée and daughter now. You're harassing me like this, understand?"

Joel lowered his eyes. "Tanya, you were so angry yesterday. Were you jealous?"

Jealous?

Tanya choked on his words.

However, she immediately realized that from the moment she saw Hillary's Facebook post, she had indeed started to feel angry and humiliated.

Previously, she had been deceived by Mia and Joel.

Even after the two of them had left, she still felt happy for a while.

It was Hillary's post that had brought her back to reality. She suddenly realized that Mia was Joel and Hillary's daughter, not hers!

Why was she so excited about Mia's birthday?

She did not sleep much that night.

Before she returned, as she thought about her plans after returning to the country, she had told herself not to contact Joel ever again. But why were they involved again?

She was angry with herself and even more furious with Joel for teasing her.

He was making her sink deeper into it step by step.

She did not say anything else along the way until they arrived at the villa. However, after stopping the car, she did not get out. Instead, she said calmly, "Yes, I was jealous."

Joel was taken aback.

Tanya lowered her head. He could not see the girl's expression, but he could see that her shoulders were trembling slightly. She had never cried much since she was young.

Why was she crying now?

As he was thinking, she chuckled. "I admit it. Are you satisfied?"

She looked up and asked with a smile, "Mr. Smith, are you satisfied with me admitting that I'm a b*tch who covets someone else's fiancé?"

“You just had to make me admit that I’ll always be lowly in front of you. Are you satisfied?”

The three “are you satisfied?” encompassed everything she had suffered all these years!

In Switzerland, she had no lack of suitors, but she did not like anyone. What she was unwilling to admit was that she had never let go of this man.

Even if this man was with the sister she hated the most.

As she smiled, tears suddenly fell down.

The teardrop was crystal clear as it slid down the corner of her eye and landed on her leg.

At this moment, a warm hand pressed down on her shoulder. With a huge reaction, she suddenly reached out and pushed the hand away!

She got out of the car angrily.

Joel chased after her. “Tanya!”

Tanya pushed him away and opened the door.

Joel hugged her tightly. “Tanya.”

Tanya was furious and shouted angrily, “Joel, what are you trying to do? Let me tell you, even if I haven’t completely forgotten about you, I won’t be your mistress! I may be spineless, but I still have this bottom line! Let go. If you don’t, I’ll call the police!”

However, the man behind her did not let go. Just as Tanya angrily picked up her phone and was about to call the police, Joel’s voice suddenly sounded. “Uncle Ian is critically ill.”

Tanya paused.

Tanya knew who his uncle was. She also knew how important this uncle was to Joel.

She said nothing.

Joel continued, "After Uncle Ian and Yvette separated more than twenty years ago, they never saw each other again. His greatest regret in this life is that he couldn't be with her. Even though he knows that Nora is his daughter, he still wants to follow Yvette to the afterlife."

"Tanya, we're so lucky to meet again. This time, I won't let go."

At the Smiths.

After taking a shower, Nora prepared to go downstairs to eat something.

But as soon as she opened the door, she saw Quentin in front of it.

Although the man was already 26 years old, he still looked very young. His thin body leaned against the wall, and he instantly stood up when he saw her.

Nora raised her eyebrows. "What's the matter?"

Quentin nodded and asked curiously, "Nora, what did you tell Uncle Ian that suddenly gave him the will to survive?"

When Nora heard this, she was silent for a moment.

She suddenly said, "Do you really want to know?"

Quentin nodded.

Nora looked away.

She was not planning to say these words. After all, her mother's last words were filled with danger. Now, she did not even know who or where the enemy was.

She said, "Do you know why I hid my identity as Big Sister?"

Quentin shook his head.

Nora said, "Because my mother said that if I stand out, people might come after me."

Quentin narrowed his eyes at these words.

Nora looked at him. "I told him this."

She was referring to Ian.

They had just reunited, but she was not used to calling that person “father.” She could not bring herself to call him “father.”

Quentin understood.

Ian felt that Joel and Quentin could protect her well and that she would live well. Therefore, he had lost the will to live and wanted to reunite with Yvette.

But when he found out that his daughter was in danger, as a father, how could he leave?

He had to live and help her get rid of all obstacles!

Especially that danger... Ian subconsciously felt that it had something to do with Yvette leaving him back then!

This was Nora’s guess.

Yvette had suddenly run away from home and told the public that she had eloped with someone, but she had given birth to her. In addition to the organization Morris had mentioned...

She felt that Yvette’s departure back then might have been to protect Ian.

Ian clearly thought of this as well, and Nora told him, “The first DNA test showed that my genes have mutated. Logically speaking, we could never acknowledge each other. But Mother left my umbilical cord blood behind.”

Yvette had preserved Nora’s umbilical cord blood because she wanted to have a contingency plan when she was at her wit’s end.

If Nora was to ever get involved in this, Ian could protect her appropriately and fulfill his responsibility as a father.

Even if Nora did not need his protection, if this responsibility could make Ian want to live, she did not mind being protected.

However, Quentin suddenly understood something. He looked at Nora seriously. “Nora, don’t worry. I will help you guard your identity!”

If there was any danger, he would protect his cousin!

Nora: “?”

In the suburbs.

Joel was hugging Tanya. “I don’t know what Nora said to make Uncle Ian want to live, but I know that I can’t lose you again, Tanya.”

When Uncle Ian lay on the hospital bed and recalled what had happened back then, he said the thing he regretted the most was not insisting on being with Yvette. At that time, Joel had thought of Tanya.

He did not want the tragedy to repeat itself.

When Tanya heard this, she stopped struggling. She closed her eyes tightly as tears started pouring. “Even if I don’t mind Mia’s existence, what about Hillary?”

“Hillary doesn’t matter.”

Joel said, “Tanya, back then, I was tricked into being with her. But all these years, apart from Mia, there’s nothing between us. I gave her the title of fiancée because I didn’t want Mia to not have a mother. But I told her long ago that when Mia turned five and became sensible, we would end the engagement. The last time I chased her away from the Smiths, it was to end the engagement.

Tanya was stunned.

Hillary was clearly saying that they were very loving.

However, compared to Hillary, she trusted Joel more.

She was not a romantic. The reason she chose to believe Joel was because she understood Hillary’s character!

But even so, she did not expect such a misunderstanding to have happened back then.

She asked again, “But her Facebook post...”

Joel explained again, “It was Mia’s birthday yesterday. I took a gift from her at the entrance of her house and left. As for the restaurant, it was only me and Mia. She followed us there by herself.”

Tanya was stunned.

Joel hugged her. “Tanya, I don’t know what else I need to do to make you forgive me, but do you know how happy I was when I heard you say that you were jealous?”

The man no longer had the aura he had in front of outsiders. At this moment, he was as happy as a child who had eaten candy. “At that time, I was thinking that even if you hate me or resent me, I won’t let you go this time.”

“ ... ”

The wind around them seemed to have stopped.

The birds and insects were all silent.

Tanya only felt that at this moment, her broken heart seemed to have been filled with healing medicine as he comforted her.

She did not know what to say.

She did not know if she should forgive this man for that night.

Even if it was not his fault that he had been schemed against...

She did not know if she could be a good stepmother, either...

She did not even know if it was right for her to pursue happiness like this before her child was found...

Before she could think, the man suddenly held her shoulder and made her slowly turn her head.

The man stopped talking and lowered his head to cover her lips.

That familiar cool breath suddenly invaded her mouth, making her brain explode.

The memories in her body seemed to have returned before her rationality, making her almost give in without any resistance...

She was in a sorry state and quickly retreated.

However, he continued to press her hard and domineeringly. It was as if he wanted to claim sovereignty over every part of her mouth.

“Agh!”

Suddenly, a voice was heard.

The two of them froze and hurriedly looked at the door. They saw Mdm. Florence covering her eyes. “Goodness, Miss Tanya, Mrs. Hunt asked me to see if you were around. You... you two lovebirds can continue. Pretend I didn’t see you!”

With that, she ran off in a hurry.

Tanya: “...”

Joel: “...”

The two of them were feeling a little awkward. It did not seem appropriate to continue what had just happened. However, if they did not continue, they would be at a loss if they just stood there.

Tanya said, “Let’s talk inside.”

She turned and opened the door.

Joel followed behind her obediently. He did not look like the tycoon who ran the business world at all.

After the two of them entered the room, Joel took the initiative to say, “You haven’t eaten yet, right? I’ll cook something for you.”

Tanya nodded in a daze. At that moment, she seemed to have completely forgotten that this was her house.

When Joel entered the kitchen, Tanya had yet to return to her senses.

At this moment, her phone suddenly rang.

She picked up the call without even looking at it and accidentally put it on speaker. Hillary’s voice came from the other end. “Tanya, do you think Joel will return to your side just because you’re back? Let me tell you, the person

he loves is me. He's right beside me now.. Our family of three is going to eat together. Stop daydreaming!"

Daydreaming...

Tanya looked into the kitchen and felt like she was really dreaming.

When she had left sadly five years ago, she thought that she would never have the chance to be with this man in her life. This man was going to disappear from her life.

Who would have thought that five years later, he would be cooking food for her?

As Tanya was thinking, Hillary's voice was heard again. "Why aren't you saying anything? Are you really going to degrade yourself to be a third wheel and come between us? Let me tell you, you better return to Switzerland. Joel chose me five years ago, he'll definitely choose me again. When that time comes, how embarrassed would you be?"

As she spoke, Joel had already walked out of the kitchen.

The villa was very quiet, and there were no car horns around.

Joel had heard the voice on the phone from the beginning.

He looked at Tanya.

Tanya was also looking at him. The slender girl just stood there, her body a little thin from dancing for a long time.

She looked at Joel with her deep eyes and suddenly raised her eyebrows. "She said I'm the third wheel. May I ask Mr. Smith, what's your relationship with Madam Hillary now?"

As soon as she said this, Hillary's voice stopped. However, she then sneered. "What are you doing? Do you think you can scare me like this? Let me tell you, I'm with Joel. If you want to talk to him, I can help you send a message..."

Amidst her chattering, Joel's originally angry eyes froze for a moment when they met the Tanya's. All his anger seemed to dissipate with an evil smile on her lips.

He took a step forward and said, "I have nothing to do with Madam Hillary. The engagement has been broken off. Madam Tanya, what kind of braised noodles do you want to eat? Tomato eggs or green pepper pork?"

The voice on the phone instantly fell silent!

Hillary: "!!"

The entire villa fell silent. Tanya smiled and said, "Green pepper pork. But no ginger, you remember my preferences, right?"

Joel nodded. "Of course. Just wait 10 minutes."

With that, he glanced at the phone. Just as he was about to return to the kitchen, Hillary smiled mockingly. "Tanya, are you lying to me? How can Joel cook? I've been with him for five years, but I've never seen him cook! He doesn't know how to cook at all! Did you find someone with a similar voice to anger me? I'm telling you, I won't fall for it!"

Tanya recalled how Hillary had deliberately chased him to the restaurant and taken a photo to post on her Facebook. She was not surprised by her way of thinking.

She only smiled and suddenly turned on the camera. She raised her phone and aimed it at Joel. "Here, let me show you. The man I'm looking at not only has a similar voice to Joel, but his appearance is also very similar!"

Her voice was filled with mockery.

When Hillary saw Joel wearing an apron, she was stunned.

She had stayed with the Smiths for five years. Joel had never allowed her to enter his room, and every time she saw him, he was always the high and mighty leader who could stir up New York's economic scene with just a move of his finger.

Since when was that man willing to fall from grace and start doing housework?

Furthermore, he was holding a tomato in one hand and green pepper in the other. He was clearly cooking!

As Tanya had turned on the camera, he looked up.

His light eyes, which were always smiling, suddenly became sharp as he stared at the camera.

He said calmly, "Miss Hillary, is there anything else?"

Tanya looked at the camera and saw that the camera on Hillary's side suddenly shook and fell to the ground. Her hands must have gone soft from shock.

This woman had been like this since she was young. She was a fox exploiting the tiger's might and was extremely hypocritical.

Tanya could not be bothered to talk to her anymore and hung up.

She chuckled softly. She looked up and realized that Joel had not entered the kitchen but was staring at her.

The man was wearing a white shirt and an apron, looking just like he did five years ago.

Tanya suddenly realized that the five years overseas seemed to have lost their distance.

As she was thinking, she saw Joel's eyes gradually turn deep and hot, making her heart beat wildly.

She hurriedly looked away and said, "There are still eight minutes!"

Only then did Joel retract his gaze and nod.

After he left, Tanya hurriedly patted her chest and cheeks.

She must stay alert!

She could not be attracted by his stunning beauty!

Eight minutes later, the noodles were done.

Tanya went upstairs and had already changed into her casual home clothes. Looking at the two bowls of steaming noodles on the dining table, she picked up her fork. Just as she was about to eat, she heard Joel say, "Wait a minute."

She paused and realized that Joel had brought a bottle of hot sauce over.

Tanya stared at the bottle and suddenly thought of a time five years ago.

At that time, she was still in university. As the living expenses from her mother were not enough, she often had to cook for herself.

Noodles were her favorite.

However, she only had one pot back then, so it was inconvenient to stir-fry vegetables. Therefore, every time, she would add a sufficient amount of noodles and vegetables before adding hot sauce.

Joel had always known this habit of hers.

In the past five years, after she went overseas, the thing she was most unused to was eating. Occasionally, she would want to eat noodles, but without hot sauce, it was as if something was missing.

While she was in a daze, Joel opened the bottle and handed it to her.

She dug a big spoonful and put it in the bowl of noodles. The thick sauce immediately floated on it and the fragrance wafted over.

She picked some noodles up with her fork and took a bite excitedly—but she was stunned.

She looked up slowly at the bottle of hot sauce.

The packaging had already changed.

As for the taste of the sauce, although it was still her favorite flavor, it was no longer the same as before.

For some reason, her heart suddenly sank.

A broken mood instantly attacked her, making her lower her head.

Indeed.

In five years, everything familiar had changed.

Nothing would stand there and wait for her.

It was like losing her child.

Even if she had returned to the country and she and Joel were still the same as they were five years ago, this fact could not be hidden.

She became depressed.

Joel looked at her and panic surged in his heart. He asked carefully, "What's wrong? The noodles don't taste good?"

A hot tear fell into the bowl.

Tanya suddenly looked up.. "There's something I need to tell you."

Joel saw her grave expression and put down his fork. He stared at her. "What?"

His heart suddenly pounded violently.

He didn't know what Tanya was going to say, much less what she was thinking... but he suddenly felt that what she was going to say next was very important.

Tanya looked at the man and said impulsively, "We had a..."

The word "child" hovered around her mouth for a moment, but she could not say it.

Joel was stunned. "What?"

He searched his memory hard. They had an agreement? An oath? Or what?

He was afraid that he would anger the girl in front of him if he did not remember.

Tanya opened her mouth.

She suddenly thought of the parents who had been searching for their children overseas.

Some mothers broke down, and some fathers were very calm. However, she had seen them turn around and cry secretly in a corner after comforting their wives.

She suddenly asked, "You love Mia very much, right?"

Joel did not know why she had suddenly changed the topic, but he still followed along and said, "Yes, I love her very much."

He suddenly reached out and held her hand. "I know that I will never let you down in this matter. Her existence is something I cannot control, but her existence makes me feel warm. Tanya, that is a kind of satisfaction from family ties. You understand me, right?"

How could Tanya not understand?

After all, she and Joel were both children who lacked love!

Even though Joel was born in the Smiths, his parents did not like him. There was even a time when they thought of abandoning him, making him feel very insecure.

As for Tanya...

After her mother remarried, she lost her home.

When the two of them walked together back then, didn't it feel like they were hugging each other for warmth?

That was why she was so happy when she gave birth to that little angel and thought that she finally had a family in this world and someone with her blood.

That was why she had searched the entire world for her child like a madman without even having seen the child once.

When Joel saw that she was in a strange mood, he mistakenly thought that Tanya would mind if he mentioned Mia. He thought about it and said, "I know it's very selfish of me to make you accept Mia, but Tanya, Mia is really a very obedient child. You'll fall in love with her. Really..."

He was afraid that Tanya would suggest sending the child away.

No matter how much he loved Tanya, he could not do that.

After all, he was a father!

Seeing that he had misunderstood, Tanya waved her hand and said, "That's not what I meant."

As soon as she said this, Joel heaved a sigh of relief. It was obvious how much he liked Mia.

Tanya asked again, "Do you like children?"

Joel nodded. "Of course. If it was our child, I would like it even more."

These words made Tanya's heart ache again.

She lowered her head and took a bite of noodles.

The hot noodles slid into her mouth, but she took another bite as if she did not know it was hot.

She ate mouthful after mouthful. When she was done, she looked up.

Joel probed, "What did you say we have?"

Tanya took out a tissue and wiped her mouth before replying, "It's nothing."

Joel immediately tried to recall any vow the two had made. However, after thinking for a while, he still could not remember it.

After he ate the noodles, Tanya took his bowl and washed it in the kitchen. Then, she said, "It's getting late, you should go back."

Joel: "..."

He actually did not want to leave tonight, but since Tanya had said so, if he insisted on staying, it would only make Tanya feel annoyed.

At the thought of this, Joel decided that he had to take things slow and not get things done in one go.

He took out his car keys and walked slowly to the door. "Good night."

"Good night."

Tanya replied softly in the kitchen.

She heard Joel walk to the door and stand there for a long time. Finally, he pushed the door open. When she heard the door close with a bang, she turned off the tap.

She stood in the kitchen for a long time before walking out.

Looking at the neat apron hanging in the living room, she thought of Joel's OCD personality and couldn't help but lower her eyes.

She sighed heavily and went upstairs.

She lay on the sofa and quietly stared at the night sky.

She did not know where her child was in the world right now, if he was hungry, or if he had any clothes to wear. She did not know how long she was thinking when her phone suddenly rang.

She picked it up and took a look. It was a call from Hillary.

She picked up the call and Hillary's calm voice was heard. "Are you two still together?"

Tanya sneered and said softly, "Yes, he's taking a shower. Why?"

"You're lying!"

Hillary suddenly smiled and said, "I just called Mia and she said Dad has come home! Tanya, I'm warning you. Stay away from Joel! Even if you seduced him now and he still likes you, Mia is the person he loves the most!"

Tanya clenched her fists.

She lowered her eyes. Before she could say anything, Hillary said, "Mia is everything to him! So what if you two still have feelings for each other? At the end of the night, won't he still go home obediently and coax the child to sleep? Tanya, if you know what's good for you, you better leave him!"

Tanya's voice was very low. "What if I don't?"

"You don't? Do you know that everyone outside knows that he and I are engaged and that Mia is our daughter?! Mia's sake, he won't even announce our separation to the public. In front of outsiders, I will always be Madam Smith! And you, Tanya, are just one of his lovers! What makes you think your status is enough to make him give up his reputation?"

The Jones.

After Hillary shouted this in anger, she finally felt at ease. She sneered and said, "No matter what, I will always be the wife, and you are just a mistress! Just like it was back then, I'm the daughter of a wealthy family, and you're just a fake daughter!"

With that, she hung up.

She had been chased out of the Smiths for so long. There were many guesses outside, but because of Mia, the Smiths had never spread the news that they had broken off the engagement.

She wanted to use this matter to agitate Tanya and let her know that she was nothing to Joel!

Any woman would mind this, right?

As she was thinking about this, the doorbell rang.

The servant went to open the door and exclaimed in surprise, "Mr. Smith?"

Hillary was stunned. She turned around and saw Joel walking in from the door!

It was already so late. Why was he at the Jones' residence?!

Hillary recalled that when she called Tanya today, Joel was also there. Later on, he did not pursue the matter, but now, he was here...

Her heart sank, but her face was still filled with smiles as she walked over. "Joel, you're here..."

When the Joneses heard the servant's words, they hurriedly walked down from the study upstairs to welcome him. "Mr. Smith, what brings you here? If there's anything you need, you can call us to the Smiths."

Joel was still smiling. His eyes were curved, and when he did not speak, he looked very gentle, like a smiling tiger.

However, Hillary could see the coldness in his eyes.

She swallowed and jolted.

Joel looked at her and slowly said, "I came personally today because I thought that after my engagement with Miss Hillary was broken off, she seemed to have been dishonest."

As soon as he said this, Hillary's father was stunned. He looked directly at Hillary. "What? When did you guys break off the engagement?"

Joel lowered his eyes and said indifferently, "Why? Didn't Miss Hillary tell you?"

Hillary had been chased back this time and stayed for a few days now, but she had not mentioned the engagement at all.

Mr. Jones looked at Hillary. "Hillary, what's going on?"

Madam Jones said, "Mr. Smith, did Hillary do something wrong to make you angry? Tell us, we'll get her to change. How can you suddenly call off the engagement?"

Joel looked at Madam Jones.

To be precise, she was also Tanya's mother.

Back then, Tanya's mother had remarried and given birth to Hillary.

Hillary was a year younger than Tanya, but their identities were completely different.

One was a burden who had been brought along into her marriage with a wealthy family, and the other was a daughter of a wealthy family. Hillary had looked down on Tanya since she was young.

As for Tanya, she had a stubborn personality. After being slandered by Hillary a few times, Madam Jones had determined that Tanya's personality was naughty and mischievous, like that of her father, who had disappeared. Therefore, she would hit and scold her!

Joel's attitude toward Madam Jones was distant and cold. He did not bother being polite with her. "Madam Jones, you can discipline her further for her mistakes. Now, we're talking about breaking off the engagement."

He took out the agreement he had signed with Hillary back then. “In the agreement back then, we said that when Mia turns five, the engagement would be automatically broken off. Now, it’s time.”

The Jones parents were stunned. They looked at Hillary in disbelief. “Hillary, you...”

Hillary bit her lip and cried. “Joel, I was wrong. I really know I was wrong. I didn’t go looking for Tanya on purpose. I was just indignant. You chased me out of the Smiths because she suddenly returned, right?”

Tanya?

Madam Jones instantly became even more furious. “What do you mean? Did Tanya cross into your family again? Joel, you can’t treat Hillary like this. Tanya was born to be a bad hooligan!”

As soon as she said this, Joel suddenly reached out and smashed the teacup on the table to the ground!

Smash!

The sound of the teacup shattering resounded throughout the living room, causing the crying Hillary and Madam Jones, who was scolding Tanya, to stop abruptly.

Everyone looked at Joel in disbelief.

Joel lowered his eyes. “I’ve already contacted the reporters. They will announce that I have broken off my engagement with Miss Hillary tomorrow...”

As soon as he said this, Mr. Jones said, “Mr. Smith, is there no room for change in this matter?”

Joel looked at him and said firmly, “No.”

Mr. Jones sighed heavily.

Hillary and Madam Jones still wanted to say something, but Mr. Jones shook his head at them.

The two of them could only shut their mouths.

Mr. Jones began to complain. "Mr. Smith, we understand that you don't like Hillary. We won't force you. We can break off the engagement, but Mia is her biological daughter. You can't stop them from meeting."

Hillary and Madam Jones looked at each other.

Yes.

As long as Mia was still around, Hillary could interfere in Joel and Tanya's lives. As long as she could, Joel and Tanya could forget about living a quiet life!

Hillary clenched her fists tightly. She was already thinking that if Mia fell ill in the future, she would definitely have to stay with the Smiths and take care of her.

If Mia was hurt, she would definitely ask Tanya why she abused her child!

As she was thinking about her future plans, Joel seemed to have seen through her thoughts and said directly, "Yes, I won't stop them from meeting. Every six months, I'll send Mia overseas to meet with Miss Hillary."

Mr. Jones was stunned.

Hillary was stunned. "Go overseas? You don't have to go overseas. I'm just in the country... You don't have to send Mia anywhere. I can just meet her at the Smiths..."

However, the moment she said this, she heard Joel say, "After our engagement is broken off, you'll be in a bad mood, and will go overseas for a vacation. You won't accept our financial support and will travel for five years. After five years, you can return to the country."

Mr. Jones was stunned. "She won't accept financial support? Then how is she going to live?"

Joel glanced at Mr. Jones and said casually, "Aren't so many international students still alive?"

Madam Jones shouted angrily, "No! Hillary has never suffered like this in her entire life! She can't go overseas!"

She had never suffered before, but Tanya could suffer?

Joel had investigated before. Tanya did not have any living expenses overseas. Everything was earned by working part-time!

His attitude was still very calm, and there was even a smile on his face. He looked directly at Mr. Jones. "President Jones, is the collaboration between the Joneses and Smiths going well?"

Mr. Jones: !!!

He immediately understood that Joel was threatening him!

If they did not send Hillary away, the Smiths would terminate all cooperation with the Joneses!

The Joneses had been prospering these years because they had relied on the Smiths. After leaving the Smiths... Joel would definitely let everyone in New York know that the Joneses had offended him.

At that time, even without Joel personally making a move, someone might help him deal with the Joneses!

He gulped and hurriedly stood up. "I understand what you mean, Mr. Smith. I'll handle Hillary's matters here. She'll go overseas."

Joel stood up. "It's good that Mr. Jones understands. I'll leave, then."

He did not even look at Hillary as he left the house.

Hillary was stunned on the spot.

Five years...

Another five years!

Tanya had been overseas for more than five years!

Hillary understood. Joel had arranged everything for her!

He was going to send her overseas for five years to help Tanya vent her anger!

She roared, "Joel! I gave birth to Mia for you! How can you treat me like this?!"

Joel stopped in his tracks and turned to look at her. "If you hadn't given birth to Mia, do you think you would have had the chance to go overseas?"

Upon hearing this, Hillary jolted.

She swallowed.

Mia was her protective charm!

At the Smiths.

After Nora finished showering, she walked out and saw Pete standing there, looking at her seriously. "Mommy, we're going to the amusement park to play tomorrow. Can we bring Mia along?"

Nora asked, "Why?"

Pete said, "I didn't even know it was Mia's birthday yesterday. I didn't give her a gift either. I want to take her out to play tomorrow."

Birthday?

Nora was stunned.

She remembered clearly that Tanya's child's birthday was five days ago.

Mia was only five days away from that child's birthday...

Was this... a coincidence?

She narrowed her eyes.

Was Mia really Hillary's daughter?

The reason why Nora knew about the birthday of the children was that on that day every year, Tanya would be in low spirits.

When she was overseas, no matter where Nora was, she would always be by Tanya's side on this day.

The two of them did nothing. Nora would sleep while Tanya would be in the room, dancing to the birthday gift she had bought long ago.

Usually, when she woke up, Tanya would be covered in sweat, but she would not feel tired. If she continued like this, she would eventually collapse.

Every year, she would fall seriously ill.

It was as if she wanted to use this method to vent her longing for her child for the next year.

Therefore, Nora remembered her child's birthday very clearly.

She couldn't help but doubt Mia's identity.

Tanya's child and Mia were both Joel's children. Furthermore, they were only five days apart...

She narrowed her eyes and began to think about the relationship between Mia and Tanya...

"Mommy, can I?"

Pete's words interrupted Nora's thoughts.

She looked at him and nodded. "Alright, I'll ask your uncle when he comes back."

If she took Mia out to play, she would definitely ask Joel.

With that, she yawned loudly and turned to walk to the bed. "It's already so late. Why isn't he back yet? I'll lie down and wait for him!"

Pete: "..."

As expected, half an hour later, there were uniform breathing sounds on the bed.

Pete sighed helplessly and put down the pen in his hand.

He walked to the bed and gently covered Nora with the blanket. Then, he went out and downstairs to sit on the sofa in the living room.

When Joel returned home, this was the scene he saw.

Pete was clearly sleepy and anxious. His little head was nodding off, but he had still forced himself not to sleep.

Joel looked at the time. It was already 11 PM. He walked over and asked, "What's wrong?"

Pete woke up suddenly and said excitedly, "Uncle, you're finally back!"

He jumped off the sofa and looked at Joel. "Tomorrow, Dad and Mom will take me and Cherry... to the amusement park. I want to bring Mia along, okay?"

Joel looked at him and touched his head. After some thought, he said, "Okay."

Pete heaved a sigh of relief.

Joel bent down and picked him up before carrying him upstairs.

After taking him to the bedroom, he asked, "Where's your mother?"

Pete said helplessly, "Mommy said that she would lie down and wait for you to come back to ask you. In the end, she fell asleep..."

Joel: "..."

Joel brought Pete to his room and watched him shower and change into his pajamas. Then, he sent Pete to Nora's bedroom.

He watched as he tiptoed in and returned to the bedroom in relief.

At the same time, he could not help but think that Nora was such a worry-free mother. Be it with Cherry or Pete, they were both so sensible and independent.

After returning to his room, he washed up and lay on the bed. He took out his phone and opened Tanya's Facebook.

Her profile picture was of a mature grape.

Joel stared at his phone screen for a long time, not knowing what to send her. Just as he was in a daze, he suddenly saw the words "Typing..." on the dialog box.

Joel was instantly delighted.

What was Tanya going to say to him?

However, after waiting for more than ten minutes, she did not say anything.

Joel couldn't help but send a message: "?"

Tanya replied: "?"

Joel: "Where's the small composition?"

Tanya: "What small composition?"

Joel smiled and typed: "You've been typing for almost twenty minutes. You should have written a small composition with 800 words by now? Where is it?"

Tanya: "!!!"

Tanya: "I wasn't sending you a message!"

Tanya: "You're mistaken!"

Tanya: "Oh, I was watching television and accidentally opened your chat window."

Seeing that she was not being honest, Joel continued to type with a smile. "What are you watching?"

Tanya: "A show on FOX TV."

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Nora glanced at him. "I don't know how to take care of people."

Quentin: "..."

After doing all this, Nora walked out. "I'm going to see Old Maddy."

Ever since Old Maddy was rescued, he had been in the hospital for treatment. After all, he had been too severely poisoned. Furthermore, Old Maddy had never recovered from his crazy illness.

Nora went to Old Maddy's ward again. When she was about to go home, she saw Quentin.

She raised her eyebrows and asked, "What are you doing here?"

Quentin coughed. "I'm waiting for you to take you home."

"..."

Nora said helplessly, "Alright."

After the two of them returned home, Nora went upstairs and saw Pete. She kissed her son's forehead and was about to take a shower when Pete suddenly said mysteriously, "Mommy, did you know? Uncle Joel came to pick Mia and me up just now. But he then later got the chauffeur to bring us back and went to chase after God-mom Tanya."

Nora: "??"

When she went to see Old Maddy, Joel had arranged for the medical staff to pick up Mia and Pete from school. She did not expect him to go after Tanya?

Why was he looking for Tanya?

Nora raised her eyebrows.

She smiled and touched Pete's head. "I understand."

Pete blinked and suddenly said, "Mommy, is God-mom Tanya going to be my aunt soon?"

Nora: "?"

This little fellow knew quite a lot. She asked, "Do you want her to be your aunt?"

"Yes!"

Pete nodded seriously. "God-mom treats Mia well."

Nora sensed something. "You mean, Mia's mommy isn't good to her?"

Pete thought for a moment. "No, she isn't."

Nora frowned and pulled a chair over casually. She sat in front of Pete with interest. "Come, talk properly."

Pete's expression was stern as he said seriously, "These are all my speculations."

Nora had always thought that Mia's mother treated her well. After all, who would be cruel to their own daughter? It was because Hillary and Joel were on bad terms that the two of them did not get together.

However, she did not expect Pete's next words to completely subvert her understanding.

Pete said, "Mommy, if I liked mathematics very much, would you stop me from learning it?"

Nora: "Of course not."

Everyone knew that Cherry liked to play games. In order to make Cherry happy, she had agreed to let her play. She only limited the time spent on playing games.

Pete nodded. "Mia's mother knows she likes to dance, but she doesn't let her learn. Moreover, Mia is very afraid of her mother."

Afraid?

No child should be afraid of their mother, right?

Nora felt that Pete might have used the wrong word. "Is it because her mommy is very strict?"

Pete shook his head. "No."

He thought for a moment and said, "The tyrant is very strict too, but I know that he does it for my own good. Sometimes, I go on a hunger strike to fight against him because I know he will eventually give in."

"But Mia's fear of her mommy comes from the fact that she's not sure her mommy would ever give in.

Nora was stunned.

Although Pete's words were messy, she understood them.

Because Justin was his father, even if he was stern every day or even hit Pete, Pete still respected Justin and was not afraid of him.

But Mia's mother was like a stranger and a bad person to Mia. Mia didn't even feel safe with her.

She frowned. "Did Mia tell you all this?"

Pete shook his head. "I observed it myself."

Nora frowned.

If what Pete said was true, Nora would really have to reconsider this matter. However, Pete was only five years old. His conclusion could not be trusted so easily.

Nora said seriously, "Okay, Pete. I understand. I'll take note of this and observe Mia. If it's true, I'll tell your uncle."

At the same time, she frowned.

Was there really a mother in this world who abused her own child?

In the suburbs.

Tanya drove in and looked at the shameless man.

After work, he took the opportunity while she had yet to lock the car to suddenly open the back door and sneak into her car.

She wanted to scold him back then, but his words made her shut her mouth. "Keep arguing If you want everyone to know about our relationship. If you don't, then drive."

Tanya: "..."

She was speechless and anxious.

However, as a kindergarten teacher, she did not want to make a scene in school. She gritted her teeth in anger, but she still drove home. On the way, she switched on her mocking mode. "Mr. Smith, may I ask what my relationship with you is?"

Joel: "I'm your ex-boyfriend."

"..."

"Or rather, it's because I can't forget my ex-girlfriend."

When Tanya heard this, for some reason, her face turned red. She shook her head and sneered. "Mr. Smith, you have a fiancée and daughter now. You're harassing me like this, understand?"

Joel lowered his eyes. "Tanya, you were so angry yesterday. Were you jealous?"

Jealous?

Tanya choked on his words.

However, she immediately realized that from the moment she saw Hillary's Facebook post, she had indeed started to feel angry and humiliated.

Previously, she had been deceived by Mia and Joel.

Even after the two of them had left, she still felt happy for a while.

It was Hillary's post that had brought her back to reality. She suddenly realized that Mia was Joel and Hillary's daughter, not hers!

Why was she so excited about Mia's birthday?

She did not sleep much that night.

Before she returned, as she thought about her plans after returning to the country, she had told herself not to contact Joel ever again. But why were they involved again?

She was angry with herself and even more furious with Joel for teasing her.

He was making her sink deeper into it step by step.

She did not say anything else along the way until they arrived at the villa. However, after stopping the car, she did not get out. Instead, she said calmly, "Yes, I was jealous."

Joel was taken aback.

Tanya lowered her head. He could not see the girl's expression, but he could see that her shoulders were trembling slightly. She had never cried much since she was young.

Why was she crying now?

As he was thinking, she chuckled. "I admit it. Are you satisfied?"

She looked up and asked with a smile, "Mr. Smith, are you satisfied with me admitting that I'm a b*tch who covets someone else's fiancé?"

"You just had to make me admit that I'll always be lowly in front of you. Are you satisfied?"

The three "are you satisfied?" encompassed everything she had suffered all these years!

In Switzerland, she had no lack of suitors, but she did not like anyone. What she was unwilling to admit was that she had never let go of this man.

Even if this man was with the sister she hated the most.

As she smiled, tears suddenly fell down.

The teardrop was crystal clear as it slid down the corner of her eye and landed on her leg.

At this moment, a warm hand pressed down on her shoulder. With a huge reaction, she suddenly reached out and pushed the hand away!

She got out of the car angrily.

Joel chased after her. "Tanya!"

Tanya pushed him away and opened the door.

Joel hugged her tightly. "Tanya."

Tanya was furious and shouted angrily, "Joel, what are you trying to do? Let me tell you, even if I haven't completely forgotten about you, I won't be your

mistress! I may be spineless, but I still have this bottom line! Let go. If you don't, I'll call the police!"

However, the man behind her did not let go. Just as Tanya angrily picked up her phone and was about to call the police, Joel's voice suddenly sounded. "Uncle Ian is critically ill."

Tanya paused.

Tanya knew who his uncle was. She also knew how important this uncle was to Joel.

She said nothing.

Joel continued, "After Uncle Ian and Yvette separated more than twenty years ago, they never saw each other again. His greatest regret in this life is that he couldn't be with her. Even though he knows that Nora is his daughter, he still wants to follow Yvette to the afterlife."

"Tanya, we're so lucky to meet again. This time, I won't let go."

At the Smiths.

After taking a shower, Nora prepared to go downstairs to eat something.

But as soon as she opened the door, she saw Quentin in front of it.

Although the man was already 26 years old, he still looked very young. His thin body leaned against the wall, and he instantly stood up when he saw her.

Nora raised her eyebrows. "What's the matter?"

Quentin nodded and asked curiously, "Nora, what did you tell Uncle Ian that suddenly gave him the will to survive?"

When Nora heard this, she was silent for a moment.

She suddenly said, "Do you really want to know?"

Quentin nodded.

Nora looked away.

She was not planning to say these words. After all, her mother's last words were filled with danger. Now, she did not even know who or where the enemy was.

She said, "Do you know why I hid my identity as Big Sister?"

Quentin shook his head.

Nora said, "Because my mother said that if I stand out, people might come after me."

Quentin narrowed his eyes at these words.

Nora looked at him. "I told him this."

She was referring to Ian.

They had just reunited, but she was not used to calling that person "father." She could not bring herself to call him "father."

Quentin understood.

Ian felt that Joel and Quentin could protect her well and that she would live well. Therefore, he had lost the will to live and wanted to reunite with Yvette.

But when he found out that his daughter was in danger, as a father, how could he leave?

He had to live and help her get rid of all obstacles!

Especially that danger... Ian subconsciously felt that it had something to do with Yvette leaving him back then!

This was Nora's guess.

Yvette had suddenly run away from home and told the public that she had eloped with someone, but she had given birth to her. In addition to the organization Morris had mentioned...

She felt that Yvette's departure back then might have been to protect Ian.

Ian clearly thought of this as well, and Nora told him, “The first DNA test showed that my genes have mutated. Logically speaking, we could never acknowledge each other. But Mother left my umbilical cord blood behind.”

Yvette had preserved Nora’s umbilical cord blood because she wanted to have a contingency plan when she was at her wit’s end.

If Nora was to ever get involved in this, Ian could protect her appropriately and fulfill his responsibility as a father.

Even if Nora did not need his protection, if this responsibility could make Ian want to live, she did not mind being protected.

However, Quentin suddenly understood something. He looked at Nora seriously. “Nora, don’t worry. I will help you guard your identity!”

If there was any danger, he would protect his cousin!

Nora: “?”

In the suburbs.

Joel was hugging Tanya. “I don’t know what Nora said to make Uncle Ian want to live, but I know that I can’t lose you again, Tanya.”

When Uncle Ian lay on the hospital bed and recalled what had happened back then, he said the thing he regretted the most was not insisting on being with Yvette. At that time, Joel had thought of Tanya.

He did not want the tragedy to repeat itself.

When Tanya heard this, she stopped struggling. She closed her eyes tightly as tears started pouring. “Even if I don’t mind Mia’s existence, what about Hillary?”

“Hillary doesn’t matter.”

Joel said, “Tanya, back then, I was tricked into being with her. But all these years, apart from Mia, there’s nothing between us. I gave her the title of fiancée because I didn’t want Mia to not have a mother. But I told her long ago that when Mia turned five and became sensible, we would end the engagement. The last time I chased her away from the Smiths, it was to end the engagement.

Tanya was stunned.

Hillary was clearly saying that they were very loving.

However, compared to Hillary, she trusted Joel more.

She was not a romantic. The reason she chose to believe Joel was because she understood Hillary's character!

But even so, she did not expect such a misunderstanding to have happened back then.

She asked again, "But her Facebook post..."

Joel explained again, "It was Mia's birthday yesterday. I took a gift from her at the entrance of her house and left. As for the restaurant, it was only me and Mia. She followed us there by herself."

Tanya was stunned.

Joel hugged her. "Tanya, I don't know what else I need to do to make you forgive me, but do you know how happy I was when I heard you say that you were jealous?"

The man no longer had the aura he had in front of outsiders. At this moment, he was as happy as a child who had eaten candy. "At that time, I was thinking that even if you hate me or resent me, I won't let you go this time."

"..."

The wind around them seemed to have stopped.

The birds and insects were all silent.

Tanya only felt that at this moment, her broken heart seemed to have been filled with healing medicine as he comforted her.

She did not know what to say.

She did not know if she should forgive this man for that night.

Even if it was not his fault that he had been schemed against...

She did not know if she could be a good stepmother, either...

She did not even know if it was right for her to pursue happiness like this before her child was found...

Before she could think, the man suddenly held her shoulder and made her slowly turn her head.

The man stopped talking and lowered his head to cover her lips.

That familiar cool breath suddenly invaded her mouth, making her brain explode.

The memories in her body seemed to have returned before her rationality, making her almost give in without any resistance...

She was in a sorry state and quickly retreated.

However, he continued to press her hard and domineeringly. It was as if he wanted to claim sovereignty over every part of her mouth.

“Agh!”

Suddenly, a voice was heard.

The two of them froze and hurriedly looked at the door. They saw Mdm. Florence covering her eyes. “Goodness, Miss Tanya, Mrs. Hunt asked me to see if you were around. You... you two lovebirds can continue. Pretend I didn’t see you!”

With that, she ran off in a hurry.

Tanya: “...”

Joel: “...”

The two of them were feeling a little awkward. It did not seem appropriate to continue what had just happened. However, if they did not continue, they would be at a loss if they just stood there.

Tanya said, “Let’s talk inside.”

She turned and opened the door.

Joel followed behind her obediently. He did not look like the tycoon who ran the business world at all.

After the two of them entered the room, Joel took the initiative to say, "You haven't eaten yet, right? I'll cook something for you."

Tanya nodded in a daze. At that moment, she seemed to have completely forgotten that this was her house.

When Joel entered the kitchen, Tanya had yet to return to her senses.

At this moment, her phone suddenly rang.

She picked up the call without even looking at it and accidentally put it on speaker. Hillary's voice came from the other end. "Tanya, do you think Joel will return to your side just because you're back? Let me tell you, the person he loves is me. He's right beside me now.. Our family of three is going to eat together. Stop daydreaming!"

Daydreaming...

Tanya looked into the kitchen and felt like she was really dreaming.

When she had left sadly five years ago, she thought that she would never have the chance to be with this man in her life. This man was going to disappear from her life.

Who would have thought that five years later, he would be cooking food for her?

As Tanya was thinking, Hillary's voice was heard again. "Why aren't you saying anything? Are you really going to degrade yourself to be a third wheel and come between us? Let me tell you, you better return to Switzerland. Joel chose me five years ago, he'll definitely choose me again. When that time comes, how embarrassed would you be?"

As she spoke, Joel had already walked out of the kitchen.

The villa was very quiet, and there were no car horns around.

Joel had heard the voice on the phone from the beginning.

He looked at Tanya.

Tanya was also looking at him. The slender girl just stood there, her body a little thin from dancing for a long time.

She looked at Joel with her deep eyes and suddenly raised her eyebrows. “She said I’m the third wheel. May I ask Mr. Smith, what’s your relationship with Madam Hillary now?”

As soon as she said this, Hillary’s voice stopped. However, she then sneered. “What are you doing? Do you think you can scare me like this? Let me tell you, I’m with Joel. If you want to talk to him, I can help you send a message...”

Amidst her chattering, Joel’s originally angry eyes froze for a moment when they met the Tanya’s. All his anger seemed to dissipate with an evil smile on her lips.

He took a step forward and said, “I have nothing to do with Madam Hillary. The engagement has been broken off. Madam Tanya, what kind of braised noodles do you want to eat? Tomato eggs or green pepper pork?”

The voice on the phone instantly fell silent!

Hillary: “!!”

The entire villa fell silent. Tanya smiled and said, “Green pepper pork. But no ginger, you remember my preferences, right?”

Joel nodded. “Of course. Just wait 10 minutes.”

With that, he glanced at the phone. Just as he was about to return to the kitchen, Hillary smiled mockingly. “Tanya, are you lying to me? How can Joel cook? I’ve been with him for five years, but I’ve never seen him cook! He doesn’t know how to cook at all! Did you find someone with a similar voice to anger me? I’m telling you, I won’t fall for it!”

Tanya recalled how Hillary had deliberately chased him to the restaurant and taken a photo to post on her Facebook. She was not surprised by her way of thinking.

She only smiled and suddenly turned on the camera. She raised her phone and aimed it at Joel. “Here, let me show you. The man I’m looking at not only has a similar voice to Joel, but his appearance is also very similar!”

Her voice was filled with mockery.

When Hillary saw Joel wearing an apron, she was stunned.

She had stayed with the Smiths for five years. Joel had never allowed her to enter his room, and every time she saw him, he was always the high and mighty leader who could stir up New York's economic scene with just a move of his finger.

Since when was that man willing to fall from grace and start doing housework?

Furthermore, he was holding a tomato in one hand and green pepper in the other. He was clearly cooking!

As Tanya had turned on the camera, he looked up.

His light eyes, which were always smiling, suddenly became sharp as he stared at the camera.

He said calmly, "Miss Hillary, is there anything else?"

Tanya looked at the camera and saw that the camera on Hillary's side suddenly shook and fell to the ground. Her hands must have gone soft from shock.

This woman had been like this since she was young. She was a fox exploiting the tiger's might and was extremely hypocritical.

Tanya could not be bothered to talk to her anymore and hung up.

She chuckled softly. She looked up and realized that Joel had not entered the kitchen but was staring at her.

The man was wearing a white shirt and an apron, looking just like he did five years ago.

Tanya suddenly realized that the five years overseas seemed to have lost their distance.

As she was thinking, she saw Joel's eyes gradually turn deep and hot, making her heart beat wildly.

She hurriedly looked away and said, “There are still eight minutes!”

Only then did Joel retract his gaze and nod.

After he left, Tanya hurriedly patted her chest and cheeks.

She must stay alert!

She could not be attracted by his stunning beauty!

Eight minutes later, the noodles were done.

Tanya went upstairs and had already changed into her casual home clothes. Looking at the two bowls of steaming noodles on the dining table, she picked up her fork. Just as she was about to eat, she heard Joel say, “Wait a minute.”

She paused and realized that Joel had brought a bottle of hot sauce over.

Tanya stared at the bottle and suddenly thought of a time five years ago.

At that time, she was still in university. As the living expenses from her mother were not enough, she often had to cook for herself.

Noodles were her favorite.

However, she only had one pot back then, so it was inconvenient to stir-fry vegetables. Therefore, every time, she would add a sufficient amount of noodles and vegetables before adding hot sauce.

Joel had always known this habit of hers.

In the past five years, after she went overseas, the thing she was most unused to was eating. Occasionally, she would want to eat noodles, but without hot sauce, it was as if something was missing.

While she was in a daze, Joel opened the bottle and handed it to her.

She dug a big spoonful and put it in the bowl of noodles. The thick sauce immediately floated on it and the fragrance wafted over.

She picked some noodles up with her fork and took a bite excitedly—but she was stunned.

She looked up slowly at the bottle of hot sauce.

The packaging had already changed.

As for the taste of the sauce, although it was still her favorite flavor, it was no longer the same as before.

For some reason, her heart suddenly sank.

A broken mood instantly attacked her, making her lower her head.

Indeed.

In five years, everything familiar had changed.

Nothing would stand there and wait for her.

It was like losing her child.

Even if she had returned to the country and she and Joel were still the same as they were five years ago, this fact could not be hidden.

She became depressed.

Joel looked at her and panic surged in his heart. He asked carefully, "What's wrong? The noodles don't taste good?"

A hot tear fell into the bowl.

Tanya suddenly looked up.. "There's something I need to tell you."

Joel saw her grave expression and put down his fork. He stared at her. "What?"

His heart suddenly pounded violently.

He didn't know what Tanya was going to say, much less what she was thinking... but he suddenly felt that what she was going to say next was very important.

Tanya looked at the man and said impulsively, "We had a..."

The word “child” hovered around her mouth for a moment, but she could not say it.

Joel was stunned. “What?”

He searched his memory hard. They had an agreement? An oath? Or what?

He was afraid that he would anger the girl in front of him if he did not remember.

Tanya opened her mouth.

She suddenly thought of the parents who had been searching for their children overseas.

Some mothers broke down, and some fathers were very calm. However, she had seen them turn around and cry secretly in a corner after comforting their wives.

She suddenly asked, “You love Mia very much, right?”

Joel did not know why she had suddenly changed the topic, but he still followed along and said, “Yes, I love her very much.”

He suddenly reached out and held her hand. “I know that I will never let you down in this matter. Her existence is something I cannot control, but her existence makes me feel warm. Tanya, that is a kind of satisfaction from family ties. You understand me, right?”

How could Tanya not understand?

After all, she and Joel were both children who lacked love!

Even though Joel was born in the Smiths, his parents did not like him. There was even a time when they thought of abandoning him, making him feel very insecure.

As for Tanya...

After her mother remarried, she lost her home.

When the two of them walked together back then, didn't it feel like they were hugging each other for warmth?

That was why she was so happy when she gave birth to that little angel and thought that she finally had a family in this world and someone with her blood.

That was why she had searched the entire world for her child like a madman without even having seen the child once.

When Joel saw that she was in a strange mood, he mistakenly thought that Tanya would mind if he mentioned Mia. He thought about it and said, "I know it's very selfish of me to make you accept Mia, but Tanya, Mia is really a very obedient child. You'll fall in love with her. Really..."

He was afraid that Tanya would suggest sending the child away.

No matter how much he loved Tanya, he could not do that.

After all, he was a father!

Seeing that he had misunderstood, Tanya waved her hand and said, "That's not what I meant."

As soon as she said this, Joel heaved a sigh of relief. It was obvious how much he liked Mia.

Tanya asked again, "Do you like children?"

Joel nodded. "Of course. If it was our child, I would like it even more."

These words made Tanya's heart ache again.

She lowered her head and took a bite of noodles.

The hot noodles slid into her mouth, but she took another bite as if she did not know it was hot.

She ate mouthful after mouthful. When she was done, she looked up.

Joel probed, "What did you say we have?"

Tanya took out a tissue and wiped her mouth before replying, "It's nothing."

Joel immediately tried to recall any vow the two had made. However, after thinking for a while, he still could not remember it.

After he ate the noodles, Tanya took his bowl and washed it in the kitchen. Then, she said, "It's getting late, you should go back."

Joel: "..."

He actually did not want to leave tonight, but since Tanya had said so, if he insisted on staying, it would only make Tanya feel annoyed.

At the thought of this, Joel decided that he had to take things slow and not get things done in one go.

He took out his car keys and walked slowly to the door. "Good night."

"Good night."

Tanya replied softly in the kitchen.

She heard Joel walk to the door and stand there for a long time. Finally, he pushed the door open. When she heard the door close with a bang, she turned off the tap.

She stood in the kitchen for a long time before walking out.

Looking at the neat apron hanging in the living room, she thought of Joel's OCD personality and couldn't help but lower her eyes.

She sighed heavily and went upstairs.

She lay on the sofa and quietly stared at the night sky.

She did not know where her child was in the world right now, if he was hungry, or if he had any clothes to wear. She did not know how long she was thinking when her phone suddenly rang.

She picked it up and took a look. It was a call from Hillary.

She picked up the call and Hillary's calm voice was heard. "Are you two still together?"

Tanya sneered and said softly, "Yes, he's taking a shower. Why?"

"You're lying!"

Hillary suddenly smiled and said, "I just called Mia and she said Dad has come home! Tanya, I'm warning you. Stay away from Joel! Even if you seduced him now and he still likes you, Mia is the person he loves the most!"

Tanya clenched her fists.

She lowered her eyes. Before she could say anything, Hillary said, "Mia is everything to him! So what if you two still have feelings for each other? At the end of the night, won't he still go home obediently and coax the child to sleep? Tanya, if you know what's good for you, you better leave him!"

Tanya's voice was very low. "What if I don't?"

"You don't? Do you know that everyone outside knows that he and I are engaged and that Mia is our daughter?! Mia's sake, he won't even announce our separation to the public. In front of outsiders, I will always be Madam Smith! And you, Tanya, are just one of his lovers! What makes you think your status is enough to make him give up his reputation?"

The Jones.

After Hillary shouted this in anger, she finally felt at ease. She sneered and said, "No matter what, I will always be the wife, and you are just a mistress! Just like it was back then, I'm the daughter of a wealthy family, and you're just a fake daughter!"

With that, she hung up.

She had been chased out of the Smiths for so long. There were many guesses outside, but because of Mia, the Smiths had never spread the news that they had broken off the engagement.

She wanted to use this matter to agitate Tanya and let her know that she was nothing to Joel!

Any woman would mind this, right?

As she was thinking about this, the doorbell rang.

The servant went to open the door and exclaimed in surprise, "Mr. Smith?"

Hillary was stunned. She turned around and saw Joel walking in from the door!

It was already so late. Why was he at the Jones' residence?!

Hillary recalled that when she called Tanya today, Joel was also there. Later on, he did not pursue the matter, but now, he was here...

Her heart sank, but her face was still filled with smiles as she walked over. "Joel, you're here..."

When the Joneses heard the servant's words, they hurriedly walked down from the study upstairs to welcome him. "Mr. Smith, what brings you here? If there's anything you need, you can call us to the Smiths."

Joel was still smiling. His eyes were curved, and when he did not speak, he looked very gentle, like a smiling tiger.

However, Hillary could see the coldness in his eyes.

She swallowed and jolted.

Joel looked at her and slowly said, "I came personally today because I thought that after my engagement with Miss Hillary was broken off, she seemed to have been dishonest."

As soon as he said this, Hillary's father was stunned. He looked directly at Hillary. "What? When did you guys break off the engagement?"

Joel lowered his eyes and said indifferently, "Why? Didn't Miss Hillary tell you?"

Hillary had been chased back this time and stayed for a few days now, but she had not mentioned the engagement at all.

Mr. Jones looked at Hillary. "Hillary, what's going on?"

Madam Jones said, "Mr. Smith, did Hillary do something wrong to make you angry? Tell us, we'll get her to change. How can you suddenly call off the engagement?"

Joel looked at Madam Jones.

To be precise, she was also Tanya's mother.

Back then, Tanya's mother had remarried and given birth to Hillary.

Hillary was a year younger than Tanya, but their identities were completely different.

One was a burden who had been brought along into her marriage with a wealthy family, and the other was a daughter of a wealthy family. Hillary had looked down on Tanya since she was young.

As for Tanya, she had a stubborn personality. After being slandered by Hillary a few times, Madam Jones had determined that Tanya's personality was naughty and mischievous, like that of her father, who had disappeared. Therefore, she would hit and scold her!

Joel's attitude toward Madam Jones was distant and cold. He did not bother being polite with her. "Madam Jones, you can discipline her further for her mistakes. Now, we're talking about breaking off the engagement."

He took out the agreement he had signed with Hillary back then. "In the agreement back then, we said that when Mia turns five, the engagement would be automatically broken off. Now, it's time."

The Jones parents were stunned. They looked at Hillary in disbelief. "Hillary, you..."

Hillary bit her lip and cried. "Joel, I was wrong. I really know I was wrong. I didn't go looking for Tanya on purpose. I was just indignant. You chased me out of the Smiths because she suddenly returned, right?"

Tanya?

Madam Jones instantly became even more furious. "What do you mean? Did Tanya cross into your family again? Joel, you can't treat Hillary like this. Tanya was born to be a bad hooligan!"

As soon as she said this, Joel suddenly reached out and smashed the teacup on the table to the ground!

Smash!

The sound of the teacup shattering resounded throughout the living room, causing the crying Hillary and Madam Jones, who was scolding Tanya, to stop abruptly.

Everyone looked at Joel in disbelief.

Joel lowered his eyes. "I've already contacted the reporters. They will announce that I have broken off my engagement with Miss Hillary tomorrow..."

As soon as he said this, Mr. Jones said, "Mr. Smith, is there no room for change in this matter?"

Joel looked at him and said firmly, "No."

Mr. Jones sighed heavily.

Hillary and Madam Jones still wanted to say something, but Mr. Jones shook his head at them.

The two of them could only shut their mouths.

Mr. Jones began to complain. "Mr. Smith, we understand that you don't like Hillary. We won't force you. We can break off the engagement, but Mia is her biological daughter. You can't stop them from meeting."

Hillary and Madam Jones looked at each other.

Yes.

As long as Mia was still around, Hillary could interfere in Joel and Tanya's lives. As long as she could, Joel and Tanya could forget about living a quiet life!

Hillary clenched her fists tightly. She was already thinking that if Mia fell ill in the future, she would definitely have to stay with the Smiths and take care of her.

If Mia was hurt, she would definitely ask Tanya why she abused her child!

As she was thinking about her future plans, Joel seemed to have seen through her thoughts and said directly, "Yes, I won't stop them from meeting. Every six months, I'll send Mia overseas to meet with Miss Hillary."

Mr. Jones was stunned.

Hillary was stunned. “Go overseas? You don’t have to go overseas. I’m just in the country... You don’t have to send Mia anywhere. I can just meet her at the Smiths...”

However, the moment she said this, she heard Joel say, “After our engagement is broken off, you’ll be in a bad mood, and will go overseas for a vacation. You won’t accept our financial support and will travel for five years. After five years, you can return to the country.”

Mr. Jones was stunned. “She won’t accept financial support? Then how is she going to live?”

Joel glanced at Mr. Jones and said casually, “Aren’t so many international students still alive?”

Madam Jones shouted angrily, “No! Hillary has never suffered like this in her entire life! She can’t go overseas!”

She had never suffered before, but Tanya could suffer?

Joel had investigated before. Tanya did not have any living expenses overseas. Everything was earned by working part-time!

His attitude was still very calm, and there was even a smile on his face. He looked directly at Mr. Jones. “President Jones, is the collaboration between the Joneses and Smiths going well?”

Mr. Jones: !!!

He immediately understood that Joel was threatening him!

If they did not send Hillary away, the Smiths would terminate all cooperation with the Joneses!

The Joneses had been prospering these years because they had relied on the Smiths. After leaving the Smiths... Joel would definitely let everyone in New York know that the Joneses had offended him.

At that time, even without Joel personally making a move, someone might help him deal with the Joneses!

He gulped and hurriedly stood up. “I understand what you mean, Mr. Smith. I’ll handle Hillary’s matters here. She’ll go overseas.”

Joel stood up. "It's good that Mr. Jones understands. I'll leave, then."

He did not even look at Hillary as he left the house.

Hillary was stunned on the spot.

Five years...

Another five years!

Tanya had been overseas for more than five years!

Hillary understood. Joel had arranged everything for her!

He was going to send her overseas for five years to help Tanya vent her anger!

She roared, "Joel! I gave birth to Mia for you! How can you treat me like this?!"

Joel stopped in his tracks and turned to look at her. "If you hadn't given birth to Mia, do you think you would have had the chance to go overseas?"

Upon hearing this, Hillary jolted.

She swallowed.

Mia was her protective charm!

At the Smiths.

After Nora finished showering, she walked out and saw Pete standing there, looking at her seriously. "Mommy, we're going to the amusement park to play tomorrow. Can we bring Mia along?"

Nora asked, "Why?"

Pete said, "I didn't even know it was Mia's birthday yesterday. I didn't give her a gift either. I want to take her out to play tomorrow."

Birthday?

Nora was stunned.

She remembered clearly that Tanya's child's birthday was five days ago.

Mia was only five days away from that child's birthday...

Was this... a coincidence?

She narrowed her eyes.

Was Mia really Hillary's daughter?

The reason why Nora knew about the birthday of the children was that on that day every year, Tanya would be in low spirits.

When she was overseas, no matter where Nora was, she would always be by Tanya's side on this day.

The two of them did nothing. Nora would sleep while Tanya would be in the room, dancing to the birthday gift she had bought long ago.

Usually, when she woke up, Tanya would be covered in sweat, but she would not feel tired. If she continued like this, she would eventually collapse.

Every year, she would fall seriously ill.

It was as if she wanted to use this method to vent her longing for her child for the next year.

Therefore, Nora remembered her child's birthday very clearly.

She couldn't help but doubt Mia's identity.

Tanya's child and Mia were both Joel's children. Furthermore, they were only five days apart...

She narrowed her eyes and began to think about the relationship between Mia and Tanya...

"Mommy, can I?"

Pete's words interrupted Nora's thoughts.

She looked at him and nodded. "Alright, I'll ask your uncle when he comes back."

If she took Mia out to play, she would definitely ask Joel.

With that, she yawned loudly and turned to walk to the bed. "It's already so late. Why isn't he back yet? I'll lie down and wait for him!"

Pete: "..."

As expected, half an hour later, there were uniform breathing sounds on the bed.

Pete sighed helplessly and put down the pen in his hand.

He walked to the bed and gently covered Nora with the blanket. Then, he went out and downstairs to sit on the sofa in the living room.

When Joel returned home, this was the scene he saw.

Pete was clearly sleepy and anxious. His little head was nodding off, but he had still forced himself not to sleep.

Joel looked at the time. It was already 11 PM. He walked over and asked, "What's wrong?"

Pete woke up suddenly and said excitedly, "Uncle, you're finally back!"

He jumped off the sofa and looked at Joel. "Tomorrow, Dad and Mom will take me and Cherry... to the amusement park. I want to bring Mia along, okay?"

Joel looked at him and touched his head. After some thought, he said, "Okay."

Pete heaved a sigh of relief.

Joel bent down and picked him up before carrying him upstairs.

After taking him to the bedroom, he asked, "Where's your mother?"

Pete said helplessly, "Mommy said that she would lie down and wait for you to come back to ask you. In the end, she fell asleep..."

Joel: "..."

Joel brought Pete to his room and watched him shower and change into his pajamas. Then, he sent Pete to Nora's bedroom.

He watched as he tiptoed in and returned to the bedroom in relief.

At the same time, he could not help but think that Nora was such a worry-free mother. Be it with Cherry or Pete, they were both so sensible and independent.

After returning to his room, he washed up and lay on the bed. He took out his phone and opened Tanya's Facebook.

Her profile picture was of a mature grape.

Joel stared at his phone screen for a long time, not knowing what to send her. Just as he was in a daze, he suddenly saw the words "Typing..." on the dialog box.

Joel was instantly delighted.

What was Tanya going to say to him?

However, after waiting for more than ten minutes, she did not say anything.

Joel couldn't help but send a message: "?"

Tanya replied: "?"

Joel: "Where's the small composition?"

Tanya: "What small composition?"

Joel smiled and typed: "You've been typing for almost twenty minutes. You should have written a small composition with 800 words by now? Where is it?"

Tanya: "!!!"

Tanya: "I wasn't sending you a message!"

Tanya: "You're mistaken!"

Tanya: "Oh, I was watching television and accidentally opened your chat window."

Seeing that she was not being honest, Joel continued to type with a smile. "What are you watching?"

Tanya: "A show on FOX TV."

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However, the man behind her did not let go. Just as Tanya angrily picked up her phone and was about to call the police, Joel's voice suddenly sounded. "Uncle Ian is critically ill."

Tanya paused.

Tanya knew who his uncle was. She also knew how important this uncle was to Joel.

She said nothing.

Joel continued, "After Uncle Ian and Yvette separated more than twenty years ago, they never saw each other again. His greatest regret in this life is that he couldn't be with her. Even though he knows that Nora is his daughter, he still wants to follow Yvette to the afterlife."

"Tanya, we're so lucky to meet again. This time, I won't let go."

At the Smiths.

After taking a shower, Nora prepared to go downstairs to eat something.

But as soon as she opened the door, she saw Quentin in front of it.

Although the man was already 26 years old, he still looked very young. His thin body leaned against the wall, and he instantly stood up when he saw her.

Nora raised her eyebrows. "What's the matter?"

Quentin nodded and asked curiously, "Nora, what did you tell Uncle Ian that suddenly gave him the will to survive?"

When Nora heard this, she was silent for a moment.

She suddenly said, "Do you really want to know?"

Quentin nodded.

Nora looked away.

She was not planning to say these words. After all, her mother's last words were filled with danger. Now, she did not even know who or where the enemy was.

She said, "Do you know why I hid my identity as Big Sister?"

Quentin shook his head.

Nora said, "Because my mother said that if I stand out, people might come after me."

Quentin narrowed his eyes at these words.

Nora looked at him. "I told him this."

She was referring to Ian.

They had just reunited, but she was not used to calling that person "father." She could not bring herself to call him "father."

Quentin understood.

Ian felt that Joel and Quentin could protect her well and that she would live well. Therefore, he had lost the will to live and wanted to reunite with Yvette.

But when he found out that his daughter was in danger, as a father, how could he leave?

He had to live and help her get rid of all obstacles!

Especially that danger... Ian subconsciously felt that it had something to do with Yvette leaving him back then!

This was Nora's guess.

Yvette had suddenly run away from home and told the public that she had eloped with someone, but she had given birth to her. In addition to the organization Morris had mentioned...

She felt that Yvette's departure back then might have been to protect Ian.

Ian clearly thought of this as well, and Nora told him, “The first DNA test showed that my genes have mutated. Logically speaking, we could never acknowledge each other. But Mother left my umbilical cord blood behind.”

Yvette had preserved Nora’s umbilical cord blood because she wanted to have a contingency plan when she was at her wit’s end.

If Nora was to ever get involved in this, Ian could protect her appropriately and fulfill his responsibility as a father.

Even if Nora did not need his protection, if this responsibility could make Ian want to live, she did not mind being protected.

However, Quentin suddenly understood something. He looked at Nora seriously. “Nora, don’t worry. I will help you guard your identity!”

If there was any danger, he would protect his cousin!

Nora: “?”

In the suburbs.

Joel was hugging Tanya. “I don’t know what Nora said to make Uncle Ian want to live, but I know that I can’t lose you again, Tanya.”

When Uncle Ian lay on the hospital bed and recalled what had happened back then, he said the thing he regretted the most was not insisting on being with Yvette. At that time, Joel had thought of Tanya.

He did not want the tragedy to repeat itself.

When Tanya heard this, she stopped struggling. She closed her eyes tightly as tears started pouring. “Even if I don’t mind Mia’s existence, what about Hillary?”

“Hillary doesn’t matter.”

Joel said, “Tanya, back then, I was tricked into being with her. But all these years, apart from Mia, there’s nothing between us. I gave her the title of fiancée because I didn’t want Mia to not have a mother. But I told her long ago that when Mia turned five and became sensible, we would end the engagement. The last time I chased her away from the Smiths, it was to end the engagement.

Tanya was stunned.

Hillary was clearly saying that they were very loving.

However, compared to Hillary, she trusted Joel more.

She was not a romantic. The reason she chose to believe Joel was because she understood Hillary's character!

But even so, she did not expect such a misunderstanding to have happened back then.

She asked again, "But her Facebook post..."

Joel explained again, "It was Mia's birthday yesterday. I took a gift from her at the entrance of her house and left. As for the restaurant, it was only me and Mia. She followed us there by herself."

Tanya was stunned.

Joel hugged her. "Tanya, I don't know what else I need to do to make you forgive me, but do you know how happy I was when I heard you say that you were jealous?"

The man no longer had the aura he had in front of outsiders. At this moment, he was as happy as a child who had eaten candy. "At that time, I was thinking that even if you hate me or resent me, I won't let you go this time."

"..."

The wind around them seemed to have stopped.

The birds and insects were all silent.

Tanya only felt that at this moment, her broken heart seemed to have been filled with healing medicine as he comforted her.

She did not know what to say.

She did not know if she should forgive this man for that night.

Even if it was not his fault that he had been schemed against...

She did not know if she could be a good stepmother, either...

She did not even know if it was right for her to pursue happiness like this before her child was found...

Before she could think, the man suddenly held her shoulder and made her slowly turn her head.

The man stopped talking and lowered his head to cover her lips.

That familiar cool breath suddenly invaded her mouth, making her brain explode.

The memories in her body seemed to have returned before her rationality, making her almost give in without any resistance...

She was in a sorry state and quickly retreated.

However, he continued to press her hard and domineeringly. It was as if he wanted to claim sovereignty over every part of her mouth.

“Agh!”

Suddenly, a voice was heard.

The two of them froze and hurriedly looked at the door. They saw Mdm. Florence covering her eyes. “Goodness, Miss Tanya, Mrs. Hunt asked me to see if you were around. You... you two lovebirds can continue. Pretend I didn’t see you!”

With that, she ran off in a hurry.

Tanya: “...”

Joel: “...”

The two of them were feeling a little awkward. It did not seem appropriate to continue what had just happened. However, if they did not continue, they would be at a loss if they just stood there.

Tanya said, “Let’s talk inside.”

She turned and opened the door.

Joel followed behind her obediently. He did not look like the tycoon who ran the business world at all.

After the two of them entered the room, Joel took the initiative to say, "You haven't eaten yet, right? I'll cook something for you."

Tanya nodded in a daze. At that moment, she seemed to have completely forgotten that this was her house.

When Joel entered the kitchen, Tanya had yet to return to her senses.

At this moment, her phone suddenly rang.

She picked up the call without even looking at it and accidentally put it on speaker. Hillary's voice came from the other end. "Tanya, do you think Joel will return to your side just because you're back? Let me tell you, the person he loves is me. He's right beside me now.. Our family of three is going to eat together. Stop daydreaming!"

Daydreaming...

Tanya looked into the kitchen and felt like she was really dreaming.

When she had left sadly five years ago, she thought that she would never have the chance to be with this man in her life. This man was going to disappear from her life.

Who would have thought that five years later, he would be cooking food for her?

As Tanya was thinking, Hillary's voice was heard again. "Why aren't you saying anything? Are you really going to degrade yourself to be a third wheel and come between us? Let me tell you, you better return to Switzerland. Joel chose me five years ago, he'll definitely choose me again. When that time comes, how embarrassed would you be?"

As she spoke, Joel had already walked out of the kitchen.

The villa was very quiet, and there were no car horns around.

Joel had heard the voice on the phone from the beginning.

He looked at Tanya.

Tanya was also looking at him. The slender girl just stood there, her body a little thin from dancing for a long time.

She looked at Joel with her deep eyes and suddenly raised her eyebrows. “She said I’m the third wheel. May I ask Mr. Smith, what’s your relationship with Madam Hillary now?”

As soon as she said this, Hillary’s voice stopped. However, she then sneered. “What are you doing? Do you think you can scare me like this? Let me tell you, I’m with Joel. If you want to talk to him, I can help you send a message...”

Amidst her chattering, Joel’s originally angry eyes froze for a moment when they met the Tanya’s. All his anger seemed to dissipate with an evil smile on her lips.

He took a step forward and said, “I have nothing to do with Madam Hillary. The engagement has been broken off. Madam Tanya, what kind of braised noodles do you want to eat? Tomato eggs or green pepper pork?”

The voice on the phone instantly fell silent!

Hillary: “!!”

The entire villa fell silent. Tanya smiled and said, “Green pepper pork. But no ginger, you remember my preferences, right?”

Joel nodded. “Of course. Just wait 10 minutes.”

With that, he glanced at the phone. Just as he was about to return to the kitchen, Hillary smiled mockingly. “Tanya, are you lying to me? How can Joel cook? I’ve been with him for five years, but I’ve never seen him cook! He doesn’t know how to cook at all! Did you find someone with a similar voice to anger me? I’m telling you, I won’t fall for it!”

Tanya recalled how Hillary had deliberately chased him to the restaurant and taken a photo to post on her Facebook. She was not surprised by her way of thinking.

She only smiled and suddenly turned on the camera. She raised her phone and aimed it at Joel. “Here, let me show you. The man I’m looking at not only has a similar voice to Joel, but his appearance is also very similar!”

Her voice was filled with mockery.

When Hillary saw Joel wearing an apron, she was stunned.

She had stayed with the Smiths for five years. Joel had never allowed her to enter his room, and every time she saw him, he was always the high and mighty leader who could stir up New York's economic scene with just a move of his finger.

Since when was that man willing to fall from grace and start doing housework?

Furthermore, he was holding a tomato in one hand and green pepper in the other. He was clearly cooking!

As Tanya had turned on the camera, he looked up.

His light eyes, which were always smiling, suddenly became sharp as he stared at the camera.

He said calmly, "Miss Hillary, is there anything else?"

Tanya looked at the camera and saw that the camera on Hillary's side suddenly shook and fell to the ground. Her hands must have gone soft from shock.

This woman had been like this since she was young. She was a fox exploiting the tiger's might and was extremely hypocritical.

Tanya could not be bothered to talk to her anymore and hung up.

She chuckled softly. She looked up and realized that Joel had not entered the kitchen but was staring at her.

The man was wearing a white shirt and an apron, looking just like he did five years ago.

Tanya suddenly realized that the five years overseas seemed to have lost their distance.

As she was thinking, she saw Joel's eyes gradually turn deep and hot, making her heart beat wildly.

She hurriedly looked away and said, “There are still eight minutes!”

Only then did Joel retract his gaze and nod.

After he left, Tanya hurriedly patted her chest and cheeks.

She must stay alert!

She could not be attracted by his stunning beauty!

Eight minutes later, the noodles were done.

Tanya went upstairs and had already changed into her casual home clothes. Looking at the two bowls of steaming noodles on the dining table, she picked up her fork. Just as she was about to eat, she heard Joel say, “Wait a minute.”

She paused and realized that Joel had brought a bottle of hot sauce over.

Tanya stared at the bottle and suddenly thought of a time five years ago.

At that time, she was still in university. As the living expenses from her mother were not enough, she often had to cook for herself.

Noodles were her favorite.

However, she only had one pot back then, so it was inconvenient to stir-fry vegetables. Therefore, every time, she would add a sufficient amount of noodles and vegetables before adding hot sauce.

Joel had always known this habit of hers.

In the past five years, after she went overseas, the thing she was most unused to was eating. Occasionally, she would want to eat noodles, but without hot sauce, it was as if something was missing.

While she was in a daze, Joel opened the bottle and handed it to her.

She dug a big spoonful and put it in the bowl of noodles. The thick sauce immediately floated on it and the fragrance wafted over.

She picked some noodles up with her fork and took a bite excitedly—but she was stunned.

She looked up slowly at the bottle of hot sauce.

The packaging had already changed.

As for the taste of the sauce, although it was still her favorite flavor, it was no longer the same as before.

For some reason, her heart suddenly sank.

A broken mood instantly attacked her, making her lower her head.

Indeed.

In five years, everything familiar had changed.

Nothing would stand there and wait for her.

It was like losing her child.

Even if she had returned to the country and she and Joel were still the same as they were five years ago, this fact could not be hidden.

She became depressed.

Joel looked at her and panic surged in his heart. He asked carefully, "What's wrong? The noodles don't taste good?"

A hot tear fell into the bowl.

Tanya suddenly looked up.. "There's something I need to tell you."

Joel saw her grave expression and put down his fork. He stared at her. "What?"

His heart suddenly pounded violently.

He didn't know what Tanya was going to say, much less what she was thinking... but he suddenly felt that what she was going to say next was very important.

Tanya looked at the man and said impulsively, "We had a..."

The word “child” hovered around her mouth for a moment, but she could not say it.

Joel was stunned. “What?”

He searched his memory hard. They had an agreement? An oath? Or what?

He was afraid that he would anger the girl in front of him if he did not remember.

Tanya opened her mouth.

She suddenly thought of the parents who had been searching for their children overseas.

Some mothers broke down, and some fathers were very calm. However, she had seen them turn around and cry secretly in a corner after comforting their wives.

She suddenly asked, “You love Mia very much, right?”

Joel did not know why she had suddenly changed the topic, but he still followed along and said, “Yes, I love her very much.”

He suddenly reached out and held her hand. “I know that I will never let you down in this matter. Her existence is something I cannot control, but her existence makes me feel warm. Tanya, that is a kind of satisfaction from family ties. You understand me, right?”

How could Tanya not understand?

After all, she and Joel were both children who lacked love!

Even though Joel was born in the Smiths, his parents did not like him. There was even a time when they thought of abandoning him, making him feel very insecure.

As for Tanya...

After her mother remarried, she lost her home.

When the two of them walked together back then, didn't it feel like they were hugging each other for warmth?

That was why she was so happy when she gave birth to that little angel and thought that she finally had a family in this world and someone with her blood.

That was why she had searched the entire world for her child like a madman without even having seen the child once.

When Joel saw that she was in a strange mood, he mistakenly thought that Tanya would mind if he mentioned Mia. He thought about it and said, "I know it's very selfish of me to make you accept Mia, but Tanya, Mia is really a very obedient child. You'll fall in love with her. Really..."

He was afraid that Tanya would suggest sending the child away.

No matter how much he loved Tanya, he could not do that.

After all, he was a father!

Seeing that he had misunderstood, Tanya waved her hand and said, "That's not what I meant."

As soon as she said this, Joel heaved a sigh of relief. It was obvious how much he liked Mia.

Tanya asked again, "Do you like children?"

Joel nodded. "Of course. If it was our child, I would like it even more."

These words made Tanya's heart ache again.

She lowered her head and took a bite of noodles.

The hot noodles slid into her mouth, but she took another bite as if she did not know it was hot.

She ate mouthful after mouthful. When she was done, she looked up.

Joel probed, "What did you say we have?"

Tanya took out a tissue and wiped her mouth before replying, "It's nothing."

Joel immediately tried to recall any vow the two had made. However, after thinking for a while, he still could not remember it.

After he ate the noodles, Tanya took his bowl and washed it in the kitchen. Then, she said, "It's getting late, you should go back."

Joel: "..."

He actually did not want to leave tonight, but since Tanya had said so, if he insisted on staying, it would only make Tanya feel annoyed.

At the thought of this, Joel decided that he had to take things slow and not get things done in one go.

He took out his car keys and walked slowly to the door. "Good night."

"Good night."

Tanya replied softly in the kitchen.

She heard Joel walk to the door and stand there for a long time. Finally, he pushed the door open. When she heard the door close with a bang, she turned off the tap.

She stood in the kitchen for a long time before walking out.

Looking at the neat apron hanging in the living room, she thought of Joel's OCD personality and couldn't help but lower her eyes.

She sighed heavily and went upstairs.

She lay on the sofa and quietly stared at the night sky.

She did not know where her child was in the world right now, if he was hungry, or if he had any clothes to wear. She did not know how long she was thinking when her phone suddenly rang.

She picked it up and took a look. It was a call from Hillary.

She picked up the call and Hillary's calm voice was heard. "Are you two still together?"

Tanya sneered and said softly, "Yes, he's taking a shower. Why?"

"You're lying!"

Hillary suddenly smiled and said, "I just called Mia and she said Dad has come home! Tanya, I'm warning you. Stay away from Joel! Even if you seduced him now and he still likes you, Mia is the person he loves the most!"

Tanya clenched her fists.

She lowered her eyes. Before she could say anything, Hillary said, "Mia is everything to him! So what if you two still have feelings for each other? At the end of the night, won't he still go home obediently and coax the child to sleep? Tanya, if you know what's good for you, you better leave him!"

Tanya's voice was very low. "What if I don't?"

"You don't? Do you know that everyone outside knows that he and I are engaged and that Mia is our daughter?! Mia's sake, he won't even announce our separation to the public. In front of outsiders, I will always be Madam Smith! And you, Tanya, are just one of his lovers! What makes you think your status is enough to make him give up his reputation?"

The Jones.

After Hillary shouted this in anger, she finally felt at ease. She sneered and said, "No matter what, I will always be the wife, and you are just a mistress! Just like it was back then, I'm the daughter of a wealthy family, and you're just a fake daughter!"

With that, she hung up.

She had been chased out of the Smiths for so long. There were many guesses outside, but because of Mia, the Smiths had never spread the news that they had broken off the engagement.

She wanted to use this matter to agitate Tanya and let her know that she was nothing to Joel!

Any woman would mind this, right?

As she was thinking about this, the doorbell rang.

The servant went to open the door and exclaimed in surprise, "Mr. Smith?"

Hillary was stunned. She turned around and saw Joel walking in from the door!

It was already so late. Why was he at the Jones' residence?!

Hillary recalled that when she called Tanya today, Joel was also there. Later on, he did not pursue the matter, but now, he was here...

Her heart sank, but her face was still filled with smiles as she walked over. "Joel, you're here..."

When the Joneses heard the servant's words, they hurriedly walked down from the study upstairs to welcome him. "Mr. Smith, what brings you here? If there's anything you need, you can call us to the Smiths."

Joel was still smiling. His eyes were curved, and when he did not speak, he looked very gentle, like a smiling tiger.

However, Hillary could see the coldness in his eyes.

She swallowed and jolted.

Joel looked at her and slowly said, "I came personally today because I thought that after my engagement with Miss Hillary was broken off, she seemed to have been dishonest."

As soon as he said this, Hillary's father was stunned. He looked directly at Hillary. "What? When did you guys break off the engagement?"

Joel lowered his eyes and said indifferently, "Why? Didn't Miss Hillary tell you?"

Hillary had been chased back this time and stayed for a few days now, but she had not mentioned the engagement at all.

Mr. Jones looked at Hillary. "Hillary, what's going on?"

Madam Jones said, "Mr. Smith, did Hillary do something wrong to make you angry? Tell us, we'll get her to change. How can you suddenly call off the engagement?"

Joel looked at Madam Jones.

To be precise, she was also Tanya's mother.

Back then, Tanya's mother had remarried and given birth to Hillary.

Hillary was a year younger than Tanya, but their identities were completely different.

One was a burden who had been brought along into her marriage with a wealthy family, and the other was a daughter of a wealthy family. Hillary had looked down on Tanya since she was young.

As for Tanya, she had a stubborn personality. After being slandered by Hillary a few times, Madam Jones had determined that Tanya's personality was naughty and mischievous, like that of her father, who had disappeared. Therefore, she would hit and scold her!

Joel's attitude toward Madam Jones was distant and cold. He did not bother being polite with her. "Madam Jones, you can discipline her further for her mistakes. Now, we're talking about breaking off the engagement."

He took out the agreement he had signed with Hillary back then. "In the agreement back then, we said that when Mia turns five, the engagement would be automatically broken off. Now, it's time."

The Jones parents were stunned. They looked at Hillary in disbelief. "Hillary, you..."

Hillary bit her lip and cried. "Joel, I was wrong. I really know I was wrong. I didn't go looking for Tanya on purpose. I was just indignant. You chased me out of the Smiths because she suddenly returned, right?"

Tanya?

Madam Jones instantly became even more furious. "What do you mean? Did Tanya cross into your family again? Joel, you can't treat Hillary like this. Tanya was born to be a bad hooligan!"

As soon as she said this, Joel suddenly reached out and smashed the teacup on the table to the ground!

Smash!

The sound of the teacup shattering resounded throughout the living room, causing the crying Hillary and Madam Jones, who was scolding Tanya, to stop abruptly.

Everyone looked at Joel in disbelief.

Joel lowered his eyes. "I've already contacted the reporters. They will announce that I have broken off my engagement with Miss Hillary tomorrow..."

As soon as he said this, Mr. Jones said, "Mr. Smith, is there no room for change in this matter?"

Joel looked at him and said firmly, "No."

Mr. Jones sighed heavily.

Hillary and Madam Jones still wanted to say something, but Mr. Jones shook his head at them.

The two of them could only shut their mouths.

Mr. Jones began to complain. "Mr. Smith, we understand that you don't like Hillary. We won't force you. We can break off the engagement, but Mia is her biological daughter. You can't stop them from meeting."

Hillary and Madam Jones looked at each other.

Yes.

As long as Mia was still around, Hillary could interfere in Joel and Tanya's lives. As long as she could, Joel and Tanya could forget about living a quiet life!

Hillary clenched her fists tightly. She was already thinking that if Mia fell ill in the future, she would definitely have to stay with the Smiths and take care of her.

If Mia was hurt, she would definitely ask Tanya why she abused her child!

As she was thinking about her future plans, Joel seemed to have seen through her thoughts and said directly, "Yes, I won't stop them from meeting. Every six months, I'll send Mia overseas to meet with Miss Hillary."

Mr. Jones was stunned.

Hillary was stunned. “Go overseas? You don’t have to go overseas. I’m just in the country... You don’t have to send Mia anywhere. I can just meet her at the Smiths...”

However, the moment she said this, she heard Joel say, “After our engagement is broken off, you’ll be in a bad mood, and will go overseas for a vacation. You won’t accept our financial support and will travel for five years. After five years, you can return to the country.”

Mr. Jones was stunned. “She won’t accept financial support? Then how is she going to live?”

Joel glanced at Mr. Jones and said casually, “Aren’t so many international students still alive?”

Madam Jones shouted angrily, “No! Hillary has never suffered like this in her entire life! She can’t go overseas!”

She had never suffered before, but Tanya could suffer?

Joel had investigated before. Tanya did not have any living expenses overseas. Everything was earned by working part-time!

His attitude was still very calm, and there was even a smile on his face. He looked directly at Mr. Jones. “President Jones, is the collaboration between the Joneses and Smiths going well?”

Mr. Jones: !!!

He immediately understood that Joel was threatening him!

If they did not send Hillary away, the Smiths would terminate all cooperation with the Joneses!

The Joneses had been prospering these years because they had relied on the Smiths. After leaving the Smiths... Joel would definitely let everyone in New York know that the Joneses had offended him.

At that time, even without Joel personally making a move, someone might help him deal with the Joneses!

He gulped and hurriedly stood up. “I understand what you mean, Mr. Smith. I’ll handle Hillary’s matters here. She’ll go overseas.”

Joel stood up. "It's good that Mr. Jones understands. I'll leave, then."

He did not even look at Hillary as he left the house.

Hillary was stunned on the spot.

Five years...

Another five years!

Tanya had been overseas for more than five years!

Hillary understood. Joel had arranged everything for her!

He was going to send her overseas for five years to help Tanya vent her anger!

She roared, "Joel! I gave birth to Mia for you! How can you treat me like this?!"

Joel stopped in his tracks and turned to look at her. "If you hadn't given birth to Mia, do you think you would have had the chance to go overseas?"

Upon hearing this, Hillary jolted.

She swallowed.

Mia was her protective charm!

At the Smiths.

After Nora finished showering, she walked out and saw Pete standing there, looking at her seriously. "Mommy, we're going to the amusement park to play tomorrow. Can we bring Mia along?"

Nora asked, "Why?"

Pete said, "I didn't even know it was Mia's birthday yesterday. I didn't give her a gift either. I want to take her out to play tomorrow."

Birthday?

Nora was stunned.

She remembered clearly that Tanya's child's birthday was five days ago.

Mia was only five days away from that child's birthday...

Was this... a coincidence?

She narrowed her eyes.

Was Mia really Hillary's daughter?

The reason why Nora knew about the birthday of the children was that on that day every year, Tanya would be in low spirits.

When she was overseas, no matter where Nora was, she would always be by Tanya's side on this day.

The two of them did nothing. Nora would sleep while Tanya would be in the room, dancing to the birthday gift she had bought long ago.

Usually, when she woke up, Tanya would be covered in sweat, but she would not feel tired. If she continued like this, she would eventually collapse.

Every year, she would fall seriously ill.

It was as if she wanted to use this method to vent her longing for her child for the next year.

Therefore, Nora remembered her child's birthday very clearly.

She couldn't help but doubt Mia's identity.

Tanya's child and Mia were both Joel's children. Furthermore, they were only five days apart...

She narrowed her eyes and began to think about the relationship between Mia and Tanya...

"Mommy, can I?"

Pete's words interrupted Nora's thoughts.

She looked at him and nodded. "Alright, I'll ask your uncle when he comes back."

If she took Mia out to play, she would definitely ask Joel.

With that, she yawned loudly and turned to walk to the bed. "It's already so late. Why isn't he back yet? I'll lie down and wait for him!"

Pete: "..."

As expected, half an hour later, there were uniform breathing sounds on the bed.

Pete sighed helplessly and put down the pen in his hand.

He walked to the bed and gently covered Nora with the blanket. Then, he went out and downstairs to sit on the sofa in the living room.

When Joel returned home, this was the scene he saw.

Pete was clearly sleepy and anxious. His little head was nodding off, but he had still forced himself not to sleep.

Joel looked at the time. It was already 11 PM. He walked over and asked, "What's wrong?"

Pete woke up suddenly and said excitedly, "Uncle, you're finally back!"

He jumped off the sofa and looked at Joel. "Tomorrow, Dad and Mom will take me and Cherry... to the amusement park. I want to bring Mia along, okay?"

Joel looked at him and touched his head. After some thought, he said, "Okay."

Pete heaved a sigh of relief.

Joel bent down and picked him up before carrying him upstairs.

After taking him to the bedroom, he asked, "Where's your mother?"

Pete said helplessly, "Mommy said that she would lie down and wait for you to come back to ask you. In the end, she fell asleep..."

Joel: "..."

Joel brought Pete to his room and watched him shower and change into his pajamas. Then, he sent Pete to Nora's bedroom.

He watched as he tiptoed in and returned to the bedroom in relief.

At the same time, he could not help but think that Nora was such a worry-free mother. Be it with Cherry or Pete, they were both so sensible and independent.

After returning to his room, he washed up and lay on the bed. He took out his phone and opened Tanya's Facebook.

Her profile picture was of a mature grape.

Joel stared at his phone screen for a long time, not knowing what to send her. Just as he was in a daze, he suddenly saw the words "Typing..." on the dialog box.

Joel was instantly delighted.

What was Tanya going to say to him?

However, after waiting for more than ten minutes, she did not say anything.

Joel couldn't help but send a message: "?"

Tanya replied: "?"

Joel: "Where's the small composition?"

Tanya: "What small composition?"

Joel smiled and typed: "You've been typing for almost twenty minutes. You should have written a small composition with 800 words by now? Where is it?"

Tanya: "!!!"

Tanya: "I wasn't sending you a message!"

Tanya: "You're mistaken!"

Tanya: "Oh, I was watching television and accidentally opened your chat window."

Seeing that she was not being honest, Joel continued to type with a smile. "What are you watching?"

Tanya: "A show on FOX TV."

Chapter 368 - The Plan of Saving Nora Novel Free

When she had left sadly five years ago, she thought that she would never have the chance to be with this man in her life. This man was going to disappear from her life.

Who would have thought that five years later, he would be cooking food for her?

As Tanya was thinking, Hillary's voice was heard again. "Why aren't you saying anything? Are you really going to degrade yourself to be a third wheel and come between us? Let me tell you, you better return to Switzerland. Joel chose me five years ago, he'll definitely choose me again. When that time comes, how embarrassed would you be?"

As she spoke, Joel had already walked out of the kitchen.

The villa was very quiet, and there were no car horns around.

Joel had heard the voice on the phone from the beginning.

He looked at Tanya.

Tanya was also looking at him. The slender girl just stood there, her body a little thin from dancing for a long time.

She looked at Joel with her deep eyes and suddenly raised her eyebrows. "She said I'm the third wheel. May I ask Mr. Smith, what's your relationship with Madam Hillary now?"

As soon as she said this, Hillary's voice stopped. However, she then sneered. "What are you doing? Do you think you can scare me like this? Let me tell you, I'm with Joel. If you want to talk to him, I can help you send a message..."

Amidst her chattering, Joel's originally angry eyes froze for a moment when they met the Tanya's. All his anger seemed to dissipate with an evil smile on her lips.

He took a step forward and said, "I have nothing to do with Madam Hillary. The engagement has been broken off. Madam Tanya, what kind of braised noodles do you want to eat? Tomato eggs or green pepper pork?"

The voice on the phone instantly fell silent!

Hillary: "!!"

The entire villa fell silent. Tanya smiled and said, "Green pepper pork. But no ginger, you remember my preferences, right?"

Joel nodded. "Of course. Just wait 10 minutes."

With that, he glanced at the phone. Just as he was about to return to the kitchen, Hillary smiled mockingly. "Tanya, are you lying to me? How can Joel cook? I've been with him for five years, but I've never seen him cook! He doesn't know how to cook at all! Did you find someone with a similar voice to anger me? I'm telling you, I won't fall for it!"

Tanya recalled how Hillary had deliberately chased him to the restaurant and taken a photo to post on her Facebook. She was not surprised by her way of thinking.

She only smiled and suddenly turned on the camera. She raised her phone and aimed it at Joel. "Here, let me show you. The man I'm looking at not only has a similar voice to Joel, but his appearance is also very similar!"

Her voice was filled with mockery.

When Hillary saw Joel wearing an apron, she was stunned.

She had stayed with the Smiths for five years. Joel had never allowed her to enter his room, and every time she saw him, he was always the high and mighty leader who could stir up New York's economic scene with just a move of his finger.

Since when was that man willing to fall from grace and start doing housework?

Furthermore, he was holding a tomato in one hand and green pepper in the other. He was clearly cooking!

As Tanya had turned on the camera, he looked up.

His light eyes, which were always smiling, suddenly became sharp as he stared at the camera.

He said calmly, "Miss Hillary, is there anything else?"

Tanya looked at the camera and saw that the camera on Hillary's side suddenly shook and fell to the ground. Her hands must have gone soft from shock.

This woman had been like this since she was young. She was a fox exploiting the tiger's might and was extremely hypocritical.

Tanya could not be bothered to talk to her anymore and hung up.

She chuckled softly. She looked up and realized that Joel had not entered the kitchen but was staring at her.

The man was wearing a white shirt and an apron, looking just like he did five years ago.

Tanya suddenly realized that the five years overseas seemed to have lost their distance.

As she was thinking, she saw Joel's eyes gradually turn deep and hot, making her heart beat wildly.

She hurriedly looked away and said, "There are still eight minutes!"

Only then did Joel retract his gaze and nod.

After he left, Tanya hurriedly patted her chest and cheeks.

She must stay alert!

She could not be attracted by his stunning beauty!

Eight minutes later, the noodles were done.

Tanya went upstairs and had already changed into her casual home clothes. Looking at the two bowls of steaming noodles on the dining table, she picked up her fork. Just as she was about to eat, she heard Joel say, "Wait a minute."

She paused and realized that Joel had brought a bottle of hot sauce over.

Tanya stared at the bottle and suddenly thought of a time five years ago.

At that time, she was still in university. As the living expenses from her mother were not enough, she often had to cook for herself.

Noodles were her favorite.

However, she only had one pot back then, so it was inconvenient to stir-fry vegetables. Therefore, every time, she would add a sufficient amount of noodles and vegetables before adding hot sauce.

Joel had always known this habit of hers.

In the past five years, after she went overseas, the thing she was most unused to was eating. Occasionally, she would want to eat noodles, but without hot sauce, it was as if something was missing.

While she was in a daze, Joel opened the bottle and handed it to her.

She dug a big spoonful and put it in the bowl of noodles. The thick sauce immediately floated on it and the fragrance wafted over.

She picked some noodles up with her fork and took a bite excitedly—but she was stunned.

She looked up slowly at the bottle of hot sauce.

The packaging had already changed.

As for the taste of the sauce, although it was still her favorite flavor, it was no longer the same as before.

For some reason, her heart suddenly sank.

A broken mood instantly attacked her, making her lower her head.

Indeed.

In five years, everything familiar had changed.

Nothing would stand there and wait for her.

It was like losing her child.

Even if she had returned to the country and she and Joel were still the same as they were five years ago, this fact could not be hidden.

She became depressed.

Joel looked at her and panic surged in his heart. He asked carefully, "What's wrong? The noodles don't taste good?"

A hot tear fell into the bowl.

Tanya suddenly looked up.. "There's something I need to tell you."

Joel saw her grave expression and put down his fork. He stared at her. "What?"

His heart suddenly pounded violently.

He didn't know what Tanya was going to say, much less what she was thinking... but he suddenly felt that what she was going to say next was very important.

Tanya looked at the man and said impulsively, "We had a..."

The word "child" hovered around her mouth for a moment, but she could not say it.

Joel was stunned. "What?"

He searched his memory hard. They had an agreement? An oath? Or what?

He was afraid that he would anger the girl in front of him if he did not remember.

Tanya opened her mouth.

She suddenly thought of the parents who had been searching for their children overseas.

Some mothers broke down, and some fathers were very calm. However, she had seen them turn around and cry secretly in a corner after comforting their wives.

She suddenly asked, "You love Mia very much, right?"

Joel did not know why she had suddenly changed the topic, but he still followed along and said, "Yes, I love her very much."

He suddenly reached out and held her hand. "I know that I will never let you down in this matter. Her existence is something I cannot control, but her existence makes me feel warm. Tanya, that is a kind of satisfaction from family ties. You understand me, right?"

How could Tanya not understand?

After all, she and Joel were both children who lacked love!

Even though Joel was born in the Smiths, his parents did not like him. There was even a time when they thought of abandoning him, making him feel very insecure.

As for Tanya...

After her mother remarried, she lost her home.

When the two of them walked together back then, didn't it feel like they were hugging each other for warmth?

That was why she was so happy when she gave birth to that little angel and thought that she finally had a family in this world and someone with her blood.

That was why she had searched the entire world for her child like a madman without even having seen the child once.

When Joel saw that she was in a strange mood, he mistakenly thought that Tanya would mind if he mentioned Mia. He thought about it and said, "I know it's very selfish of me to make you accept Mia, but Tanya, Mia is really a very obedient child. You'll fall in love with her. Really..."

He was afraid that Tanya would suggest sending the child away.

No matter how much he loved Tanya, he could not do that.

After all, he was a father!

Seeing that he had misunderstood, Tanya waved her hand and said, "That's not what I meant."

As soon as she said this, Joel heaved a sigh of relief. It was obvious how much he liked Mia.

Tanya asked again, "Do you like children?"

Joel nodded. "Of course. If it was our child, I would like it even more."

These words made Tanya's heart ache again.

She lowered her head and took a bite of noodles.

The hot noodles slid into her mouth, but she took another bite as if she did not know it was hot.

She ate mouthful after mouthful. When she was done, she looked up.

Joel probed, "What did you say we have?"

Tanya took out a tissue and wiped her mouth before replying, "It's nothing."

Joel immediately tried to recall any vow the two had made. However, after thinking for a while, he still could not remember it.

After he ate the noodles, Tanya took his bowl and washed it in the kitchen. Then, she said, "It's getting late, you should go back."

Joel: "..."

He actually did not want to leave tonight, but since Tanya had said so, if he insisted on staying, it would only make Tanya feel annoyed.

At the thought of this, Joel decided that he had to take things slow and not get things done in one go.

He took out his car keys and walked slowly to the door. "Good night."

"Good night."

Tanya replied softly in the kitchen.

She heard Joel walk to the door and stand there for a long time. Finally, he pushed the door open. When she heard the door close with a bang, she turned off the tap.

She stood in the kitchen for a long time before walking out.

Looking at the neat apron hanging in the living room, she thought of Joel's OCD personality and couldn't help but lower her eyes.

She sighed heavily and went upstairs.

She lay on the sofa and quietly stared at the night sky.

She did not know where her child was in the world right now, if he was hungry, or if he had any clothes to wear. She did not know how long she was thinking when her phone suddenly rang.

She picked it up and took a look. It was a call from Hillary.

She picked up the call and Hillary's calm voice was heard. "Are you two still together?"

Tanya sneered and said softly, "Yes, he's taking a shower. Why?"

"You're lying!"

Hillary suddenly smiled and said, "I just called Mia and she said Dad has come home! Tanya, I'm warning you. Stay away from Joel! Even if you seduced him now and he still likes you, Mia is the person he loves the most!"

Tanya clenched her fists.

She lowered her eyes. Before she could say anything, Hillary said, "Mia is everything to him! So what if you two still have feelings for each other? At the end of the night, won't he still go home obediently and coax the child to sleep? Tanya, if you know what's good for you, you better leave him!"

Tanya's voice was very low. "What if I don't?"

"You don't? Do you know that everyone outside knows that he and I are engaged and that Mia is our daughter?! Mia's sake, he won't even announce our separation to the public. In front of outsiders, I will always be Madam Smith! And you, Tanya, are just one of his lovers! What makes you think your status is enough to make him give up his reputation?"

The Jones.

After Hillary shouted this in anger, she finally felt at ease. She sneered and said, "No matter what, I will always be the wife, and you are just a mistress! Just like it was back then, I'm the daughter of a wealthy family, and you're just a fake daughter!"

With that, she hung up.

She had been chased out of the Smiths for so long. There were many guesses outside, but because of Mia, the Smiths had never spread the news that they had broken off the engagement.

She wanted to use this matter to agitate Tanya and let her know that she was nothing to Joel!

Any woman would mind this, right?

As she was thinking about this, the doorbell rang.

The servant went to open the door and exclaimed in surprise, "Mr. Smith?"

Hillary was stunned. She turned around and saw Joel walking in from the door!

It was already so late. Why was he at the Jones' residence?!

Hillary recalled that when she called Tanya today, Joel was also there. Later on, he did not pursue the matter, but now, he was here...

Her heart sank, but her face was still filled with smiles as she walked over. "Joel, you're here..."

When the Joneses heard the servant's words, they hurriedly walked down from the study upstairs to welcome him. "Mr. Smith, what brings you here? If there's anything you need, you can call us to the Smiths."

Joel was still smiling. His eyes were curved, and when he did not speak, he looked very gentle, like a smiling tiger.

However, Hillary could see the coldness in his eyes.

She swallowed and jolted.

Joel looked at her and slowly said, "I came personally today because I thought that after my engagement with Miss Hillary was broken off, she seemed to have been dishonest."

As soon as he said this, Hillary's father was stunned. He looked directly at Hillary. "What? When did you guys break off the engagement?"

Joel lowered his eyes and said indifferently, "Why? Didn't Miss Hillary tell you?"

Hillary had been chased back this time and stayed for a few days now, but she had not mentioned the engagement at all.

Mr. Jones looked at Hillary. "Hillary, what's going on?"

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Seeing that she was not being honest, Joel continued to type with a smile. "What are you watching?"

Tanya: "A show on FOX TV."

Chapter 369 - The Plan of Saving Nora Novel Free

He was afraid that Tanya would suggest sending the child away.

No matter how much he loved Tanya, he could not do that.

After all, he was a father!

Seeing that he had misunderstood, Tanya waved her hand and said, "That's not what I meant."

As soon as she said this, Joel heaved a sigh of relief. It was obvious how much he liked Mia.

Tanya asked again, "Do you like children?"

Joel nodded. "Of course. If it was our child, I would like it even more."

These words made Tanya's heart ache again.

She lowered her head and took a bite of noodles.

The hot noodles slid into her mouth, but she took another bite as if she did not know it was hot.

She ate mouthful after mouthful. When she was done, she looked up.

Joel probed, "What did you say we have?"

Tanya took out a tissue and wiped her mouth before replying, "It's nothing."

Joel immediately tried to recall any vow the two had made. However, after thinking for a while, he still could not remember it.

After he ate the noodles, Tanya took his bowl and washed it in the kitchen. Then, she said, "It's getting late, you should go back."

Joel: "..."

He actually did not want to leave tonight, but since Tanya had said so, if he insisted on staying, it would only make Tanya feel annoyed.

At the thought of this, Joel decided that he had to take things slow and not get things done in one go.

He took out his car keys and walked slowly to the door. "Good night."

"Good night."

Tanya replied softly in the kitchen.

She heard Joel walk to the door and stand there for a long time. Finally, he pushed the door open. When she heard the door close with a bang, she turned off the tap.

She stood in the kitchen for a long time before walking out.

Looking at the neat apron hanging in the living room, she thought of Joel's OCD personality and couldn't help but lower her eyes.

She sighed heavily and went upstairs.

She lay on the sofa and quietly stared at the night sky.

She did not know where her child was in the world right now, if he was hungry, or if he had any clothes to wear. She did not know how long she was thinking when her phone suddenly rang.

She picked it up and took a look. It was a call from Hillary.

She picked up the call and Hillary's calm voice was heard. "Are you two still together?"

Tanya sneered and said softly, "Yes, he's taking a shower. Why?"

"You're lying!"

Hillary suddenly smiled and said, "I just called Mia and she said Dad has come home! Tanya, I'm warning you. Stay away from Joel! Even if you seduced him now and he still likes you, Mia is the person he loves the most!"

Tanya clenched her fists.

She lowered her eyes. Before she could say anything, Hillary said, "Mia is everything to him! So what if you two still have feelings for each other? At the end of the night, won't he still go home obediently and coax the child to sleep? Tanya, if you know what's good for you, you better leave him!"

Tanya's voice was very low. "What if I don't?"

"You don't? Do you know that everyone outside knows that he and I are engaged and that Mia is our daughter?! Mia's sake, he won't even announce our separation to the public. In front of outsiders, I will always be Madam Smith! And you, Tanya, are just one of his lovers! What makes you think your status is enough to make him give up his reputation?"

The Jones.

After Hillary shouted this in anger, she finally felt at ease. She sneered and said, "No matter what, I will always be the wife, and you are just a mistress!"

Just like it was back then, I'm the daughter of a wealthy family, and you're just a fake daughter!"

With that, she hung up.

She had been chased out of the Smiths for so long. There were many guesses outside, but because of Mia, the Smiths had never spread the news that they had broken off the engagement.

She wanted to use this matter to agitate Tanya and let her know that she was nothing to Joel!

Any woman would mind this, right?

As she was thinking about this, the doorbell rang.

The servant went to open the door and exclaimed in surprise, "Mr. Smith?"

Hillary was stunned. She turned around and saw Joel walking in from the door!

It was already so late. Why was he at the Jones' residence?!

Hillary recalled that when she called Tanya today, Joel was also there. Later on, he did not pursue the matter, but now, he was here...

Her heart sank, but her face was still filled with smiles as she walked over. "Joel, you're here..."

When the Joneses heard the servant's words, they hurriedly walked down from the study upstairs to welcome him. "Mr. Smith, what brings you here? If there's anything you need, you can call us to the Smiths."

Joel was still smiling. His eyes were curved, and when he did not speak, he looked very gentle, like a smiling tiger.

However, Hillary could see the coldness in his eyes.

She swallowed and jolted.

Joel looked at her and slowly said, "I came personally today because I thought that after my engagement with Miss Hillary was broken off, she seemed to have been dishonest."

As soon as he said this, Hillary's father was stunned. He looked directly at Hillary. "What? When did you guys break off the engagement?"

Joel lowered his eyes and said indifferently, "Why? Didn't Miss Hillary tell you?"

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Joel bent down and picked him up before carrying him upstairs.

After taking him to the bedroom, he asked, "Where's your mother?"

Pete said helplessly, "Mommy said that she would lie down and wait for you to come back to ask you. In the end, she fell asleep..."

Joel: "..."

Joel brought Pete to his room and watched him shower and change into his pajamas. Then, he sent Pete to Nora's bedroom.

He watched as he tiptoed in and returned to the bedroom in relief.

At the same time, he could not help but think that Nora was such a worry-free mother. Be it with Cherry or Pete, they were both so sensible and independent.

After returning to his room, he washed up and lay on the bed. He took out his phone and opened Tanya's Facebook.

Her profile picture was of a mature grape.

Joel stared at his phone screen for a long time, not knowing what to send her. Just as he was in a daze, he suddenly saw the words "Typing..." on the dialog box.

Joel was instantly delighted.

What was Tanya going to say to him?

However, after waiting for more than ten minutes, she did not say anything.

Joel couldn't help but send a message: "?"

Tanya replied: "?"

Joel: "Where's the small composition?"

Tanya: "What small composition?"

Joel smiled and typed: "You've been typing for almost twenty minutes. You should have written a small composition with 800 words by now? Where is it?"

Tanya: "!!!"

Tanya: "I wasn't sending you a message!"

Tanya: "You're mistaken!"

Tanya: "Oh, I was watching television and accidentally opened your chat window."

Seeing that she was not being honest, Joel continued to type with a smile. "What are you watching?"

Tanya: "A show on FOX TV."