

Married by Mistake – Chapter 2401

Her heart began to beat very nervously from this moment on. She was not sure if Esther had gotten out of the car here just now, or if someone would hear the sound and come out to check. Amidst her perturbed feelings and doubts, Ava vaguely heard the sound of hurried and disorientated footsteps coming from afar. After a while, Ava sensed a tall man standing across from the wall.

“Damn, the wall of this broken house fell off,” the man complained unhappily, “I think before the fish takes the bait, I might be crushed to death in this stupid house for locking someone here.”

The man complained again before walking back.

Ava held her breath. She poked her head out and observed the direction the man was leaving. However, from what the man said to himself just now, Ava was able to determine that Daniel was indeed locked up here.

Unexpectedly, Esther was even more extreme than Naya.

Ava looked around before following behind the man. However, after taking a few steps up the stairs, she felt that something was not right. When she was about to look back, a shadow suddenly shrouded her path in front of her.

A bone-chilling cold penetrated her back. The moment Ava recomposed herself to turn around, she felt a heavy dull pain in the back of her neck before losing consciousness.

On the other hand, Madeline was feeling uneasy. She figured that Ava might not have gone shopping to clear her mind. Instead, she might have gone after Esther. Since she was worried about Ava’s safety, Madeline decided to go to the Mendez family’s manor to find out what was going on. However, at this moment, Ken came into the office to report to Jeremy.

“Mr. Whitman, Daniel Graham is home.”

This answer from Ken surprised both Madeline and Jeremy.

“By home, you mean he went home himself?” Jeremy pressed.

Ken nodded affirmatively. "I asked someone to observe the situation near Daniel's house, and the person over there told me Daniel has returned home in a taxi."

Madeline and Jeremy looked at each other in disbelief.

"I'll call and ask," Madeline called Daniel's phone again, but still, no one answered. Then, she called Ava again and again, but no one picked up either.

This worried Madeline greatly.

She did not think much about it. She just got Jeremy to go with her to Daniel's house.

Daniel had just taken a shower and was about to eat something when he heard from the servant that someone was looking for him. When he was wondering if it was Ava, he was stopped by his mother, Gina.

"Dan, you haven't tested all night. Go back to your room and nap after you eat. I'll entertain the guests," Gina persuaded kindly.

Daniel looked toward the entrance and saw Madeline and Jeremy. They had already entered the house. "But they seem to be looking for me. "

Gina was stunned when she saw that Jeremy and Madeline had come in uninvited. However, she had no choice and could only pout.

"Dan, where did you go yesterday?" Madeline asked hurriedly. "Why couldn't we call you?"

"I lost my phone when I went out yesterday. Someone might have taken it. What happened? Why do you guys look so nervous?" Daniel asked suspiciously.

"You lost your phone?" Madeline felt it was not that simple.

If his phone was lost, why did she receive the extortion message, and why did Ava receive messages that were seemingly sent by Daniel?

Jeremy also found it very suspicious. "You lost your phone, but where did you go last night? Why didn't you come home?"

Facing Jeremy and Madeline's doubts, Daniel frowned. He seemed to look troubled.

"When I was going to pick up Ava from work yesterday evening, I ran into an old woman who had trouble walking. She was separated from her family. I figured that since it was still early, I would send her home, but who knew her home was so far away?"

"When I wanted to tell Ava, I realized that I had lost my phone. There were no cars where the old woman lived, so I had to wait until this morning."

Daniel frowned again. "I didn't expect this to happen."

Gina was surprised after hearing what Daniel said. "Dan, did you... Weren't you with that Ava last night?"

"No..."

Gina had an embarrassed look on her face. She felt slightly embarrassed when she recalled what she said about Ava not long ago. She even thought that Ava was deliberately making something unnecessarily complicated, but it turned out that Ava really had no idea where Daniel had gone.

"This is bad." Madeline's heartstrings tightened, and her whole body became tense. She stepped aside and dialed Ava's phone number, but still, no one answered.

Daniel felt curious when he saw that. "What's wrong? What do you mean by bad?"

"Someone sent messages to Ava while pretending to be you, and my wife also received an extortion message. All signs indicated that you, Daniel, might have been kidnapped. Ava suspected that the mastermind behind your kidnapping was Naya's mother. She probably went to find Naya's mother because she was worried about you, but now, we can't reach Ava." Jeremy told Daniel the whole story.

After hearing this, Daniel's expression turned solemn. He habitually wanted to take out his phone to call Ava, but when he touched his empty pocket, he remembered that he had lost his phone. However, it did not seem that his phone was lost accidentally. Otherwise, how could someone send messages while pretending to be him?

"I'm going to the Mendez family's manor now to see if Ava is there," Daniel said and strode toward the door.

Gina grabbed him. "Dan, are you crazy? What will the Mendez family think if you just go there and demand Ava from them? Also, what do they mean when they said you were kidnapped and went missing? What nonsense is this? How could Naya's mother do something like that? Besides, aren't you fine and well?"

"What's more, their precious daughter has already gone to prison. You're more or less related to this. If you go to them now, aren't you just asking for trouble? Listen to me and don't go."

Gina repeatedly discouraged him. Of course, she did not care whether something bad had happened to Ava. However, Daniel's attitude was firm. "I have to make this trip."

"Sigh, Dan!" Before Gina could stop him again, Daniel broke free of her grip and went out the door.

Madeline and Jeremy followed suit.

"What's this all about? There's endless drama every day. Aren't you just trying to let that woman marry into our family? How annoying!" Gina complained in dissatisfaction and plopped down on the sofa.

She thought about it, and finally, she picked up her phone to call Esther. However, even though the call went through, no one answered. Gina did not want to call again, so she stopped caring about this. In her opinion, nothing was going on. It was all a scheme that Ava deliberately created in order to marry Daniel.

It was now noon. In the dilapidated building that was waiting to be demolished...

Ava suddenly felt a biting chill amidst her drowsiness. She shivered and finally woke up from the cold. In her blurry vision, Ava saw a figure slowly walking toward her. She raised her head with difficulty and saw a familiar face with a sinister smile through her wet eyes.

It was Esther.

Ava closed her eyes, recalled what had happened before she passed out, and slowly opened her eyes again.

"Of course, it's you." Ava took a deep breath and recomposed herself.

She remembered, but as soon as she moved, she was kicked violently from behind. This kick hit her lumbar, causing indescribable dull pain.

"Ah!" Ava reflexively let out a muffled groan as she curled up, the ice water soaking her whole body and penetrating her skin layer by layer. At this moment, she felt extremely uncomfortable, but she still did not give in. She was still trying to stand up.

Just as she was trying to get up, Esther walked over and slapped Ava twice in the face without saying a word. "You b*tch, do you finally know the pain? Do you know that my Naya is in prison suffering a hundred, no, a thousand times more pain than you are now?"

Esther raised her foot and kicked Ava, who was lying beside her feet, with a frightening and sinister smile on her face.

"Ava, do you and Eveline think you're very smart for setting up a trap for my Naya so that she'll admit to all those crimes she unknowingly committed and she'll finally go to jail because her crimes are beyond dispute?"

Esther suddenly reached out and grabbed Ava, who was shivering from the pain in her lumber. "25 years. Do you know how many 25 years a person has in one's life? When Naya is released from prison in 25 years, I don't even know if there's any chance of me seeing her again. If she sees the person who harmed her back then married to the man she loves, do you know how much pain she'll be in?"

Esther roared, pulling on Ava harder and harder.

"You b*tch, you b*tch! You guys colluded and made my daughter suffer so much. I'll make your life a living hell as well!"

After Esther finished cursing as if she had been possessed, she ordered the two burly men beside her. "Do it Teach her a lesson she'll never forget."

"Yes, boss." The two men obeyed Esther and strode to Ava.

Ava felt the fear of the unknown overwhelming her. She tried her best to stand up and run, but she was grabbed by her hair.

"Let go! You lunatics! The police will find this place soon. You're committing a crime, and if something happens to me, none of you will be spared!"

"How dare you remain so stubborn?!" Esther sneered. "Beat her until she can't speak anymore!"

Those two men were doing this for money, so when they heard Esther's order, they quickly executed it.

Ava was just kicked a few times and she was in so much pain that she could not stand it anymore. She tried to struggle, but it was to no avail. The two men yanked her up and started beating her mercilessly. Soon, Ava was thrown to the ground with bruises covering her body.

"Naya is my only daughter in this life. She was supposed to have such a happy and blessed life, but because of you, she has to be locked up for 25 years! As her mother, how do you expect me to accept this, huh?" Esther towered over Ava, who was almost at her last gasp. Then, a sense of pleasure gushed from the bottom of her heart.

She bent down slightly and grabbed Ava's hair, her eyes aggressive.

"My daughter's life is over, and so is yours."

Esther warned with a grim face. At this moment, she no longer had the image of a graceful and elegant lady. She was like an irrational town shrew who was doing completely crazy and ridiculous things.

Ava lay down on the uneven ground as she listened to Esther's constant curses in her ear. Then, she closed her eyes weakly.

She was wrong. She was too impulsive when she took this step. She should have listened to Madeline and not impulsively looked for Esther. She should have stayed at Whitman Corporation and waited for Jeremy to find out some clues before taking action. Now, she did not even know if she would be able to go back alive.

Ava thought silently, but it was too late for her to regret this. At this time, she was still worried about Daniel in her heart.

"Danny... Where the hell are you? Are you near me?"

Esther, who was about to go back, heard Ava muttering Daniel's name in a daze. She spun around and walked back to Ava.

"You're still thinking about men at this moment, huh?" Esther sneered contemptuously. A sinister smile that was very similar to Naya's reached her eyes. "Before you become deaf and blind, I'll tell you the truth. Daniel is fine. No one kidnapped him. He should be home by now."

Upon hearing Esther's triumphant reply, Ava suddenly opened her tired eyes. "What? Did you say that Danny is already home?"

"Yes, he has returned home safe and sound."

Ava widened her eyes in astonishment and looked at Esther, who had a complacent expression on her face. "Is this a trap you set on purpose?"

"You and Eveline set up a trap to frame my precious daughter. So, of course, I'm going to retaliate. I originally wanted to teach Eveline a lesson too, but lucky for her she didn't come to look for me with a fool like you."

There was a trace of unwillingness in Esther's eyes, and at the same time, she was projecting more resentment on Ava.

"Aren't you good friends? You colluded together to bully my Naya. Why didn't she accompany you to find Daniel this time, huh?"

"Heh." Ava smiled and said sarcastically, not showing any weakness, "It's fine that I fell for your trap because I was impulsive, but do you think Maddie will let you play her like a fool too? Back then, I wondered why Naya was so sinister and vicious. Now, I know. Like mother, like daughter."

She raised her exhausted but still stubborn eyes to meet Esther's menacing eyes.

"You saw what happened to your precious daughter, right? You'll be like her too, sooner or later."

"Shut up!"

Esther slapped Ava's face after flying into a rage out of humiliation.

Slap!

Ava could taste the metallic taste of blood spreading in her mouth. However, she did not give in. Instead, she smiled.

"Thank you for telling me that Daniel is safe and sound. Now, I have nothing to worry about. You can do whatever you want. Worse comes to worst, I'll just die here."

After she said that, Ava closed her eyes and fell asleep.

When Esther saw how fearless Ava was, the fire of hatred in her heart burned brighter and brighter.

She saw a wooden stick on one side and wanted to beat Ava with it after she grabbed it. However, her phone rang at this moment. When she looked at the caller ID, she saw that it was from her husband.

Esther threw the bat away and told the two men to look after Ava before turning away. After getting in the car, she called Ethan back.

Esther was even angrier when she heard that Daniel had gone to look for her. However, she did not show it. She replied in a soft voice that she was shopping outside and would be back in a while before hanging up the phone.

When she thought that the life of her precious daughter, whom she had doted on for more than 20 years, was over, Esther's desire for revenge grew stronger and stronger.

Madeline and Jeremy followed Daniel to the Mendez family's manor, but they did not expect Ethan to be at home at this time.

Compared to Esther's unfriendliness, Ethan seemed to be a rather polite person. Although he was very heartbroken and regretful about Naya's incident, he felt that Naya was just suffering the consequences of her actions. He could not blame anyone.

He asked the servant to make tea and prepare snacks before sitting down.

"You said Ava came to see my wife not long ago, but I've been at home today and we haven't had any guests." Ethan was curious. "Is there a misunderstanding? Try calling Ava again and see if you can get in touch with her."

"We could get through to her just now, but her phone's turned off now."

Madeline's face was full of worry, then she analyzed the situation.

"I've known Ava for so many years, so I can somewhat guess her thought process. She thought that Dan was kidnapped, so she spent all morning being worried. She had the idea of coming to look for Mrs. Mendez, but my husband and I stopped her. However, she ran out by herself, so I guess she must have gone to look for Mrs. Mendez alone because she was too worried about Dan."

Ethan looked even more confused after hearing what Madeline said.

"Dan was kidnapped? Isn't he right here? Even if he was kidnapped, why would it be related to my wife? Why did you say that, Mrs. Whitman?"

When Jeremy saw Ethan looking confused, he explained, "Mr. Mendez, I heard that Naya slit her wrist in prison to try to kill herself. You and your wife only got to visit her after pulling a lot of strings, right?"

Ethan's eyes flickered when he heard that. Then, he nodded to admit, "Indeed."

"Then, do you remember what Naya told you when you were in the detention ward?"

Ethan was stunned again. He still remembered Naya's face when she said fiercely that she would never forgive Ava. However, he did not expect Jeremy to know about that.

"Mr. Whitman, what are you trying to say?"

"What I want to say is, Mr. Mendez, you're an honest and trustworthy businessman and a good father. But you may not have a good wife. Otherwise, how could your daughter have been spoiled into someone who dares to kill?"

Ethan's face suddenly turned pale, not knowing what to say.

In silence, the servant came to inform him that Esther was back.

Esther came in carefreely with her bag. When she saw Madeline and the others sitting on the sofa in the living room, she chuckled disdainfully and

said sarcastically, "What's going on? The top young master and young mistress in Glendale are here."

Madeline and Jeremy did not want to waste time contending with Esther. When they were about to go straight to the point, Daniel suddenly got up and strode in front of Esther.

"Where's Ava?"

When Esther heard what he said, she displayed a surprised and amused look.

"Daniel, you've lost your memories. Why are you acting crazy here? How would I know where that vixen you mentioned is?"

"Please watch your mouth. You're someone with status," Daniel reminded her solemnly. Then, he asked again, "You must know where Ava is. Tell me right now."

Daniel asked Esther about Ava's whereabouts with certainty.

Esther's heart was racing, but her face was full of disapproval. She walked toward Ethan leisurely and sat down on the sofa carefreely. "This is so strange. What does it have to do with me that you can't find that vixen? Why are you asking me about her whereabouts?"

Seeing that Esther was acting so indifferent like this matter had nothing to do with her, Madeline began to feel anxious.

"Mrs. Mendez, we have reasons to believe that Ava came here to find you, and during this period when Ava was gone, I heard from Mr. Mendez that you just happened to be out."

After listening to Madeline's words, Esther suddenly let out a sneer.

"Mrs. Whitman, what you said is really interesting. I'm not my precious daughter who's now behind bars because she was framed by you guys. She lost her freedom and is detained in prison all day and night. I'm a free woman, so I can go wherever I want. Do you think you have the right to control me?"

When she said this, Esther obviously increased her tone. It was obvious that she was unhappy about how Naya ended up.

They knew that Esther had something to do with Ava's disappearance, but Esther's attitude made it impossible to get anything out of her.

Ethan felt that Esther's attitude at the moment was truly horrible, so he said, "Esther, don't talk like that. Naya went astray, so you can't blame others."

When Esther heard this, she was like a tinderbox that would explode the second it was lit. She blew up immediately, "Are you serious? I'm your wife, and the one who's in prison now is your biological daughter. But at this moment, you're still siding with the people who harmed your daughter?"

"I didn't mean that. Calm down."

"How can I calm down? How can I calmly face these people who harmed Naya? If it weren't for them, would Naya have gone astray?"

Esther put all the blame on others. She suddenly looked at Daniel with hostility in her eyes.

"Daniel, you scumbag. Are you even worthy of our Naya? Naya has been so good to you for so many years, but have you ever repaid her? Naya is devoted to you and has done so much for you, but what about you? You only want to marry that vixen. You forced Naya to do something so extreme because of that vixen. Do you still have a conscience?"

Daniel, who had amnesia, listened to Esther's rebuke. He could not remember what he had ever done with Naya. However, as he listened to what Esther said, he felt as if he had done something to let Naya down.

He frowned, saying, "Even if I had really let your daughter down, it has nothing to do with Ava, Mrs. Mendez. Please tell me where Ava is now."

"Hmph." Esther chuckled coldly. "Don't ask me, I don't know!"

"You do know," Jeremy said suddenly in a very determined tone.

Esther raised her eyes arrogantly to look at Jeremy. "What do you mean?"

"I just received a document here. The document shows that Ava was standing near your house during the time you went out. Soon after, you got into a cab and left. Ava also got into a cab to follow you." Jeremy narrowed his eyes.

Esther was stunned after he heard that. A few seconds later, she got up suddenly. "Heh! It seems that the vixen was following me. Great, I have to go report this to the cops. I have to tell them I'm being stalked!"

After she finished saying that, Esther took her phone out to call the cops.

When Ethan saw that, he quickly stopped her. "Esther, stop it! Don't make a huge fuss out of this."

"What do you mean by that? They're working together to bully me! They're targeting me after they harmed our daughter. At the end of the day, it's all because of that vixen! I don't want to get involved in this stupid matter anymore. If you think that I have something to do with that woman's disappearance, go ahead and call the cops. But for now, please get out of my house!" After Esther said that, she turned around to go upstairs angrily.

Ethan could not stop Esther, so he just politely said a few words to Jeremy and the rest before going upstairs himself.

Daniel stood in the same spot with a lot on his mind. He felt very anxious, and an inexplicable sense of uneasiness was spreading in his heart. Then, it gradually wrapped around his heart like a huge black curtain.

"Dan, let's go to the police station first." Madeline's voice brought Daniel back to his senses.

He nodded, said nothing, and followed Jeremy and Madeline to the police station. On the way there, he saw the surveillance footage of Ava getting into the cab and following Esther on Jeremy's phone. The subsequent surveillance footage from the streets had not been sent to Jeremy, so there was no way to determine where Esther and Ava got out of their cabs.

Esther stood on the balcony, watching the car drive away with a sneer.

'If you want to call the police, go ahead. Even if you look for her following the surveillance footage, you won't find her. You hurt my Naya so badly, yet you still expect that vixen to return home safely?'

Esther narrowed her eyes. She had decided to kill Ava without caring about the consequences.

She was about to call the two men who were keeping an eye on Ava, but when she turned around, she saw Ethan come in. Esther glanced at Ethan angrily before walking over to the dresser and sitting down.

Ethan walked over with a worried look on his face. "Esther, do you really know Ava's whereabouts? Where did you go just now? Did Ava really follow you?"

Esther slowly took off the precious jewelry she was wearing and spoke in a leisurely manner.

"You're doubting your wife because of a few words from some outsiders. Our daughter is already in this state. Do you want to see them harming me as well?"

"I didn't mean that, but it's indeed Naya's fault for ending up like this." Ethan looked helpless.

Esther tossed away the jewelry in her hand and stood up suddenly, her eyes full of resentment.

"So, are you blaming me? Are you blaming me for not educating my daughter well? So what if I didn't educate her well? Isn't Naya your own flesh and blood? She has never endured any hardship since she was a child, but she's been imprisoned for so many years. You're her father and you don't feel bad, but I do! It's best not to let me see Ava. Otherwise, I'll definitely make her life a living hell!"

After Esther said those harsh words, she turned to go out again.

Ethan tried to stop her to advise her but failed to do so.

After Esther left the house, she was worried that Ethan would follow her. Hence, she deliberately called a cab and circled the streets first. When she felt that she had done enough, she decided to go vent her anger on Ava. She was so aggrieved and wanted to release everything on Ava so that she could avenge herself. However, as the cab drove along the street, she noticed from the rearview mirror that a car seemed to be following her.

Esther cursed unhappily and asked the driver to drive into the junction in front. Then, the car behind also drove into the same junction. However,

when the car drove into the junction, Esther had already gotten out of the car and was looking over at the car with an enigmatic smile.

On the way to the police station just now, Madeline had persuaded Jeremy to let her get out of the car halfway. She returned to the location near the Mendez family's manor to try to see if Esther would go out again. Not long after, Madeline did manage to wait until Esther went out. Then, she called a cab to follow behind Esther's cab.

She did not expect Esther to notice her.

When the driver saw that the car he was following had stopped in front of him, he turned his head and asked Madeline.

"Miss, do you still want to follow them?"

"No, thank you." Madeline directly got out of the car after paying the fare.

Esther was a little surprised to see Madeline getting out of the car, but at the same time, she was not too surprised.

"Mrs. Whitman, why are you following me?" Esther asked with a smile.

Madeline stepped forward and parted her lips with a light smile. "Everyone can use the road. Are you the one who paved this road, Mrs. Mendez?"

The smile on Esther's face was even more meaningful now. "I've heard that you were very articulate, and now, it seems that this is really the case. But you know best whether you're truly just coincidentally passing by."

Madeline pursed her lips and smiled calmly, her eyes meeting Esther's gaze like a torch.

"Mrs. Mendez, you also should best why you're out at this time and even deliberately circled the streets."

"Oh? Really? I just find staying at the house very boring. And I felt irritated when you uninvited guests barged in, so I came out to ease my mood." Esther's tone was relaxed. She did not take Madeline seriously at all.

"Since you like to follow me so much, Mrs. Whitman, go ahead. We can even have a cup of coffee together if you're interested."

Esther turned around and was about to get in the cab when she unexpectedly heard Madeline's free and easy voice behind her.

"Since you're inviting me so politely, then I won't refuse. I also happen to have something to ask you, Mrs. Mendez, so let's have a cup of coffee together."

Madeline said as she walked to the car.

Esther was stunned for a moment, not expecting Madeline to follow suit. She did not know what to do, so she got into the car first.

After Madeline got into the car, Esther gave the name of a coffee shop and did not speak anymore.

Madeline did not speak either, but she was still very satisfied with the result. She believed that as long as she could get Esther's movements at this time, then Ava would not be in so much danger.

'But Ava, where are you now? I hope Jeremy can get the surveillance footage as soon as possible to find where your whereabouts.' Madeline prayed silently in her heart.

Over here, Jeremy was also keeping track of Madeline's movement. When he saw Madeline entering a coffee shop, he called Madeline curiously.

Madeline received a call from Jeremy right after she sat down. She did not hesitate before answering it. After briefly telling him what was going on, she hung up.

Inside the coffee shop. Madeline and Esther sat face-to-face.

Esther picked up the hot coffee that was just served, took a sip, and spoke first.

"Mrs. Whitman, you have three children, right? I heard that your only daughter was tortured to the point where she couldn't speak by a woman in a gang. She's still mute now. I wonder if it's true."

The sudden mention of Lily, who got so frightened by Lana that she lost her courage to speak, made Madeline feel a little uncomfortable. However, she still calmly raised her eyes and parted her lips lightly. "Mrs. Mendez, you can just say what you want to. We've already reached this point, and some

things are already tacitly understood. There's no need to beat about the bush."

Esther pulled the corners of her red lips into a half-smile. "I really don't understand what you mean when you say those words. I'm just curious if your daughter was ever scared into a mute."

Madeline could hear that Esther was hiding something in her sentence. She maintained a composed attitude and replied calmly, "Yes, my daughter can't speak yet."

"Tsk ts." Esther sighed. "How do you feel as a mother when you see your daughter being bullied like that by outsiders?"

Hearing this, Madeline seemed to gradually understand what Esther wanted to convey.

Madeline did not avoid Esther's question. She replied calmly, "No mother can stand idly by when their precious daughter is being bullied."

Madeline replied. At the same time, she also saw the look of satisfaction in Esther's eyes, but Madeline was not done.

"However, if my daughter is the one at fault, she deserves it even if she's taught a lesson. Furthermore, if it's because I, her mother, failed to educate my child on how to be a decent human since childhood, which resulted in my child harming others and themselves, then as her mother, I can only regret not educating her well enough. The only way to rectify it is to let society and the law teach her how to be a decent human. So at the end of the day, I, her mother, am equally to blame."

After listening to Madeline's words, the smile on Esther's face gradually disappeared. She wanted to take this opportunity to show that her actions were justifiable even if she were to do something drastic, but she did not expect Madeline to say that.

"Mrs. Mendez, what happened to your daughter has been going on for so long. After all this time, have you really never realized that the problem is with you and your daughter?"

Esther was already a little unhappy, but at this moment, when Madeline accused her and Naya, she threw the cup on the table and stood up furiously.

"Eveline, are you saying that my daughter brought it upon herself? How dare you say such a thing?! Naya is too soft-hearted, so that's how you got the opportunity to force her into what the situation she's in now!" Esther scolded, her dramatic behavior attracting the attention of other customers in the shop.

Madeline looked calmly at Esther who was suddenly furious.

"Naya is indeed your biological daughter, Mrs. Mendez. You're equally selfish. You'll both blow up the moment you're lit. You're both always so self-centered, and you two never think you're the ones at fault."

"Eveline, you..."

"Mrs. Mendez, do you really wish for your daughter to stay 25 years in prison? Don't you want her to repent genuinely and get the chance to be released early?" Madeline stood up as well, her eyes becoming sharp.

"I know you're very much aware of where Ava is now. I know you want to avenge your precious daughter, I know you want to have a life and death struggle with us and have a huge fallout, but if something happens to Ava, your daughter will be the mastermind who instigated a murder. When that happens, she'll be given the death penalty immediately. She won't just be locked up for 25 years."

After hearing this, Esther was about to explode in rage.

"You... Eveline, you dare curse my daughter?"

"I'm not cursing her. I'm telling the truth." A sharp light gradually shot out from Madeline's eyes. "You're my elder, so it's impossible that you don't understand these things. As a mother, you should set the right attitude and worldview for your child rather than ignorantly doting on her and allowing her to take a road of no return."

"Shut up, Eveline! Stop talking!" Esther could not contain herself anymore. "I don't need you to lecture me. How I educate my daughter has nothing to

do with you. You should mind your own business and remember this. Naya was not driven to a dead end by Ava alone. You had a part in this too!"

Esther turned to leave after leaving what sounded like a warning.

Madeline did not delay for a second. She immediately followed after Esther and quietly called Jeremy from her watch.

"Jeremy, I'm going to follow Esther now. There's a chance that something bad might happen, so let's keep connected first. If I'm in any danger, you can follow the GPS location to find me." Madeline said this very quickly and hurriedly followed Esther.

Esther knew that Madeline was following her. The evil look on her face grew more intense. The grievance that she felt for Naya grew bigger and bigger after accumulating in her heart

"Eveline, since you want to follow me so badly, then I'll help you accomplish your goal," Esther whispered through gritted teeth.

She turned her eyes and looked to the window on the side at Madeline's reflection. Indeed, she was following her. A sinister cold light flowed out from Esther's eyes. After walking for a while, Esther stopped and made a phone call.

After hanging up the call, she turned around, her eyes locking on Madeline not far away.

"Eveline, you must be quite tired after following me for so long, right?"

Madeline smiled and walked over to Esther. "Why? Mrs. Mendez, do you want to sit down for a cup of coffee with me again?"

"I want to ask you to sit down and rest, but not here." Esther smiled, her smile looking abnormally hypocritical but meaningful.

Madeline had roughly figured out what was going on, but she was not anxious or panicking.

It was most likely because she knew Jeremy was listening, so her heart was beating steadily.

"I wonder where you want me to go, Mrs. Mendez?"

As soon as Madeline finished speaking, an unremarkable-looking black sedan stopped on the side of the road.

Esther glanced at the car before walking over to the car and opening the door of the backseat. "Eveline, do you dare to get in the car with me?"

Madeline stepped forward calmly. "I think if I don't get in the car, it should be difficult to meet the person I want to meet, right?"

"I don't know what you're talking about, but if you don't get in the car, I'm leaving." Esther's tone was full of provocation for fear that Madeline would not dare to get in the car.

Worried that Madeline would change her mind, Esther got into the car first and pretended like she was going to ask the driver to drive away.

Madeline raised her hand and said something to her watch without being noticed. Then, she got into the car decisively and sat beside Esther.

Esther seemed to be relieved. Then, she immediately gave the driver the command, "Drive."

The driver understood and immediately started the car.

Madeline quietly observed the scenery outside the window, wanting to remember the road to their destination. However, she found that the driver was taking detours, obviously not wanting her to figure out the route.

However, despite this, the smartwatch worn by Madeline recorded the route completely.

Jeremy, who was on the other end of the phone, was also listening carefully to the situation in the car. However, it seemed that there was no communication in the car. It seemed pretty safe so far, but Jeremy was still worried about Madeline. Jeremy was about to go after Madeline according to the data sent by Madeline's smartwatch when he suddenly heard Esther speak

"Eveline, the place I'm going to take you to is very private, so you have to turn off your phone now. Take off your jewelry and your watch. Leave them in the car." Esther stared at Madeline with sly eyes.

"I've long heard that Mr. Whitman is very concerned about you, so he installed tracking devices on the jewelry you wear. If you don't want to take them off, your journey today will only end here."

Madeline understood what Esther meant and glanced at the watch that was still connected to a call. Madeline could not hear what Jeremy was saying on the other end of the line at the moment because the volume was turned down to the lowest. However, she could probably guess that Jeremy must be trying desperately to stop her and asking her to get out of the car. However, Madeline removed her phone, watch, and some jewelry according to Esther's wishes. She did not end the call, though.

Esther, pleased with Madeline's actions, told the driver to stop the car.

Madeline looked up and saw a place she had never been to before. This place was not very secluded, and there were still a small number of cars on the street.

After Esther got out of the car, she asked Madeline to follow her. Madeline took a look at the surrounding situation before following Esther.

After walking for 20 minutes, Madeline saw the dilapidated buildings that were about to be demolished in front of her. Madeline had a strong feeling that Ava was inside. She sped up a little uncontrollably, but reason told her not to be impulsive.

Esther took Madeline into one of the buildings that seemed to be collapsing. After reaching the third floor, Madeline heard noises that sounded like a heating was happening in the empty corridor.

She was startled. After she saw the smug look on Esther's face, Madeline's eyes darkened. She ran to the house where the sound came from without saying a word. As soon as she ran in, she saw a tall man beating Ava who was curled up on the ground in front of him. She could not fight back. Madeline felt a pain in her heart as she ran to Ava without thinking.

"Ava!" Madeline ran over and pushed the man who wanted to attack Ava away.

The man was dissatisfied with being pushed away and wanted to teach Madeline a lesson. However, at this moment, he received an order from

Esther to stop. Madeline glanced at Esther who walked slowly to the door. She quickly squatted to the ground, holding the frightened Ava in her arms.

"Ava..."

As Madeline called Ava's name and looked at Ava who was covered in bruises and was still bleeding, she felt as if a knife had been stabbed into her heart. Ava was still conscious, so she lifted her exhausted eyes. The wound on the corner of her eye was still bleeding.

"Maddie, am I dreaming?" Ava asked weakly.

Madeline's tears started to fall as she held Ava tightly. "It's me, Ava. You're not dreaming."

"Really? I'm not?" Ava took a deep breath and closed her eyes. However, the next second, she pushed Madeline away with all of her might "Run, hurry! Esther is a lunatic!"

Ava pushed Madeline away with the last bit of her strength.

Madeline almost lost her footing, but she was still hugging Ava, who insisted that she should leave as soon as possible.

"Ava, don't be afraid. I'm here. I won't let anyone bully you again," Madeline promised as she held the trembling Ava.

Having known Ava for so many years, Madeline always had the impression that Ava was strong and upright. She was never afraid of anything, but now, Madeline could feel from Ava's trembling body how scared she was at the moment. Looking at the various wounds on Ava's body, Madeline's heart was also in excruciating pain. She could not imagine what Esther had done to Ava in this short period that would cause Ava to be covered in such nasty wounds.

Naya's mother, Esther Bay, was even more extreme than Naya. Sure enough, only people like that would have children who acted the same.

Madeline hugged Ava in even more distress, while Esther, who was watching this scene, displayed a sinister and disdainful smile on her face.

"Tsk ts, what a touching sisterhood. I'm so moved," Esther said eerily as she walked up to Madeline and Ava.

"Eveline, you were originally one of my targets, but you're not as impulsive as this fool, so you got lucky. I really didn't expect you to be willing to follow me just to put yourself in danger for this fool. It seems that you're not that smart either, and your husband Jeremy is not that worried about you. Otherwise, why would he let you take the risk knowing that you'll be in danger?"

Madeline did not want to answer at all when she heard what Esther said in a smug tone, but Ava felt extremely guilty after hearing it. She leaned weakly into Madeline's arms and made an almost inaudible apology. "I'm sorry, Maddie. I was too impulsive. I should've listened to you. I shouldn't have gone after this lunatic. Maddie, I'm sorry..."

Ava's voice was very soft, but Madeline heard every word. She furrowed her eyebrows, feeling even more distressed.

"You dummy, no one is blaming you. It's enough as long as you're safe," Madeline comforted softly.

At the moment, Ava could only lean against Madeline's arms and cry silently. However, Esther would not be soft-hearted. She would not feel the slightest bit moved by such a scene. In her opinion, Madeline and Ava were now in her hands, so she would now avenge her daughter.

"I almost can't bear it after seeing how affectionate you two are," Esther's smile became more and more sinister. "Why don't I give you a choice? Only one of you can leave. I'll give you one minute to discuss and decide who will leave. The one who stays may not see the sun tomorrow."

After hearing this, Ava's first reaction was to let Madeline go.

Without hesitation, she tugged on the corner of Madeline's clothes. "Go, Maddie. Don't stay here. Go now."

Madeline could feel how much Ava cared about her, but since she came here, she never thought of leaving.

"Esther, stop joking. Since you brought me here, I know you have no plans of letting either one of us go. Just be direct about what you want."

Madeline hugged Ava tightly as she faced Esther who was looking down on them neither obsequiously nor superciliously.

"Hmph." Esther sneered. "Eveline, it seems that you're pretty bold. Well then, I want to see just how strong you are."

"No!" Ava suddenly shouted as she turned her face to look at Esther.

"Esther, the person you hate the most is me. The person you want to deal with is also me. Eveline has no grudges against Naya. All of this is between Naya and me. This has nothing to do with my friends. You can just do anything you want to me!"

Although she was tortured to the point where she was covered with scars and bruises, Ava did not flinch from fear at all.

"Esther, tell your people to continue torturing me. Let Eveline go. You should know that her husband is Jeremy Whitman. You must also know his status in Glendale. He loves Eveline so much. If something happens to Eveline, not only will you be doomed. Your entire family will be too."

Esther frowned. "Are you threatening me? Do you think I'll be afraid of that at this moment? My daughter has already been sentenced to 25 years in prison. Her future is already over. Do you think I'd still be afraid?"

"Yes, that's right. Naya's future is over, but do you want her life to be over too?" Ava struck down at Esther's weakness.

"How dare you curse my daughter like that, you b*tch?!"

Indeed, Esther started stamping with fury. She grabbed Ava's blood-stained collar and reached out her hand to slap Ava.

When Madeline saw this, she decisively stopped Esther and pulled Ava back to her.

"Ava is right. I've already reminded you about this. You just visited Naya in prison a while ago. If you take action against us at this time, then Naya won't be able to escape the suspicion of instigating murder. Once she's convicted of this charge, do you think Naya will merely be locked up?"

"Eveline, how dare you threaten me too?!" Esther glared fiercely at Madeline but then followed with a smirk. "Haha, I know you're just saying that because you're scared. You're afraid that I'll kill you, so you have to scare me like this. It's alright, don't be too scared. I won't kill you. I'll just make you suffer a pain worse than death."

Esther's eyes grew more and more terrifying as she spoke.

Not long after she said that, the driver who drove the car just now came in.

Esther glanced sideways at Madeline and Ava before ordering, "Tie them both up."

"Okay, Boss."

The two men responded before picking up the rope on the ground and walking toward Madeline and Ava.

Ava weakly pushed Madeline. "Maddie, if you don't leave now, there'll be no more chances. I'm already happy that I have a good friend like you in my life. Really." As she said that, tears started flowing out of her eyes.

"Maddie, I've been alone my whole life, so it won't be a big deal if something really happens. But you're different. You have three children, and Jeremy will be very sad if he loses you. Don't take risks for me anymore. I'm stupid for falling into Esther's trap, so just let me endure all of this. Maddie, you should go now."

"Ava, stop being stupid. You're not alone anymore. You have your parents. Even though Daniel has lost his memories, he's still concerned and worried about you. Since I'm here, I won't let you face all these dangers alone. Don't be scared. You'll never be alone anymore."

After Madeline said that, she held Ava with one hand and put another hand into her pocket. Then, she lowered her head to whisper in Ava's ear...

Ava's physical condition was not good now, but her hearing was still okay. After hearing Madeline's whispers in her ear, she was slightly stunned, but she also knew they did not have a second to hesitate. From the corners of her eyes, she could see the two men gradually approaching them with the rope.

Madeline also knew that at this time, she could not hesitate. Once she did, something would go wrong. When she saw that the two men were about to tie her and Ava with rope, Madeline suddenly raised her hand and sprayed the pepper spray in her hand into the eyes of the two men with lightning speed.

"Ouch!"

"F*ck!"

The two men screamed in pain at the same time. They threw the rope in their hands to the ground. They were desperately wiping their eyes. However, since they were wiping it away with their hands, they allowed more of the pepper spray to go into their eyes.

Madeline advanced after the enemies retreated. She sprayed more pepper spray into the eyes of the two men, then kicked the two men without hesitation.

The two men could not see, so they staggered and fell backward after being attacked so suddenly. One of the men even fell to the ground. Then, Madeline held Ava tightly and they ran toward the door.

Ava had long been prepared, so she was holding Madeline tightly, refusing to let go.

Esther was dumbfounded to see this scene.

How would she expect that Madeline would carry pepper spray with her? When she saw that Madeline was about to leave with Ava, Esther immediately stopped her.

"Eveline, don't even think about leaving just like that!"

Esther blocked the door forcefully, then ordered the two men.

"You two, there's water over there. Go wash your eyes quickly. If these two escape, not only won't you get the rest of the money but you might even be arrested. When that happens, you won't have the chance to spend the money even if you have it. Do you hear me?!"

When the two men heard what Esther said, they squinted their eyes and tried to find the water to clean their eyes.

Of course, Madeline knew she could not waste any time. She decisively took out the pepper spray she used just now and pointed it at Esther.

"Do you want to try how it feels to get pepper spray in your eyes?" Madeline's eyes were as sharp as knives, and she was unhesitating. "Esther,

I'm not merely intimidating you now. Don't force me unless you want to feel your eyes burn."

Esther looked at the nozzle of the pepper spray that was facing her. At that second, she did not dare to act recklessly.

Madeline retracted her hand quickly and held Ava tightly. "Ava, let's go!"

"Okay," Ava replied Madeline forcefully, then used all of her might to put her weak legs forward. She tried her best to run out of this place quickly.

Esther wanted to chase after them, but she knew she was not Madeline's opponent. She quickly turned around and grabbed two bottles of mineral water before throwing them in front of the two men. Then, she ordered them while feeling flustered and exasperated.

"Quickly wash your eyes and chase after them! If they escape, we'll all be done for."

Madeline supported Ava's arm on her shoulder with one arm while her other arm held Ava's waist. Despite running very fast, Ava was still too weak. When she got to the first floor, she did not have the energy to keep running anymore.

"Maddie, you should just leave me here and run. You can call Jeremy and the rest to come and rescue me after you escape," Ava tried to get Madeline to leave.

Of course, Madeline would not let go. She ignored Ava's words. Instead, she asked with concern, "Ava, are you really unable to walk at all?"

"Yeah, I can't walk anymore. I have no energy, and it hurts so much." Ava frowned, almost unable to lift her head. "Maddie, listen to me. You can leave now. Esther is crazier than Naya. She can really do anything."

"Then it's even more impossible for me to leave you here to face the danger alone," Madeline said and lifted Ava with even more force. When she heard the hurried footsteps behind her, Madeline had to make a decision immediately, "Ava, hold on for a while."

"Maddie..."

Ava gradually began to lose consciousness, but her feet still followed Madeline.

After the two men washed their eyes, they were the first to chase after Madeline and Ava. Meanwhile, Esther was following closely behind them. However, after they ran out of the building, they found that the buildings around them were empty. They did not see any shadows, let alone humans. Esther thought it was strange, so she asked the men to look for them nearby, knowing that Madeline would not be able to go far with Ava.

Yet, after looking around, there was still no trace of Madeline and Ava.

As time passed, the sky gradually darkened. Then, Esther received a call from Ethan again. After she picked it up, she made up an excuse saying she was shopping with friends before hanging up. Esther's eyes became darker and darker as she looked at the building in front of her.

"Eveline, Ava, don't even think about leaving like this! My precious daughter's life is over. I won't make life easy for you!" Esther said viciously, then she turned and walked into the building in front of her.

After entering, she stood at the door as if she was trying to listen to any sounds. However, she did not hear anything. Esther was so angry that she wanted to find them floor by floor. However, as soon as she started to walk upstairs, she suddenly heard footsteps behind her.

"No need to look. I'm here," Madeline's voice sounded behind Esther.

Esther stopped in her tracks and looked behind her in slight disbelief. She did not expect that she would really see Madeline.

"Evelin, you're so bold." The corners of Esther's lips twitched as she took two steps toward Madeline. However, she quickly stopped and looked at Madeline vigilantly. She seemed to be suspecting whether Madeline still had the pepper spray on her.

Madeline sensed Esther's suspicions, so she threw the pepper spray at the floor in front of Esther.

"Don't be scared. I have nothing on me that I can attack you with now."

Esther glanced at the pepper spray on the floor. When she picked it up, she noticed that it was already finished.

"Eveline, what's the meaning of this? Where's Ava?"

"Hmm. " Madeline shrugged. "I hid her somewhere you can't find her, of course."

"Heh, you're such a good friend. You hid her and came out to put yourself at risk... How courageous!"

"Same goes for you." Madeline seemed to be praising Esther, but her eyes were filled with sarcasm. "You can do insane things for your precious daughter, but the difference is that you don't even know what you should do and what you should not do."

After hearing what Madeline said, Esther only chuckled pejoratively. Soon after, she called the two men back and gave them an order.

"You two, go into this building and search around. That woman must be nearby. As for her, I'll handle her myself."

The two men glared at Madeline savagely. They clearly wanted to teach her a lesson because she sprayed them with pepper spray just now. However, they could only execute Esther's order right now.

When Madeline saw the two men going upstairs, she knew this was her last chance.

Madeline was not flustered at all when she was facing Esther who was staring at her so closely. The moment she saw the two men going up the stairs, she suddenly turned and ran.

Esther looked at Madeline who suddenly ran away and screamed in confusion, "She ran! Catch her first! Don't let her run away!"

The two men did not expect such a sudden turn in the situation, but they also realized now that Madeline was not a woman who was easy to deal with.

Esther was so angry that she chased after Madeline. As she watched Madeline's figure speed away, she was seething.

"Eveline, I don't believe that those two big men can't handle you!"

Esther gritted her teeth and finally realized how negligent she was. Madeline was fine and not injured, so she should let those two men deal with her. She should be looking for Ava, who was beaten so badly that she could not even walk on her own. Esther was also a little aware of the reason why Madeline would take the initiative to show up here. Clearly, she was doing this on purpose.

"Eveline, you're smart, but I'm not stupid. Since you ran out on purpose, it proves that b*tch Ava is in this building. Well, since you can run so fast, go ahead. I'd like to see where that b*tch Ava can run to now."

Esther's gloomy eyes narrowed fiercely before she turned around and walked upstairs. She looked for Ava from room to room.

Outside the building, Madeline was running along the damaged and bumpy road. She glanced back from time to time, making sure that the two men were still desperately chasing after her. The sky was getting darker and darker. She could not feel any warmth in the light from the sunset when it hit her. After running for a distance, Madeline slowed down a little as she was running out of strength. Then, she saw the two men who were chasing after her get closer and closer.

The two men also saw that Madeline was a little tired now. They both had smug smiles on their faces.

At this moment, Madeline tripped over a sharp stone under her feet. She immediately lost her balance and fell to the ground. When she tried to stand up, she found that her ankle was twisted and she could not stand up at all.

Seeing this situation, the two men stopped abruptly and started to guffaw loudly.

"Mrs. Whitman, do you still wish to run?" one of the men asked with a wretched smile.

"Mrs. Whitman, you are really good at tricking people. You attacked us with pepper spray just now and we couldn't even open our eyes. Then, you deliberately showed up to distract us. You have a lot of ideas."

"We initially had tender, protective feelings for women like you, but since you've tricked us twice, don't blame us for being ruthless." After the man said that, he showed a sinister look on his face.

"Wait!" Madeline cried out to stop them.

The two men were slightly stunned. Then, more evil and prouder smiles appeared on their faces.

"Mr. Whitman, are you going to beg us for mercy?"

Madeline lifted her eyes, not panicking even when she was in the face of danger. "I want to talk terms with you."

"Terms? What terms?" The man was curious.

"Whatever Esther is giving you, I'll give you double," Madeline answered straightforwardly.

When the two men heard that, they seemed to fall into deep thought before bursting into laughter a few seconds later.

"Mrs. Whitman, you're overthinking. People like us are extremely vengeful. You can't use money to settle this matter anymore after how you tricked us just now."

Madeline furrowed her brows. "What do you want?"

"What do we want?" The two men lifted their heads to look at each other, their eyes filled with evil. "Mrs. Whitman, you're so pretty. What do you think we want? Since you were so disobedient just now, we shall teach you a lesson."

Madeline's eyes were filled with terror after she heard that. She tried to stand up to back away, but her ankle was in so much pain that she could not stand no matter what.

Seeing this, the two men rubbed their hands and walked toward Madeline. However, Madeline suddenly shouted, "Be careful, there's a snake under your feet!"

The two men paused subconsciously when they heard that, but soon, they realized that Madeline might be fooling them again.

The weather had not turned warm, so how could there be snakes?

"Stop talking nonsense with this woman. She has too many tricks up her sleeves. Just grab her and drag her into the house to teach her a lesson. Let's see if she still dares to fool us again after that!" One of the men was already agitated after being fooled so many times. He could not hold himself back anymore.

The other man also agreed, so he stopped talking nonsense. Then, the two of them rushed toward Madeline without saying a word. However, just as they were about to walk in front of Madeline, the two suddenly stepped on air as the feeling of weightlessness immediately overcame them.

"Ah!"

Thud! Thud!

After the scream, Madeline heard two muffled falls in succession.

Even though it was dark, Madeline could see a thin layer of dirt floating up from the pit in front of her.

"Damn, why is there such a big hole here?"

"Hurry up! Otherwise, we'll ruin this!"

"It's so high! How should I get up there?"

"You can't get up here, of course," Madeline's sweet voice came from above the heads of the two men.

The two men raised their heads and looked over at the same time, only to see Madeline giving them a proud and deep smile.

"I reminded you just now that there was danger. You were the ones who insisted on walking forward."

When they heard what Madeline said, the men realized that they had been tricked by Madeline again.

"Damn it!"

The men were not reconciled and could not accept this, but right now, they could only watch as Madeline laughed at them.

Madeline did not want to waste time either. She turned around and ran without saying a word.

The men finally understood that Madeline did not twist her ankle at all and had faked her fall. She was just pretending so that they would put their guard down!

How clever!

The two men had no choice but to admire her, but at the same time, they did not want to stay in this pit and wait for their deaths. Hence, they tried to get up. However, after a while, they really could not come up with a way to climb up. The pit was at least two meters tall.

Esther did not know what was going on outside. She searched for Ava's whereabouts from room to room, but after searching for so long, she still could not find any trace of Ava. Esther wondered where could a living and breathing person like Ava hide. Which safe place would Madeline hide her now that she was covered in injuries and had no strength to walk?

As she wondered about it, Esther suddenly thought of something.

Was the most dangerous place not the safest place?

Ava was on the third floor where she was originally held in!

Esther immediately walked back. When she entered the room, she heard the two men shouting from outside the balcony. It was only then Esther realized that the two men had fallen into a pit. She immediately guessed that it was Madeline's idea.

"Eveline, you have so many tricks up your sleeves. Since you dare to play me a fool like this, then I won't have mercy on you anymore. You've never been merciful since the beginning."

Esther turned around sharply when she heard the statement from behind her.

"Eveline, even two big men can't handle you. I really underestimated you." Esther's words were full of irony, but her eyes were full of deep resentment.

Madeline approached her with an indifferent smile. "It's not that you underestimated me, but since I've died once, I'll always be cautious no matter what I do."

Esther frowned. She had heard about Madeline's past. She chuckled coldly. "Eveline, where's Ava?"

"Do you think I'll tell you?" Madeline's eyes grew colder. "Esther, this is not how you should love your child as a mother. You'll soon pay the price for your crimes."

"Hmph!" Esther chuckled again, "The price? Yes, it seems that I can't win against you, Eveline. But since things have come to this point, I don't want to deal with you anymore. I don't want to waste any more time either."

As she said that Esther suddenly pulled out a switchblade from her pocket.

"You and Ava have ruined Naya's life anyway. I can't win this game for Naya. Since I'm going to prison no matter what, then why don't I drag both of you down with me? We'll all be losers in this game!"

Esther clenched the handle of the switchblade and charged straight toward Madeline. Madeline swiftly avoided the attack and slapped the switchblade out of Esther's hand. Esther widened her eyes in astonishment. She did not expect Madeline to not only have such quick reflexes but also the ability to easily subdue her.

Esther was furious. She pushed Madeline away to pick up the switchblade. Then, Madeline raised her foot and kicked the switchblade to the side.

"Eveline, I'll kill you!" Esther was instantly annoyed and angry.

At this moment, she was not behaving like a normal person at all, let alone a rich lady. When she grabbed Madeline's clothes, she started tugging on them.

Madeline did not want to entangle herself with Esther too much. She wanted to break free from Esther. However, Esther was not only unwilling to let go but she also reached out to grab Madeline's hair like a shrew.

Madeline was caught off guard. Esther seemed to have caught Madeline's weakness. She then raised his foot and kicked Madeline's knee.

"Kneel! Eveline, kneel!"

Esther pushed and tugged at Madeline frantically, her eyes getting more and more savage.

Madeline was ambushed by Esther. She could not rid Esther for a while. When Esther saw that Madeline could not get rid of her, she became even more intense. She suddenly pushed Madeline to the ground. Madeline's knees slammed on the cold and hard floor. The skin on her hands was scratched because she was trying to support herself.

When she was about to stand up, she turned her head and saw Esther picking up the switchblade and pointing it straight at her face.

"Eveline, you didn't expect the situation to change like this, right?"

Esther displayed a sinister and sly grin on her face. Then, she sighed long and hard.

"I raised my Naya for so many years because I hoped that one day, she could marry into a wealthy family and become a noble wife. Since she was a child, I've doted on her like a princess. She has never suffered any grievances, but one day, that b*tch Ava showed up and ruined everything!"

When she said Ava's name, Esther was grinding her teeth. She looked as if she wanted badly to kill Ava.

"Daniel doesn't know what's good for him. He should be honored that Naya likes him, but he only wants to be with Ava. If it's not because I don't want to make Naya sad, Daniel would be here now!"

Madeline did not want to add fuel to the fire when she looked at Esther's malevolent and resentful face at this moment. This woman who was behaving like a lunatic was holding a knife to her, so she could not take the risk. Madeline took a deep breath and said calmly, "Esther, did you deliberately bribe someone to trick Daniel into going somewhere with no cars around and then have someone steal his phone so that you could pretend to be Daniel's kid napper when texting Ava? The reason you did all of that is to lure me and Ava out because you want to deal with both of us at once, right?"

Esther sneered. "It's too late to know this now, Eveline, I'll get rid of you first, then I'll settle the crippled Ava. She's already half-dead anyway, so it'll be easier to get rid of her. Right now, you're the one I need to get rid of the most!"

Madeline was a little worried when she faced Esther's ferocious and threatening appearance, but she was not too scared.

Esther sensed that something was wrong when she saw that Madeline was still so calm. She felt that if she did not do anything now, she might really have no chance to do it later.

The villains usually died because they were too long-winded. She did not want to repeat Naya's mistakes. Therefore, she had to deal with Madeline quickly and efficiently.

Esther raised the switchblade suddenly, her face looking fierce. "Naya, I'll avenge you right now! I'll never forgive anyone who opposes you!"

After shouting out the words like she was venting, Esther stabbed Madeline with the knife.

At this critical moment, Esther heard someone shout at her.

"Esther!"

Esther's hand halted. Madeline was about to dodge but she looked flabbergasted at Ava who suddenly appeared. Ava walked staggeringly. She was covered in scars and could barely open her eyes, but she insisted on walking in front of Esther.

"Esther, the person you want to kill the most should be me." Ava took a deep breath to keep herself awake and regain her strength. "Come on! Come and kill me to vent for your precious daughter!" Ava deliberately provoked Esther.

Esther turned around and pointed the knife at Ava.

"You b*tch, you dare to step out for Eveline. I really admire your courage and the so-called sisterhood between you."

"Yeah, you should admire me, but how can narrow-minded, selfish, sinister, and vicious people like you and Naya know what the unyielding will do?"

"Hmph!" Esther's eyes were full of contempt. "Since you're so loyal, I'll fulfill your wish now, you b*tch!"

"Come on! I'll fight to the death with you too, you lunatic!" Ava was also completely annoyed at this moment.

When she saw that Esther was swinging the switchblade at her, Ava raised her right hand without hesitation. The next second, Esther felt something spicy and tingling penetrate her eyes. It blurred her eyes and made her lose her clear vision for a moment.

It was pepper spray!

She did not expect Ava to have it too!

"Ah!" Esther cried out in discomfort.

Madeline also took this opportunity to stand up immediately and snatched the switchblade from Esther's hand.

As Esther struggled blindly, she accidentally slammed her head against the wall and staggered a few seconds before fainting.

Madeline knew that Esther would not die, so she supported Ava and walked out, "Ava, hang in there. I think Jeremy and the others will be here soon."

"Maddie..."

"Don't talk so much. I'll take you out first."

Madeline picked up Ava's arm. The moment they stepped out of the door, they saw the two resentful men covered in dirt in front of them.

As soon as the two thugs saw Madeline, their faces turned as dark as charcoal.

"Eveline, you just love to play, don't you? Well, we'll play with you to your heart's content now!"

After one of the men said that, they strode toward Madeline and Ava.

Madeline did not expect these two men to climb out of the pit so quickly. She really did not have the strength to fight these two men at this moment.

Right as she and Ava were about to be tortured by these two gangsters, a familiar figure entered Madeline's line of sight.

Jeremy restrained the two men without any hesitation. He almost effortlessly brought down the two thugs who wanted to bully Madeline and Ava. The two thugs did not even notice that someone was following behind them. All they were thinking about was finding Madeline to vent their anger. At this moment, they were under Jeremy's feet.

"Jeremy." Madeline's face suddenly brightened with a happy smile.

Jeremy ran to Madeline after making sure the two men were no longer able to resist.

"Linnie, are you all right? Why is there so much dust on your clothes? Did you fall? Or did they..."

"I'm fine, Jeremy. I'm fine. Don't worry about me. Take Ava to the hospital now." Madeline looked worriedly at Ava, who was leaning on her shoulder and gradually losing consciousness.

Jeremy seemed to finally notice the injuries on Ava.

"Did they do this?"

"Esther instructed them to do this." Madeline frowned.

Ava's injuries made her feel distressed. "Esther passed out in the room. Are the police here?"

"I've informed the police. They should be here soon. Daniel will be here soon as well," Jeremy said and carried Ava bridal-style.

Looking at Ava's lacerated wounds which were of different sizes, Jeremy could not stop himself from frowning. He could tell how much Esther despised Ava. Jeremy obeyed Madeline's instructions and walked downstairs with Ava in his arms. At this time, Daniel also hurried upstairs. At first glance, he saw Ava unconscious in Jeremy's arms. He felt as if something had tugged on his nerves. For a moment, there was an indescribable pain all over the body.

"Ava!"

Almost subconsciously, Daniel called out to Ava in a very intimate tone. However, Ava could not hear him at all.

Daniel hurried to Jeremy, and Jeremy could not fully understand how Daniel was feeling at the moment. He also took the initiative to hand Ava to Daniel.

"Don't say anything. Take her to the hospital first," Jeremy stressed.

Daniel's Adam's apple moved when he seemingly sobbed. Then, without any hesitation, he carried Ava and quickly ran downstairs.

Jeremy immediately turned around and held Madeline's hand, only to realize that Madeline was walking a little weirdly.

"Linnie, did you hurt your foot?"

Madeline did not hide it any longer. "I twisted it a little when Esther pushed me and I was caught off guard. It shouldn't be a big problem."

"I shouldn't have let you take the risk to come here alone." Jeremy regretted this.

"If I didn't do this, there would be no way to find Ava so quickly. I had no choice but to make Esther bring me here by becoming the bait." Madeline smiled helplessly.

She took a risk for this trip out of desperation, but if she had not done this, they would not have been able to find Ava so quickly.

If Madeline had not gone to look for Esther alone, Esther would not have eased her vigilance and bring Madeline here?

Jeremy understood what Madeline meant. He picked Madeline up by the waist without saying a word.

"Linnie, you've worked hard. I'll take you home now."

"Let's go to the hospital first. I wonder how Ava's injury is." Madeline was very worried.

Of course, Jeremy would not go against Madeline's wishes. Hence, he immediately followed Daniel with Madeline in his arms. The police arrived at the scene at this time. After learning about the situation in the building,

the police immediately entered the house and arrested the two thugs and Esther.

At this time, Esther's hateful roar suddenly came from the balcony on the third floor.

"Daniel, you scumbag! My daughter's entire life was ruined by this b*tch Ava because of you, but you still care so much about this b*tch even after you lost your memory. If I knew this would happen, I wouldn't have let you go!"

Anger was overflowing from Esther's red eyes. Madeline did not expect Esther to suddenly wake up at this time and roar at them until her voice became hoarse.

Daniel stopped and looked at Esther who was standing on the balcony. Esther looked very terrifying at the moment. The light of the sunset was so gentle, but Esther's face under the light looked so aggressive and mad.

"Daniel, I'll make the lives of you adulterous swine a living hell!" Esther cursed fiercely.

"Dan, take Ava to the hospital. Ignore what she says. She seems to have some mental problems because of Naya."

Daniel did not want to waste another second, so he carried Ava and turned toward the car.

Esther saw that everyone was ignoring him and there were layered sounds of footsteps on the stairs. Based on the conversation, it seemed that the police were here. Esther angrily picked up a stone on the floor and threw it downstairs with all her strength. She was aiming at Ava who was leaning on Daniel's shoulder unconsciously. She knew very well that Naya hated Ava the most. Since things had developed to such an extent, she could not accept that Ava could still go to the hospital alive.

The stone fell in a parabola toward Ava. When Daniel noticed the abnormality, he hurriedly turned his body to the side to protect Ava. The stone hit him heavily on the head.

Esther saw that Daniel had protected Ava and wanted to throw another stone at her, but the police who arrived in time stopped her.

"Don't even think about staying alive, you b*tch! You should end up like my daughter!" Esther roared like she had gone mad.

Madeline had long ignored Esther. When she saw that the wound on Daniel's head was bleeding, Madeline and Jeremy hurried to the side of the car to open the car door.

"Get in the car quickly," Jeremy urged, and after leading Madeline into the passenger's seat, he helped Daniel carry Ava into the car. After they were all seated, he immediately stepped on the accelerator and rushed to the hospital.

When they got to the nearest hospital, Daniel immediately carried Ava out of the car. However, Madeline noticed that Daniel was extremely pale at this moment. The back of his clothes also seemed to be stained with blood. His arms that were holding Ava were slightly trembling, and his eyelids also seemed to be fluttering as well.

"Jeremy, come quick!" Madeline cried urgently.

Jeremy hastily stopped the car and ran over.

At this moment, Daniel suddenly lost his strength and consciousness. Afterward, he fell heavily to the ground with Ava in his arms.

"Dan!" Madeline exclaimed, and Jeremy quickly ran over to support Daniel.

The doctors and nurses on the side also came to help when they saw it. Immediately, Ava and Daniel were respectively pushed into the emergency room, while Jeremy and Madeline waited at the door.

Madeline also called to notify Raegan and Neil at this time. Raegan and Neil, who rushed to the hospital after learning about the situation, were full of anxiety. When they found out that Esther was behind this again, their eyes were full of anger. However, at this moment they felt more worried than anything else.

At this moment, no thing was more important than Ava's safety.

Neil wanted to wait for news about Ava with Raegan, but he got a call from the emergency room on the other side. As a doctor, it was his duty to save

people, hence Neil went without thinking too much. However, he found out that the injured person in need of treatment was Daniel.

Neil did not know how to describe his mood. He had always wondered why Ava and Daniel, a young couple, would have so many hardships.

Night had already fallen. Raegan, who was waiting outside the emergency room, looked at the closed door, tears falling silently from her eyes.

Madeline walked over and handed a piece of tissue to Raegan. "I'm as worried about Ava as you are. Please don't think too much about it. Let's sit down and wait."

Raegan took the tissue and sat down silently.

While Madeline was comforting Raegan, she was also comforting herself. When she thought of the wounds on Ava's body, she was unsure if Ava would be fine.

"I didn't fulfill my responsibilities as a mother for so many years. Over the years, I have gained both fame and fortune. Only then did I want to get my daughter back for a family reunion. At the end of the day, I was too selfish." Raegan was blaming herself.

"No matter if it was back then or right now, I've never considered Ava's feelings."

"You didn't have a choice back then, so you can't blame yourself. Ava has some misunderstandings about what had happened back then, so she's still brooding over it. That's why she resists you so much. However, she longs for a family reunion too," Madeline comforted.

After hearing this, Raegan felt a warm current flowing through her cold heart.

"Mrs. Whitman, thank you. Your company as Ava's good friend has been a huge source of support to her," Raegan thanked Madeline sincerely.

Madeline smiled. "Actually, I'm blessed to have Ava as my good friend."

Of course, Madeline would not forget that Ava had gone through the most difficult time in her life with her. The relationship between them was not just as simple as good friends. After experiencing this incident together, this could already be regarded as a life-and-death relationship.

"Actually, have you ever considered telling Ava the truth about your departure so that Ava won't be trapped in contradictions and self-struggles?" Madeline suggested.

However, Raegan was still a little hesitant. "Telling Ava about it now would seem like I'm making excuses to absolve myself."

Madeline understood the worries and concerns in Raegan's heart. She nodded, then voiced her thoughts. "But I don't think so, especially after all this time."

"Mrs. Whitman, you're saying..."

"We always feel that the future is still very long from now and there's still a lot of time, but maybe the future is not long. You never know when an accident will happen. We should cherish every minute and every second we have. If there are misunderstandings, just make them clear and don't make the people you care about wait too long."

After Madeline said that, Raegan seemed to be lost in thought. Those words made their way through Raegan's mind, and after some deep thought, she suddenly felt relieved. At that moment, the door to the emergency room finally opened.

Madeline and Raegan got up immediately and walked over to ask about the situation.

"Doctor, how's my daughter? Her injuries..."

"Madam, please calm down first," The doctor politely reassured Raegan.

"We've treated all the patient's wounds. After careful examination, her injuries are mainly flesh wounds and aren't life-threatening. But she's very weak now. She probably hasn't eaten or drunk for a long time. You can go and prepare some warm food for her first. Feed her when she wakes up."

Ava's life was not in any danger, so Madeline and Raegan breathed a sigh of relief. After the two thanked the doctor, they arranged a VIP ward for Ava. It was mainly to give Ava better care and hope that she could recover as soon as possible.

After Raegan was left alone to look after Ava, Madeline went to see Jeremy. Daniel's surgery was still ongoing.

When Madeline arrived, she happened to meet Daniel's parents who arrived in a hurry.

"What's going on here? Dan was fine when he went out. Why is he suddenly in the emergency room?" Gina looked panicked, but she quickly blamed Ava.

"Is it related to Ava again? When will that woman give us a break? Why does she have to pester our Dan? Let me tell you this, Dan's grandfather will never allow Ava to marry into our family. Tell her to give up as soon as possible!"

When Jeremy heard Gina scolding Madeline the moment she saw her, his face darkened. Madeline noticed that Jeremy might get angry, so she went over to hold the man's hand while smiling at him. Then, she turned to look at Gina before calmly saying.

"Firstly, Dan's situation in the emergency room is still unknown. Plus, this is the hospital. It isn't a place for you to fight."

"Also, Dan is one of the Grahams, not a puppet. He has his thoughts and his plans. He's a living person, not a puppet you can manipulate as you wish."

"Eveline, you..."

"Lastly, listen closely. The reason Dan got hurt is because of Mrs. Mendez. Didn't you want to get Dan and Naya together back then? But do you know how cold-blooded and cruel the pair of mother and daughter is? Do you know that they're demons?"

"What? Esther did this to Dan? Eveline, she's a polite and gentle lady from a rich family. How could she have done this?" Gina did not believe Madeline at all. She thought Madeline was just saying this to shift the blame.

Madeline did not want to get caught up with Gina about this. She was also not in the mood to fight Gina. Hence, she turned around to sit down and wait for the result.

"Eveline, make this clear right now. Aren't you going to explain after pushing the blame on others?"

"There's nothing to explain," Jeremy interrupted Gina unhappily, his eyes penetrating her like an ice dagger. "If you're dying to find out what happened and don't want to believe my wife, you can go ask Esther when you visit her in the police station."

Gina was taken aback as she looked at Daniel's father.

Esther was arrested?

Daniel's parents did not believe what Madeline and Jeremy said, so they decided to call Esther. However, Esther's phone went unanswered. The two suddenly were a little confused. They immediately called a friend who had some connections in this regard. When asked, Esther was really at the police station now. She was also refusing to cooperate with the investigation. She truly was arrested.

After hearing this news, Daniel's parents' faces changed.

"How could this be?" Gina still could not believe it. She asked another person who had connections and the result was the same.

Daniel's parents glanced at Madeline and Jeremy. They did not speak anymore. Anything they said at this time would only embarrass themselves further. Hence, the two sat peacefully aside and waited for the surgery to end.

After more than an hour, the surgery was finally over. Neil was the first to come out of the emergency room, and his expression was rather serious.

Daniel's parents did not know Neil. They thought he was just a normal doctor, so they eagerly asked about Daniel's situation.

Neil learned that they were Daniel's parents from their words, and he also knew that Daniel's parents did not like his precious daughter. Although Neil

did not like Daniel's parents, he still used an objective attitude and tone to inform them of Daniel's current situation from the doctor's point of view.

"The patient suffered trauma to his brain previously and had yet to fully recover. Now, he suffered another trauma and experienced excessive blood loss. But you can rest assured that his life will not be in any danger. The subsequent course of treatment will depend on how the patient behaves when he wakes up."

Upon hearing this, Daniel's parents did not know if they could breathe a sigh of relief or not. Before even a few seconds of peace, Gina began to blame Ava again. "At the end of the day, it's all because of that annoying b*tch Ava. If Dan had broken up with her long ago, nothing would've happened. I shouldn't have agreed to let her date Dan just because her mother is the richest person in Y Country."

Gina's words sounded extremely ear-piercing to Neil.

"I won't let my daughter marry a guy with such parents too if it isn't because she likes him!" After Neil said this coldly, he turned around, nodded to Madeline and Jeremy politely, and walked away.

Daniel's parents felt as if Neil was talking to them, but they did not know him. Why did he make such a comment?

"How strange. Does the doctor have a few loose screws in his head?"

"The doctor's not the one who has a few loose screws in their head, it's someone else." Madeline looked at Gina profoundly. "Not only is he a doctor, but he's also a father with a daughter."

Gina looked at Madeline, feeling confused. "What does his daughter have to do with me?"

"His daughter is Ava. So, do you think this matter concerns him?"

After Madeline said that, Daniel's parents were immediately speechless.

"Jeremy, since Ava's and Dan's lives are not in danger, you should go back. Let them rest. We'll come to see them tomorrow."

Jeremy looked at Madeline with tenderness in his eyes. Then, he held her hand. "You should go back to rest too."

"Okay." Madeline smiled and leaned against Jeremy.

They ignored Daniel's parents and left the hospital hand in hand.

Daniel's parents finally came back to their senses after a very long time. It seemed that the doctor was Ava's biological father, Neil. They had heard about him before, but they had never seen him in person.

The two of them did not think that there would be such a coincidence.

Madeline and Jeremy returned to Old Whitman Manor. After taking a shower to wash away the grime and exhaustion, the two sat down comfortably on the sofa. Jeremy then took the hairdryer and carefully dried Madeline's hair. Finally, he pulled her intimately into his arms. Feeling the temperature on her body and smelling her scent, Jeremy finally felt at ease.

"Linnie, I really want to hold your hand and take you around the world every day. That way, none of those troubles can find us."

Madeline raised her hand and patted the side of Jeremy's face. "You're thinking about retiring? Do you think you've earned enough money for Pudding's formula and Jack's and Lily's studies? As long as the children are around, we parents can't even think about retiring."

"The children will grow up. If we want to travel the world when we get older, we may not be able to walk anymore." Jeremy suddenly became serious as he held Madeline's face and stared at her deeply.

"Linnie, a lot has happened in the past few years. I've experienced the anxiety and uneasiness of almost losing you several times. I don't want to go through that again. We should live our lives peacefully and comfortably. You're not allowed to do anything risky for anyone ever again. Do you hear me, hmm?"

Madeline understood the deep meaning behind Jeremy's words. Madeline also knew in her heart that a lot of things had happened in the past few years. They had experienced life and death before. These things had made her cherish what she had now. Madeline nodded solemnly as she looked into Jeremy's deep and tender eyes.

"Jeremy, it wasn't easy to come to where I am with you today. Don't worry. Even if I don't do it for you, I'll still stay by your side for our kids."

With Madeline's assurance, Jeremy felt a lot more at ease.

At this time, they heard Karen calling them down for dinner from outside the door. Jeremy kissed Madeline's cheek and took her downstairs to eat together.

While they were eating, Madeline inevitably started to miss her only precious little princess as she looked at her adorable sons.

She wondered how Lily was doing in Fabian's place during this time.

Recently, she had been too busy dealing with Ava's affairs. She had not made a video call to her precious daughter for several days now. Madeline wanted to have a video call with the little princess after dinner. However, perhaps she was too tired, she immediately fell asleep when she got back to her room and lay down.

Jeremy put the blanket over Madeline and fell asleep while cuddling her.

The next morning, Madeline woke up and made breakfast for Jackson. After she arranged for a driver to take her son to school, she made a pot of chicken soup to bring to the hospital for Ava.

Karen felt a little distressed when she saw that, but she came over and told Madeline some good news. "Eveline, you've been so busy lately. Have you noticed any changes at home?"

Madeline was cooking the chicken soup when she heard this. She turned back curiously. "What do you mean, Mom?"

"Don't you think the house is cleaner and more comfortable?"

Madeline frowned. She seemed more confused now. When Karen saw how confused Madeline was, she stopped beating about the bush. "That woman is gone."

"That woman?"

"Did you forget about that woman who insisted on pestering Jeremy and even said she was willing to stay in our house as a maid?"

After Karen's reminder, Madeline finally remembered something. So many things had happened these days that she nearly forgot the existence of this

person. What was even more suspicious was that the woman actually left by herself.

"Did she say why she was leaving?" Madeline asked curiously, carefully pouring the soup into the thermos.

"This woman wanted something to happen between her and Jeremy from the very beginning, so how could she be willing to stay in our house as a maid? Even though she looked pitiful, she was just pretending to win your sympathy. She only wanted to stay here and take the opportunity to pester Jeremy again," Karen analyzed what Hannah had in mind at that time.

In fact, Madeline knew in her heart that Hannah was just faking when she said she wanted to stay here as a maid and when she said she did not remember anything. She only had one goal and purpose, which was to seek revenge.

Madeline smiled and did not want to dwell on these unnecessary things. She packed the thermos and turned around. "Mom, I'm going to the hospital to see Ava now. I'm going to have to trouble you to pay more attention to the things happening at home."

"Don't worry, and be careful on the road. Don't run into any strange people and get into an accident again," Karen said worriedly.

"I got it. I'll be careful," Madeline promised with a small smile before leaving. However, on the way to the hospital, Madeline felt as if a strange person was following her.

She arrived at the hospital vigilantly, then found the ward where Ava was. After entering the ward, Madeline found that Ava had woken up. The person accompanying her by the bed was Raegan.

When Raegan saw Madeline, she subconsciously raised her hand to wipe the tears from the corner of her eyes. After that, she showed Madeline a kind smile and said, "Mrs. Whitman, you're here. Coincidentally, I need to go handle some things, so please take care of Ava."

After she said that, Raegan hurried out of the ward. Madeline could feel that Raegan deliberately found an excuse to leave. When she walked closer to Ava, she found that Ava's eyes were red too. However, as she looked at Ava's wounds, she naturally felt distressed.

Luckily, Ava was fine and looked much better now.

Madeline placed the thermos down and started saying in an accusatory tone, "You know how painful this is now, right? I'd like to see if you still dare to act so impulsively again."

Ava knew Madeline was just concerned about her, so she smiled. However, it unconsciously tugged on the wound on her face.

"Hiss."

"Be careful. Don't move around. They've just redressed your wounds," Madeline reminded nervously.

Ava laughed and sighed indifferently. "Luckily, they're all flesh wounds. Esther is such a lunatic. No wonder she has a daughter like Naya."

"Yeah, like mother, like daughter. But Ava, your mother is an elegant and intelligent successful woman. Why is your personality so different from your mother's?" Madeline asked playfully while placing the chicken soup she poured out in front of Ava. "Chicken soup fresh out of the pot. Drink some and regain some color on your cheeks."

Ava lifted her hand strenuously, the smile on her face disappearing quietly.

"Maddie, it's not like you don't know. I haven't had a mother since I was a child. The person who gave birth to me just gave me this body and nothing else."

Ava's remarks sounded like she was acting in a fit of pique, but she still obediently drank the soup made by Madeline.

Madeline nodded and sat down at the side. Then, she looked at Ava very seriously. "But Ava, from an objective point of view, what kind of people do you think your parents are?"

Ava paused while drinking the soup. Even though her expression seemed a little reluctant, she still spoke seriously.

"If you look at it from an outsider's perspective, one of them is a successful lady who's intelligent, elegant, kind, and generous. The other is an influential doctor with both medical skills and morality. Both of them are outstanding well-known figures."

"That's all?" Madeline asked. "If you look at it from another perspective, how do you think they treat you?"

"Me? They're great." Ava smiled again, but this smile looked very ironic. "After gaining success, they want to take back the garbage they threw away in the past to make up for their regrets and guilt."

Madeline knew that Ava would overthink, but she also understood why. Even so, she knew that in Ava's heart, she was longing for the warm moment of a family reunion.

After careful consideration, Madeline decided to tell her the truth that Raegan did not dare to say out loud. She deliberately waited for Ava to finish drinking the chicken soup and sit down comfortably on the bed before she spoke.

"Ava, when your mother left you, she had her own involuntary difficulties."

After hearing what Madeline said, Ava was stunned for a moment. Then, she started feeling doubtful.

"Difficulties? What kind of difficulties can make a mother abandon her own daughter? Maddie, you worked so hard back then to keep Jack were her difficulties harder and more challenging than yours?"

Madeline sighed helplessly as Ava questioned her.

"Maybe the pain I suffered physically was much worse than your mother's, but mentally, your mother was subjected to countless torture. Your mother was sick at the time, and it was a disease that made her unable to control herself."

The look in Ava's eyes changed slightly. "Maddie, what do you mean? What disease can make a parent abandon their biological child?"

"A disease that made her lose the freedom to act independently and one that fills the body with so much negative energy that the patient would just want to escape from reality."

Ava's expression seemed to freeze for a moment. Then, she moved her lips and guessed, "Depression? Is it depression?"

Madeline nodded. "Yes, she had severe depression. She had to leave you because she knew that she would only bring you misfortune and sadness if she stayed. She had no way of controlling what this disease would do to her emotions. After leaving you, your father was worried that your mother would do something stupid, so he went to your mother. After that, he realized that you were still on the street. When he went back to look for you, he could no longer find you."

After hearing the truth, Ava was like a statue. She was motionless, only feeling as though her breathing and heartbeat had stopped.

"Because your mother was so emotionally unstable, she signed the divorce papers with your father before leaving. Later, your mother moved to Y Country. Your father lost your mother and couldn't find you. That was why he left this place that had brought him so much sadness."

Madeline raised her hand and gently held Ava's slightly trembling hand. "Ava, your parents didn't have the courage to tell you this because they're worried that you might think they're lying to get you back, but these are the facts."

Ava bit her lip. She could not stop the tears that overflowed from her eyes, but she still laughed stubbornly. "Maddie, how do you know this is true? What if they're lying to you?"

Upon hearing this, Madeline smiled slightly. She knew that even though Ava was still arguing stubbornly, in her heart, Ava was willing to believe that this was the truth.

"Ava, there might not be ample time in the future, especially since so many things have happened these days. It's difficult to predict what will happen in the future. Therefore, we must cherish everything in front of us, especially those who truly love us."

Ava understood what Madeline wanted to convey, but at this moment, she just wanted to escape.

"Maddie, what's Danny's situation like now? I heard... I heard from that person just now that Dan bled a lot because he wanted to save me. Is his condition serious?"

"I'm going to visit Dan in a while, so don't worry. If something bad had happened to Dan, that person you mentioned just now would have already told you."

Ava knew that Madeline was deliberately teasing her and called Raegan that. However, if Raegan was sure that Daniel was fine, Ava was relieved.

"Maddie, y-you should go see Danny now. I want some time alone to think." It seemed that Ava wanted to get Madeline to leave.

Of course, Madeline understood how Ava was feeling right now. "Alright, I'll go over to take a look at Dan. Don't think too much. The most important thing for you right now is to recover."

Ava nodded seriously. "I know. I'll recover well and won't let the people who care about me worry about me anymore."

After hearing what Ava said, Madeline felt relieved. After packing up the thermos, Madeline went to visit Daniel. However, when she arrived at the door of Daniel's ward, she coincidentally saw Gina coming out of the ward.

Gina's face was heavy. When she saw Madeline coming, she stopped at the door and refused to let Madeline go in.

"If it weren't for you guys, Dan wouldn't have gotten hurt again! Stop bothering him. I get so annoyed when I see you," Gina said impatiently.

Madeline did not force her way inside when she saw Gina's attitude.

"You're right. A lot has happened these days, but you have to be clear that the reason why Dan is hurting so much is because of people with malevolent intentions. You should blame those criminals who are now in the police station and prison."

Gina understood what Madeline was saying. She was too embarrassed to quibble over anything anymore. After Madeline took a look inside Daniel's ward before leaving. If she wanted to know Daniel's situation, she had to take a more direct approach.

Ava was thinking about something all alone in the ward. After some time, she saw Madeline walking back, looking dejected.

"Maddie, what's wrong? Why did you come back so quickly and why do you have that look on your face? Is Danny..."

"I was stopped at the door and couldn't go in." Madeline had a helpless look on her face.

"What should we do? Does that mean we won't be able to find out Dan's condition now? Maddie, can't we go ask the nurse on duty?" Ava looked very worried and anxious.

Madeline shook her head helplessly. "How would the nurse tell us the patient's information? However..." She paused and looked into Ava's eyes. "However, you can go ask your dad. I heard he's Dan's doctor. Since Dan is your fiancé, it won't be considered revealing the patient's confidentiality if the future father-in-law is telling his daughter about his son-in-law's condition. Right, Ava?"

What Madeline wanted to express was too obvious. Ava was not stupid. Of course, she understood.

Just when Ava was staying silent, someone knocked gently on the door of the ward.

Madeline and Ava looked up at the same time and saw Neil in a white coat standing at the door hesitantly. There was a conflicted expression on his face. He was worried about Ava's reaction to his appearance, but at the same time, he was expecting Ava to let him in. Madeline glanced at the two people who were not speaking, smiled, and said, "Hello Dr. Long. Ava and I happened to be talking about you."

Upon hearing that, Neil's expression became more natural, and a smile appeared on his face. "Really? What were you talking about?" He walked in while asking, his eyes shifting to Ava's face from time to time.

When he saw the wounds on Ava's face, his heart ached, but he could not say anything to comfort Ava. It was as if he had lost the qualification to care about his daughter many years ago.

"Ava is worried about Dan's injury, so we wanted to find out about that from you," Madeline said while looking at Ava.

Ava looked into Madeline's eyes. She wanted to say something, but she pursed her lips and stopped herself.

Neil knew that Ava was worried about Daniel, so he did not hesitate and told her immediately, "Don't worry, Daniel only has some flesh wounds. But he lost a lot of blood and needs to replenish his blood to recover. However, everything else is fine, so you don't have to worry."

After getting a positive answer from Neil, Ava was completely relieved. However, when she heard that Daniel had lost a lot of blood, her heart was still a little uncomfortable.

"Ava, h-how do you feel? Do you feel any discomfort? If so, you must inform Da... I mean, the doctor." Neil seemed to have a slip of tongue. In his heart, he was longing for Ava to call him Dad. However, what disappointed him was that Ava did not say anything. She did not even look at him.

After Neil left, Madeline stayed in the ward with Ava for half an hour. She only left after Ava lay down to rest. After she walked out of the ward, she saw Neil and Raegan waiting at the door. They wanted to take care of Ava, but they did not have the confidence or courage to face the child whom they had hurt in the past.

Madeline understood how Neil and Raegan were feeling. She smiled and comforted them, "I've told Ava what happened back then. Despite looking like she's reluctant to believe it, I can sense that she wants to reunite with you guys very badly."

"Really?" Neil and Raegan's excited voices almost startled Ava, who was in the ward.

They tried to control their emotions and looked expectantly at Madeline, hoping for her to give them a certain answer.

Madeline nodded with certainty. "It's true. I've been friends with her for so many years. I can vaguely guess what she's thinking in her heart."

Neil and Raegan looked at each other. They were desperate for that day to come sooner.

Madeline did not stay for too long. She grabbed the empty thermos and went to the parking lot to drive home. However, when she was about to get

in the car, she saw a familiar figure from the side mirror. She retracted her hand that was about to open the door and confidently turned to face the person who was silently approaching her.

"Were you the one who followed me to the hospital just now?"

Madeline was calm. She did not have the slightest hint of fear or avoidance.

"I heard that you've already left. Why did you suddenly come back? You're even following me now. Is there anything else you want to tell me?"

Madeline asked directly with a slight smile.

Hannah looked at the calm smile on Madeline's face, and her eyes sank. However, the next second, she also smiled.

"Yes, as you said, I'm very unwilling. Even if I really have to go back to St. Piaf, I have to say goodbye to my good 'sister' before leaving."

Hannah obviously had something to say. When she said the word 'sister', it sounded extremely ironic. Although Hannah's eyes and words were full of strong dissatisfaction and unwillingness, and perhaps she still wanted to take revenge on Madeline, Madeline's heart was inexplicably calm at this moment. There was not even the slightest fluctuation.

Madeline just smiled and nodded. "Well then, do you want to go to a nearby café to sit down and properly bade farewell?"

"No, I'm in a hurry. I don't have time to chat with you," Hannah's tone sounded very unfriendly, and she was still as arrogant as ever.

"Well, since that's the case, then say what you want to say here." Madeline was also very straightforward.

Hannah frowned. She seemed to be bothered by Madeline's calmness, but the next second, she suddenly smiled as if she was relieved.

"I really envy you." Hannah's eyes showed an envious look. "Your family loves you so much, especially the people you love. They love you so much too."

Hearing Hannah's words, Madeline's heart was somehow moved.

"Eveline, in your eyes, I'm pathetic, right? I did that with Mr. Whitman because I believed I was infallible, but it was actually just a trap set by others. What's even more ridiculous is that I lied to myself for so long and refused to accept the reality. Heh," Hannah chuckled bitterly to herself.

"After I found out the truth about being fooled, I tried to feign madness and pretended to lose my memory to stay at your house. No matter what, I wasn't convinced that I would lose just like this."

"Then why did you suddenly decide to leave?" Madeline asked curiously.

"It's because I feel like a clown." Hannah smiled bitterly and walked in front of Madeline. The previous jealousy and hatred in her eyes were gone, leaving only a trace of envy.

"If I continue to stay in your house, I'll just be inviting humiliation upon myself. Plus, I finally understand that I can't force a relationship after seeing how Mr. Whitman treats you."

Suddenly, Madeline felt sorry for the girl in front of her when she saw the serious expression on Hannah's face. However, everyone had to choose their own paths. Luckily, Hannah had an epiphany.

"What are your plans now? Are you going back to St. Piaf?" Madeline asked with a friendly smile.

"Yes, I bought a ticket for this afternoon."

"Have a safe journey and arrive safely." Madeline expressed her well wishes, but she still had some questions in her heart. "So you just want to tell me these after following me for so long?"

After she said that, Hannah was quiet for two seconds. Then, she said, "No, I also came here to thank you."

"Thank me?" Madeline was confused. However, she seemed to understand what Hannah was trying to say from her relieved tone.

"Thank you for helping me see myself clearly. If I could've gotten rid of my stubborn opinions earlier, I wouldn't have made myself look so much like a fool. Now that I think about it, I was indeed ridiculous. However, I only think

I was ridiculous. I don't wish to seek revenge or fight back. I'm treating this as a kind of growth," Hannah explained calmly, word by word.

"So, Eveline, thank you. I'll never make a fool of myself again in the days to come."

After saying this, Hannah curled her lips into an intriguing smile before turning around decisively. After turning around and taking two steps, she looked back at Madeline who was standing there.

"There's one more thing I forgot to say. I wish you and Mr. Whitman a long and happy life."

After giving this last blessing, Hannah walked forward freely and did not look back.

Madeline looked at Hannah's back, which was gradually disappearing. She did not forget to reply, "Thank you..."

On the way back, Madeline still found it a little weird. How did Hannah suddenly have an epiphany?

Something must have happened. A person who hated her to the bone was suddenly relieved and unaffected. Something must have enlightened her. Yet, Madeline could not think of the reason until she got home and heard Jeremy talk about what happened last night.

"Last night, she seemed to be watching the evening news in the living room when we were eating in the dining room," Jeremy said as he recalled.

However, Madeline had no impression of it at all. She had been so tired these days that she would go days without noticing Hannah's existence.

"What was the news reporting at the time?" Madeline asked Jeremy, raising her clear and watery eyes.

Jeremy raised his hand to put it around Madeline's shoulder. He told her what he knew, "It was about Ava's kidnapping and how the police went to save her."

"Really?" Madeline was surprised.

She did not expect the media to report this so quickly. She had not had the time to pay attention to the news on the internet since yesterday.

"So, she saw that and had a sudden change of heart?" Madeline guessed Hannah's mood at the time and recalled the words she said in the parking lot.

"You can't force a relationship."

Jeremy shook his head. "Perhaps. Forget about her. Linnie, why don't we call Lily?"

"Alright, I miss Lily too." Madeline smiled and leaned against Jeremy's shoulder.

As she watched Jeremy take out his mobile phone and video called Fabian, Madeline could not help but wonder if Hannah was touched because the news talked about how Daniel had protected Ava at such a dangerous moment. Maybe it was the scene where Jeremy turned back and carried her that finally made Hannah realize that her obsession was just a joke. Anyway, no matter what it was, she finally figured it out.

Soon, the notification sound of the video call being accepted pulled Madeline's thoughts back. She saw Lillian's cute little face on the screen at a glance. Although Lillian still could not say anything else, she could still say 'Mommy' and 'Daddy'.

Despite being separated by the screen, Madeline and Jeremy were still glad.

"Lily, how are you doing recently? Do you want to come home to see Mommy, Daddy, and your brothers?" Madeline asked with a gentle smile.

Lillian blinked her big watery eyes. When she was about to tell Madeline what she was thinking by gesturing, Fabian suddenly took away the phone. The screen was occupied by Fabian's cool-looking and handsome face.

"Lily's condition is not stable yet. She won't be returning to Glendale for the time being."

Fabian gave a very decisive answer, and his tone also sounded unfriendly. However, Madeline and Jeremy were used to Fabian's attitude by now. Of

course, Madeline and Jeremy also understood that it was not that Fabian had a problem with them, but instead, he had grown.

The young master who used to be cynical had now become calmer and steadier.

That was why Madeline and Jeremy were comfortable letting Lillian stay with Fabian.

"Fabian, how's Lily's health recently?" Jeremy asked earnestly. The thing that he was concerned about the most was his precious princess' health.

Fabian turned the camera of the phone around. Lillian's cute baby face appeared on the screen again. In the warmly decorated bedroom, the gentle warmth of the setting sun quietly scattered on Lillian's fair little face. Small dimples accentuated both sides of her small mouth. She looked very energetic.

Madeline believed this was all due to Fabian.

"Fabian, Lily looks great. Thank you for taking such good care of my daughter," Madeline thanked him.

"Don't thank me. I didn't do this all by myself. The person who spent the most effort and labor on Lily is my friend, but since he's a doctor, this is his responsibility. There's no need to thank him either."

Fabian's tone was very relaxed, but Madeline knew that Lily would not be in this current state if it were not for Fabian's meticulous care.

"What's wrong? Don't you miss your daughter? You haven't called in the past few days. Are you busy with something?" Fabian asked in a very light tone.

Madeline's eyes were on the little princess, and at the same time, she answered Fabian's question very seriously.

"Well, I encountered some troubling things recently, but they've been dealt with."

"Hmm, you're still busy as always, Madeline," Fabian suddenly called out Madeline's name so affectionately.

Madeline was shocked, but the way he addressed her made her recall the time she had just met Fabian. That cheerful and handsome young man would cynically call out her name, acting like a playboy. However, he was so steady now and doing everything seriously.

After they ended the video call, Madeline leaned against Jeremy's arms, feeling a little lost.

Of course, the family would be better off staying together, but it was better for Lillian to stay by Fabian's side right now.

F Country.

The small detached villa was shrouded in the soft golden glow of sunset.

Fabian was sitting on a reclining chair on the balcony of Lillian's small room. He held the latest report on Lillian's condition. After reading it, a long-lost smile appeared on his handsome face.

All indicators looked normal.

On one side, the caretaker who took care of Lillian was relieved after seeing the report. "Young Master Fabian, Miss Lily has been in good condition recently. You should rest assured now."

Fabian lifted the corners of his lips slightly. "Did Lily say she wanted to go to school?"

"Yes, even though she can't speak, from the pictures she drew, she does seem to want to go to school." The caretaker then took Lily's drawings to show Fabian.

After Fabian saw them, he got up to walk to Lillian.

Lillian was in front of the small desk and was drawing silently on a piece of paper with a pen in her hand. Perhaps she sensed Fabian approaching her, so she lifted her clear and lively big eyes curiously. When she saw Fabian, she smiled and reached out her hand to grab Fabian's hand before pointing at her drawing.

Feeling the warmth of Lillian's little hands, Fabian felt a wonderful warm current flowing comfortably through his heart. He looked at Lillian's drawing. The tall, thin man in the drawing was him.

In the drawing, he was holding Lily's hand and they were standing in front of a building that looked like a kindergarten. Fabian instantly understood what Lillian meant. She wanted to go to school.

It was true that she would feel bored if she was locked at home or in the hospital every day. Children of this age needed to play with their peers.

Fabian decided to send Lily to kindergarten, but he was still very worried. Lillian's body was not completely healthy. Plus, she could not speak, so he was afraid that Lily would be excluded and bullied in kindergarten. Even so, he could also see that Lily really wanted to go to school.

After careful consideration, Fabian did a lot of research and finally decided to send Lillian to the best aristocratic kindergarten closest to his workplace.

The second day after finishing the admission procedures, Fabian got up early in the morning and put a clean and simple dress on Lillian.

The little cutie stood in front of him obediently, staring at him earnestly with eyes as clear as water.

Fabian did not forget to remind her, "If you encounter anything that makes you unhappy in the kindergarten, you must tell me. If someone bullies you, you must tell the teacher first, then tell me. Do you understand?"

Lillian nodded obediently. She listened to all of Fabian's advice.

After breakfast, Fabian personally drove Lily to the kindergarten. There were a lot of people at the gate of the kindergarten since classes were about to start. Fabian held Lillian's hand tightly and walked to the gate of the school.

When he was about to send Lillian in, Fabian was inexplicably reluctant and worried. He was very worried.

Fabian squatted and reached out his hand to caress Lillian's little head.

"Lily, you have to listen to the teachers, okay?"

Lillian blinked her big eyes and nodded.

"What a good girl. You have to call me if there's anything."

After Fabian said that, Lillian nodded again.

"Sir, are you Lillian's parent?" A young woman's voice approached them.

Fabian lifted his head to look over, and the woman in front of him looked foreign. She was smiling gently at Fabian. Her face looked gentle. Her features were small and delicate, which made her look very pretty.

When the teacher saw Fabian lifting his head to look at her, a blush clearly appeared on her face.

"I think I saw your back view yesterday. I wanted to say hi but you were walking a little hurriedly. My last name is Charles, and I'm Lillian's teacher. Mr. Whitman, you can reach out to me if there are any issues in the future."

After hearing the teacher's introduction, Fabian furrowed his good-looking eyebrows and stood up. He seemed a little dissatisfied when he explained, "My last name is not Whitman, and I'm not Lillian's parent."

Fabian denied it very simply and decisively with a look of displeasure on his handsome face.

The teacher was stunned for a moment, but she quickly reacted and continued to put on a sweet, friendly smile. "I'm so sorry, I thought you were Lillian's..."

"I'm Lillian's guardian. If anything happens to Lillian at school, notify me immediately," Fabian said and handed over his business card.

The teacher took the business card in her hand and glanced at it carefully.

Fabian turned back and stroked Lillian's little head. "Lily, go in with the teacher. I'll come to pick you up after school."

Lillian lifted her baby face and blinked at Fabian.

Fabian lifted the corner of his lips and smiled softly. After that, he reached out and put a piece of candy in Lillian's palm. Then, he looked at the teacher seriously, "Miss Charles, I'll leave Lillian in your care, then."

The teacher quickly put away the business card and smiled before nodding at Fabian.

"Mr. Johnson, don't worry. I'm already aware of Lillian's situation. I'll take good care of her," The teacher promised with a smile.

"Thank you," Fabian thanked her, then turned around and left without saying anything more.

Lillian looked back at Fabian's back and followed Miss Charles into the kindergarten gate.

As Fabian was driving away, his gaze stayed on the gates of the kindergarten for a few seconds before leaving.

Lillian had not gone to school for a long time. Now that she was back in an environment where there were many of her peers learning and playing together, she seemed to have perked up.

The teacher named Miss Charles arranged for Lillian to sit next to a little boy and specially instructed the little boy to take good care of his new classmate. The little boy looked at Lillian's cute baby face and nodded. Seeing that the classmates were very friendly to Lillian, the new student, Miss Charles went back to the office without worries.

Fabian returned to the office and turned on his phone to find that someone had added him.

When he saw that it was Miss Charles from just now, Fabian quickly accepted the request and asked, "Miss Charles, did something happen to Lily?"

However, Fabian did not receive a reply even after the message was sent out for some time.

He was a little anxious, so he immediately called Miss Charles. However, no one answered.

About half an hour later, Fabian was almost at the gate of the kindergarten. Only then did he receive a reply from the teacher.

"Mr Johnson, Lillian is fine. Please don't worry. I added you so that it'd be convenient to contact you for any follow-ups."

After seeing this news, Fabian's worried heart immediately calmed down. He raised his deep eyes and looked at the gate of the kindergarten not far ahead. His heart trembled inexplicably.

What was happening to him?

When did he start feeling so protective over that little child?

Perhaps it was from the first time he held Lillian, or perhaps after Lana's and Yorick's death, this little child became his only obsession. No matter what, Fabian knew no one could replace Lillian's existence in his life.

Fabian headed back to his office, but his eyes would keep glancing at the time.

Kindergarteners finished school earlier, and he could not miss the time to pick up Lillian.

During lunchtime, Fabian received a message from Miss Charles. She sent him a video of Lillian eating lunch. She also sent him a picture of Lillian taking an afternoon nap. Fabian's gaze turned softer after looking at the photos of Lillian on the screen.

Today was the first day of school for Lillian. When Fabian went to pick her up from school, he brought over the toys and a little cake that he bought for her.

Miss Charles held Lillian's hand and handed her to Fabian. Then, Fabian handed the little cake he bought to Miss Charles before thanking her.

Miss Charles was a little embarrassed, but she took the cake anyway and waved goodbye to Lillian. Lillian smiled and waved goodbye to the teacher.

After getting in the car, Fabian's eyes glanced in the rearview mirror from time to time.

"Lily, are you happy that you got to go to school today?"

Lillian nodded.

Fabian asked again, "Did any of your classmates bully you?"

Lillian shook her head, and there was a pure smile on her little face.

Fabian breathed a sigh of relief.

For the next few days, Fabian picked up and dropped off Lillian on time every day. For the rest of the time, he was either in the company or he was taking Lillian to the hospital for regular check-ups. He would only go to these few locations. He rarely indulged in entertainment or attended gatherings.

His best friend was making fun of him, saying that he did not have a girlfriend yet but seemed to be tied down already. That was the truth, but Fabian was happy with this.

He had promised Madeline and himself that he would take care of Lillian with all his heart in his life. He would take care of her until the day she became a slender and elegant young woman. On that day, he would no longer need to suppress his feelings. Until this day came, he would always be her Fab, and he would only be a big brother to her.

Fabian's mind inexplicably wandered until a familiar tug came from the corner of his clothes. He looked back and lowered his eyes. He saw Lillian smiling slightly and pointing to the cute picture book in front of her with the other hand.

Fabian understood and immediately bought Lillian a set of books.

"What else do you want, Lily? Tell me."

Lillian shook her head and pointed at her stomach.

"Are you hungry?"

Lillian nodded, telling Fabian that she was hungry.

When Fabian was holding her hand to walk to a burger shop, Lillian suddenly pointed at one side excitedly. Her little mouth made soft murmurs. Before Fabian could see what Lillian was pointing at, he heard a woman's greeting.

"Lillian? Mr. Johnson, what a coincidence. I didn't expect to run into you here."

Fabian finally saw the person clearly. It seemed that Lillian had spotted her teacher. He then vaguely remembered that the teacher's name was Julie. There was a female friend next to Julia who was about the same age as her.

"Hello, Miss Charles," Fabian greeted politely and humbly.

"Hello, Mr. Johnson. Are you shopping with Lily?"

Fabian nodded softly. "Are you shopping as well?"

"Yeah, it's the weekend, so I came to shop with my friend..."

"Well, I won't disturb you anymore. Lily is hungry, so I'll bring her to eat." Fabian seemed to not have the patience to listen to Julie. He picked Lillian up to leave.

Julia did not mind. She smiled and nodded before waving to Lily. "See you tomorrow, Lily. "

Lillian waved her hand obediently too.

When the woman next to Julie saw Fabian carrying Lillian into the burger shop in front, she said, "He's so handsome. He looks so young, but I didn't expect him to have a daughter who's so grown."

After listening to her friend's exclamation, Julie smiled happily. "That little girl is not Mr. Johnson's daughter."

"Not his daughter?" The friend was surprised. "But it looks like this handsome guy is very concerned about this little girl."

"He's her guardian, so of course, he's concerned about the child in his care," Julie explained, and her words sounded very reasonable. She looked at Fabian's back as he entered the burger shop, a smile appearing on the corners of her lips. "Mr. Johnson is so loving and patient with children. I'm pretty sure he'll love his own children even more when he has them in the future."

It was the weekend, so Fabian spent the day out with Lillian.

It was not until dusk that Lillian felt a little sleepy. Fabian carefully carried Lillian who had started to doze off and got into the car.

After returning home, Fabian carried Lillian to the bedroom to sleep. Looking at her innocent sleeping face, Fabian's heart was extremely satisfied and at ease.

He went back to his room to take a shower, dealt with some work, and finally called his only best friend F Country, Evan, to discuss Lillian's health.

When he was about to hang up, Evan could not help but gossip, "Say, Young Master Johnson, have you noticed a problem?"

"What problem?" Fabian asked casually while walking toward Lillian's bedroom. He looked at the time and figured that Lillian should be waking up soon.

"Fabian, you are an adult. You're handsome and rich. You're excellent in every aspect, but you've never had a girlfriend. You don't like sweet girls or mature ladies. Instead, you're always revolving around Lily. Is it because you're not straight?"

Evan expressed his concerns, but at the same time, he did not forget to remind Fabian solemnly, "Fabian, listen to me. Don't ever have any ideas about me. I'm as straight as they come."

When Fabian heard this, he was not mad. Instead, he laughed. He coincidentally arrived at Lillian's room. When he saw the little cutie who had just woken up from her sleep and was still groggy, his gaze softened. He said, "Don't worry, I'm not interested in you. I already have someone in my heart."

On the other end of the line, Evan seemed to have made a new discovery when he heard this. "What? You have someone in your heart? Do you already have a girlfriend? Who? Tell me..."

Beep!

Before Evan could finish, Fabian hung up the phone. Evan could not stop the curiosity in his heart and called Fabian back. However, Fabian did not answer. Instead, he texted Evan back saying that Evan would naturally find out when the time was right.

Young Master Johnson, who was so cynical in the past, was now speaking to him with such an earnest tone that Evan felt that he would not be able to

get to the bottom of this. Although he was very curious and cared about his good friend, he should respect Fabian's decision.

In the next week, Fabian sent Lillian to kindergarten as usual. Not long after he went back to work, he received a message from Miss Charles. Miss Charles reported to Fabian about Lillian's situation in the classroom as always. Fabian also politely expressed his gratitude every time he saw the updates.

When Julie saw Fabian's reply, the smile on her face would widen.

After school, Fabian picked up Lillian right away. Perhaps it was because of Lillian's physical condition that the school took more care of her.

At night.

Fabian held Lillian's half-finished DIY work and did the finishing touches seriously. After completing it, Fabian sat next to Lillian's bed for a while. He did not know when he fell asleep, but when he woke up the next day, he found that he had fallen asleep next to Lillian's bed.

When he saw the caretaker who took care of Lillian come into the room, Fabian got up with a little embarrassment.

The caretaker did not find it strange to see this scene. Everyone in this room knew that Fabian, the elder brother, had always been fond of his little sister, Lillian. In truth, Fabian was just a little worried because he did not know whether he had affected Lillian with the way he slept. However, it seemed that the little girl slept well.

Fabian still sent Lillian to kindergarten as usual.

After returning to the company, he received news from Julie again. However, this time, Julie's tone seemed anxious.

[Mr. Johnson, please come over quickly. Lillian beat someone up.]

When he saw this message, Fabian left the conference room where the regular meeting was taking place without hesitation. He called Julie, but no one answered. Fabian's heart was panicking, and his mind was occupied with the statement 'Lillian beat someone up'.

How could Lily, such a docile and well-behaved child, hit someone?

Fabian did not want to believe it, but after he arrived at the school, Julie told him with certainty that Lillian had indeed beaten someone up. The one who was beaten into tears was a little boy.

The little boy stood beside his father and cried, "Daddy, she hit me, boo-hoo. It hurts. My hand hurts..."

The little boy stretched out his right hand while crying. There was indeed a large red spot on the back of his chubby hand.

Fabian looked at the boy's hand and frowned slightly, but his eyes quickly fell back to Lillian.

"Lily..." Fabian squatted down and gently caressed Lillian's cheek. "What's wrong with you? Why did you hit your classmate, huh? I know that you're an extremely good girl and you wouldn't simply beat someone up. Did something happen and that's why you hit him? If yes, just nod and tell me."

Fabian's attitude was very gentle and patient. Julie, who was watching on the side, was a little moved. However, the little boy's father was not happy. "Hey, what are you saying as a father? Are you saying your daughter beat my son up because he was the one who caused trouble first? Even if my son did something, your daughter's the one who beat him up. The one who takes action first is the one in the wrong! Hurry up and ask your daughter to apologize to my son. Otherwise, I won't let this rest."

Fabian's eyes turned dark. He slowly got up to face the overbearing man who looked like a parvenu.

"Mr. Johnson." Julie quickly walked next to Fabian. She was worried that Fabian would start fighting with this man, so she stopped him. "Mr. Johnson, please calm down. "

Fabian lowered his eyes to look at Lillian, who looked miserable. Then, he lifted his cold eyes to look at the aggressive man.

"Firstly, I'm not her father, so I don't know what fathers think. Secondly, it's wrong to hit someone, but if your son was the one who provoked Lily and that caused her to strike first, I won't let this matter rest either."

Fabian's sharp eyes and determined tone made the little boy's father feel a hint of chill, but when he remembered that it was his son who was beaten up, confidence surged within him once more.

"You're so strange, pretty boy. Since you're not the father of this little thing, what are you doing here? Why are you so righteous now that the little thing has beaten my son up?" The man rolled up his sleeves, looking arrogant and domineering.

"Say, Miss Charles, I spent so much money to send my son to school here, and is this how you take care of him? Now that my son was beaten by this little thing, you must expel her immediately. Otherwise, I'll even report you!"

"What did you say? Who are you calling a little thing? Say it again if you have the galls." Fabian's heart was already ignited by this man, but at this moment, his gaze was like a cold arrow. The man was instantly flustered.

"Miss Charles, don't worry. I won't let you lose your job because of this. There should be surveillance cameras in the classroom, right? Get the surveillance footage right now. We'll see exactly what happened."

Of course, Julie did not think this man could threaten her job. However, Fabian's way of defending her made her heart beat faster involuntarily.

"Yes, there are surveillance cameras. I'll get the footage right away." Julie immediately walked to the door.

Seeing this, the man looked a little impatient. "Why should we get the surveillance footage? The facts are in front of us. So many children here saw it with their own eyes. Children won't lie."

He said and pointed to the silent Lillian. "What's going on with your child? She's not apologizing after she beat someone up. Do you think just because you're a girl that we guys have to accommodate you? If you apologize to my son now, I won't pursue this any further."

He urged impatiently and began to mumble.

"Who gave birth to this strange thing? She hasn't said a word in such a long time. It's like she's mute."

The man's last sentence obviously offended Fabian.

At this time, the man's son suddenly replied loudly, "Dad, she is mute. She can't speak!"

The man did not have the slightest empathy. Instead, he laughed out loud. "Oh, she's actually a mute girl!"

Fabian suddenly stretched out his hand and grabbed the man's collar, his eyes piercing the man like an icpick. The man shuddered with fright. Just as he was about to ask Fabian what he wanted to do, he received a heavy blow to his face.

"Ouch!" The man screamed in pain.

When he was about to get out of Fabian's grip, Fabian suddenly pulled the man in front of him. "Do you know what you're talking about? You're an adult, but you don't have any sympathy and love. You're here making fun of a child who can't talk because of illness. Are you a man?"

"I don't think there's any need to check the surveillance footage at all. With a parent like you, of course, your child would be a nightmare as well."

"You!"

"Apologize to the kid right now!" Fabian ordered angrily.

Julie, who hurried back, heard Fabian's angry voice when she was at the door. She quickened her pace and ran in, only to see Fabian throw the man to the ground angrily.

The man lost his footing and fell to the ground. He tumbled backward.

"Daddy, Daddy!" The little boy hurriedly ran to his father.

Meanwhile, Fabian came to Lillian's side, reached out, and caressed her cute little head to comfort her.

"Don't be afraid, Lily. I'm here. I'll never let anyone bully you."

With Fabian by his side, Lillian would never be afraid. Although she was still a very young girl, she had never been afraid of such villains even when they bullied her. Even when she faced the she-devil Lana and was thrown into the pool, she never once begged Lana to spare her. It could be said that

she had completely inherited Madeline's genes. Even in the face of criticism and accusations, she was silent because she could not speak. Even so, her eyes were bright and confident

Seeing this, Julie immediately went to mediate.

"Mr. Johnson, how could you..."

"Yes, I hit someone, but it's because he deserves it."

Fabian's expression never changed. His sharp eyes fell on Julie's face as he asked, "Did you get the footage?"

"Yes, please go to the office to check," Julie said and glanced at the man who got up from the ground. "Mr. Martinez, are you alright?"

"Am I alright? Do you think I'm alright? Both the child and the adult go around beating people up. Just you wait, I'll make you pay the price!" The man threatened angrily. "Why should we even watch the surveillance footage? I don't want to watch it. I want this mute to apologize to my son now, and you, pretty boy, I..."

"If you don't want the other side of your face to swell as well, come watch the surveillance with me. If Lily was the one who bullied your son, I'll let you do whatever you want to me. However, if the footage proves that your son was the one who provoked Lily, I'll hit the other side of your face until it swells."

After Fabian finished talking, he picked Lillian up and walked toward the door.

The man was mad but was cowering a little. However, he could not let himself lose his dignity in front of the children. Hence, he barged angrily behind Fabian to watch the footage in the office.

When they saw the surveillance footage, the man felt a scorching pain in the cheek where he was punched by Fabian. The footage was very clear, but there was also sound. The screen clearly showed the scene of the little boy blocking Lillian's way while annoying her.

He would touch Lillian's coloring pencils and also pull Lillian's hair. What was even worse was that he wanted to grab Lillian's hand, but at this

moment, Lillian, who was always docile, was enraged. Hence, she pushed the little boy's hand away. The little boy might not have expected Lillian to have such a big reaction, so he fell to the floor. His hand did not swell because Lillian hit him. He just accidentally knocked it on the edge of the table when he fell.

The incident's details were made clear at once.

The coldness in Fabian's eyes was even more intense now. He tried his best to control the anger and evil tendencies in his heart. Then, he walked to the little boy who did not dare to speak anymore.

"Since you're a child, I won't do anything to you. However, if you're smart, you should immediately say sorry to Lillian and promise that you won't get close to her anymore. Otherwise, I'll make sure that your hand will get even more swollen and painful than it is right now."

"You're threatening my son, you pretty boy! You..."

"I never waste my breath threatening anyone. Listen up, I'm warning him," Fabian interrupted the man coolly. Right now, his terrifying gaze was telling the man that he was not just saying those words.

"Whoever bullies Lily will be going against me. I'll make the life of anyone who goes against me a living hell."

Looking at Fabian's sullen eyes, the man immediately admitted defeat.

"You punk, this is all your fault! Hurry up and apologize to her!" the man scolded his son who was standing beside him and pushed his son in front of Lillian. "Hurry up and apologize!"

The man was scared, let alone the man's son.

"I... I'm sorry, Lillian." The man's son apologized tremblingly, not having the courage to look directly at Lillian.

Seeing this, the man immediately smiled flatteringly. "Look, my son has apologized. Are you satisfied?"

Fabian raised his eyes coldly. "Do you think this is enough? Do you think you're not at fault at all?"

"Uhm..."

"Parents are the best teachers for children. You, as his father, have an inescapable responsibility for how your son turned out."

"Yes, yes," the man answered repeatedly. He did not dare to talk back to Fabian at all. "You're right. I, as the father, have a great responsibility."

He submissively looked at Fabian with a smiling face that looked even uglier than a crying face. "Little girl, it's my fault. I didn't choose my words wisely. If I upset you with what I said, please don't take it to heart. I'm sorry, little girl."

After hearing the man's apology, Fabian's cold eyes glanced past the man. When he looked at Lillian's little face, his gaze turned warm and bright.

"Lily, what do you think? Do you accept their apologies?" Fabian's soft tone at the moment was completely different from the previous one.

An envious look overflowed from Julie's eyes uncontrollably. She had never seen a guy being so loving and patient to a little child. This was something very rare.

Just as Fabian expected, Lillian nodded quickly. She accepted the apologies. She was a very sensible and obedient girl. If she was not provoked, how could she have flipped her lid?

When the father and son saw Lillian nodding, they breathed a sigh of relief.

"Well, since this little girl has accepted our apologies, this matter is settled. I still have something to do, so I'll beheading out first. You brat, don't make trouble for me, or else I'll spank you until you can't sit down."

After the man viciously warned his son, he raised his head and smiled awkwardly at Fabian. He wanted to flee.

"Wait!" Fabian stopped the man.

The man stopped in his tracks. He could not stop himself from breaking out in a cold sweat. He turned his head and looked at Fabian with some trepidation. "What else can I help you with, sir?"

"Have you forgotten about your threats to Miss Charles just now?"

"Apologize to Miss Charles," Fabian reminded the man.

The man was stunned for a moment, but in order to avoid being beaten again, he quickly apologized to Julie. "Miss Charles, I'm so sorry. It's because of my poor discipline that my son..."

"It's okay, Mr. Martinez. You don't have to apologize."

"I should." The man was afraid to cross Fabian again.

After he apologized, he did not feel so flustered anymore. When he saw that Fabian was not speaking, the man did not waste any time and fled quickly. However, as soon as the man left, he clutched his face and ran to the nearest police station to report that someone had beaten him.

On the other hand, Fabian took Lillian's hand and sent her back to the classroom. The boy who made trouble did not dare to approach Lillian again, let alone touch her.

On the way back, Julie sent Fabian to the door of the kindergarten and thanked him.

"Thank you for speaking up for me just now, Mr. Johnson."

Fabian did not take it to heart, but when he saw Julie expressing her gratitude, he spoke calmly. "It's nothing. You don't need to thank me, Miss Charles. I still need to trouble you to take care of Lily on weekdays. If anything happens to Lily, I'll need you to tell me as soon as possible."

Julie nodded with a smile. "Mr. Johnson, don't worry. I'll pay more attention to Lily."

"Thanks."

After Fabian thanked her, he was about to leave. However, when he turned around, he saw the man whom he punched just now angrily walking toward him with two policemen. The man quickened his pace when he saw that Fabian seemed to be leaving and pointed to Fabian before telling the police beside him.

"Officers, it's this pretty boy. This pretty boy was the one who hit me just now. Look at my face. It's swollen now! You must arrest him!"

When Fabian saw this, he tugged the corner of his thin lips somewhat amusingly and stood there with a calm expression. Meanwhile, Julie frowned. She did not expect the man who had acted like a yes-man just earlier to report the incident to the police.

After watching the surveillance footage, they could conclude that it was indeed the little boy's fault. However, it was also a fact that Fabian hit the man. Thinking of this, Julie could not help but be a little worried about Fabian.

The two police officers walked up to Fabian and asked seriously, "Did you beat this gentleman just now?"

Fabian glanced at the man indifferently from the corners of his eyes, then admitted very frankly, "That's right. I hit him just now."

The man became even more arrogant after he heard Fabian admitting it. "Officers, you heard him. He admitted it! He's the one who hit me, so arrest him now!"

There was a wicked smile on the corners of the man's mouth, and he cast a smug look at Fabian as if to say, 'How dare you offend me? I'll make you pay!'

However, Fabian was not bothered.

The policeman looked at Fabian seriously and asked, "What's your name?"

"Fabian Johnson."

"Fabian Johnson?"

The two police officers looked at each other and felt that the name was a little familiar. Then, they seemed to have suddenly thought of something.

"Who are Yorick Johnson and Lana Johnson to you?"

'Yorick and Lana Johnson?'

Both the man and Julie were stunned when they heard those names. Almost everyone had heard of those two names in F Country.

Yorick used to be the big boss of a big group. He had power and authority, but it was later discovered that Yorick was engaged in illegal business.

Meanwhile, Lana was a woman who was notorious in F Country. She was unruly and self-willed, so she would cause a lot of trouble as she had Yorick backing her. Lana did a lot of bad things like snatching boyfriends and forcefully taking away the possessions of others. In the end, it was said that she was met with a tragic end. However, how would these two people be connected with Fabian?

Julie's heart started to race, while the man who made the report started to feel anxious and panic. He had heard about how ferocious Yorick was. If Fabian was related to Yorick, would it mean that he had court disaster to himself?

Fabian was not happy with the police's question. "This is my personal matter, so what are you trying to do by asking me about unrelated matters?"

The look in the officers' eyes changed. "Well then, Mr. Johnson. Please come back to the station with us to assist in the investigation."

The police were pretty courteous.

Fabian glanced at the man who was arrogant just now and nodded calmly.

"Alright," he replied indifferently. He then turned his head to look at Julie, who appeared worried. "Miss Charles, go back to the classroom and please look after Lily. Thank you."

Julie was worried and wanted to say something, but she felt like she had no right to. Hence, she just nodded. "Mr. Johnson, you can rest assured that I'll take care of every student in the class."

Fabian lightly pulled the corner of his lips into a smile. He did not say anything else. Then, he took the lead and walked forward. The two policemen followed behind Fabian, then they called the man along.

"Mr. Martinez, please follow us to the police station again to assist in the investigation."

The man cowered as he glanced at Fabian's tall and lean figure. Suddenly, he wanted to back out of this. "W-Why don't we just forget this?"

The man wanted to give up on pursuing the matter. He felt that he had provoked someone he should not have.

Fabian and the police stopped at the same time.

"Mr. Martinez, what do you mean by that?" a policeman asked.

The man touched his red and swollen cheeks in pain, then glanced at Fabian cowardly. "I don't want to sue him anymore. I'll just treat what happened today as bad luck I'm still rushing to go to work, so that's all for today."

When he said that, the man turned around and wanted to flee.

"Wait, Mr. Martinez." A policeman stopped the man and told him with a stern look, "Mr. Martinez, you made a report to the police just now and we've already lodged it. If you just leave and decide to forget about it now, then you'll be hindering the police from doing our jobs. You'll be suspected of lodging a false report as well. If that's the case, the police can counter-charge you. Are you sure you want to do this?"

After hearing that, the man was scared again.

"W-Well then, I'll go to the police station with you."

Hearing this, Fabian glanced at the uncertain man. A meaningful chuckle escaped his lips.

When the man saw the smile on Fabian's face, he felt a little nervous.

After arriving at the police station, Fabian was taken to the interrogation room alone for questioning while the man waited in the lobby outside.

While waiting, he saw a policeman come out of the interrogation room. He was talking to other colleagues.

"Fabian has a lot of history. His brother is Yorick Johnson, the one who used to work for both the dark and lawful sides. It turns out the person who was brought into the interrogation room just now is Yorick's younger brother."

When the man heard this conversation, he felt even more nervous.

Yorick, who had connections in both the lawful and dark sides was a ruthless character in F Country at that time. As Yorick's younger brother,

Fabian should also have a lot of means up his sleeves. The man was really panicking now. He felt as if he had dug a grave for himself. He quickly got up and rushed in front of the two officers.

"Officers, can I take back my report? I don't want to sue Fabian anymore! I fell by myself. It has nothing to do with him."

The police immediately knew what he was afraid of. "Mr. Martinez, you don't have to be so nervous. The police will take action according to the evidence. If Fabian really hit you, then we'll punish him according to the law. It doesn't matter who his siblings are. The law will still protect your lawful rights. Plus, you don't have to worry too much. That Yorick person was executed a long time ago."

"Yes, he's dead, b-but this person is Yorick's brother and I've offended him this time. I won't be able to have a day of peace anymore. My son won't be able to study in peace in the kindergarten either!"

The police frowned suspiciously. "Did Fabian hit your son?"

"It... It's even more serious than hitting my son," the man said without exaggeration.

The two police officers looked at each other and felt that it was necessary to pay attention to this matter. After a while, the police officer who interrogated Fabian came out of the interrogation room with a solemn expression.

The man named Mr. Martinez rushed over at once to ask about the situation. "Officer, how did it go? Are you going to arrest Fabian and lock him up?"

The police officer looked at the man with a serious look in his eyes. "Fabian readily admitted from the beginning that he hit you, and he didn't try to explain it, but..."

The man's heart twitched. "But what?"

"Mr. Martinez, Fabian is going to sue you and your son now."

"What?! He wants to counter-sue me and my son?"

"That's right." The policeman nodded affirmatively. "And he also summoned his lawyer who'll be arriving soon."

"Mr. Martinez, did your son bully a little girl named Lillian Whitman? And did you verbally attack the little girl named Lillian?"

"Uhm, I..." the man stammered, his eyes darting around. "No! How could I, an adult, attack a child? It didn't happen. That person is just speaking nonsense. His family members are not good people in the first place, so he's definitely not a good person either. Officer, please don't be deceived by Johnson. I didn't bully a little girl..."

As soon as the man finished speaking, a cry sounded from the entrance of the police station.

"Officer!" Julie went straight to the police officer who was handling the case. After introducing herself, she directly handed over the USB flash drive in her hand to him. "Officer, I think this will help you handle Mr. Johnson's case."

The policeman took the USB flash drive provided by Julie and asked his other colleagues to plug it in.

When Martinez saw this scene, he started sweating. He could probably guess what was in the USB flash drive. Sure enough, as he expected, the content on the drive was the surveillance footage at the time of the conflict. The details of the matter were all consistent with what Fabian said. On the contrary, Martinez was full of lies. The only thing he did not lie about was that Fabian really did hit him. Judging from the dialogue and actions displayed on the surveillance footage, this man was very hateful. Even so, Fabian did hit him, so they would still need to follow the legal proceedings for this matter.

It did not take long for Fabian's lawyer to arrive. After learning about all the circumstances, the lawyer did not waste his breath and asked Martinez a question. He asked whether he wanted to turn this into something huge or whether he wanted to resolve this.

After Martinez knew about Fabian's background, he had wanted to give up. Now that someone was giving him a way out, of course, he chose to resolve

this. It was fine if he got into trouble, but he did not want to ruin his son's future.

After Fabian came out of the interrogation room, to his surprise, he saw Julie. He finally knew why this was solved so smoothly after he heard from his lawyer. It was all thanks to the surveillance footage Julie provided.

Out of politeness and gratitude, Fabian politely extended an invitation to her. "Miss Charles, if you're free tonight, I'd like to invite you to my house for a light meal. In addition to this, I also want to thank you for taking care of Lily on normal days. What do you think?"

When Julie heard what Fabian said, she was surprised but did not show it. On the surface, she maintained her gentle and reserved demeanor. "I'm free tonight, but would that be too much trouble?"

"No. As long as you feel okay with it, it's fine."

"Alright then." Julie nodded and agreed. Deep down, she was already planning what gifts she would bring to Fabian's house.

Then, it was evening and kindergarten was over. Fabian arrived at the kindergarten's entrance right on time. Julie took Lillian by her hand and brought her to Fabian.

"Mr. Johnson, I have other business to attend to. Here, you can take Lily back first."

"Okay, go ahead," Fabian did not say much. He just turned around and walked away with Lillian in his hand.

Julie was at a loss as she looked at Fabian's back, but the work in front of her was fighting for her attention. She sent the children back to their parents in an orderly manner before she returned to the office to deal with other matters. By the time she was almost done with work, the sky had already darkened a little.

When she picked up her phone and looked at it, she saw that Fabian had not sent her any messages. She was starting to feel depressed when her phone vibrated. Julie thought it was Fabian calling to ask if she was coming over, but it was just a call from home.

Julie picked up her bag and then took her time to answer her phone.
"Mom, I won't be home for dinner tonight. Don't wait up for me."

After she finished speaking, she hung up the phone and walked toward the entrance of the kindergarten.

The sky was getting darker, but the thought of going to Fabian's house for dinner afterward brought a smile back to Julie's face. She walked happily to the entrance and was about to hail a cab when a black car drove up and stopped in front of her.

Julie's eyes widened in surprise as she looked closer. Her pupils reflected Fabian's handsome and gentle face.

"Get in, Miss Charles"

"Mr. Johnson?" Julie was really surprised.

She would never have guessed that Fabian would be waiting for her at the kindergarten entrance after work. She felt her heartbeat getting faster as an indescribable joy overcame her.

Julie did not reject his offer and quickly got into the car before turning around to greet Lillian, who was sitting in the backseat. Lillian looked at Julie and smiled sweetly. She seemed like she was in a good mood, and her cute dimples by the corners of her mouth appeared.

Fabian then started the car. Julie sat quietly, maintaining her ladylike impression. She knew she had a little crush on Fabian, the man who seemed both warm and cool. It was really hard for her to resist him. Besides that, she also felt that Fabian was treating her well.

There was just one thing that Julie was curious about. She wondered what the relationship between Lillian and Fabian was. They did not seem to be related, but Fabian seemed to care a lot about Lillian and took good care of her to the point where they seemed closer than some families.

Nevertheless, she knew she would have plenty of opportunities to ask about it during dinner that night.

While they were driving, Fabian did not say a word, so Julie kept silent.

When the car stopped, Julie silently sighed in relief as she had felt as if she were about to die from suffocation. When she got out of the car, Julie took the initiative and tried to carry Lillian out of the car, but Fabian was one step faster.

"Allow me." Fabian very decisively stepped forward and carefully carried Lillian into his arms as he led the way. "Please follow me, Miss Charles..."

Julie froze for a moment before catching up behind him. She looked around the place and noticed that although the house Fabian lived in was not a particularly luxurious or grand villa, it still seemed like an expensive place.

Fabian's background popped up in Julie's mind. His brother, Yorick, used to be a powerful big shot in F Country, but it was later found out that he was involved in illegal business dealings. Since Fabian was still unscathed and he was doing his own business now in F Country, it would mean that he had no involvement in Yorick's businesses. Therefore, she did not have to worry about being friends with Fabian.

After Julie convinced herself, she smiled again.

When she walked into the foyer, the servant politely came over to greet her. "Young Master Fabian, Young Lady Lillian, welcome home. And you must be Miss Charles. Please, come in..."

Julie did not expect that Fabian would inform his servants that she would be coming. When she felt seen by him, her heart rejoiced.

"Thank you for inviting me," Julie spoke in a soft voice and followed Fabian into the house.

"Oh, my... Young Master Fabian's finally back. I heard that you were bringing an esteemed guest for dinner tonight. Is it a coincidence that I'm here tonight?"

When Julie heard the man's playful banter, she paused for a while and looked over before seeing a vaguely familiar handsome face. Evan looked at Julie at the same time and felt that she looked familiar but did not say anything.

"Miss Charles, this is my friend, Evan."

Julie nodded, quickly smiled, and greeted him, "Hello. I'm Lily's homeroom teacher. My name is Julie."

"Julie?" Evan repeated her name. "That's a nice name."

When Evan said that, he walked toward Fabian. "So, is this the beautiful and great woman you've been talking our ears off about?"

Julie had sharp ears, when she heard what Evan said, she could not help but blush.

"Nonsense. Miss Charles is our guest and she's Lily's teacher. Behave yourself."

It was as if Fabian neither denied it nor confirmed it.

Julie's heart started thumping wildly. To get her mind off that, she naturally went up to Lillian.

Lillian was quite fond of Teacher Julie. Although she did not speak, her body language showed that she liked Teacher Julie a lot

The servants had started preparing dinner before Fabian returned, so the food was almost ready.

Julie took Lillian to wash her hands before they came to the dining room. In the dining room, they saw Evan seated at the table but Fabian was nowhere to be seen.

"Fab's in his room changing his clothes," Evan suddenly said as if he saw through what she was thinking about.

Julie looked at Evan again. He seemed really familiar, but she just could not put her finger on where she had seen him before.

At that moment, Fabian came down after changing his clothes. He looked a little informal and relaxed with casual clothes, but that seemed to have made him look even more attractive to Julie.

The vibe during dinner was very good and the food was scrumptious. Everything was going well, but there was one thing that annoyed Julie.

Tonight was supposed to be an unexpectedly rare opportunity. She thought she would be able to have dinner with Fabian alone and have a kid tag

along at most, but she did not expect that Fabian's friend would also be here.

His presence seemed to have ruined the vibes, but Julie did not show her annoyance on her face. She kept a decent, gentle smile on her face throughout the meal and tried to look after Lillian to show them her good traits, but she had no chance to do so. From the time they started eating, Fabian had been taking care of Lillian himself all the way to the end of the meal. All Lillian had to do was eat like a good girl. Fabian put all the food on her plate, peeled every prawn for her, and even deboned all the fish for her. He was incredibly thoughtful toward Lillian during the entire meal.

When Julie saw all of that, she wished she could do all of that for her. She felt that a guy who acted like Fabian was incredibly rare. As a kindergarten teacher, she would sometimes run out of patience for the kids, yet Fabian seemed to be able to do everything.

After the meal was over, Fabian invited Julie to chat in the living room.

A servant brought in some nicely-cut fruits and dessert. Julie wanted to take this opportunity to talk to Lillian for a while, but Fabian picked her up and put Lillian by his side before putting Lillian's little fruit platter into her small hands.

Fabian looked at Lillian with warmth in his eye. "Here, Lily. Eat more fruits, okay? They're good for you."

Lillian was a good girl, nodding her little head and obediently eating the fruits as she was told.

"Lily's such a good girl," Julie smiled and complimented her. "Although Lily doesn't speak, I can tell that she's a very understanding girl. She's a bright and adorable little girl, which I think is all thanks to your meticulous care for her, Mr. Johnson."

After she said that, Evan teased Fabian before he even had the time to reply.

"I know, right? I think Fab cares more about Lily than her own parents do."

Fabian looked at Evan coldly. "Nonsense..."

Evan was used to Fabian's personality, so he just shrugged and smiled. "Ahem. What I mean is, Eveline and Jeremy have three children. Three children are a lot to take care of, so it's great that Lily's staying with you. Besides, staying with you was also Lily's choice."

When Fabian heard what Evan said, he could not help but recall the image of the time when Madeline and Jeremy were about to take Lillian home. At that time, Madeline and Jeremy decided that they were going to take Lillian back to Glendale, but Lillian walked firmly toward him before they left.

When Fabian thought about that, a sweet smile appeared on his face.

He lifted his hand and gently stroked Lillian's little head before turning his face sideways to look at Julie.

"Miss Charles, I must thank you for today. Thank you for taking care of Lily in school every day. Even though she can't speak, she understands everything that's going on and told me that she likes you very much, Miss Charles."

When Julie heard what he said, she blushed a little from embarrassment.

"You're too nice, Mr. Johnson. Lily's my student. It's my responsibility to take care of her. It's only my job, Besides, Lily's so cute, which is a plus."

When Julie said that, she smiled at Lillian before continuing seriously. "As for today's matter, I was just explaining the whole thing to the police as it was."

"Even so, I still want to thank you for everything."

"Oh Mr. Johnson, it's my pleasure. I..."

"Can one of you guys just accept the compliment?" Evan interrupted them. When he was about to say something, Julie's phone rang.

"I need to take this call. Please go ahead without me." Julie got up and headed outside.

Fabian nodded gently and put all his attention back on Lillian.

"Lily, is the blueberry sweet?"

Lillian blinked her big eyes and reached out to grab a small blueberry before bringing it to Fabian's mouth. Fabian understood and smiled as he lowered his head to eat the blueberry she offered. For some reason, the sour blueberry tasted sweet. Only Fabian knew why it tasted sweet.

Evan looked at the heartwarming scene and plopped down beside Fabian.

"Fab, are you telling me that Miss Charles isn't the woman you have a crush on?"

"Stop speculating. How could I possibly like Lily's teacher?" Fabian denied it with a serious look on his face.

"Well, that's a pity. Otherwise, it would've been a win-win situation and your business would've gone to the next level." Evan had a look of pity on his face, but it soon turned into a relieved smile. "But judging from your personality, it probably wouldn't make much of a difference for you."

Fabian did not understand what he meant but seemed to have caught onto something.

"You know Julie?" Fabian asked.

Evan shook his head. "Not really, but I've met her father twice and I've seen her at a business party previously."

"Is that so?" Fabian asked casually. He did not seem interested in wanting to know more about Julie as he looked at Lillian and casually responded to what Evan said.

"Julie's father is a real estate tycoon in F Country. I'm sure you would've heard of him before. The Charles only has one precious daughter, and Mr. Charles has always hoped that his daughter would inherit his business. But Julie seems to be only interested in her current job. He wanted to give everything to her on a silver platter, yet the rich daughter didn't want it. Instead, she took up the tireless and hard job as a kindergarten teacher. Well, I guess in some ways, that's kind of noble of her?"

"Perhaps so, but if you look at it from another perspective, she's only doing what she's passionate about. That's not exactly a noble virtue." Fabian shot him down coldly.

Evan looked at Fabian's complex look and sighed helplessly. "I have to say, Mr. Johnson, You are quite the unfeeling man."

Evan subconsciously glanced in the direction that Julie had just left as though he was worried that Julie was going to hear what he was about to say.

As it happened, Julie came back in after her phone call the moment he turned his head. She had just taken two steps in from the foyer when she heard Evan.

"Fab, just because you've never dated before, are you so dense that you can't even tell that someone is interested in you? Aren't you worried that she'll misunderstand this whole thing if you invite her to your place for dinner like this?"

When Julie heard what he said, she just stood in the same spot awkwardly.

It seemed that Fabian's best friend could tell that she had a crush on Fabian.

Her ears got hot, and her heartbeat went wild again. She wanted to pretend that she had not heard anything and go back in, but she was looking forward to hearing what Fabian would say. She knew that Fabian might also have some feelings for her. Otherwise, why did he invite her to his house for dinner?

As she was thinking apprehensively, Julie finally heard Fabian's reply.

"Yes, I've never dated anyone before but I'm not a fool. Of course, I know that she's interested in me. That's why I made it a point to invite her here for this dinner tonight."

When Evan heard what Fabian said, he frowned in confusion. On the other hand, Julie was there blushing, waiting with anticipation for what Fabian was going to say next. It was clear to her now. Fabian knew that she liked him and had deliberately invited her here for dinner with the knowledge of that.

As for what that meant? It was obvious.

Julie felt nervous, and her heart stirred like never before.

She pricked up her ears and continued to listen to what Fabian was going to say next eagerly. However, she never expected that Fabian's subsequent words would end up extinguishing all her expectations and fantasies in an instant

"I invited her here so that I wouldn't owe her any favors."

Julie's excited heart skipped a beat. 'He did all this because he didn't want to owe me any favors?'

She looked at Fabian in astonishment. She could not and did not want to imagine what Fabian would say next. To prevent that from happening, Julie adjusted the smile on her face.

"Mr. Johnson..." She walked over and interrupted Fabian and Evan's conversation.

When Fabian heard her voice, he looked at Evan before looking at Julie.

"Miss Charles, are you done with your phone call?"

"Mhm. It was a call from home. My parents were wondering when I was coming home." Julie smiled faintly and sat by the side before extending her hand toward Lillian. "Lily, can you come over here? I'd like to tell you something."

Lillian looked at Fabian, who understood what Lillian meant. He put her down. Lillian slowly walked up to Julie, who picked her up in a friendly and gentle manner before seating Lillian beside her.

Julie gently took Lillian's hand and complimented, "Lily, you're such a lovely and understanding child. I hope that you'll grow up healthy and happy and that you'll be able to speak one day."

Lillian understood what Julie meant and she nodded to indicate that she acknowledged Julie's words.

"Mr. Johnson, I hope this isn't presumptuous of me, but what exactly is Lily's relationship to you?"

"Lily is my friend's child," Fabian answered matter-of-factly and frankly. "And Lily's staying with me for now because of her health."

"I see..." Julie finally cleared the suspicions in her mind.

"So Lily doesn't talk because..."

Toward the end of her sentence, Julie vaguely saw a subtle glint of light flash across Fabian's eyes for a moment.

Fabian would never forget that the reason Lillian could not speak was because of his sister, Lana.

When Evan saw that Fabian was in a daze and became quiet, he spoke up and explained on behalf of Fabian, "It's because Lily had a scare once and fell ill because of it. She got better after, but the only people Lily can talk to at the moment are her parents."

After hearing Evan's explanation, Julie's eyes softened. She looked at Lillian with even more heartbroken eyes. "I see. It's really unfortunate that such a thing happened to Lily. I hope things get better and she'll get better soon."

"Thank you for your well wishes," Fabian returned the thanks. "By the way, there's a question I've been meaning to ask you if it's okay."

Julie lifted her pretty eyes curiously to meet Fabian's gaze. "What's your question, Mr. Johnson?"

"Do you have a boyfriend?"

Julie was stunned by his question.

What Fabian said previously still rang in her ears. She did not understand what Fabian meant with his question, but the initial expectation she had surged within her heart once more.

"I don't have a boyfriend," Julie did not hesitate to answer, and her heart started beating faster unconsciously.

"That's really great. I really wouldn't want to miss out on such an excellent, gentle, and kind-hearted woman like you, Miss Charles."

Julie was really confused.

Evan also looked at Fabian with surprise.

What was going on?

Did Fab not just say that he was not interested in Julie? Why was he saying this now?

Just as they were wondering, Julie and Evan heard Fabian continue.

"Evan, I've done my best as your friend. I already invited such a good woman here for you. The rest is up to you."

"..."

"If it weren't for me having no intentions to date now, I really wouldn't have been willing to introduce such a great woman to you."

When Fabian was done talking, Julie and Evan then understood. Julie never expected this to be the reason why Fabian asked if she had a boyfriend.

Evan glanced at Fabian and noticed that he was looking at him meaningfully while smiling. He soon understood the meaning conveyed through Fabian's gaze and smiled accommodatingly.

"Fab, seriously. Even if I were really interested in Miss Charles, you can't be so direct. Aren't you afraid that Miss Charles might feel embarrassed?"

Hearing that, Fabian had a sudden realization. "I'm sorry, Miss Charles. I just wanted you two to get to know each other. I didn't think too much of it."

Julie's fantasy was turned to dust the second time, but she still maintained a decent smile. "It's alright, but I really didn't know that you had such intentions. Is that why you also specially invited Mr. Evan for dinner here tonight?"

Fabian nodded. "Yes, I had specially asked Evan to come over."

Julie did not know what to say. She initially thought that Fabian had specially invited her here for dinner, but the truth was...

"Miss Charles, you granted me a favor today. I wish to repay your kindness as soon as possible."

"I... I understand your intentions. In fact, you don't have to worry about it. I just did what a citizen should do. Not to mention, like you, I have no plans to date at present. I wish to focus on my career," Julie said this and stood up.

"Well, my mother called me just now asking me to come home early. I think it's about time I take my leave. Thank you for your hospitality tonight."

Julie obviously could not stay any longer. Since Fabian had made his intentions clear, she did not want to remain either.

"I'll ask the driver to send you back. If you require any help in the future, come to me. I owe you a favor and will certainly pay it back."

Julie could sense that Fabian really did not want to be indebted to anyone, so she stopped shirking it off. "Well, if I do need help in the future, I'll be sure to look for you, Mr. Johnson. I'll go first now. Goodbye. See you tomorrow, Lillian."

Lillian raised her small hand and waved to Julie, waving goodbye.

Julie immediately left. After turning around, she could no longer keep the smile on her face.

After hearing the sound of the car as it drove away, Evan spoke freely without hiding, "I say, Young Master Fabian, you invited me to a seafood dinner tonight but it turns out it was to take advantage of me?"

Evan was very direct. He had never heat about the bush with Fabian.

Fabian did not deny it either, but he could not accept Evan's choice of words. "She's undoubtedly a very fine lady, so much better than those libertine women you keep by your side. Not to mention, it's such a coincidence that you two have met before. You even know her father. Maybe you two really are fated."

Evan raised his eyebrow. "Young Master Fabian, you still wish to matchmake me? But you have to get this clear. The one she's interested in is you."

"I don't even know her that well. At most, she might fancy my appearance," Fabian said coldly. He then called a servant to bring Lillian back to the room to take a bath first.

Evan did not really agree with Fabian's perspective. "It's only because of one's attraction to another's appearance, that one would then feel inclined

to learn more about the other on a personal level. Fab, you're still too naive. It seems that I have to teach you more about this."

"Do these things need to be taught?" Fabian smiled meaningfully. "If the person you're facing is a woman you like, then there are some things that you can only learn by yourself. There can't be such dense men in the world, no?"

Listening to Fabian's speech, Evan found it unexpected. Fabian was not wrong, there were no such dense men in this world. Love was an instinct.

After that night, Fabian still sent Lillian to school as usual, and Julie would also still inform him of Lillian's performance in class. Fabian would thank Julie politely every time he read her message.

Julie could obviously notice that Fabian was being courteous because he was trying to maintain a distance from her. That was because only strangers would thank each other like this.

During lunch break that day, after Julie had taken videos of Lillian's entire day and sent them to Fabian, she returned to her office with anticipation. She waited for Fabian's reply. After a long time, however, Fabian still did not respond.

One of the female colleagues in the office saw the listless expression on Julie's face and could not help poke her nose into things. "Julie, why do you look so distracted. Could it be that you and your boyfriend are arguing?"

Julie suddenly returned to her senses. She looked at her colleague in confusion. "Boyfriend? I don't have a boyfriend. Why would you ask that?"

"I knew you wouldn't admit it." Another young female colleague had also come over.

Julie was confused when she heard that. "I really don't have a boyfriend."

"You're still denying it. We all saw you that night." The look on Julie's colleague was gossipy yet certain.

Julie was even more confused. "That night? Which night are you talking about?"

"We saw you get into Mr. Johnson's car that night."

"No wonder you're taking so much care of Lillian, Julie. You and Mr. Johnson are dating!"

"Mr. Johnson is really handsome! When he came to go through the admission procedures for Lillian the last time, he was so gentle and polite. If I didn't have a boyfriend, I would've fallen for him."

"But our Julie is not bad at all, and your family background is pretty good. Whoever marries our Julie will be the one who's blessed."

The two female colleagues were going back and forth between themselves. Julie did not have the opportunity to interject and explain. When she heard all this, she suddenly did not want to explain anything at all.

Yes, the background of her family, the Charles, was one of the best in F Country. Her own qualifications were also excellent. She had always been surrounded by suitors ever since she was a child. Among the people who pursued her, there were many with family backgrounds that matched hers, and they also had outstanding looks. She had also thought about falling in love before, but in the end, she got bored after a few days.

When she met Fabian this time, however, she was completely attracted to his invisible charm. Fabian's patience and thoughtfulness toward Lillian had fascinated her.

However, Fabian was not interested in her. He even introduced her to another man. This left Julie feeling depressed for a while. Until today, she could not figure out just what about her was not enough.

"Julie, it's normal for couples to quarrel with each other. Don't be too depressed. If he has tried coaxing you, then let it be. Don't hold onto your anger against your man all the time," another female colleague reminded her kindly.

Julie was stunned for a whole two seconds before she nodded along.

"No, we didn't argue." She smiled faintly and said somewhat embarrassedly.

Right at this moment, her phone rang with a notification, indicating that she had gotten a message. Julie picked up the phone with anticipation and looked closely. It was indeed a message from Fabian, but after opening it, she only saw four utterly familiar words.

[Thank you, Miss Charles]

Julie felt so disappointed, but she could not make any requests whatsoever. She was not Fabian's girlfriend.

Julie put down the phone and was about to keep herself occupied to divert her attention when she suddenly recalled what Evan said to Fabian that night. "So, is this the beautiful and great woman you've been talking our ears off about?"

Julie was shocked, then she thought of something.

It turned out that Fabian already had someone he was crushing on?

Julie clenched her hands unwillingly, and when break time was almost over, she went back to the classroom to wake Lillian.

Lillian quite liked Julie, and Julie also took care of Lillian with much patience and love. It was just that Julie had her own motives this time.

She brought Lillian to the bathroom. After Lillian was done using the toilet, she carefully helped Lillian wash her hands. During this process, she kept talking to Lillian unconsciously or unintentionally. Lillian would also nod and shake her head while smiling to respond to Julie.

When Julie felt that it was the right time, she asked the question she wanted to ask the most, "Lillian, do you usually live with Fab? What I mean is apart from the servants and the driver, is it only you and Fab?"

Lillian blinked her beautiful big eyes and nodded.

This answer also inexplicably relieved Julie.

"Then, when Fab takes care of you and brings you out to play, does he bring someone else along?"

In response to this question, Lillian shook her head quickly in denial.

"Are you very sure? Fab doesn't play with anyone else?"

Lillian nodded firmly, indicating that Fabian usually only played with her.

Julie smiled gently and continued testing. "Why are you so sure? Is it because Fab always brings you with him no matter where he goes?"

Lillian's final answer was another nod.

Julie was somewhat happy because apart from work, Fabian spent the rest of his time with Lillian. However, Evan's words that night made it clear that Fabian had someone else in mind.

Could it be a secret crush?

This was the most plausible answer that Julie received from Lillian's responses. The smile on her face faded a little, and finally, she just asked, "Lillian, does Fab have a female friend he likes? Have you met Fab's female friends?"

After asking this question, Julie felt that she was asking very profound questions.

How could a child who was still in kindergarten understand the definition of boyfriend and girlfriend?

Sure enough, Lillian looked at Julie with a curious look as if asking what girlfriend meant.

Julie felt that there was no need for her to ask any more questions. Just then, the bell signaling the end of break rang.

"Lillian, class is about to start soon. Hurry back to your class."

Lillian nodded and walked to her class obediently.

While watching her little figure, thoughts bubbled in Julie's mind. She really wanted to know who Fabian had in his heart. Fabian still showed up on time when school was over for Lillian. Of course, he would see Julie every time.

As always, Julie sent Lillian to Fabian with a friendly and gentle smile. Fabian politely expressed his thank as usual to maintain the distance between them.

In the long run, Fabian felt that Julie would get a clear idea about what he meant.

However, for Julie, it was a good thing to be able to see Fabian every day. She still had expectations for her relationship with Fabian. She did not want to miss out on a guy who was so outstanding in every aspect.

In the days that followed, Julie finally got a rare opportunity. The kindergarten had organized a spring outing to bring the children to the nearby suburbs to play. Of course, they also needed to be accompanied by a guardian.

Julie could probably guess that Fabian would come to take care of Lillian no matter how busy he was. Sure enough, Julie received an affirmative reply from Fabian, saying that he would go along as Lillian's guardian. With that, Julie began looking forward to the day of the spring outing.

One day before the spring outing, Julie made a special trip to the spa and bought herself some new clothes. She hoped to make herself look even more stunning the next day.

On the other hand, Fabian was also preparing for the spring outing the next day. It was just that what he was preparing was related to Lillian.

In the living room, Fabian took Lillian's small school bag and carefully put some spare medicine into it. The lady who was in charge of taking care of Lillian on weekdays came over with a fruit plate.

"Mr. Johnson, have you really decided to let Miss Lillian take part in the kindergarten outing tomorrow? Miss Lillian is still within the recovery stage. You must pay attention to her safety and hygiene when you go out in the suburbs with her," she reminded kindly.

A light arc graced Fabian's lips before a rare smile appeared on his handsome face.

"Maybe Lillian is also looking forward to going out to play with the children," said Fabian as he looked at Lillian's little face softly. "Lillian, am I right? Are you looking forward to tomorrow's outing?"

Lillian, who was munching on fruits, lifted her big, innocent eyes. She did not speak, nor could she speak. However, Fabian could already fully understand what she wanted to express through her eyes. He smiled gently, reached out, and touched Lillian's little head.

Late that night, Fabian tossed and turned. He could not sleep. He got up and drank some iced water. When he walked past Lillian's room, he hesitated for a while at the door before finally opening the door and going in.

The night was deep, and the tranquil moonlight fell quietly on Lillian's clean, sleeping face through the sheer curtains. Fabian reached out and caressed Lillian's cheek, his brows softening.

"Lillian, I'll do anything as long as you're happy."

After making the promise, Fabian left Lillian's room quietly.

The next day.

Fabian woke up early in the morning and put the piping hot lunch the chef just made into a thermal lunch box. Then, he thoroughly checked all of the things that Lillian had to bring today. When he was almost done getting ready, Lillian came downstairs after washing up.

Half an hour later, Fabian brought Lillian to kindergarten.

When they arrived, a bunch of parents and their kids had already gathered at the entrance. Everyone seemed to be in high spirits.

Fabian led Lillian inside. On the other hand, Julie had long spotted the person she had been waiting all morning for amidst the crowd.

"Mr. Johnson." Julie waved at Fabian.

Fabian looked up and saw Julie walk toward him with a smile on her face.

"Miss Charles, it must be difficult for you to take care of so many children today."

"Well, it's my job. Mr. Johnson, this is the itinerary for the spring outing today, as well as some things to take note of. Please read through it first and feel free to ask me if you have any questions," said Julie while she handed him a card.

Julie looked down and smiled at Lillian. "Good morning, Lily. I hope you'll be able to make some wonderful memories today."

Lillian understood what Julie said and obediently nodded her head in response.

When Julie saw Fabian look at the card intently, she thought that there was no point in staying here any longer. She had listened to some talks recently and thought that their philosophies made a lot of sense. Sometimes, dealing with men may require some tact. One of the techniques was playing hard to get. Perhaps she was too enthusiastic before, so now she had to keep her distance and keep her cool.

After a short while, the supervisors of each class got on the school bus with the children.

Fabian held Lillian's hand and got on the bus as well. Julie was the last to get on. She deliberately glanced toward Fabian and Lillian before sitting down in her designated seat.

Not long after, the school bus departed and moved steadily at a moderate speed. As the supervisor for her class, Julie had the responsibility to liven up the atmosphere on the bus. However, she could not carry out any physical activities on the bus, so she picked a few children to sing songs and whatnot.

Lillian could not speak, so she just sat quietly beside Fabian. She could only listen to them sing their class song and clap her little hands at the end to show her participation. This made Fabian feel uncomfortable. He wished that Lillian could talk, sing happily with the other kids, and express her thoughts freely.

Throughout the journey, Julie had been observing Fabian's every move from time to time. She noticed that Fabian was indeed especially caring toward Lillian. His patience made her fall for him even more, but there was one thing that concerned her.

The young mother sitting next to Fabian seemed to have been looking for opportunities to strike up a conversation with him. Moreover, Fabian's behavior toward her was not as cold as he usually was. e was even chatting with her.

When they reached their destination, Fabian was even kind enough to help the young mother carry her things. This moment caught Julie's eyes and made her feel uneasy.

At that moment, Julie's colleague came over.

"Julie, what's going on here?"

Only then did Julie come to her senses. She turned to see her female colleague looking in Fabian's direction with a puzzled look.

"Julie, isn't Mr. Johnson your boyfriend? Why is he chatting with another woman so attentively? Did both of you fight again?" the female colleague asked repeatedly out of curiosity.

Previously, she had never clarified that she and Fabian were not in a relationship, so it would be awkward for her to deny it now. Hence, she chose the same approach.

"It's nothing. Let's do our job first and talk later." Julie came up with an excuse and left.

The female colleague thought it would be inappropriate to question any further, so she turned around and went about her business. Although Julie said she was going to do her job, she still could not stop thinking about Fabian. After seeing Fabian chat happily with the young mother, Julie felt even more on edge.

Was it on purpose?

While Julie was making guesses, she suddenly thought of something. It seemed like the little boy's parents were divorced, which meant that the woman was a single mother.

Could this woman be the one Fabian had a crush on?

The thought of that made Julie even more agitated, and the plausibility of it started creeping into her mind.

On which day of bringing Lillian to school did he first meet the single mother?

Just when Julie was busy imagining things, she suddenly felt someone tugging on her clothes. Julie looked behind her and lowered her head. She was surprised to see Lillian. She subconsciously glanced at where Fabian was just now but realized that he was no longer there.

Julie immediately smiled and squatted in front of Lillian. "Lillian, what brings you here? Where did Fab go? Why isn't he with you?"

Lillian blinked her big clear eyes and handed Julie the box of tiramisu cupcakes in her hand before she stretched her adorable little fingers and pointed in a certain direction. Julie raised her head to look in the direction Lillian pointed at. She unexpectedly made eye contact with Fabian at first glance. Her heart started to beat fast, and she hurriedly averted her gaze to look at the tiramisu in her hands.

Did Fabian ask Lillian to send this over to her?

The feeling of hope that had been doused in Julie's heart just earlier seemed to have rekindled again at this moment. She looked up again to smile in Fabian's direction, then turned to smile gently at Lillian too.

"Thank you for sending the cake over, Lillian. Help me thank Fab as well. Have fun on today's outing. I've planned some games for everyone to play later. I hope you'll like it."

Lillian nodded, indicating that she understood. She then turned around and trotted toward Fabian.

Julie looked down at the tiramisu in her hand and got her confidence back. However, when she looked up again, she noticed that Fabian and Lillian were sitting on the picnic mat laid by the single mother with her son. They were chatting away happily again. It seemed like their conversation was never-ending.

Julie had known Fabian for some time, but she had never seen such a radiant smile on his face.

At that moment, the tiramisu in her hands no longer smelled good to Julie. She turned around to leave in discontent and saw other parents coming over with their children to gift her exquisite snacks and refreshments. Julie kept a decent smile and accepted the kind gestures of each and every one

of the parents and students. However, she was not in the mood to eat these at all.

After setting everything aside, she could not help but want to take another look at Fabian. However, she did not see Fabian after turning around this time. Instead, she saw the beautiful single mother who was walking toward her with her son. She brought her son along with her and walked up to Julie with a polite smile on her elegant face.

"Miss Charles, thank you for taking such good care of my son at school during the weekdays. This is a snack I made myself this morning. I hope you like it."

Julie glanced at what she handed over. It was a box of four mochi balls that looked very appetizing. Although Julie was not in the mood to accept it, she still showcased her signature smile.

"Why, how nice of you. Taking care of children is my job. There's no need for you to give me things to show your appreciation. As you can see, I already have so much here. I can't possibly finish it all. It's better if you share this box of mochi balls with others. I have to go prepare for the next activity now, so please excuse me."

Julie turned around after she was done talking. The young mother who got rejected did not think anything of it, but the little boy felt down. His teacher rejected their gift.

Did she not like him?

The little boy listlessly followed his mother back to their seat. Fabian was confused when he saw the untouched mochi balls in the woman's hands.

"Miss Charles didn't take it?"

"Too many people gave Miss Charles gifts as a token of appreciation. She said she can't finish all of them and didn't want these to go to waste, so she rejected them," the woman answered truthfully.

After noticing her son's long face, she comforted him. "Silly boy, don't be upset, Miss Charles just doesn't want the snacks I made to go to waste. Why don't you do what Miss Charles said and share these mochi balls with your friends? That'll make this box of mochi balls even more meaningful."

After hearing those words, the little boy's eyes instantly lit up.

"Okay!" The little guy nodded as he picked up the box of mochi balls and walked toward the other kids.

Lillian glanced at Fabian and happily followed along to deliver the mochi balls.

Fabian relaxed as he watched Lillian's tiny figure tenderly.

A few moments later, the two children came back happily one after the other. As they were about to sit down, they heard Julie calling everyone to gather around.

The first round of activities was hiking up a fairly easy trail along with their guardians. Climbing up a mountain trail was a must during outings. Not to mention, it could help train the kids' fitness and stamina.

Fabian took Lillian's health condition into account and had looked up the trail before coming. The trail was not rugged at all. There were flowers, plants, and even streams with small pink flowers flowing in its clear water. The environment looked nice, so going on a walk here would not be a bad idea. Even if Lillian could not walk anymore, he could still carry her.

After he made up his mind, Fabian carried Lillian's small school bag and joined the hiking team in an orderly manner.

Julie intentionally walked close to Lillian and talked to the kids around her from time to time. That way, she could talk to Lillian naturally without others finding it odd. She was also doing this in hopes that Fabian would talk to her, but throughout the entire journey, he only talked to Lillian and took no notice of Julie.

This caused Julie's confidence to suffer a huge blow. Eventually, she could not help but speak to Fabian.

"Mr. Johnson, do you hate me?" asked Julie as she strode forward to catch up to Fabian.

After hearing Julie's question, Fabian's expression did not change in the slightest. On the other hand, Lillian raised her head and was looking curiously at Julie with her bright eyes. However, children's minds were still

innocent. She only looked at Julie for a second before continuing to walk forward with small steps.

At this moment, Fabian started to talk, "Why do you ask, Miss Charles?"

Julie internally breathed a sigh of relief and smiled out of embarrassment as Fabian finally acknowledged her existence.

"It's nothing. I just feel like I've done something wrong to make you not want to talk to me."

"Miss Charles, you must be overthinking. You're Lily's teacher. I have nothing but respect for you. How could I feel hatred toward you?"

Fabian answered courteously, yet his answer sent a chill down her spine.

Nothing but respect?

She fell into a trance for a moment until she heard Fabian speak again.

"Plus, Lily likes you a lot. This morning, she even asked the home chef to make tiramisu to give to you. Miss Charles, did you not see it? There's a card inside the cake box with Lily's own writing on it."

Julie's legs suddenly felt weak. It turned out that the tiramisu had nothing to do with Fabian. It was just Lillian's token of appreciation. It was all just her imagination, after all. A surge of loneliness overwhelmed her heart as she could not help but slow down her footsteps.

When she came back to her senses, she realized that Fabian and Lillian were already way ahead of her. When they were almost at the halfway mark, many of them sat down near the pavilion to rest, eat, and drink to replenish their energy.

Julie saw Fabian and the beautiful single mother sitting next to each other again. They talked and laughed while taking care of their little ones.

Julie had lost her appetite. She took two sips of water and sat alone on a rock

The two female colleagues beside her noticed and could probably guess what was going on. After having a little discussion, they walked toward Fabian.

Fabian was feeding Lillian snacks when he noticed someone walking toward him. He looked up and saw the two teachers from other classes. The two female teachers walked up to Fabian and unintentionally glanced at the young single mother.

"Mr. Johnson, can we have a word with you?"

"Mr. Johnson, we're Julie's colleagues. There are some things we want to consult you about. We won't take up too much of your time."

After hearing their words, Fabian gently patted Lillian's head. "Lily, be good and eat your food. I'll be right back."

"Don't worry, Mr. Johnson. I'll watch over Lily." The single mother politely expressed that she would take care of Lily.

Fabian was rest assured and followed the two female teachers to the side.

"May I ask what is it that the two of you want to consult me about?" Fabian asked straight to the point.

The two female teachers looked at each other and put on straight faces.

"Mr. Johnson, although we're not in a position to comment on your relationship with Julie, nor do we know what happened between the two of you, arguments aside, Julie would be very upset to see you talk and laugh with someone of the opposite gender while you give her the cold shoulder."

A female teacher spoke while deliberately glancing over at the single mother.

"She's right, Mr. Johnson. No matter what happens between a couple, one shouldn't go to such lengths to torment their other half. Julie is a great woman. She comes from a good family, and most importantly, Julie cares a lot about you, Mr. Johnson."

"The other day, when you were taken away by the police right outside the kindergarten, Julie hurriedly went into the monitoring room to ask the people in charge for a copy of the surveillance footage of your argument with the parent. She didn't even have time to ask for leave before she ran out to provide proof of your innocence. She even got reprimanded by the

principal when she came back. Can't you see how much she cares about you?"

"Mr. Johnson, that's all we have to say. You'd better not let down such a nice girl."

After hearing what they had to say, Fabian understood what the two female teachers were trying to express. However, Fabian found it quite amusing.

Just as he was about to explain, Julie sprinted over in a panic.

"Miss Monet, Miss Lee, what are you and Mr. Johnson talking about?"

The two female teachers looked nervous when they saw Julie coming over. They became even more certain that Julie and Fabian were a couple in a lover's quarrel.

"It's nothing, Miss Charles. We'll head back now and leave you two to it. Between lovers, just say kind words to each other and it'll be over. Don't make such a huge fuss over things."

The two of them turned around and walked away before Julie even had the chance to ask what was going on. However, Julie could sort of make sense of the situation based on the words they said before leaving. Julie never thought that her colleagues would come and deal with Fabian themselves. Now that they were done, she was awkward from head to toe.

"I'm sorry. They must have misunderstood our relationship," Julie hurriedly apologized to Fabian.

Fabian smiled blandly. "It's okay, other people's misunderstandings don't matter to me. My job is to take good care of Lily. I don't care about anything else. Miss Charles, don't take it to heart. It's not a big deal to me either. Just clear the misunderstanding with your colleagues."

Fabian turned to leave as soon as he was done talking.

He expressed his intentions clearly and concisely. Although he said that it was no big deal, he still asked Julie to clear the misunderstanding about their relationship.

The man who previously had a conflict with Fabian at the kindergarten had eavesdropped on the entire conversation. He muttered to himself, "Pfft, no

wonder this Julie woman is so concerned about this pretty boy named Johnson. They're having an affair!"

After the short break, each class carried out some fun mini-games. The kids had a good time too. When it was over, the guardians accompanied the kids back the way they came from in a neat line.

Fabian sensed that Lillian was tired and carried her in his arms without thinking twice. Lillian exhaustedly leaned her little head on Fabian's shoulder.

"Lily, are you tired?" Fabian asked concernedly.

Lillian nodded gently,

"So, did you have fun today?"

Lillian still nodded her head.

"As long as you're happy, that's all I can ask for," Fabian said softly.

As soon as he stopped talking, the sound of Lillian's rapid and shallow breathing caught his ears.

His heart inexplicably skipped a beat. "Lily, what's wrong? Are you sick?"

After hearing Fabian's voice, Lillian blinked her eyes strenuously.

Fabian was able to notice the subtle change in Lillian's expression at a glance. After he was sure that Lillian was not feeling well, his muscles instantly tensed up.

"Lily, can you let me know where you're not feeling well?" Fabian asked nervously without even noticing that his footsteps had quickened.

Lillian lifted her little hand and placed it on her heart. The sight of that tugged at Fabian's heartstrings. He suspected that she was experiencing shortness of breath. He was disoriented for a moment, not knowing whether to hold the little one in his arms tighter.

Julie was walking not far behind Fabian. Her heart had been occupied with desolation and resentment ever since she had that conversation with him. She was starting to doubt herself despite being an excellent person who was outstanding in every way. However, she could not even attract that

man in the slightest. She did not know exactly what she was lacking, but she was even more curious to know the identity of the woman in Fabian's heart.

When Julie was upset and imagining things, she noticed from behind that Fabian seemed a little off.

He was not walking normally but running.

The path was not rugged, but it was still a mountain trail. However, he was running with Lillian in his arms!

Julie hurriedly chased after him.

"Mr. Johnson, Mr. Johnson!" she shouted while chasing him, causing the parents and students to look over out of curiosity.

It seemed that everyone had heard her except for Fabian.

"Mr. Johnson!"

Julie ran faster, and because of that, she did not notice the uneven rocks beneath her feet. She accidentally tripped over them.

"Ah!" Julie exclaimed as she fell heavily to the ground.

Her palms were injured by the fine gravel as she landed on her hands, which left wounds of varying sizes.

"Miss Charles!"

"Miss Charles, are you okay?"

"Julie, how did you fall?"

"Miss Charles..."

Parents, students, and teachers around Julie rushed over to help her up. They were all full of concern. However, in Julie's eyes, there was only Fabian, who continued running forward without even looking back. Julie had never felt so aggrieved, and her vision was instantly blurred by uncontrollable tears.

These clueless people thought that Julie was crying because of the painful fall, when in fact, she was crying because she was upset that Fabian was ignoring her.

Fabian was worried about Lillian's condition, so he rushed down to the foot of the mountain as fast as he could. He hailed a cab to head back immediately. Throughout the journey, all he could think about was Lillian. He could not even think straight about anything else.

After reaching the hospital Evan worked at, he did a check-up for her and found out that the discomfort was caused by her weakened immune system. At that moment, Fabian finally felt like he could breathe again.

His promise to Madeline and Jeremy to take good care of Lillian was one thing, but what was more important was how important Lillian was to him. The safety and health of this little girl were more important than his own.

After the check-up at the hospital, Fabian took Lillian home. After returning home, he ordered the servants to make some nutritious snacks while he carried Lillian back to the bedroom.

At this time, Lillian seemed to be tired. Her pure and big eyes blinked at Fabian. She gradually fell into a state of drowsiness.

"Lily, sleep if you're sleepy. When you wake up, I'll give you something delicious." Fabian's eyes were warm. It was as if he had endless patience.

Lillian seemed to have heard what Fabian said, and finally, she gently batted her thick eyelashes and fell asleep quietly.

As he was staring at Lillian's peaceful sleeping face, Fabian's heart seemed to have found a safe haven in an instant. It seemed that he also wanted such a quiet and peaceful life.

"Little cutie, sleep at ease. I'll always be with you," Fabian promised softly. He walked to the seat at one side and waited quietly.

At this time, he took out his mobile phone and found that there were many missed calls, most of which were from Julie. There were also a few unfamiliar numbers he had never seen before. However, he did not hear any of these calls. Fabian noticed that he had put his phone on silent unbeknownst to him. He did not think much about it, and he really should

have told Julie before leaving, but he was so worried about Lillian's health at the time that he could not think about anything else.

Fabian pressed the call back button, and the person on the other end of the phone picked up the call after it rang just a few times.

"Mr. Johnson!" Julie sounded very emotional. "Mr. Johnson, you finally called me back."

"I'm sorry, Miss Charles. I forgot to tell you before I left," Fabian apologized and then explained, "Lily was a little sick, so I took her to the hospital for a check-up. Since I was worried about Lily's condition, I didn't pay attention to my phone."

"Is Lily not feeling well? How is she now?" Julie asked with concern, "Did she feel unwell because of the hike today?"

"Don't worry, she's asleep now. She should just be tired. Don't worry too much, Miss Charles."

"It's good that Lily is fine." Julie let out a sigh of relief.

Only now did she learn that Fabian had run with Lillian in his arms at that time because Lillian was unwell. Hence, he hurried to the hospital with Lillian in his arms. He really cared about this kid very much.

After hanging up the phone, Julie sat on the hospital bed in a trance. As she looked at her hands that were covered with gauze and also at her right foot which could not move at will for the moment, her heart felt even more aggrieved. She fell and was injured because she wanted to remind Fabian to walk slowly and not run, but in the end, she did not receive his concern at all.

"Heh, Julie, what were you doing?" Julie asked herself in distress, but she could not get an answer in the end.

After two days off on the weekend, Fabian called Evan to come to the house to check on Lillian twice. After confirming that Lillian was okay, Fabian sent Lillian to the kindergarten with confidence on a new Monday morning.

After arriving at kindergarten, Fabian saw the other female teacher who had 'lectured' him that day.

Fabian thought Julie applied for leave, so he asked casually, "Is Miss Charles not here today?"

The female teacher was stunned and looked at Fabian in surprise, "Mr. Johnson, how could you ask such a thing?"

Fabian frowned slightly, "What do you mean?"

"Mr. Johnson, are you even Julie's boyfriend? Is this how a boyfriend should act? Don't you know that your girlfriend is in the hospital?"

Faced with the accusation from the female teacher, Fabian felt that he was implicated though innocent. He was bewildered. However, he was not in the mood to care so much.

Lillian seemed to be curious. She blinked as she looked at Fabian. It seemed that she had deep doubts about the word 'boyfriend' in her tiny head.

In the evening after school, Fabian showed up on time to pick up Lillian. The female teacher who replaced Julie in the morning brought Lillian over. She had a very disdainful look on her face.

"Mr. Johnson, you really are carefree. You still haven't visited your girlfriend, but you're so patient and careful with children. How can you not care about your girlfriend at all? Julie was hurt and got hospitalized because of you." The female teacher told Fabian again.

Fabian was confused. 'Julie being hospitalized because of me?'

He did not ask much, and he did not bother to explain his relationship with Julie either. He wanted to save some face for Julie, so he took Lillian away.

The female teacher was a little puzzled when she saw Fabian completely ignoring her, but she could not say anything else.

In the car, Fabian turned his head to look at Lillian, who was sitting in the backseat. He parted his lips softly.

"Lily, let's go to the hospital now."

Lillian blinked her shiny eyes and looked at Fabian. She seemed to be asking why they were going to the hospital.

Was she unwell again?

Fabian could tell what Lillian wanted to ask at a glance, and he smiled gently. "We're going to visit Miss Charles."

The doubts in her little head were immediately resolved. Lillian nodded, sat down obediently, turned her head, and glanced at the bouquet of powder blue baby's breath was on the seat. The powder blue baby's breath was her favorite flower. Lillian thought silently while looking up at the scenery outside the car window.

Before long, the car pulled into the parking lot of a hospital in the city center. Fabian took Lillian out of the car and took the bouquet as well as two boxes of gifts.

Before coming, Fabian had already learned about Julie's hospital ward.

As they approached the door, Fabian handed Lillian the bouquet. "Lily, give it to Miss Charles later."

Lillian nodded obediently. She lowered her eyes and looked at the flowers in her hand seriously.

Fabian took Lillian's little hand and walked to Julie's ward. He raised his hand to knock on the door and found that the door was open. Out of courtesy, Fabian knocked on the door anyway.

"Is anyone inside?"

After Fabian said that, there was movement in the bathroom. A well-dressed and graceful woman walked toward Fabian with a puzzled face.

"Who are you?"

Fabian figured that the woman in front of him was Julie's mother, so he introduced himself calmly, "Hello, I'm Mr. Johnson. I've brought a child from Miss Charles' class to visit her. I heard that she's hospitalized."

The woman immediately understood, and a kind smile appeared on her face.

"I see. How considerate of you. Please come in. Julie is in the bathroom now and will be out soon."

Fabian nodded. "Lily, come in..."

Lillian obediently followed Fabian into the ward just as Julie came out of the bathroom.

When Julie saw Fabian here, she almost could not believe her eyes. The tall good-looking figure and the handsome gentle face in her sight were all real.

Fabian also spotted Julie. He greeted her very politely and courteously, "Miss Charles, how are you feeling? I didn't know you were in the hospital. That's why I only came to see you now. My apologies."

Julie was stunned, not knowing what to say for a while. On the other hand, Julie's mother quickly replied, "You're too kind. It's already nice enough for you to come to visit Julie. What are you sorry for? Please sit down."

Julie's mother was very polite. Then, she bowed her head and asked Lillian kindly. "Little girl, you look so beautiful. What's your name?"

Lillian blinked her big clear eyes and glanced at Fabian. "Her name is Lillian."

"Lillian? That's a really special and nice name. Come sit down, good girl."

"Mr. Johnson, Lily, you should sit down first." Julie finally came back to her senses and greeted.

Lillian turned and walked toward Julie, passing the bouquet in her hand to Julie.

Seeing the bouquet that Lillian just handed to her, Julie's annoyed mood seemed to be relieved at once.

"Thank you, Lily," she thanked Lillian and took the bouquet.

Julie's mother finally felt relieved when she saw a smile on Julie's face. She had not seen her daughter smile since she got hospitalized.

"Julie, you should talk first. I'll go outside to buy something."

Julie also wanted to speak to Fabian alone, so she nodded. "Okay."

Fabian, Lillian, and Julie were soon left in the ward. Julie was also very puzzled by Fabian's sudden visit. At the same time, she also held a trace of expectation in her heart.

"Why did you suddenly come to the hospital to visit me, Mr. Johnson?"

"Originally, I wanted to prevent people from misunderstanding our relationship, so I didn't want to take this trip. But I heard that you were injured and got hospitalized because of me, so I thought I needed to come and visit you." Fabian's explanation was very straightforward. There were almost no subtleties at all.

The only hope that remained in Julie's heart was also disillusioned in an instant. Sure enough, she was overthinking again.

"Don't take it to heart, Mr. Johnson. I was injured because I didn't pay attention to where I was going and fell accidentally. It has nothing to do with you, Mr. Johnson."

"I have to apologize no matter what," Fabian apologized sincerely. "Where did you hurt yourself, Miss Charles? Is it serious?"

Julie retracted her hands when she heard the words. The wounds that were already healing somehow became more painful.

"It's okay, they're just flesh wounds. My mother came to take me home from the hospital today," Julie said while looking at Lillian, who was sitting quietly beside Fabian. "What about Lily? Is she okay?"

"Lily is fine. Since I'm taking care of her, I won't let anything happen to her again," Fabian promised.

His gentle gaze fell on Lillian's little face, and there seemed to be a very subtle and special light in his eyes. Julie's heart trembled inexplicably.

"You care so much about Lily, Mr. Johnson." Julie sighed softly.

"Lily is my only 'family' in this world," Fabian said softly.

Julie was a little taken aback. 'Family..?'

"By the way, there's one thing I hope you can do for me." Fabian asked for a favor.

Julie was very curious and thought it was related to Lillian. "What is it? Mr. Johnson, please tell me."

"I hope that when you go back to work, you'll explain to your colleagues that you and I are not dating."

Julie was stunned. She did not think that this was what Fabian wanted to ask of her.

She suddenly felt that she was too naive. She could feel that Fabian did not have any feelings for her, but she still had some unrealistic fantasies and expectations. She thought that this man would become interested in her. Despite the desolation in her heart, Julie remained indifferent and calm on the surface.

"I'm so sorry about this. My colleagues have misunderstood. Don't worry, Mr. Johnson. When I go back to work, I'll explain it to them."

"That's good." Fabian expressed his relief, then he reached out and held Lillian's little hand. "Lily, wave goodbye to Miss Charles. We're going home now."

Upon hearing this, Julie's heart sank again. She hoped that Fabian could stay longer, but she had no reason or status to ask Fabian to stay longer. Therefore, she smiled magnanimously at Lillian.

"Lily, thank you for coming to see me. Bye..."

Lillian nodded obediently with a grin. Then, she raised her little hand and waved to Julie.

Seeing Fabian's figure walking out of the ward, Julie leaned back on the bed weakly.

After a while, Julie's mother came back.

When she saw that Fabian and Lillian were gone, she asked casually, "Is the young man who came to see you just now the father of one of your students from your class? Look at that... He's a father at such a young age, so you should also find a boyfriend to start a family too. You don't want to

inherit the family business and insist on being a kindergarten teacher. All the people you encounter in that environment will be married, so will you ever meet new friends?"

Julie let out a listless laugh. "So what if I meet someone new? They may not like me."

When Julia's mother, Patty, heard this, she suddenly realized something. "Julie, do you have someone you like?"

Julie turned her head and did not answer.

Patty found it even more strange. Meanwhile, she noticed that her baby girl seemed to be in a bad mood again.

'Wasn't she laughing just now?'

After being discharged from the hospital, Julie rested at home for two more days before going back to work.

When she saw Lillian in the classroom, she could not help but think of Fabian.

Julie felt like she had really fallen in love with this man who did not love her back. During class, her mind started wandering, so she did not hold the textbook in her hand properly. It accidentally hit the head of the little boy who bullied Lillian last time.

The little boy burst into tears, and Julie hurried to comfort him. She thought this trivial matter would pass peacefully. She did not expect the father of the boy to start sneering at her when he sent the boy to school the next morning.

"Miss Charles, you're a teacher. You should serve as a model to others, so how could you avenge private wrongs in the school?"

As soon as the man said this, the parents around them who were sending their children to school looked over vigilantly. Some of them were even the parents of the students in Julie's class, so naturally, they were now paying attention after hearing what this man said.

Julie knew that she had accidentally hurt the little boy yesterday, but she did not understand what he meant by 'avenging private wrongs'.

"Mr. Martinez, I did accidentally hit your child yesterday, but what do you mean when you say that I'm avenging private wrongs?" Julie asked as calmly as possible.

The man snorted and deliberately raised his voice to continue sneering.

"Miss Charles, it's not necessary to say everything loudly and clearly. You're secretly in love with the parent of a child in your class. The last time when my son was just playing around with that child, you treated it as such a serious matter and asked me to come to kindergarten. You even criticized my son in public and let that man lecture me so impolitely."

"Hmph! This time, you accidentally hurt my son. How could there be such a coincidence? You're clearly avenging private wrongs in the school! I'm not saying you can't fall in love with a student's parent, but if you're such a teacher, who would dare to put their children under your care again? Everyone, do you think I'm right?"

The man incited public sentiment and tried to embarrass Julie, but the parent next to him was not swayed. Instead, they asked Julie calmly and rationally. "Miss Charles, are you really dating your student's parent? Does he have a family, or is he a divorced single parent?"

"We don't want to interfere with your personal life, but you're a teacher. As parents, we also hope that our child's teacher is a person who's upright and honest."

"Miss Charles, please answer us. We don't believe you're such a person, so we won't believe his one-sided statement so casually."

Most of the parents looked at this matter rationally and looked at the man with questioning eyes. The man did not expect these parents to be so calm, so he felt like a clown instead.

Julie took a deep breath and explained with a calm smile.

"Thank you for trusting me. Since I've chosen this job, I'll definitely do my job well and not avenge private wrongs in the school." Julie looked at the man calmly. "Mr. Martinez, there are surveillance cameras in the classroom. You can go look at the surveillance footage to see whether I deliberately bullied your son because I was avenging private wrongs, but please don't slander me so casually."

"You... When did I slander you?" The man was shamed into anger. "Julie Charles, do you dare to say that you have no relationship with that mute's parent?"

However, the moment he finished saying that, the man suddenly felt a chill go down his spine. Then, a cool and frigid voice said from behind him.

"Who are you calling a mute?"

The man shuddered subconsciously.

The crowd looked over when they heard that voice. At the first glance, they seemed to be stunned by Fabian.

They saw a young man with a graceful and confident posture carrying a little girl walking who looked quick-witted. He walked toward the door domineeringly.

When the man saw Fabian, he was instantly silent. He did not dare to continue to be arrogant anymore. He thought that Fabian had sent Lillian to school and had already gone back.

He did not expect...

Fabian's whole body seemed to be ice-cold as he stood in front of the man frigidly.

"Repeat what you just said."

The man did not dare to repeat what he said and did not even dare to make a sound.

"If you have nothing to say, then I'll speak." Fabian lowered his eyes to Lillian. Then, he shifted his cold eyes to the man's face. "Listen closely. I have no blood relationship with this child. I'm just her guardian, so don't try to start rumors like a female teacher hooking up with a married man."

The man was even more anxious now that his plan had been exposed. He still remembered the punch that Fabian gave him before. "No, no, Mr. Johnson. Don't get me wrong, I didn't mean that at all..."

"It's best if you didn't mean it. Have you sent your son to school?"

"Y-Yes."

"Then go back and do what an adult like you should do. Don't start rumors and make trouble here like a philistine."

As he looked at Fabian's dark and turbulent eyes, the man naturally did not dare to say anything else in case he was beaten up again. The man timidly turned his head and left. The other parents on the side also understood the situation when they saw this scene.

It seemed that the man felt guilty, and they had heard what Fabian said, so they comforted Julie one after another.

"I really didn't think such a person would exist. Miss Charles, don't take it to heart."

"That's right. How could there be such a parent? What a weirdo."

"Yeah, we're relieved to leave our children under your care, Miss Charles."

When she heard the indignant words of other parents, Julie felt a lot more at ease. She raised her eyes and glanced at Fabian. She felt an indescribable sense of comfort from his timely appearance. She walked over and wanted to have a word with Fabian. Coincidentally, Fabian also came over and handed Lillian to Julie.

"Miss Charles, I'm relieved to see you back at your post. I'm going to entrust Lily to your care today again. Thank you."

Fabian exchanged pleasantries with her politely.

Julie knew that she did not have the qualifications to imagine that her love was being reciprocated, so she smiled.

"Don't worry, Mr. Johnson. I'll take care of every child in the class." Julie smiled and held Lillian's hand. "Lily, say goodbye to Fab. We're going in now."

Lillian blinked, her cute little mouth moving slightly. Finally, she raised her little hand and waved at Fabian. Fabian understood, but he felt a pang of pain in his heart.

'Lily, what should I do to help you break through the barriers in your heart and make you speak? I really miss the times you talked to me in that crisp, childish voice.' Fabian pondered before turning away after a few seconds.

Julie seemed to notice the desolation in Fabian's eyes before he turned around, and she did not quite understand the look in Fabian's eyes. However, her intuition told her that Fabian's expression must be because of a woman.

After morning class, Julie went back to the office.

Two of her female colleagues quickly came over to gossip with her.

"Julie, have you reconciled with your boyfriend?"

"In the morning, the father of that kid in your class made trouble again and your boyfriend showed up at the right time."

"Yeah, he not only taught the man a lesson and made that man leave in disappointment, but he also explained to the public that he's not blood-related to Lillian for fear that other parents would misunderstand you."

Julie was stunned for a moment. She started having mixed feelings. She did not even know how to explain that she and Fabian were not actually in a relationship. She somehow liked that they misunderstood her relationship with Fabian.

"Julie, why are you not talking?"

"Are you shy?"

Her female colleagues teased her.

Julie quickly came back to her senses, "No, stop saying nonsense. It's not that complicated. He's just telling the truth."

"The truth is that he doesn't want others to misunderstand you."

Julie was speechless, and she started having doubts in her heart.

'Really? He doesn't want others to misunderstand that I'm dating a man who has a family? If that's the case, then it's also a type of concern, right?'

Julie felt a touch of warmth flowing through her heart.

After Fabian sent Lillian to school and went back to his office, he focused on his work. He knew that only when he became stronger and more stable could he take better care of Lillian and give her a better future.

At present, he was trying to find an expert. What he wanted the most was to cure Lillian's inability to speak, but it seemed that there was no hope. Fabian fiddled with his phone and opened the photo album. This was an exclusive album, which only contained the private photos of him and Lillian. He regarded this album as a hidden secret that he did not want anyone to know. He cherished these photos.

Most of the photos documented Lillian's daily life, and of course, there were many photos of them together. When he saw the photos of Lillian being sick and hospitalized a while ago, it made him feel distressed for a while. The cute doll-face was thin and haggard.

"Lily, I won't let you suffer anymore."

Fabian looked at Lillian's photo and made a solemn promise.

He put away his phone, picked up the document, and walked into the conference room at a steady pace to preside over the meeting.

By the time he was almost done, it was already in the evening when the sun was setting. Fabian sat on the sofa and flipped through the album again.

In a video, Lillian was smiling with her eyes looking like crescent moons. Her fair and innocent face was as fair and smooth as a peeled egg. Her big lively eyes were as pure and clear as colored glass. Her eyes looked so lively it was as if they could speak. She was like a doll. Yes, a doll who could not speak. Fabian's eyes softened, and he felt tiredness overwhelming him.

He woke up after a short nap and found that it was past the time to pick up Lillian from school. Fabian hurriedly got up and went to the parking lot. He had just gotten in the car and was about to pick up Lillian when he received a sudden call from the villa.

It was from the servant, and they said that Lillian was already home.

Fabian was surprised that the servant would go to pick Lillian up. He had never given the order, so did something bad happen to Lillian?

Fabian felt anxious. He slammed on the accelerator while calling the number back. However, even though the call went through, no one answered the call. This made Fabian more and more anxious.

Unbeknownst to him, he started speeding up and rushed toward the villa. Normally, it would take about 20 minutes to go back home, but it only took him more than ten minutes today.

Fabian stopped the car and quickly ran into the house.

"Mr. Johnson, you're back," the servant greeted him when they saw him.

Fabian only had Lillian in his mind. He glanced at the servant hurriedly. "Why did no one answer the phone? Where's Lily? When did she come back?"

"The phone?" The servant looked at the landline curiously. "It never rang."

The servant's answer puzzled Fabian.

Could it be that he called the wrong number?

Fabian was finding it strange when he heard the servant tell him, "Miss Lily has indeed come back. She's playing in the back garden now."

Upon hearing this, Fabian's heartstrings were suddenly less tense.

When he saw that the servant's expression was also very relaxed, he knew that Lillian was fine. Fabian did not think about it anymore and walked straight to the back garden. He did not know if it was an illusion or because he had just woken up and hurried home, Fabian kept feeling like something was a little off. However, he could not put a finger on what it was.

He thought doubtfully, and the sound of someone playing badminton gradually got closer and closer to his ears.

Fabian followed the source of the sound and saw someone playing badminton in the back garden. However, who could be playing badminton at his house?

Fabian was even more curious, so he looked up and saw the back of a young girl. The girl was wearing a white shirt and a navy blue pleated skirt. Her figure was lithe and graceful, while her ponytail looked energetic and youthful.

Fabian thought this figure looked very familiar and kind, but he could not remember who it was.

Fabian inexplicably felt that the scene in front of him was like a dream. He walked over step by step, and the scene felt more and more realistic. The enthusiasm of the young girl skipping and swinging her badminton racket was vividly in front of his eyes.

Meanwhile, the girl's back gave him an indescribable intimacy.

At this time, the man who was playing badminton with the girl spotted Fabian. It was the old butler in the villa. When he saw Fabian, he immediately stopped and greeted Fabian respectfully.

"Sir, you're back."

Upon hearing this, the girl stopped immediately. The next second, the girl turned around and looked back excitedly.

In an instant, Fabian felt the light of the setting sun shining on him dazzlingly. The girl's bright and youthful smile was like a dreamy oil painting.

The delicate and small facial features on the plump contours of her oval face seemed to be hand-crafted. She looked extremely beautiful.

She smiled sweetly, and the little dimples dotting the corners of her lips instantly gave Fabian a sense of joy like it was warm spring.

The girl strode toward him, opened her mouth, and called out to him sweetly, "Fab, you're back!"

'Fab.'

This name sounded like the sound of heaven when it fell into Fabian's ears. Fabian did not react at all, and the girl had already pounced into his arms. As her warm body got close to him, there was a throbbing in Fabian's heart.

She should be a stranger to him, but this touch and warmth were so familiar to him. He liked it very much, so he did not reject her at all. He even raised his hand involuntarily and hugged the girl back. Then, he said those pampering words habitually from his mouth.

"Okay, stop playing. Have you done your homework?"

"Fab, why are you dampening my spirits? Today is Friday. Can't you let me relax for a while?"

The girl coquettishly got out of Fabian's arms and picked up the badminton racket she had just thrown away.

"Fab, play badminton with me for a while." The girl voiced her wilful demands.

No, she was not at all being wilful.

Fabian saw this and he doted on her in his heart. However, he was still in a trance when he looked at this energetic and youthful face.

Who was this girl? Why did he feel this way?

"Okay, Miss Lily. Stop playing for now. Come and eat some fruits and snacks. You must have not eaten well while living on campus." The voice of the maid could be heard from afar.

That was the caretaker who had been taking care of Lillian all this while.

When Fabian heard this, he fell into shock almost instantly.

'Lily?'

He looked at the girl in astonishment. She skipped in front of the maid, used a fork to pick up two pieces of fruit, and then skipped back to Fabian like a little rabbit.

"Fab, say ah!"

Fabian looked at the grinning youthful face in front of him in disbelief.

'Lily..? This is Lily? How is this possible..?'

He kept denying what he was seeing, but it seemed that what he saw was real.

"Fab, what's wrong with you? Why are you in a daze? I was only in the dorm for half a month and you've already forgotten me?"

The girl pouted and complained. Her coquettish manner was completely different from the obedient and quiet Lily Fabian had in his mind. However, she was calling him Fab, and she was so sweet and natural when she did so.

Plus, coupled with her clear and lively big eyes and small dimples on the sides of her mouth, she was clearly Lillian.

Fabian was stunned, but he still opened his mouth involuntarily.

The girl in front of him smiled sweetly, put the fruit into Fabian's mouth, and then skipped over to hold the entire plate of fruits before eating them happily. As Fabian looked at the scene in front of him, he was still in a state of confusion. He raised his hand and patted his face.

Was he dreaming?

However, his face really hurt. How did he fall asleep and come home like this?

"Fab, this pomelo is so sweet. What do you think?" He could hear Lillian's sweet voice.

Fabian snapped back to his senses and strode over to Lillian.

"Lily?" he asked incredulously, but the intimacy he felt when he got closer convinced him that it was really Lillian.

Lillian raised her beautiful big eyes and blinked. "What's wrong, Fab?"

"Lily, are you really Lily?"

"Of course, I'm Lily." Lillian looked at Fabian in confusion and raised her hand to test the temperature on Fabian's forehead. "You don't have a fever, so why are you asking such a silly question?"

"But... How could this be?" Fabian was confused.

Lillian frowned, feeling even more curious. "What are you saying? Fab, are you too busy these days so that's why you're confused from exhaustion?"

"No..." Fabian shook his head, his dark pupils glued to Lillian's big, confused eyes.

"Lily, when did you start talking? H-How old are you now?"

Lillian's brows furrowed even more. "I knew how to talk a long time ago. It was only last month that I celebrated my 18th birthday. Have you forgotten about that, Fab? Could it be that while I was living on campus, you lost your memory?"

'18...'

'She knew how to speak a long time ago...'

When he got this information, Fabian's heart started hammering against his chest. He looked at the little face full of doubts in front of him. His beating heart almost leaped out of his throat.

However, Fabian held himself back.

"Lily..." He looked deeply at the girl in front of him and called out softly.

Lillian smiled and blinked. "I'm here, Fab."

"Lily," he called again.

"I'm here, Fab. Are you stupid? Did you miss me too much when I was in the dorm for half a month?" The girl joked, her lively and mischievous appearance was the opposite of her quiet and well-behaved appearance when she was a child.

Fabian could not describe how he was feeling at this moment, but he was convinced that everything in front of him was true. His little Lily had grown up and she could talk!

This was amazing! So amazing!

Fabian resisted the eagerness in his heart and followed Lillian back to the house. At this moment, he seemed to notice that the decorations of the house were a little different. The previous servants had also changed in appearance. They were all a little older now.

He noticed the schoolbag on the sofa, and he subconsciously thought it was Lillian's schoolbag. He walked over and picked up the schoolbag to look at it. When he opened it, he found that it was filled with high school textbooks.

His little Lily was already a high school student?

This was like a dream. However, this was a good dream.

Fabian looked through Lillian's textbook with interest. Meanwhile, Lillian sat beside him. It was like she was used to everything. However, as Fabian flipped through her books, he noticed a love letter in a pink envelope.

Right, it was a love letter. His joyous heart seemed to be frozen in an instant as his face fell.

Lillian quickly noticed the changes in Fabian too. She turned her head to look over. When she saw the love letter in Fabian's hand, she was also startled.

"Fab..."

"What's this? Did a male classmate give it to you?" Fabian asked, his tone sounding calm and gentle, but he could no longer hide the displeasure in his eyes.

Lillian did not dare to lie in front of Fabian. She nodded slightly like a child who had done something wrong.

The moment Lillian nodded, Fabian's heart sank suddenly. He stared at the youthful and beautiful face in front of him and suddenly realized something.

The little Lily of that year had grown up, so it also meant that he was old. He still remembered when he met Lillian for the first time. The child was only five years old, and he was only a 17 year-old boy. Lillian was 18 years old now and she was at such a youthful and energetic age. On the other hand, he was already an old man.

Fabian gently put down the love letter in his hand and slowly got up to walk toward the stairs.

Lillian stared at Fabian's lonely back for unknown reasons and went upstairs to catch up to Fabian without hesitation.

"Fab, why aren't you speaking?"

"Fab, are you angry? Fab, what's wrong with you? Are you ignoring me?"

Lillian quickened her pace and ran up to Fabian, blocking his path.

"Fab..."

With a serious expression, she stopped Fabian who was ignoring her.

Fabian reluctantly stopped. His heart tightened when he faced the girl in front of him.

"Lily, I want to be alone for a while."

"Why?" Lillian wondered. "Are you mad at me?"

Fabian shook his head, barely holding the gentle smile on his lips.

"I won't be mad at you no matter what happens."

"If that's the case, what's going on with you?" Lillian did not understand. "Is it because of that love letter?"

When she mentioned the love letter, the smile on Fabian's lips disappeared instantly. He did not say anything. Instead, he walked past Lillian and went straight into the study.

Lillian watched Fabian's figure leave quietly and felt worried. Her small face was filled with melancholy.

Fabian came into the study and walked in front of his desk silently. Then, he picked up a photo frame on the desk. There was a photo of him and Lillian in the frame.

He did not remember when he took this photo. The Lillian inside the photo was now a slender and elegant young lady.

Fabian furrowed his brows and fell into deep thought. However, he seemed to not remember any memories of Lillian transforming from a little girl to a young lady. When he remembered that Lillian had grown up by his side all these years, he felt extremely relieved. Even so, she had grown to the age when she would have her first awakening of love. She had already accepted the feelings of other boys.

All his waiting over the years seemed to have been in vain.

Knock, knock.

There were soft knocks on the door of the study. Fabian spotted Lillian out of the corners of his eyes. He turned his head to look at her and saw Lillian walking toward him with a cup of iced coffee.

She smiled, and her smile was so sweet.

"Fab, I just made this. It's your favorite iced Americano..."

Fabian never refused Lillian's wishes, so he reached for the glass.

"I'll drink it. Go do your homework."

"I'll do my homework, but I want to tell you something first." Lillian's expression suddenly became serious.

Fabian put down the glass, his heart pounding hard against his chest. He was afraid to hear Lillian would say something he did not want to hear.

"What do you want to tell me?"

"It's about that love letter." Lillian went straight to the point.

Fabian's heart skipped a beat again. "What do you want to say?"

Lillian frowned, her big glass-like eyes staring straight at Fabian.

"Fab, I've always remembered what you said. You said that I can't fall in love early and I have to study hard. I remember it all."

Fabian was stunned when he heard that. He did not remember telling her that.

"Fab, I did all of that, but I'm an adult now."

Upon hearing this, Fabian seemed to already know what Lillian was going to say next.

This girl wanted to express that she had reached the age where she could fall in love and that she had someone she liked, which was why she accepted the love letter.

Fabian felt something tugging at his thoughts, and for a while, he lost his sanity and calmness. "Okay, stop talking. I got it."

"No, I have to tell you this because you don't know." Lillian insisted stubbornly.

Fabian did not want to hear it, but his endless love for Lillian made him unable to refuse this girl's wayward and stubborn personality.

"Fab, you must have thought that I accepted the love letter and that's why I put it in my schoolbag. Actually, it's not what you think. I was going to return the love letter to the boy next week when I went to school, so that's why I put it in my bag."

When he heard this, Fabian's dull heartbeat seemed to gradually regain its original beating frequency. He looked at Lillian suspiciously, and a ray of light gradually appeared in his deep pupils.

"Are you going to reject the boy who sent you the love letter?"

"That's right." Lillian smiled. "I want to tell him that I already have someone I like, so I can't accept any other boys."

Fabian's heartbeat had just regained its usual momentum when it was disrupted again.

"You already have someone you like? When did that happen? Who is it?" Fabian asked hurriedly. He could not control his emotions anymore at this moment.

When she was facing the panicking Fabian, Lillian looked at him with a soft smile and said.

"I don't know when it started, but I believe that this person has always been in my heart for a very long time. It's been so many years and this person has continued to be by my side. He's the most reliable person in my heart, and he's also the guy I love the most." As she said that, her gaze on Fabian grew deeper and deeper.

Meanwhile, Fabian seemed to understand something from Lillian's eyes.

"Fab, do you know who I like?" She smiled sweetly.

There was only one person who fit her description.

"Fab, I like you... It's you... You..."

Lillian's final answer lingered in Fabian's ears memorably and stayed even after some time.

At this moment, the familiar sound of his alarm clock rang out. Fabian suddenly opened his eyes. He was completely awake now. As he looked at the sunset outside the French windows, he realized it was just a dream. The scene and images in his dream were all imaginations and hopes from his subconscious.

Fabian looked at the time. He prepared himself to go pick Lillian up from kindergarten.

When he turned around, he saw the photo frame on his desk. It was a photo of him and Lillian. However, the little girl in the photo was still an ignorant and naive little doll. Fabian smiled in relief and quickly headed to the kindergarten to pick Lillian up.

Fabian appeared at the gate of the kindergarten on time and picked up Lillian smoothly. He could still clearly feel Julie's amorous gaze on him, but he just gave her a polite smile and turned around while carrying Lillian. He carefully fastened Lillian's seat belt and patted the little girl's head with a gentle smile.

The little face in front of him was still so immature, and her cute smile was still so innocent.

Fabian stopped in his tracks. He could not help recalling the dream he had not long ago.

In that dream, Lillian grew up and became a slender and elegant young lady. She could talk and had become extraordinarily cheerful and lively.

What made Fabian most grateful was that during the period when Lillian grew up from a child to a young lady, she had always lived under the same roof as him. She grew up safely and healthily under his wings. Probably because he was distracted for too long, Fabian felt someone tugging on the corner of his clothes, only to realize that it was Lillian.

The little girl was wondering what was wrong with him and why he was staring at her in a daze.

Fabian smiled. Then, he got into the car and left.

Julie looked at Fabian's car in dismay, the feeling of loss in her heart never eased. She still did not understand why Fabian refused to take one more look at her when she was so outstanding and excellent. She was upset, and when she got home, her mother noticed that she was depressed too. Hence, her mother went shopping with her since tomorrow was the weekend.

After shopping for a long time, Julie was still absent-minded. She was not even in the mood to look at the branded clothes and bags that she liked.

"Julie, what's wrong with you?" Julie's mother wondered. "Since you got injured and hospitalized, you've always looked unhappy. Did something go wrong at work?"

Julie shook her head and smiled. "It's nothing. Mom, you don't have to worry about me."

"How can I not worry about you when you're like this?" Julie's mother was still worried and wanted to bring Julie to a spa to lighten her mood. Coincidentally, she ran into a friend of hers from her upper-class circle.

When that woman saw Julie and her mother, she sighed ruefully and said regretfully, "Julie, you have such good qualifications and you're such an amazing woman, so why did you fall for a single father with a daughter? I also heard that the single father's daughter is mute. You're a proper lady who's never been married, so why are you so stupid to want to become a stepmother?"

Hearing that, Julie was taken aback, while Patty's eyes were filled with shock.

"What? What's going on?" Patty looked at Julie in bewilderment. "Julie, is Mrs. Gill telling the truth? Have you fallen for a single father? Is he the father of one of the students in your class? Tell me everything!" Patty urged her, then she seemed to remember something.

"It's that young man who came to visit you that day in the hospital, right? Mr. Johnson, right? Is it him? I remember he had a very pretty little girl with him. No wonder he went to the hospital to see you. It seems that you..."

"Oh, Mrs. Charles, you've met that single father?" Mrs. Gill interrupted Party with a nosey look on her face. "That man in that video looks pretty handsome. I wonder if he's that Mr. Johnson you mentioned."

Mrs. Gill took out her phone and opened a trending video.

Julie also lowered her head to take a look. Then, she noticed it was the video of Mr. Martinez causing a ruckus in front of the entrance of the kindergarten not long ago.

The scene of Mr. Martinez causing a ruckus and Fabian coming to the rescue with Lillian at the end was all recorded and posted on the internet. This person was still a little conscientious and had censored Lillian's appearance, but Fabian's figure and face were clearly visible in the video.

Patty recognized the person in the video as Fabian at a glance. After seeing the comments below, Patty was even more anxious.

"Julie, how could you fall in love with a single father?"

Julie frowned. "Yes, I won't deny it. I do have a crush on Mr. Johnson."

"What?! Tsk tsk... Julie, do you really like this single father?"

The look in Mrs. Gill's eyes was very subtle. "Someone dug up all his information, and it turns out that this man is Yorick's younger brother. Back then, Yorick stirred up all kinds of troubles and did whatever he wanted in F Country. His sister, Lana, was also notorious in our circle."

"What? He's Yorick and Lana's younger brother?"

Patty was even more nervous, for fear that her precious daughter would interact with someone with a tarnished family background like Fabian.

"I've heard about his brother and sister, but I also learned that he has never interfered in those things. Otherwise, the police would've arrested him long ago." Julie answered solemnly, and her expression became serious.

"Also, Mr. Johnson is not the biological father of this child. He's just temporarily taking care of this child for his friends. So, please, Mrs. Gill, don't gossip about this child's inability to speak. It's already very sad for a child to not be able to speak. If it were you, you definitely wouldn't want to hear someone gossiping about your own child, right?"

Mrs. Gill, who originally wanted to hear some gossip from Julie and then joke about this with her friends, was utterly deflated.

"Mom, don't worry about me. Mr. Johnson and I only have a normal relationship. He probably doesn't even consider me a friend, let alone his girlfriend." Julie smiled and explained, though it was uncertain why she was suddenly feeling relieved.

"The reason he came to visit me the last time is not like what you think. On the contrary, he just wanted to draw a line with me. Me liking him is my affair and has nothing to do with him. Just let those keyboard warriors and busybodies on the internet say what they want to say. I don't care at all."

After Julie simply expressed her opinion, she left very decisively. She left behind the worried Patty and embarrassed Mrs. Gill.

Julie walked aimlessly on the street. When she was passing by the branded bag store, she looked at the display in the window and suddenly felt very interested. She walked in, picked out her favorite bag, and walked out of the door satisfied. Then, to her surprise, she saw Fabian standing at the door while carrying Lillian.

When she spotted Fabian at this moment, Julie's mood was inexplicably different from before. Her heartbeat was not as chaotic as before.

"Mr. Johnson? Lily? Why are you here?"

Fabian lifted the corners of his lips and gave her a warm smile.

"I came out to take a walk with Lily and didn't expect to run into you so coincidentally. I happened to see you, your mother, and a woman who's probably your mother's friend chatting at the door of the jewelry store."

Julie froze for a moment. "So, did you hear our conversation just now?"

"I did," Fabian admitted frankly.

Julie thought she would feel embarrassed because of this, but she did not know why she still felt very relaxed. Even so, she still felt a little embarrassed.

In order to not make Julie feel embarrassed, Fabian smiled and said, "I wanted to help you get out of that situation, Miss Charles, but I didn't want

to cross the line. I also didn't expect someone to have taken a video and put it on the internet. Lily and I have caused you much trouble. I'm really sorry about that."

Fabian paused as he spoke, then, he glanced at Lillian softly.

"But Miss Charles, rest assured, there'll be no such trouble in the future."

Julie was stunned for a moment when she heard the words, and she inexplicably felt a strong sense of loss coming up from the bottom of her heart. She looked at Fabian suspiciously, and sure enough, the words she heard next made her feel remorseful.

"Miss Charles, I've found a more suitable school for Lily, and it's closer to where I work so that it'll be much easier for me to commute to and from work to pick up Lily."

After listening to Fabian's words, Julie felt very upset.

"Mr. Johnson, did you decide to change Lily's school in order to avoid what happened in the past from happening again?"

Fabian nodded, not denying it.

"It'll be good for you and us." Fabian glanced at Lillian when he said 'us'.

Julie seemed to understand something for a moment. At the same time, she finally understood that it had always been her own wishful thinking. In Fabian's eyes, she was just an outsider.

"Mr. Johnson, you've made the right decision." Julie agreed and smiled with relief. "I'm so sorry about what happened just now. What my mother and my mother's friend said about you was really inappropriate."

Fabian said without hesitation, "It doesn't matter. I've never cared about what outsiders think of me."

In fact, Julie had long felt Fabian's open-minded attitude. Now, she felt that she should face everything openly.

"Mr. Johnson, since you heard it just now, I might as well admit that I'm very fond of you, especially when I see you taking care of Lily so

meticulously. Your thoughtfulness and patience are what attracted me the most." Julie voiced the secret in her heart.

"But this is just my one-sided appreciation and fondness for you. It has nothing to do with you, Mr. Johnson, so I hope you won't take the trouble and harsh remarks made at you to heart. I'm really sorry."

"I feel sorry as well." Fabian also apologized. "I actually had ulterior motives for inviting you to be a guest at my house before."

Upon hearing this, Julie was stunned for two seconds. Soon, she seemed to understand something.

"I understand." She smiled lightly. "Mr. Johnson, you must've felt that I had taken a fancy to you, so you deliberately invited me to be a guest at your house and also called your friend over to pretend to match me with him. You wanted me to understand that you had no feelings for me and hoped I could withdraw myself from the awkward situation."

Now that they were talking about this, everything was crystal clear. Fabian did not nod or deny it. However, the answer was already evident.

"Sigh..." Julie let out a long sigh, seemingly troubled and annoyed. However, her face was filled with a relieved smile.

"It's a pity. It's rare for me to meet a man who I think is excellent in all aspects. I thought that as the daughter of a dignified entrepreneur, I'd definitely win you over, but I didn't think that I couldn't even pique your interest at all."

Julie seemed to laugh at herself, then she said seriously, "To be honest, I really admire you, Mr. Johnson. But I know better. A relationship can't be forced. This is the most precious part of a relationship."

When he heard Julie say that, Fabian suddenly felt the burden in his heart disappear in an instant.

Since Julie was about to think that way, it showed that she was a reasonable person.

"Lily." Julie walked up to Lillian and squatted down, giving her a friendly blessing. "Lily, I really like you. I hope you can be happy every day, and I hope you'll be able to speak soon."

Lillian was a sensible child. She raised a sweet smile and nodded vigorously, indicating that she acknowledged Julie's blessing.

Julie stood up and faced Fabian. Right now, there was a little more admiration in her eyes and a little less of her unwilling persistence before.

If one liked someone, one did not necessarily have to stubbornly fight for it. Julie did not say anything and just smiled at Fabian. Fabian did not say anything more either. He bent over and picked Lillian up in his arms. Before turning around, he gave Julie a friendly smile.

"Miss Charles, you can still come to me if you need help in the future. After all, I still owe you a favor."

Julie smiled and shook her head. "You stopped owing me anything when you came and helped me out. However, I'm still very happy to have a friend like you, Mr. Johnson. Let's have dinner together again if we have the chance."

"Okay." Fabian readily agreed. If they were just friends, he would not mind.

Julie stood there, watching Fabian walk farther and farther away. Suddenly, she took two steps forward.

"Mr. Johnson, I still have a question in my mind. I wonder if you can answer me."

When he heard the voice from behind him, Fabian slowly stopped. He turned around, and a friendly smile appeared on his handsome face. "What do you want to ask?"

"Do you really have a girl you like?"

When Fabian heard that, he cast his soft gaze on Lillian's ignorant little face for a few seconds. Then, he answered.

"My biggest wish right now is for Lily to grow up safely and healthily. I won't think about other things aside from work."

When Julie heard what Fabian said, she did not feel glad at all. From Fabian's eyes, she thought she could see a vague and subtle trace of concern and love. She did not say anything anymore, and it was the same for Fabian. Then, he turned around with Lillian carefreely.

Soon, he disappeared from Julie's vision. After a moment, she was unable to find this figure in the crowd. Suddenly, Julie realized something. She would meet a lot of people in her life, but some of these people were just merely passing through her life.

May. Glendale.

Ava, who was hospitalized because of Esther, had finally fully recovered and was discharged from the hospital. However, Daniel, who got hurt from protecting her, was still in a coma. He was only relying on IV drips to maintain his vital signs. As long as Daniel was still unconscious, Ava would stay beside his bed.

Gina was still the same. Whenever she saw Ava, she would chase Ava away impatiently. However, as time went on, Gina seemed to get annoyed from repeating herself. Hence, she stopped speaking entirely and only coldly showed her dissatisfaction with Ava with an unpleasant expression.

Ava did not care about Gina's attitude. She did not wish for anything else in her heart and only hoped that Daniel would wake up soon.

Today, she came to the hospital ward early as usual, but when she entered the ward, the bed was empty.

Ava stared at the empty ward for a while. Then, she returned to her senses and immediately went to look for Daniel. However, after looking around for a while, Ava could not find Daniel, which made her feel a little nervous.

At this time, Gina also came in. She saw that the ward was empty, and Daniel, who was supposed to be lying on the hospital bed, had disappeared.

"What's going on? Where's Dan? Did the doctor take Dan away?" Gina looked at Ava and asked with an unfriendly expression on her face.

Ava was used to Gina's attitude, so she did not bother to argue with Gina. Instead, she replied, "I want to know as well."

"How could you not know? You came before me."

"Dan wasn't in the ward when I came," Ava said and turned around. "I'll go to the nurse's station and ask."

"Wait!" Gina grabbed Ava, her face was dark.

"Ava, let me tell you this. Dan has suffered a lot and gotten a lot of injuries because of you. Because of you, both Naya and her mother have been sent to prison. It's obvious that you're not suitable for the Grahams. So no matter how much you like Dan or how much Dan likes you, you can't marry into our family."

After listening to Gina's words, Ava felt speechless for a while. Other matters aside, could she be blamed for what happened to Naya and her mother?

She and Daniel were both victims. Even if people like Naya had not done those bad things, they would still commit other crimes sooner or later. It was because Naya was the kind of person who would do anything to achieve her goals. The situation was very clear, but Gina still insisted on blaming Ava. Ava did not want to waste her words arguing with her.

"I'm going to the nurse's station," Ava replied, turned around, and left.

Of course, Gina did not let Ava go like this and hurried to follow her.

Ava did not care about Gina following her. She just wanted to know where Daniel was. She was worried and wondered if his condition had suddenly deteriorated, so he was taken to the emergency room. Did something unexpected happen?

In short, her heart was feeling restless. However, Gina had always doubted Ava and thought that Ava was acting. She felt that Ava must know about Daniel's current situation.

After arriving at the nurse's station, Ava hurriedly asked the nurse on duty about Daniel's situation. However, the nurse was shocked when she heard what happened.

"He was still there when I went to the ward ten minutes ago."

"What?!"

"What did you say? My son was still in the ward just now and now he's gone? So you're saying that he wasn't taken away by the medical staff?" Gina cast her doubtful eyes on Ava again.

"Ava, just tell me the truth. You asked someone to take Dan away, didn't you?"

Ava looked at Gina with amusement. "Why would I do that?"

"You still have the nerve to ask that? So many things happened because of you." Gina widened her eyes and started complaining about Ava. "You've always been here these few days. I'm so annoyed when I see you. You..."

As she was complaining, her phone suddenly vibrated.

She stopped complaining and lifted her phone to take a look. Then, she saw that it was from her husband. Gina answered the call without thinking. Before she said anything about Daniel, she heard her husband's excited voice.

"When did Dan wake up? How did he get discharged from the hospital all by himself?"

"What? Dan got discharged by himself? Is he at home now?"

"He just went back to his room. You should come back right now!"

"I'll be right back!"

Gina hurriedly ran back. Suddenly, she turned back and stopped Ava, who was about to follow her.

"Don't follow me! You're not welcomed at our house."

Despite Gina's warning, Ava could not stop herself from looking for Daniel. She did not know what was going on. How could Daniel suddenly be discharged by himself? He had obviously been in a coma on the hospital bed. He did not wake up this whole time.

On the way there, Ava called Daniel, but Daniel did not answer. Ava did not know if Daniel had his phone with him, but in short, she could not get into contact with him. She wanted so badly to stand in front of Daniel right now, but there was traffic on the way.

When Ava followed Gina into the door of Graham Manor, she heard Gina's sharp voice. "What? Dan's gone? Where did he go? D-Didn't he just wake up? What the hell is going on?"

"Look at this and you'll know what's going on."

Daniel's father sounded like he was reproaching someone, then he seemed to hand something to Gina.

Ava quickly walked in while wondering what was going on with Daniel, but as soon as she stepped into the hallway, Gina's face fell again when she saw Ava.

"I told you not to follow me. Why are you here? You're not welcome here..."

"That's enough. Just read this first." Daniel's father interrupted Gina and did not stop Ava from coming in.

Ava saw that Daniel's father was looking at her with a very subtle expression and noticed he was not kicking her out, so she quickly walked over.

Gina was holding a sticky note in her hand, and there were a few short sentences written on it. It was a message addressed to Gina.

Daniel said that he actually woke up two days ago, but every time he woke up, he could only hear Gina either complaining or expressing her dislike toward Ava. Thus, he understood that Gina would never let Ava marry him. He did not want to disobey his parents but he also did not want to see Ava being scolded and wronged again, so he decided to be alone.

After reading this, Gina was extremely depressed. Just when she was about to say something, she saw her husband handing another sticky note to Ava.

"Dan wrote this for you. You should read it."

Ava was stunned. When she was about to take it, Gina unexpectedly grabbed the note and read it one step ahead of Ava.

"Why are you giving this to her? She's the one who caused this!"

Ava did not want to waste her breath, so she lowered her eyes to read the contents of the note.

[Ava, I'm sorry I didn't do what I promised. I hope you can meet another man you'll like in the future. I'll never marry a woman other than you in my life. Good luck.]

"What? What is Dan saying? He won't get married unless it's with this bringer of misfortune?" Gina was extremely startled.

After Ava read the note, her heart throbbed violently. She did not even think before turning around to run out of the house.

"Hey, you bringer of misfortune, where are you going?" Gina yelled at Ava.

Daniel's father frowned. "Follow her. She might know where Dan is."

Before Gina could come back to her senses, she saw her husband running to the garage to start the car.

She crumpled the paper into a ball out of frustration and threw it to the floor. Then, she quickly followed behind her husband.

Old Master Graham just came back from exercising. When he saw Gina running out hurriedly after throwing something to the floor, he quickly asked the servant to pick it up. After reading the contents, he almost fell to the floor.

"What? He's not going to get married for the sake of that woman?"

After Old Master Graham read Daniel's message, he was so angry that his eyes were wide open.

"He just got out of the hospital and he ran away for a woman? He even said that if he can't marry that woman, he won't get married in the future?"

Old Master Graham would never allow such a thing to happen. However, when he thought about it, he still felt a little nervous. If Daniel really did not get married because of this, would this not be the end of the Graham family?

"I can't let this happen."

After Ava ran out, she went to find Daniel in all the places she could think of. However, after spending the entire morning, she still could not find Daniel. She tried to call Daniel, and although the call was connected, it was always unanswered.

As time passed, Ava felt very tired. She sat down on the chair by the roadside and watched the street where people came and went. Then, a deep sense of loss welled up from the bottom of her heart

'Dan, have you decided to just give up? Are we just going our separate ways just like this?'

Ava asked herself silently. The dazed feeling at the moment made her feel very helpless and confused.

At this moment, Madeline called. Ava picked up her phone and informed her of Daniel's current situation. After Madeline learned about it, she rushed to the place where Ava was.

When Ava saw Madeline, her eyes were red.

Madeline hurriedly comforted, saying, "Ava, I think Dan is just acting on a whim. He won't really give up on you because of this."

"He will." Ava took a deep breath and calmed herself down. "His family definitely won't accept me, especially Dan's mother. A lot of things have happened these days, and they've all caused his family to have a deeper prejudice against me."

"What happened had nothing to do with you. You're the victim."

"But they don't think so. They think I'm a bringer of misfortune who implicates Dan time and again," Ava said with a sigh.

Suddenly, she pulled the corners of her lips into a smile. "Perhaps, Danny and I are not destined to be with each other and I shouldn't put him in the difficult position of a middleman."

Madeline understood what Ava meant, but she still wanted to persuade Ava.

"Ava, no matter what, let's find Dan first. Even if you two really part ways, he has to give you a clear explanation instead of just walking away like this and escaping the problem."

Ava nodded in agreement. She looked as if she was relieved and smiled. "Maddie, you're right. Since we're going to part ways, then we should make it clear and give each other an explanation."

Judging from what Ava said, it seemed that she had decided to respect Daniel's opinion. However, Madeline also knew that even if Ava agreed, she would still be reluctant to leave Daniel.

"Maddie, give me your phone. I'll try calling Dan."

Madeline handed her phone to Ava without saying a word, but the result was the same. Daniel did not pick up his phone.

Ava sighed in frustration, "Why is he hiding? Where else can he hide? I've searched everywhere I can."

"Ava, don't be so discouraged. Try recalling if there's another place where you and Dan have memories together. Somewhere nostalgic for you two. No matter where it is, anywhere is possible as long as the place contains your shared memories." Madeline reminded Ava.

Ava fell into deep thought after she heard that.

Daniel's parents, who were secretly observing Ava in the distance, gradually became more and more restless in the car.

"Hmph, how dare she say that she has a deep relationship with Dan? It's been so long and she still doesn't know where Dan has gone," Gina rolled her eyes and complained.

Daniel's father glanced at Gina. "Stop being so mean. Right now, the most important thing is to find Dan. Ava isn't a bad person. In the beginning, you disliked her because she didn't have parents, money, and power. Now, her parents are alive and well, her mother is extremely rich, and her father is a specialist doctor and professor. What else are you dissatisfied with? Do you really want your son to stay single his entire life?"

Gina was not happy when her husband was complaining about her.

"Didn't you object at the beginning as well? I agreed with the relationship after that, but your father refused to agree to save his reputation. Why are you blaming me now?!"

"Stop talking." Daniel's father interrupted.

Gina was even more dissatisfied. "Why are you allowed to say it and I'm not..."

"They're leaving." Her husband reminded her and hurriedly stepped on the accelerator to keep up. Finally, Gina shut her mouth.

A moment later, Madeline's car stopped at the gate of Glendale University. After the two got out of the car, they were brought back to the summer many years ago as they looked at the familiar building in front of them.

It was their first day in college, and at that time, they each bumped into the boy of their dreams who were a year older than them. However, it took so long for them to wait until the day when they could finally get to know and fall in love with those boys.

"Ava, do you think Dan will be at Glendale University?" Madeline asked.

Ava shook her head and smiled slightly. "I can't be sure, but just like you said, Maddie, he might linger at any place that contains the memories of the both of us. So if that's the case, then I shall try my luck."

As Ava said that, she walked toward the entrance. Since the university was open, Madeline and Ava went in directly. They split up and looked around, but they still could not find Daniel anywhere. It turned out that finding someone aimlessly was exactly like looking for a needle in a haystack. It was so difficult. However, this also showed how precious it was for two people to meet and fall in love.

As time slipped away unknowingly, the sun gradually set in the west. It felt as if they had searched every corner of the campus, but they could not even see Daniel's shadow.

At this time, Daniel's parents got impatient from waiting. Both of them entered the school to look for Madeline and Ava.

"What nonsense! How could Dan be here?" Gina was full of doubts, but when she turned around, she saw Ava.

When she saw Ava standing under a tree with a lost expression, Gina walked over with a face full of resentment.

"You've wasted my day running around aimlessly. You're such a troublemaker." She complained resentfully, but just as she took two steps forward, she spotted Madeline walking straight to Ava from the other side.

"Ava, maybe Dan isn't here. Let's look elsewhere," Madeline suggested.

Ava was silent for a few seconds before speaking.

"Maddie, maybe I shouldn't be looking for Danny anymore."

Madeline looked at Ava in surprise. "Why? Don't you want to talk to him?"

Ava raised her eyes and smiled. "Since Danny wants to be alone, I shouldn't bother him. Besides, marriage is not between two people. I should respect Dan's opinion as well as his parents' opinions."

Upon hearing this, Gina slowly stopped. She never thought that Ava still had some respect for her in her heart. This really surprised her. However, she soon heard Madeline stand up for Ava.

"Ava, you respect them, but have they ever respected you? Respect should be mutual."

"But Danny will always be their son. If Dan and I insist on getting married, his parents won't be happy about it for the rest of their lives," Ava said with a helpless sigh.

"I really don't want Dan to be caught in the middle of this matter."

"But Ava..."

"Maddie, don't persuade me. You should know best that when you truly love someone, you don't have to stay with them. As long as they're safe, healthy, and happy, that's enough, isn't it?"

There was a smile of relief on Ava's face as if she had already made a final decision in her heart.

Madeline wanted to persuade her a little more, but nothing seemed appropriate at this moment.

"Ava, are you leaving, then? Are you going to stop looking for him now?"

"I've looked in so many places, but I still can't find him. Maybe it's destined that I won't be in a relationship with Dan, so I'll just leave Dan alone."

Ava said and turned to leave.

Gina immediately stepped aside when she saw this, for fear that Madeline and Ava would find out that she was following them. However, at this time, Madeline stopped Ava. "Ava, you've come this far, so give yourself and Dan another chance. Think about where you haven't been. Maybe Dan is also waiting for you to find him."

Ava paused when she heard those words. "There is a place I haven't looked."

"Where?"

"I didn't go to the hall. There's a renovation sign outside."

"If Dan wants to be alone, he'll definitely find a place where there are fewer people or even empty. Maybe he's there!"

Ava's heart started beating quicker for some reason when she heard Madeline saying that. She did not think much as she turned around to run to the hall that the university used for lectures and performances.

Madeline followed behind her, and Daniel's parents also followed closely behind.

Ava ran to the door of the hall in a spurt of energy. At this moment, she noticed that the renovation sign that was here just now was no longer here.

Was the renovation done in just a short period?

She curiously walked to the door to try to open the door. Unexpectedly, she opened the door easily. The moment the door opened, she heard a soft melody from a piano. Then, Ava's attention was attracted by the scene on the stage in front of her. She widened her eyes in surprise and looked in

disbelief at the familiar figure who was playing the piano with his back toward her.

"Danny?"

Ava's heart was hammering against her chest. In the dark, the only thing that lit up was the man who was playing Wedding March on the piano under the spotlight.

'Wedding March?' Ava's heart skipped a beat.

She felt that something was not right, but when she was about to wonder what was going on, the music from the piano stopped. She jolted back to her senses and stared straight at the figure turning around on the stage.

As their eyes met, her heart seemed to have calmed down at that second. She saw Daniel holding a bouquet of red roses in his hands.

He was walking toward her with a smile. He looked like he was in good spirits, and there was a tenderness in his eyes that he only had before he lost his memories.

All sorts of guesses and speculations floated in Ava's mind until Daniel walked up to her with the bouquet in his hand.

"I remember everything, including the moments we fell in love and the moments we went through together. While I was in a coma in the hospital, I could feel you coming to take care of me every day. Your company gave me the will to wake up." Daniel's tone was gentle, and his eyes became more and more resolute.

"Actually, when I was discharged from the hospital, I did try to calm down. I also had stupid thoughts of giving up on you, but I thought that if I didn't have you for the rest of my life, my life would be meaningless."

After he said that, Daniel suddenly knelt on one knee in front of Ava. He handed over the bouquet and diamond ring that he had prepared earlier. He then looked at her sincerely and proposed again.

"Ava, I'm ready to spend the rest of my life and spend every ups and downs with you. I wonder if you'd like to give me this chance to shield you from every hardship in the world?"

After Daniel finished speaking, Ava's tears fell.

How could she not be willing?

She had always been willing. She had never thought about giving up. It was just a last resort. She did not make Daniel wait too long before she nodded her head amidst the tears.

"I do, I do!" Ava repeatedly agreed as she pulled Daniel to his feet.

"No matter what happens next, I'll marry you and be your bride."

Daniel showed a satisfied smile, put the diamond ring on Ava's finger, and hugged Ava in the next second. Ava also hugged Daniel tightly.

Gina, who was standing at the door, saw this scene and was about to walk in when she was stopped by her husband.

"Stop causing more trouble. Do you really want your son to be a bachelor for the rest of his life?"

"Who said I'm going to make trouble? I'm going to tell them that I agree to this marriage now, okay?"

Her husband was startled. "You're agreeing to this?"

Gina was about to answer when out of the corners of her eyes, she suddenly caught a glimpse of the lights in the room. It was followed by cheers and applause from inside.

Ava pulled herself out of Daniel's embrace. She was surprised to find Madeline and Jeremy, her parents, and even Tom and Maisie slowly approaching them with smiles on their faces. Ava stared blankly at Madeline. Then, she finally understood that they had all worked together to arrange this.

Only she and Daniel's parents were kept in the dark. Daniel had never thought of leaving her at all. He just used a different approach to let her know that she was the only one he wanted to be with for the rest of his life.

Spring the next year. A season when all living things were recovering.

In the open-air garden in Glendale Hotel, a wedding ceremony was being held. Yes, today was the day Daniel and Ava officially got married.

Madeline and Jeremy were playing with their little princess whom they had not seen for a long time. The couple had so much love in their eyes, and when Jackson and his brother who had just learned to walk saw this, they also came over to get a share of the love.

"Mommy, Daddy, Pudding and I want kisses too."

"Kisses, kisses," Pudding imitated Jackson and said childishly.

"You two are always with Mommy and Daddy, so why are you fighting? It's rare for Lily to come home so, of course, Mommy and Daddy will want to play with her."

As Jeremy said that, he carried the adorable little princess, and his eyes were filled with love.

"Lily, have you been studying hard recently? Does that guy speak to you fiercely?"

"Am I that guy you're talking about?" Fabian appeared in front of Jeremy with a cold face, but his expression was cold for only three seconds before it softened instantly when he faced Lillian.

"Lily, come. Let me carry you."

After hearing this, Jeremy's face turned cold.

"Fabian, you carry her every day and you want to fight with me for this little time that we have?" Jeremy said in dissatisfaction. Then, he turned to Lillian in the next second, "Lily, tell Daddy, who do you want to carry you?"

Lillian blinked her beautiful big eyes, looked at Fabian for a few seconds, then leaned her little head into Jeremy's arms.

"I want Daddy to carry me now."

The little girl lightly parted her pink lips, her voice sweet and crisp. Every word that she said was extraordinarily clear.

Jeremy glanced at Fabian with victory in his eyes while Fabian looked disappointed, but there was still a sweet smile on the corners of his lips.

"Maddie, come and take a photo." Ava, who was wearing a wedding dress, shouted at Madeline from a distance.

Madeline looked up at Jeremy. Coincidentally, he was looking at her as well.

His hair color had returned to normal now, and his pupils had also returned to the once bright black color. Moreover, there was a hint of extra mature heroism in his eyes.

"Linnie, let's go." Jeremy's gentle voice interrupted Madeline's thoughts.

"Okay." Madeline nodded and reached for Jeremy's arm.

Jeremy was also holding Madeline's hand with joy. Suddenly, the little princess in his other arm was carried away by Fabian.

"You'd better hold your wife first. I'll carry Lily," Fabian said in a teasing tone, but his eyes were full of the satisfaction of getting to carry Lillian.

Jeremy did not bother to split hairs with him. Seeing the simple and beautiful smile on the little princess' face, he was willing to entrust Fabian with his only daughter.

"Lily, it's so rare for us to come back to Glendale. Where do you want to go?"

"I want... I want to go..."

"Lily doesn't want to go anywhere. She wants to play with me and Pudding." Jackson took Pudding's hand and followed Fabian.

Pudding babbled along with Jackson.

Madeline and Jeremy were relieved to see this scene.

"This is nice." Madeline sighed.

"The luckiest thing for me is to be able to stay with you forever..." Jeremy made no secret of his inner thoughts.

Madeline clenched Jeremy's arm tighter and leaned gently on Jeremy's shoulder. She looked cute and helpless. "I want to be with you too. The greatest luck in my life is to have met you, know you, love you, and stay together with you forever."

In the past, there were so many catastrophes, but they managed to survive them.

With a happy smile, Ava and Daniel stood in the middle, arm in arm. Meanwhile, Madeline, Jeremy, and all their friends and family were standing around them. The moment the shutter sounded, the happiness and joy of this moment were completely frozen in the warm spring when the flowers bloomed.

They would let the quicksand of time wash over them, but as the years changed, their wishes from the beginning would remain unchanged.

[THE END]

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