

She Made a Comeback as a Renowned Doctor

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“What’s wrong?”

Upon hearing this, Benjamin Myers’ expression stiffened, and a moment of tension flashed through his usually composed eyes.

Hope Williams pursed her lips, lowered her gaze to arrange the medical records in her hands, and sighed.

“Haven’t you felt the rage value of thousands of girls going off the charts, just shy of coming over and stabbing me for venting?”

Hope Williams joked, making a throat-slitting gesture, to which Benjamin Myers could only smile helplessly, “Don’t overthink it, I would protect you even then.”

“...” Hope Williams blinked, not knowing how to respond.

“Doctor Myers, there will be a postoperative consultation later, the chief asked you to come over and give some advice.”

“Alright, I’ll be right there,” Benjamin nodded.

“Go ahead, don’t keep the patients waiting.”

“Make sure you apply the medication,” Benjamin Myers reminded.

Hope Williams put the medicinal alcohol into her own pocket, relieved, and was about to correct a few issues she spotted on the medical record, when she heard several uncontrollable exclamations in the hospital.

“Ah, ah, ah...so...so handsome...”

“My gosh, you guys, look at that man coming over here, my goodness, he’s too handsome.”

“This must be a celestial being, I just thought Doctor Myers was handsome enough to slap me in the face, but this man is simply heart-shakingly handsome.”

“It’s not just about being handsome; it’s this aura, this aura. He didn’t even look at me, but why do I feel my legs going weak under this intense pressure?”

“Ah, ah, ah, this is totally cheating; I’m going to faint from his handsomeness. Handsome guy, come give me mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.”

“Help! Help! He must be a god descended from heaven, he’s too handsome.”

Hearing these exclamations, Hope Williams chuckled softly, shaking her head,—a god descended from heaven, that’s quite an exaggeration.

Just as she wanted to see what this so-called godlike man looked like, she looked up and saw Waylon Lewis’ face, meeting his unfathomably deep eyes.

!!!

A god?

Maybe check your vision at the optometrist.

This is clearly a soul harvester!

Hope Williams’ hand, holding the pen, paused there, and for a moment, all other sounds receded from her ears, leaving only silence and the man approaching her.

The man wore a pure black, bespoke suit; the light cast upon him highlighted his robust and erect figure, his fine brows, high nose bridge, and noble, slightly pursed lips, like the depths of a deep pool in his eyes.

That cold, unapproachable demeanor carried such an intimidating pressure, making him unapproachable, yet that overly dazzling handsome face made it impossible to look away.

Hope Williams regained her composure, and she couldn’t deny that Waylon Lewis was devilishly handsome, with an inherent noble aura that emitted a soul-stirring pressure, enough to make any woman rush towards him, and relish in his presence.

That was how Hope Williams had felt back then.

Hope Williams slightly tugged at the cool corner of her lips, closed the medical record in her hands, and turned to leave.

Why Waylon Lewis appeared in the hospital was clear to her—Joy Ward was hospitalized, and naturally, he would personally take care of his beloved. Yet, this moment should have been his busiest time at the company. When she had been sick before, calling him always found him busy, only sending Thomas Hughes to check on her and offer some consolation. But now... Ha! It sure was different for his darling.

Hope Williams let out a breath, feeling something oppressive over her heart that suddenly made it hard to breathe.

Enough already, just thinking about these things still hit a sore spot for Hope Williams.

Hope Williams inwardly scolded her own helplessness.

She was about to head back to her office when suddenly two black-suited bodyguards wearing Lewis Family uniforms appeared in front of her.

Hope Williams' body stiffened sharply.

"Miss Williams, the Boss requests your presence."

Hope Williams held her breath, not planning to pay any attention, but the bodyguards showed no intention of letting her go.

"Please," the bodyguard lifted his hand expressionlessly.

Hope Williams pulled the corner of her mouth in disbelief; the people of the Lewis Family, like Waylon Lewis, were always cold and commanding, their stance and this polite "please" were hardly related.

Hope Williams tugged at the corner of her mouth and turned around.

They weren't far apart, just a few meters, and could clearly see each other's expressions. Hope Williams' hand involuntarily tightened in her pocket. His cold, scrutinizing gaze seemed to pierce through her, as if he intended to see straight through to her soul.

She took a deep breath, stepped up to the man a head taller than her, her beautiful face bearing an impeccable smile, and asked in an easy tone, "President Lewis, what a coincidence, are you here to see Joy? How is her sickness..."

"It's not a coincidence, I'm here for you!"

"For me? What for?" Hope Williams' eyebrows arched.

The deep voice sounded again.

“Come with me.”

Hope Williams frowned in refusal, “I’m busy.”

“You’re busy? Ha.”

His voice carried disdain and mockery.

Suddenly, the man raised his hand and pulled her into his arms.

The unexpected collision made Hope Williams tremble, her eyebrows tightly furrowed, panicked for a brief moment, as exclamations from around and her body’s instincts made her desperately try to push the man away.

But this resistance seemed utterly trivial in the man’s view.

His grip tightened slightly, pressing Hope Williams even closer to him.

Hope Williams gritted her teeth in anger.

“Waylon Lewis, I’ve realized you really have a problem. What do you mean by this? Huh? Embracing and cuddling with your ex-wife in public, not afraid of word reaching Joy Ward?”

Hope Williams fixed her gaze on Waylon Lewis.

Waylon Lewis’ lips curled slightly; his eyes like deep pools, devoid of any smile.

The man’s cold voice sounded again, as if meant to freeze everything, “I didn’t see you being busy, chatting cozily with your boyfriend, all lovey-dovey.”

Chapter 52: Chapter 52 Hope Williams Goes Fishing

“...” Hope Williams gritted her teeth, her tone suddenly changing as she sneered coldly, “Is that my problem, or is President Lewis just being jealous?”

“Heh.” The man’s jaw tightened slightly as he let out a low chuckle, “Do you think you’re worthy of my jealousy? You were once my woman, and now, even if I don’t want you, no one else is allowed to lay a finger on you, get it?”

A layer of frost coated Waylon Lewis’s handsome face as his domineering words directly assailed her heart.

Hope's expression stiffened slightly as she stared coldly at Waylon Lewis, "You're sick, and you need treatment. I suggest you see a psychiatrist."

"I'll take your advice." Waylon Lewis's thin lips curled up mockingly as he reached out his long fingers to lightly adjust her tousled hair.

Hope blinked, utterly confused about what this man really wanted to do. Such an intimate gesture, however, elicited gasps from those around them.

Hope felt her hand being gripped tightly. She tried to pull her hand away, but the man had no intention of letting go, in fact, he gripped it even tighter.

"Where are you taking me?" Hope asked, lowering her voice.

Waylon Lewis leaned in closer to her, his voice low and magnetic as he whispered in her ear, "You'll know when we get there."

Hope felt her ears turn slightly red.

Everyone's hearts trembled with them; this man's every action was fatally alluring.

"Ahhh... why is it always Doctor Williams? Why do all the outstanding men fancy Doctor Williams?"

"I wish a domineering CEO would sweep me into his arms. Save me, this man is so handsome, I'm in love."

"Why not me, why isn't it me? Oh my god, I'm going to die of jealousy, Doctor Williams is just too blessed."

"But it looks like Doctor Williams is two-timing, with Doctor Myers tenderly delivering medicine before, and now the overbearing CEO embracing her, is Doctor Williams actually fishing?"

"Now that you mention it, that does seem likely. If it's true, that's shameless. Hey, did you hear? Doctor Williams seduced her own professor in college, and that's why she got expelled."

"Who said that, is there any proof? That's explosive news. We always saw Doctor Williams as a cold goddess, indifferent and low-key, but who knew she was this vile behind the scenes?"

"I know, right? But look how beautiful she is, with such a perfect shell, can men resist?"

"Exactly, exactly."

It wasn't until Hope was dragged to the eighteenth floor by the man that she realized they were clearly headed for Joy Ward's hospital room.

"Waylon Lewis, let me go."

The man paid her no mind. Hope couldn't match his strength, and she was pulled directly into the hospital room.

Seeing Waylon Lewis arrive, Joy Ward's feeble face immediately brightened with a gentle smile, "Waylon... Hope?"

Hope did not miss the fleeting crack in her expression.

Emotions surged in Joy's eyes, but she fiercely suppressed them, again and again, until she forced out a weak, strained smile.

Two elegantly dressed ladies sat on the sofa next to the hospital bed, one being Alitzel Williams and the other Joy Ward's mother Kaeli Thompson. Tears stained Joy's face, her eyes red and swollen as if she had just been crying.

As soon as Hope arrived, all eyes were on her, and the atmosphere became awkward and tense. Hope slightly tugged at her lips—this situation felt very much like a public trial, and she was the accused!

And their glares—it almost made Hope wonder if she had desecrated their ancestral graves overnight.

"The second young master must be deceived by this woman, spouting nonsense," Kaeli Thompson couldn't help but snort coldly. "Alitzel, we are sisters, and you've seen our Joy grow up. You know her better than anyone. She went abroad to study medicine to treat the old master's heart disease, and she's had a hard time. She did it so one day she could cure the old master, and now she's done it, yet this woman wants to take credit. Our Joy is like swallowing bitter aloes, she can't speak of her bitterness."

As Kaeli spoke, she pressed her lips together and tears began to flow, her expression one of great grievance.

Seeing this, Alitzel Williams frowned and comforted, "Kaeli, I naturally know that Joy treated the old master, and that can't be faked, nor taken away by anyone else. I, of course, don't believe this woman's words, and our Wyatt is straightforward, he must have been deceived by this woman."

Hope, not knowing the full story, listened in a fog, "What do you mean taking credit? Joy swallowing bitter aloes with unspoken bitterness? What about Wyatt Lewis being straightforward, so he's deceived by me?"

Hope's brow knotted slightly.

"Do you believe me, Waylon? I've tried my best to save grandfather. I'm not seeking credit or glory, but I can't let Miss Williams frame me like this, Waylon, I'm human too, I feel wronged. All I ask is to be vindicated."

Joy's lips were tightly clenched, a picture of forbearance before her tears heart-rendingly fell.

"Wait a minute."

Hope couldn't help but raise her hand to interrupt her.

"What do you mean I'm framing you?"

Chapter 53: Chapter 53: Joy Ward's Injustice, Waylon Lewis's Favoritism

She paused, fixing her gaze squarely on Joy Ward.

The frosty stare, sharp as a sword, made Joy's heart tighten, alerting her to her need for vigilance.

"I'm curious, what are you talking about? How have I wronged you? What exactly have I wronged you for?"

Joy Ward bit her lip, "Miss Williams, why bother pretending ignorance?"

"A fine question of why pretend ignorance," Hope Williams wouldn't let Joy off the hook so easily. She pulled the corner of her lips coldly, "Sorry, but I really don't know. You might as well tell me. I'm listening. I am very eager to know how I've wronged you."

Hope Williams casually leaned against the sofa, carelessly straightened her white robe, and poured herself a glass of water. She held the glass up to Joy, and impatiently urged her on as she remained silent, "Begin now, Miss Ward."

Waylon Lewis's eyes were deep, his gaze shifting from Hope to Joy.

"You shameless bitch..." Kaeli Thompson, seeing her daughter in distress, couldn't help but stand up and point at Hope, about to unleash a torrent of curses, when a chilling, oppressive gaze swept over her.

Kaeli's throat tightened, as if being choked, and she couldn't utter another word.

"Continue." Waylon's voice was cold.

Kaeli trembled, looking pleadingly at Alitzel. Alitzel moved, pulled Kaeli to sit down, and said, "Let Joy speak. It's best if she spells out the details to make this woman, Hope, utterly convinced."

Anxious, Joy pursed her lips. Speaking about this matter in front of Hope, she couldn't stop her inner insecurity. She clutched the bedsheets tighter and slowly began speaking.

After a moment's thought, Hope roughly guessed the meaning behind their words. Listening to Joy finish, she couldn't help but burst into cold laughter, almost exactly what she had anticipated.

Joy Ward truly lived up to her reputation, with a talent for turning black into white, honed to perfection.

The aggrieved and begrudging composure she maintained while recounting the events could deceive everyone.

After listening, Hope was quiet, her expression thoughtful, as if considering something.

"Don't you have anything to say?" The man's jaw tensed. He looked at Hope with a chill in his brow and a deep darkness in his eyes.

"Do you believe me if I speak?"

Hope slowly lifted her eyes to meet Waylon's, and after a long while, her pale lips parted, and she asked with a cool voice, "I say she is lying, and that I was the one who saved Grandpa Lewis. Do you believe me?"

Hope's eyelashes trembled slightly when she asked this question.

The man pursed his lips, his gaze deepening, and he remained silent for a long moment.

Hope snorted coldly, "Waylon, don't bring up trust next time if you don't have it, OK?"

It hurts!

Waylon frowned, his cool voice rising, "I will investigate."

"Investigate?"

He still didn't believe.

A moment later, Hope tightened her expression and lightly curled her lips in a smile.

Well, he never trusted her anyway. Her words weighed nothing against those of the woman in his heart; Hope knew this all too well.

She shouldn't have harbored any hope; then the disappointment wouldn't have been so overwhelming.

"Mom, brother, I've told you, it was my sister-in-law who saved Grandpa..." Wyatt Lewis entered the sickroom unbeknownst to the others and saw everyone with different expressions. Without hesitation, he broke the impasse.

"Wyatt, you really have been fooled by this woman. Compared to Joy, how could her medical skills possibly be inferior?" Alitzel stood up and said.

"Yes, our Joy even went abroad specifically to study cardiology. Mister, our Joy's medical skills can't be compared to this woman's, don't be deceived by her."

"Mister, I know you're prejudiced against me because of Miss Williams. I don't blame you, and I don't ask for anything else. Say what you will, just don't slander me."

Three women, each phrase in harmony with the next, and among them, his own mother, darkened Wyatt's expression.

Hope drained the hot water in her cup in one gulp, stood up, straightened her clothes, and smiled, "Forget it, thank you, Wyatt." At least there was someone who chose to believe her.

But Hope understood that without evidence, they would never believe her words, so any further explanation was in vain.

Hope didn't want to waste words explaining because even if she spoke herself hoarse, no one would believe her.

Joy narrowed her eyes in disbelief. She couldn't understand how Hope could bear so much. Joy had wronged her so, and yet she could still laugh it off lightly, appearing indifferent as if she hadn't taken Joy seriously at all.

What was she really thinking?

Hope's sharp gaze twinkled, and with a light laugh, she said, "Well then, Grandpa Lewis's treatment must continue. Let me help with his treatment, and you can all be there to witness. Then you'll know who is lying."

Joy shivered imperceptibly, staring hard at Hope. What was she trying to do? Using this to treat Grandpa Lewis?

That was impossible, not allowable; it would reveal everything.

She couldn't let Hope succeed.

Joy addressed Hope.

"Miss Williams, Grandpa Lewis's illness isn't just a common cold. Are you sure you can handle it? I'm not doubting you, but given your academic background, after all these years not practicing medicine, can you really manage? Grandpa Lewis's heart disease can't afford any mishaps."

Tears brimmed in Joy's eyes, sounding as if she were kindly and concernedly advising Hope to know better and back down, but Hope knew she just wanted to step on her in front of everyone, to tell them her medical skills were inadequate.

These words triggered Alitzel to be the first to stand up against Hope.

Hope's expression darkened slightly, "Since I have said it, I have the ability to do it. Grandpa Lewis has shown me kindness; of course, I wouldn't joke with his life."

"But are you confident, Miss Williams?"

"Joy, how entertaining you are. Can't you understand human words?"

"I'm just worried about Grandpa Lewis's health not being able to withstand your 'care.' If..." Joy was about to continue when a stern, frigid voice interrupted her.

"Enough."

Waylon's brows were heavy, his voice suddenly cold.

"Let's do as she suggests."

What... what?

Joy looked at Waylon incredulously. He had actually agreed. Could he really care so little about Grandpa Lewis's life for the sake of this woman?

Waylon's consent also caught Hope by surprise for a moment. When she looked up at Waylon, he had already left the sickroom, and Hope did not linger either.

Alitzel's gaze narrowed as she watched Hope leave, and she couldn't help but recall Joy's words from the night before.

Waylon cared for Hope.

The continuous protection Waylon showed for this woman forced her to take it seriously.

Chapter 54: Chapter 54: A Storm of Blood and Violence

Hope Williams returned to her office wanting to write the academic paper she'd been mulling over for the past few days, but after typing a few words, her mind wandered away.

The events of today had indeed caught her off guard, but what made her think deeply afterward was the sudden onset of the old man's illness, the cause of which she couldn't figure out.

However, after today's incident, she suddenly realized that during the entire treatment process for Grandpa Lewis, the only thing that didn't go through her hands was the medication. She had also noticed during her examination of Grandpa Lewis yesterday that his breathing and heartbeat were all disrupted. If it wasn't an external psychological factor causing this, then it must have been the medication.

Yesterday, she was too focused on her own prescription to consider anything wrong with the medicine. But now it seemed quite likely that the medicine Grandpa Lewis took was not from her prescription and was probably switched by Joy Ward.

Hope leaned on the desk with her elbow, her hand resting against her forehead, deep in thought. Various messy details flashed through her mind, and she scolded herself for not being more cautious.

The phone rang. Hope brushed the stray hairs on her smooth forehead and collected her thoughts, glancing at the screen. It was an unknown number.

Hope picked up the phone suspiciously.

"Hello, Hope Williams, wouldn't you ever contact me if I didn't call you?" The deep magnetic voice on the other end resounded.

Hope took a deep breath—it was him again. She pursed her lips and asked calmly, "Do you need something?"

"Of course!"

"Ha..." Hope raised an eyebrow and chuckled lightly, "Well then, son, let's hear it quick. Daddy is listening."

"..."

Listening to Hope's playful tone, Liam Cloud was rather surprised. She had a lot going on recently, everything reaching his ears, yet she still managed to laugh; her attitude was impressive.

"You can still laugh? Good!"

"Speak up if you have something to say; quit beating around the bush!" Holding the phone, Hope walked to the window, watching the slowly setting sun paint the sky red. Glancing at her watch, she noted that there was not much left to do today at the department, and she could leave on time to pick up Luke and Willow from school.

"Some people are investigating you—actually, to be precise, they're investigating the children."

Hope's brow furrowed, her usually indifferent eyes darkening.

"Who?"

"Lewis Family."

Liam had the largest intelligence network; his informants were spread across business and political circles. He could find out anything he wanted with just a little effort.

The Lewis Family? The only person in the Lewis family who knew about the children's existence was Waylon Lewis, so it must be him investigating the children.

Hope clenched the phone tighter.

Silence lingered for a while. He indeed had not given up on finding the children. Hope glanced at her watch again, her mood anxious, wishing she could fly to the school and bring the children back to her side to ease her worries.

"Also, someone is investigating your identity as Cynthia."

"Who?" Hope asked as she started to gather her things, preparing to head to the school.

"Lewis Family."

That wasn't a surprise to Hope, they probably wanted her to treat Grandpa Lewis—no, Cynthia to treat the old man.

"It's interesting, indeed, using such a broad network to find you—yet the real Cynthia is right in front of them, fighting hard to treat the old man, and they still drive you away. You tell me, don't their eyes deserve to be plucked out?"

In this madly low tone, Hope detected a hint of cruelty and bloodlust, wondering what crazy methods he might be thinking of.

“What’s your ex-husband’s name again?” Liam paused, clicking his tongue twice, “Ah, remembered now, Waylon Lewis, his eyes would be best to pluck out...”

“Liam Cloud!” Hope took a deep breath, her voice stern and cold.

He was never one just to talk idle; if he said something, he meant it.

But the Lewis Family, the top-tier affluent family in Emperor Capital, was not easy to provoke, and Waylon Lewis was not someone easy to talk to—ruthless and decisive in his actions.

This madman, bloodthirsty and brutal, without mercy, Hope couldn’t imagine what kind of bloody storm would ensue if these two tyrants came to blows.

“Why call me if you’re not going to talk?”

“You once promised me you wouldn’t resort to violence so casually. Can’t you think of a placid, peaceful solution?”

“You think I’ve survived till now by peaceful solutions?”

“...”

“Or is it because it involves your ex-husband? Do you care for him?”

Hope pursed her lips, not deigning to argue further, “Just leave my matters alone, I’ll handle them myself.”

“Handle them yourself my ass; you treat the old man of the Lewis family without leaving your name, acting like the good Samaritan Lei Feng, and yet you get blamed. Hope Williams, you think I don’t know? Are you a coward? If you can’t deal with that woman, let me do it. Anyone who dares to bully me has got it coming!”

“Liam Cloud, not everything can be solved with violence; I have my plans for this situation, so leave it.”

“You have your plans? They’re bullying you outright, Hope, are you stupid?”

Suddenly called a coward, then stupid, Hope massaged her forehead, speechless.

“I’ve realized it’s impossible to have a conversation with you, always so irritable. Can’t you see a therapist about this attitude? Thanks for letting me know all this, I’m hanging up now.” Hope ended the call.

Annoyed and deeply worried, her thoughts in turmoil, it was clear to Hope that Waylon, that deceiver, had not given up on the idea of snatching away the children even for a moment.

She headed to the parking garage and had just gotten into her car when her phone rang—it was Aria Richardson calling, “Hope, did Waylon Lewis look for you at the hospital today?”

“How did you know?” Hope was surprised; it seemed like everyone was monitoring her like placing a tracker, given how quickly news reached them.

“A video was posted online, on the forum of your hospital. What exactly is going on between you and Waylon Lewis, and what did he want at the hospital?”

Chapter 55: Chapter 55 Hope Williams Being Followed

Aria Richardson couldn't help but worry about Hope Williams. She mentioned the video online but didn't talk about the ridiculous comments beneath it. Hope had done nothing wrong, yet the trolls were accusing her of deliberately seducing men and even juggling two at once. Aria was so infuriated that she fought with these keyboard warriors for countless rounds and couldn't resist calling Hope.

Hope set her phone on the holder, started her car, and shared what happened today with Aria.

Aria's angry curses filled the car, a reaction Hope had expected and found reasonable.

“Joy Ward, what kind of demon or ghost is she? I've seen shameless people but never anyone as despicable as her. How could she be so disgusting? She saved Old Master Lewis? My God, why doesn't she just ascend to heaven? With her medical skills, it's a miracle she hasn't harmed the old man, let alone saved him! Oh, my God, I'm so furious. If I were there, I would've slapped her twice, making her recognize herself clearly. And Hope, you're Cynthia. She dares compare her medical skills to yours? Hope, reveal your identity and pin her against the wall.”

Hope held the steering wheel, her eyes fixed ahead, much calmer compared to Aria's anger.

She just didn't expect Joy Ward to have the audacity to do such a thing. Wasn't she afraid that one day, when the old man woke up, her true colors would be revealed? And she even had the nerve to falsely claim credit.

Hope shook her head in disbelief and chuckled.

Such shamelessness was beyond anything she had seen before.

Taking a deep breath, she exhaled heavily, "It's indeed infuriating, but today's chaos with Joy Ward wasn't without gains; at least now I have a direct opportunity to treat Old Master Lewis at the Lewis Family home, which saves me a lot of trouble."

"Hope, wake up. After all they've done to you at the Lewises, you still want to save Old Master Lewis? Even if he was kind to you in the past, it was your mother who saved him first, not you. You don't owe them anything. Let's not do this thankless job, okay?"

"...No," Hope answered firmly.

She couldn't just not save Grandpa Lewis.

Moreover, Grandpa Lewis had fallen ill because of her; she couldn't possibly give up on saving him. She had to make him well again.

Aria was silent for a few seconds, then sighed heavily, "I knew I couldn't persuade you. Alright, but Hope, you must protect yourself. And now that you are in contact with the Lewis Family so much, aren't you afraid that Luke and Willow might be..."

"Aria!" Hope gripped the steering wheel tighter, raising her voice without meaning to.

Aria flinched on the other end of the phone, "What's wrong, Hope?"

Hope's delicate eyebrows were tightly furrowed as she glanced at the rearview mirror, her gaze locking onto the black car behind her. She steadied her emotions and calmly said, "I think I'm being followed."

"What? Where are you now? Should I come to you? Find a crowded place to park, and don't get out of the car alone. I'm coming right now..."

"That license plate..." Hope frowned, "It's the Lewis Family's car."

"The Lewis Family?"

"Yes, their license plates are famous here in Emperor Capital."

"Why would they follow you?"

Hope maneuvered the wheel methodically, drove to a parking spot, then steadily stopped and got out of the car with her coat and phone in hand.

"Hello? Hello? Hope, are you alright?"

"I don't know." Hope's eyes narrowed slightly, her gaze icily fixing on the car parked in front of her. She spoke into the phone, unperturbed, "I'm fine, Aria. Can you pick up Luke and Willow for me? I'll come to you after handling things here."

"Okay, I'm on my way. Just be careful, and call me the moment you need anything."

"Okay."

Hope's hands were in her trench coat pockets as her cool gaze observed Alitzel Williams stepping out of the car.

Alitzel held a designer handbag, her chin slightly raised, looking at Hope with a disdainful and condescending gaze, exuding an aura of a long-standing high-society woman.

Hope's familiarity with that look was intimate; it was the same look she received from Alitzel when they first met when Hope was eighteen—always disdainful and condescending.

Hope's brow slightly furrowed, her demeanor calm, her gaze direct, neither submissive nor arrogant.

"Let's talk," Alitzel said sternly.

Hope lightly raised an eyebrow, her hand gesturing towards the café.

Inside the café, Hope and Alitzel sat facing each other.

Alitzel unlocked her phone and threw it across to Hope, her eyebrow coldly twitching, grunting, "Hope Williams, you're evidently still trying to seduce my son."

Hope glanced at the video on the phone; it was a sneak recording of her and Waylon Lewis at the hospital.

Hope's exquisite eyebrows drew together slightly, but her expression remained unchanged, even under Alitzel's sharp and oppressive gaze.

"Mrs. Lewis followed me all this way just for this?" Hope lowered her gaze, her delicate, pale fingers gently stirring her coffee.

Alitzel snorted.

"I'm here to remind you to stop deluding yourself," Alitzel asked coldly, her voice rich with sarcasm, "Do you think you could ever return to the Lewis family?"

Chapter 56: Chapter 56: Does Naughty Daddy Have Mommy in His Heart?

Hope Williams picked up her coffee, drank it calmly and elegantly, her indifferent face devoid of any superfluous expression.

“Hope Williams, one must be aware of their own worth. You should know that I don’t want to see you at all, and you should also realize that with your background, you are simply not a match for our Lewis Family.”

A trace of bitterness flickered through Hope’s beautiful eyes, but she responded with a slight smile, not angering at Alitzel Williams’s words. Instead, her expression remained indifferent, seemingly unaffected.

“Mrs. Lewis, I think there’s been a misunderstanding. I have no interest in the position of the young lady of the Lewis Family.”

Her voice was unhurried, carrying a biting sarcasm, her stoic face impeccable.

Her good upbringing still prevented Hope from uttering distasteful words to an elder.

But these days, her tolerance for Alitzel Williams had indeed reached its limit.

“Rest assured, I’ve never thought about returning to the Lewis Family.”

“Pretending what?”

“Ha.” Hope couldn’t help but let out a sarcastic laugh, “How interesting. I say I don’t want to return to the Lewis Family, and you accuse me of pretending. Since you’ve already convicted me in your heart, why bother asking me at all?”

Alitzel Williams’s face suddenly darkened.

“Hope Williams, what tricks are you trying to play now? Trying to retreat as a way to advance? Let me be clear, don’t even think about it! As long as I’m here, you will never set foot in the Lewis Family again. Forget that notion.”

“Return to the Lewis Family? Ha, as I said, five years ago I chose to leave, and now I don’t care for it.” Hope’s heart turned icy, “Don’t worry, I only wanted to save Grandpa Lewis, that’s all.”

“Ha, what makes you think you can save the old man?”

“I will achieve what I resolve to do.” Hope cast her gaze down, her voice clear, cold, and resounding, her gaze firm and confident, leaving no room for doubt.

Hope's phone vibrated twice. She looked down to open Aria Richardson's conversation, which startlingly showed a message from five seconds ago: Hope, Luke and Willow are missing!!

With a loud bang.

Hope's usually composed face stiffened, and she stood up abruptly, making quite a noise.

Alitzel Williams frowned in displeasure, but Hope was already grabbing her bag to leave.

"Hope Williams." Alitzel Williams said angrily, "I haven't finished talking..."

All she was left with was the sight of Hope's retreating back.

Hope immediately returned Aria's call, "Hello, what's going on?"

"I just went to pick up Luke and Willow from school. The teacher said they had already been picked up by someone. What do we do?" Aria's voice was choked with emotion and near tears, "Could it be that Waylon Lewis found Luke and Willow and took them away?"

Hope took a deep breath, her mind instinctively leaping to that same guess, especially considering Liam Cloud's reminder that the Lewis Family was searching for Luke and Willow.

A fear unlike any she had known surged in Hope's heart.

"Hope, what do we do? Please say something, I'm panicking."

"I'll go look."

Hope hung up the phone with red-rimmed eyes, her brows furrowed, her countenance growing colder by the moment.

Previously, Luke had given her a watch with a three-person GPS tracking feature. Clinging to a thread of hope, Hope activated the tracker.

Her grip on the phone suddenly tightened.

The little hope Hope had harbored shattered.

The tracker showed that Luke and Willow were right at the old Lewis estate at that moment.

Waylon Lewis! He claimed he had no intention of taking the children, so what was this?

In her mind, Hope cursed Waylon Lewis hundreds of times.

She started her car and headed straight for the Lewis residence.

Meanwhile, two small figures were silently moving through the old Lewis estate.

"Brother, it's too dangerous. What if the bad daddy finds out and snatches us away?" Willow crouched behind Luke, worried.

Luke, holding a tiny GPS tracker, was searching for Brother Jimmy's room, "But Willow, Brother Jimmy is supposed to be a birthday gift for Mommy. We have to get Brother Jimmy back. Don't worry, I've hacked into the bad daddy's computer before and seen his schedule. He has a meeting today and probably won't come home until late. We'll find it soon and then we'll leave."

Hearing this, Willow also mustered the courage to search with Luke.

Waylon Lewis, who they assumed would be coming home late, was now entering the old house followed by Thomas Hughes and two secretaries.

"Boss, there's another video conference later at five o'clock."

"I know." Waylon's face was stern as he unbuttoned his suit jacket and went upstairs to visit Grandpa Lewis first, inquiring about his health and instructing, "Keep a closer watch on Grandpa's side. We can't let what happened last time occur again. Have a doctor available at the Lewis Family home around the clock."

"Understood, Boss. Don't worry."

"And another thing..."

Waylon's voice halted, his head slightly tilting, his intelligent eyes narrowing ever so slightly. It seemed he had just seen something dash past.

"Boss, what's wrong?" Seeing Waylon stop abruptly, Thomas Hughes asked anxiously.

"Did you see something run past just now?"

Thomas Hughes, taken aback, followed Waylon's gaze, but all was calm; not even a mosquito in sight. "Boss, I didn't see anything."

Waylon withdrew his gaze, perhaps it was his mistake, his brow furrowed slightly.

“Brother, look, it’s Brother Jimmy.” Willow struggled to climb up the executive chair, excitedly took Brother Jimmy from the desk, “We found Brother Jimmy.”

“Well done, Willow.” Luke carefully protected Willow on the chair, helping her down.

Luke took Brother Jimmy, checking it briefly to ensure it just needed charging before feeling relieved.

“Brother, look, the bad daddy even hid photos of Mommy here. Mommy looks so beautiful in a white dress.” While Luke was checking Brother Jimmy, Willow held the photo frame next to her, her little hand touching the picture of Hope Williams in a beautiful wedding dress.

In the photo, Hope, clad in a pure white wedding dress, holding a bouquet, looked unimaginably beautiful. At the age of 20, her delicate features held a youthful and bashful glow during the wedding photo shoot. Her gorgeous amber eyes brimmed with smiles and boundless anticipation for the future. Her eyes held only Waylon Lewis, and none but him. She looked completely like a happy bride, affectionately linking arms with Waylon, her head slightly resting on his shoulder.

Even though Waylon’s stoic face did not show much emotion, one could discern a hint of a smile in his eyes.

Looking at the photo, Luke couldn’t help but ask, “Willow, do you think the bad daddy has Mommy in his heart?”

Chapter 57: Chapter 57 Luke and Willow were taken away by Waylon Lewis

“I don’t know.” Willow pouted her little mouth and put the photo album back in its original place.

“But if not, why would bad Daddy cherish Mommy’s photos?” Luke murmured, puzzled.

Thud, thud, thud...

A series of neither light nor heavy footsteps sounded outside.

Luke cautiously looked towards the door, “Not good, someone is coming, let’s hide first.” In order not to give anything away, Luke first put Brother Jimmy back in his original place.

The study was connected to the room next door; Luke and Willow opened the door and quickly hid in the other room.

The moment the door closed, the study door was opened.

Waylon Lewis adjusted his tie, sat at the desk, turned on the computer, and started a video conference.

Meanwhile, the bodyguard at the door, seeing a car approaching, intended to stop it, but when he saw the cold and ruthless face of the woman in the car, he didn't think twice before promptly opening the gate to let her pass.

This she-devil was not to be messed with; the door had just been fixed, and he didn't want her to break it again.

Hope Williams entered the Lewis Family home smoothly.

"Young Madam?" Just as Nanny Thompson opened the door and Hope came in, Nanny Thompson intended to inquire, but upon meeting Hope's gaze, she swallowed her words.

Hope was in a furious state and glanced around the living room, "Where is Waylon Lewis?"

Hearing this, Nanny Thompson immediately pointed upstairs, "Young Master is in the study... ah, Young Madam, I'll go call..."

"I'll find him myself." Hope coldly dropped a sentence and strode upstairs.

Seeing the expression on Hope's face, Nanny Thompson wasn't sure if she should stop her, but thinking it over, she knew she couldn't and decided to pretend she hadn't seen anything, not wanting to be blamed, and immediately went on with her own tasks.

Hope was extremely familiar with every room in the Lewis household and quickly found her way to Waylon's study door.

At that moment, a raging fire of anger ignited within Hope; she could tolerate everything except the matter of taking the children away.

Hope pushed the door open without hesitation.

"Waylon Lewis, you are the biggest liar in the world."

When Hope saw Waylon, her anger erupted.

Waylon shifted his gaze from the computer screen, slightly surprised by Hope's appearance.

He furrowed his brows.

The biggest liar in the world?

Waylon, sitting at home, the accusations fell from the sky.

He glanced at her coolly, remaining silent, and the air grew quiet for a few seconds.

The conference was still ongoing in the computer, suddenly two low chuckles came through, playful, "Brother Waylon, you owe someone a favor, huh?"

Waylon shifted his gaze, raised his hand, and closed the computer.

"Where have you hidden the children?" Hope cut straight to the chase.

He was momentarily stunned, "What children?"

"You're still playing dumb, Waylon Lewis? Amusing, isn't it?"

Waylon's expression darkened rapidly; he couldn't understand why Hope had suddenly come to demand the children, "What madness is this? When did I hide the children?"

Hope took a deep breath trying to stay calm, her gaze icy as she stared at Waylon.

"If you haven't hidden the children, then where are they? The GPS shows Luke and Willow are right here, Waylon Lewis, and you still deny it."

A deeper chill appeared in Waylon's eyes.

"I told you, I didn't take the children away..." Waylon paused, his eyes shifting slightly, he frowned, "Are you saying the children are lost?"

"Playing dumb!" Hope's eyes reddened, truly panic-stricken, thinking Waylon was deliberately delaying her made her even angrier, "Waylon Lewis, if you don't hand over the children, I won't leave."

Waylon's brow furrowed tight, with Hope looking as if she would fight to the death if he didn't hand over the children.

He took the children away?

Dare he?

Now every time he even mentions children, she goes crazy; he now dares not even mention them, let alone take them away. Joking!

But now the crucial matter was that the children were missing!

Seeing the anxious look on his face, Hope sarcastically pulled at her lip, "Waylon Lewis, have you been hanging out with Lotus Ward too long and picked up her habits? Besides you, who would take them away? Yet here you are still playing innocent, really that's enough."

Waylon's mouth twitched slightly, wanting to speak.

The woman's angry voice rose again, "Waylon Lewis, I don't care what you do to me, that's fine, but when it comes to the children, I've said it before, I won't compromise, and I definitely won't compromise. I won't give them to you. I know I'm no match for you, if you really want to take the children away, I can't stop you, but if you really do that, I'll make you regret it, even if I have to pay with my life."

Waylon's temples throbbed.

"Crazy."

He muttered lowly, paced two steps in place in agitation, picked up his phone, and put it to his ear, his voice cold, "Gather everyone."

"Boss, what happened?"

Waylon clenched his back teeth in anger, "My son is missing, find my son, everyone, immediately."

"...Yes."

"Also, mobilize the police force from the station, have everyone search."

"The children are right here in the Lewis home, you hid them, why do you still pretend?"

"Hope Williams, if the children are found here in the Lewis home, I, Waylon Lewis, will let you deal with me as you see fit!" Waylon banged his phone down on the desktop, his face threateningly grim.

He didn't know which dog dared to kidnap his children and frame him, causing him to be lectured to death by this madwoman, Waylon boiled with rage internally, and if he found that person, he swore he'd skin him alive.

Hope tugged at her lips, "Fine, if you want to play, I'll see it through to the end."

Hope's sharp gaze stared at him, unwilling to move away even slightly.

The atmosphere between the two was rigidly tense.

Waylon's somber gaze landed on the woman in front of him, her eyes filled with tears yet her face exceptionally stubborn; a few traces of struggle flashed through his eyes, somewhat reluctant.

Just then, Wyatt Lewis excitedly came in holding two children, "Brother, I found the two children in your room, the boy looks exactly like a carbon copy of you."

Chapter 58: Chapter 58: To Keep My Child Alive

The air fell silent for a few seconds.

Hope Williams held Luke and Willow close in her arms, nervously.

"Waylon Lewis, you said Luke and Willow weren't taken away by you, so what's this all about? Tell me."

"Mommy, actually..." Willow muttered quietly.

"Don't be afraid, my darlings. Mommy's here, he won't dare to do anything to you!"

Luke and Willow were also helpless. They had hidden well in that room, thinking they could quickly return and all would be well, but then someone suddenly burst in. When he saw them, his expression was as if they were aliens invading Earth.

Moreover, they realized that this uncle had an extraordinary ability to adapt. After his initial surprise, he excitedly tried to recognize them, and his enthusiasm was unstoppable.

As a result, he had forcibly brought them here...

Willow swallowed dryly, looking at her brother with fear-filled eyes. Should she keep talking?

Mommy looked so scary when angry; she seemed as if she wanted to tear apart their bad daddy. It must be a misunderstanding.

Luke, with his head lowered, shook it fearfully.

Let's not say anymore, let bad daddy take the blame. He's already bad enough, one more thing won't make a difference!

Willow nodded in agreement, and the siblings silently reached a consensus.

Hope, still furious, failed to notice the small gestures of Luke and Willow as she glared at Waylon Lewis.

A flash flickered in Waylon's dark eyes, his chest swelling with a sudden joy.

His gaze fixed on the children, not shifting in the slightest.

A girl and a boy—he had twins back then.

The girl was pretty, small, soft, and very cute, her clear, amber eyes strikingly similar to hers.

The boy had a face very similar to his own, with a look of inherent seriousness, his eye color shallow and cool.

The appearance of these two children had provoked an extremely strong emotion in him.

His well-defined hand raised as if to touch the children, but Hope immediately guarded them behind her back, her eyes wary. Waylon suddenly came back to reality, his hand stiffening slightly.

“Are the children's names Luke and Willow?” he asked.

Hope's eyes narrowed slightly but she did not respond.

Her expression turned slightly bitter; the children's presence here was indeed unexpected.

But given the current situation, there's no way he could explain himself, and Hope's suspicions would only deepen. Waylon massaged his furrowed brow with worry.

“Cough cough...”

Wyatt Lewis coughed awkwardly. The atmosphere in the room was strangely tense.

“Brother, sister-in-law, these children are yours, right?” Wyatt wasn't foolish; from the current situation, these looked to be five or six-year-old children, likely the ones Hope was pregnant with before she left, and they greatly resemble his brother—it's undoubtedly his lineage.

Back then, Hope had disappeared overnight, and no one knew why she left or where she went, until later they found out she had divorced Waylon.

But why divorce having had children, leaving so decisively?

“Sister-in-law, if you were pregnant back then, why did you leave...”

Wyatt choked up, regretting his words the moment he asked them—it seemed inappropriate given the tension in the room.

Hope’s eyes trembled, a surge of bitterness uncontrollably rising, tears welling up. Eventually, she looked away, forcefully holding back her tears.

Her voice was exceptionally cold, “To let my children survive.”

In that moment, Waylon’s eyes shook violently, his heart clenched as if gripped by something.

That night, his tall and sturdy figure stood by the floor-to-ceiling window, his deep eyes following Hope’s slender figure as she left with the two little ones.

He smoked one cigarette after another, his deep-set eyes carrying a melancholy that had never been there before.

The two little ones, buckled up in the back seat, kept their heads low, not daring to breathe too loudly. They had made a mistake that caused Mommy to worry and bad daddy to be scolded by Mommy, filling the little ones with guilt.

Mommy wasn’t speaking now; she must still be very angry.

The car smoothly stopped in the apartment parking lot.

Hope led the two little ones home, noticing their mood was even more depressed than hers.

Confused, she initially thought they were scared; once home, she hugged the children into her arms to comfort them.

“My darlings, Mommy is at fault here for not protecting you well. I promise this won’t happen again, okay?”

“...” Luke and Willow exchanged glances, their emotions even more tangled, guiltily lowering their heads.

Mommy was not only worried for them but also misunderstood daddy and now blamed herself, but none of this was her or bad daddy’s fault—it was theirs.

Willow secretly tugged at Luke’s sleeve, her eyes full of questions.

“Mommy... actually...” Luke struggled, wanting to tell Mommy the truth but also fearing her anger, yet he didn’t want Mommy to feel guilty for not protecting them.

“Yes? What is it?”

Amid immense conflict, Luke finally spoke, “Mommy, actually... today, it was me who took sister to the Lewis Family’s house. It wasn’t bad daddy who took us.”

“What?”

Hope’s expression visibly froze for a moment, she lifted her head, her eyes wide in disbelief as she looked at the two well-behaved children lowering their heads, as if waiting to be reprimanded.

A flicker of disbelief crossed her eyes.

“Are you saying it wasn’t Waylon Lewis who took you, but you went to the Lewis Family’s house yourselves?”

Hope nearly doubted her own ears and asked again.

Luke and Willow became guiltier, nodding slightly and weakly saying, “Mommy, we’re sorry.”

Chapter 59: Chapter 59: Misunderstanding, Admission of Mistake, Apology, Dinner Invitation

They went to the Lewis Family on their own? So, it’s them running off on their own again without a word.

She was frantic when she realized they were missing, even thought Waylon Lewis had taken them, pointed at Waylon’s nose and scolded, so anxious that she almost fought with Waylon!

And now they tell her that they ran to someone’s house on their own!

After all that, it turned out she had misunderstood Waylon.

Hope Williams slapped her forehead in annoyance, emotions churning in her eyes, she took a deep breath, forcibly suppressed her emotions, and frantically advised herself, my own flesh and blood, stay calm, definitely stay calm, perhaps they had a reason, listen to their explanation, don’t get angry at the kids, right, don’t get angry at the kids.

Hope Williams took a deep breath, tried to keep her tone as calm as possible, “Speak, before your mommy dies of anger, finish what you were saying.”

“Mommy, do you remember Brother Jimmy?”

“Luke’s gift for Mommy, mommy remembers.”

“That time Mommy went to the Lewis Family to treat Grandpa Lewis...” Luke explained everything to Hope Williams.

Hope Williams touched her forehead, the overload of information almost made her faint.

“Mommy, scold us, it’s our fault.” Willow’s little face wrinkled up.

“It’s my fault, Mommy, you should scold me instead.”

Hope Williams’s frown slightly gathered then relaxed, tightened then loosened, and finally, she sighed deeply, looking at these two pitiful little ones, how could she bring herself to scold them.

After a long while, Hope Williams slowly said, “Mommy won’t scold you, scolding you would hurt Mommy’s own heart.”

“But...”

The two little ones heard Hope Williams say this, their heads raised with brightened eyes, but there was a ‘but’, and they sadly lowered their heads again.

“But the mistake you made this time is very serious. How dangerous it is for you to run out like this, wouldn’t Mommy worry? Mommy has told you, you are still too young to understand many things or have full control, what if you had run into danger making decisions on your own?”

Hope Williams felt helpless and couldn’t bear to lecture them severely, she earnestly explained things to them.

Luke and Willow have always been smart, Hope Williams explained so they could understand. Luke has been full of ideas since he was small and he is sensible.

Moreover, the children had good intentions for her, Hope couldn’t really be angry, instead she felt a bit apologetic toward Waylon, she really had misunderstood him this time.

And today, the moment she saw her children, Hope saw the joy in Waylon’s eyes, that joy was the instinct of a father seeing his biological children for the first time; it couldn’t be faked.

Hope Williams furrowed her brows, “You two need to reflect on this properly, understood?”

“Understood,” both little ones said in unison.

“Then Mommy, what about bad daddy? It’s our fault Mommy misunderstood him.” Luke expressed their apologies.

Hope Williams was also troubled.

“Actually Mommy, Willow doesn’t think bad daddy is that bad. He didn’t do anything today, and despite being wronged, he wasn’t angry. I think bad daddy is quite nice.”

Hope Williams did not deny Willow’s words. Today she, too, was surprised that Waylon Lewis did not take the children; and upon seeing the children, he calmly let them return.

It seems that Waylon Lewis was telling the truth about not taking away the children, because he wouldn’t pass up such a good opportunity today if he intended to.

Hope Williams’s frown relaxed slightly, perhaps she had been too sensitive before, thinking of this, her hanging heart also relaxed a bit.

But what Liam Cloud said, about the Lewis Family looking into the children’s matter, what was that about?

If Waylon had no intentions of taking the children, he wouldn’t have needed to keep looking into it, who else in the Lewis Family even knew about the children’s existence.

Hope Williams used her phone to report safety to Aria Richardson, chatted a bit, answered some family members of patients, and as she was planning to wash up and sleep, her gaze settled on a familiar number, conflicted.

Indeed, she had wronged Waylon, and should apologize to him, but how should she start?

In the end, she leaned her cold phone against her forehead, sighing somewhat wearily.

In the living room, being punished, the two little ones propped up their heads quietly watching Hope Williams struggling with her phone.

“Brother, why is mommy holding the phone with a black screen and not looking at it?” Willow asked in a whisper.

“I also don’t know.”

“Brother, today mommy misunderstood bad daddy, and was so harsh to him, it was ultimately our fault, should we make it up to bad daddy?”

“I think so too, it’s our fault, we should take responsibility. Because of us, mommy and bad daddy’s relationship got worse. What should we do to make amends, and even bad daddy today didn’t seem as bad as imagined, what do you think?”

Willow's soft little face took on a thoughtful look and nodded.

"Brother, then we should have mommy and bad daddy eat together, wouldn't it be good if the misunderstanding was cleared?"

"Good idea, then should mommy invite daddy for a meal?"

"No way," Willow immediately disagreed, hands on her hips, refusing, "Daddy is a boy, how can you let a girl take the initiative, it definitely must be daddy who invites mommy."

Luke nodded, "Then how do we get bad daddy to invite mommy for a meal?"

The two little ones were again troubled, this was still a difficult problem.

After all, both bad daddy and mommy were too proud, neither willing to bow to the other in anything.

"Let's call bad daddy." Luke had a good memory; he had seen Waylon's phone number in Hope Williams' phone and remembered it.

Willow completely agreed.

The phone rang for several seconds before it was answered, the other side didn't speak, Luke tentatively called out, "Bad daddy?"

The person on the other end hesitated for a few seconds, a low and slow voice finally responded, "It's me."

"I'm Luke."

"I know."

"We told mommy the truth, it wasn't you who took us, it wasn't your fault today, it's because of you being wronged, I apologize to you, sorry," Luke said apologetically.

"..."

The other side was silent for a few seconds, Luke and Willow looked at each other, thinking perhaps Waylon was angry; after all, no one likes being wronged, feeling a bit panicked, they tentatively asked again, "Bad daddy, are you angry?"

"No."

"Then do you forgive us?"

“Knowing one’s mistake and correcting it, your mommy has taught you well, what else?” Waylon’s eyes showed a layer of light helplessness, but his lips couldn’t help lifting in a smile, no hint of anger there.

Chapter 60: Chapter 60 Waylon Lewis’s Value Lies in Self-Awareness

“Can we ask you for a favor, bad daddy?”

Waylon Lewis raised an eyebrow, “Let’s hear it.”

These two little rascals were calling him so late. He thought it couldn’t just be to apologize. Waylon Lewis curled his lips into a smirk, waiting for what they would say next.

“Could you take our mommy out for a meal?” Willow asked timidly, her voice milkily sweet, irresistibly adorable.

“What?”

Waylon Lewis walked to the window, looking at the twinkling lights outside, a flicker of surprise passing through his deep eyes.

...

“Our mommy said she wanted you to take her out for a meal; she has something to tell you.”

“She wants me to take her out? Did she say that herself?”

Waylon’s astute eyes narrowed slightly with amusement, yet he was skeptical.

“Mm-hmm, of course.”

“ ... ”

“You don’t believe it?” Luke asked.

“The likelihood is not high,” he said in a deep voice.

“Mmm...” Luke paused, as if pondering something, and after a few seconds, he spoke up, “Bad daddy, Luke suddenly realizes you have a high-quality trait.”

“Mm?”

A high-quality trait?

What high-quality trait?

“Especially self-aware!”

“ ... ”

Especially self-aware?!

...

Waylon Lewis was momentarily stunned—his dark, deep eyes fluttering with confusion—then he quickly regained his composure, shaking his head helplessly with a smile.

This son of his was truly Hope Williams’ child, inheriting her sharp wit perfectly.

“You are very smart.”

“Just average, the world’s third,” the little guy boasted joyfully.

Waylon Lewis chuckled softly, “You should feel fortunate.”

“Fortunate about what?” Luke asked, puzzled.

“My high-quality genes were passed on to you, that’s why you’re so smart.”

“Psh, I was born from my mommy; what does that have to do with you?”

“Without me, your mommy couldn’t have had you,” Waylon said, the amusement deepening in his profound eyes, so much pride that his tail might have been wagging to the sky.

“That’s nonsense, both Willow and I were born to mommy alone, what does that have to do with you?”

Luke was angry; he wouldn’t believe they couldn’t have been born without their mommy. She was the one who gave birth to them and raised them all by herself; with or without him, what was the difference?

“Right, we were born and raised by mommy, we didn’t need you for that,” Willow chimed in furiously, contradicting Waylon Lewis.

Hearing the children’s words, he felt a heavy twinge in his chest, a thick sense of guilt suddenly enveloping him.

The children didn't understand what he was talking about, but their words reflected the reality Hope Williams had lived these past years. The children were born of her alone, raised by her alone, with or without him there was no difference...

Waylon Lewis slightly bowed his head, his refined, thin lips pressed tightly together. Raising his hand, he rubbed his throbbing forehead.

The call was still ongoing, and no one spoke.

Waylon Lewis let out a deep sigh, and after a long while, he slowly asked, "When is she free?"

"... You'll have to call her yourself to ask that."

"Mm."

"Then remember, you have to invite mommy personally. Goodbye, hang up."

"..."

Doo-doo...

Waylon Lewis's cool brow furrowed slightly, he tossed the phone carelessly onto the table, and slowly shifted his gaze outside the window. His typically impassive face was shadowed with a heavy gravity.

Minutes later, Waylon Lewis picked up the phone he had thrown aside. He intended to make the call himself, but a call unexpectedly came in first.

Surprise flickered through Waylon's cool eyes; his long fingers glided to answer the touch screen.

"This is Waylon Lewis."

The girl's soft, calming voice came slowly, tinged with a hint of struggle.

"Mm, is something the matter?"

"About today's incident..." Hope Williams looked down, biting her lip, "I got it wrong; it wasn't you who took Luke and Willow away. I want to apologize to you. I'm sorry."

There was a brief silence on the call.

Hope's fingers drummed on the table, fearing that Waylon Lewis would be angry, only to find the next second the man showed little surprise or verbosity, his voice deep as he said, "Mm, it's fine."

Hope's eyes sparkled, finding Waylon easier to talk to than ever before.

Hope narrowed her eyes slightly and, in the end, let out a sigh of relief, "Well, if there's nothing else, I just wanted to apologize to you..."

"Nothing else you want to say?"

Hope tugged at her lips, and, prompted by his question, she really did think it over thoroughly in her mind, confirming there was nothing more to say before responding, "...Nothing."

"..."

Waylon Lewis was silent for two seconds before he spoke.

"I have something to say to you."

Hope felt a wave of perplexity, thinking to herself why don't you just say it, wondering why he was making it seem so serious, which made her inexplicably anxious.

"Are you free tomorrow?"

Hope paused briefly, then countered, "Do you have something to do?"

Waylon Lewis leaned back in his executive chair, his gaze casually lingering on a photo on the desk, his expression indifferent yet somber.

"Yes."

The man's low voice continued, "Let's have dinner together."

Hope pursed her lips, a bit slow to react, "Dinner? With you?"

"You don't want to?"

"..."

This wasn't about wanting or not wanting, what on earth did he want to have dinner with her for, it all felt so strange.

Hope pursed her lips, using her usual method of declination, very seriously and tactfully saying, "It's mainly that I don't have the time."

Waylon Lewis was silent for another two seconds, then said, "Hmm, mainly I wanted to talk to you about Grandfather's health. Since you..."

"I am free!"

Hope's voice suddenly burst out.

"Tomorrow at noon... I have time."

"..."

Changing her tune quicker than flipping a book, Waylon Lewis's eye twitched, thinking that to invite this woman for a meal he had to bring up Grandfather, and after a while, he couldn't help but laugh helplessly.

"Alright, I'll wait for you at Crane Clearing Tower," the man's voice then arose.

Crane Clearing Tower, the most famous restaurant in Emperor Capital, with its pavilions, terraces and towers, and jade railings, was a sight that exhilarated the spirit at a glance.

Their dishes were even more commendable, each one fresh and tasty, primarily featuring light fare.

Hope had always been fond of this place, and had wanted to take the two little ones there, but the restaurant was always packed, and they didn't take reservations. You'd have to line up outside if you wanted to eat.

And yet, people were still willing to queue for it incessantly.

"Mommy, who are you talking to on the phone?" Luke and Willow leaned over to Hope's sides, one on each side.

Hope put down her phone, pinching the chubby cheeks of the two little darlings, "You two little rascals were supposed to be reflecting on your naughtiness, and now here you are blatantly bouncing around in front of me, you've gotten bold, haven't you?"

"Oh, Mommy, can you bear to keep your two cute treasures standing there all the time?" Willow cuddled into Hope's embrace and acted coquettishly, knowing that Mommy was always the softest, and definitely couldn't resist this.

"Mommy definitely can't bear it, right?" Luke also launched into his own charm offensive.

The two little ones acting cute and affectionate instantly cheered Hope up.

Seeing Mommy smile, Luke gave Willow a look, and Willow casually asked, "Mommy, were you talking to bad Daddy on the phone just now?"

“How do you know?”

“What did bad Daddy say?”

“He asked me out to dinner.”

~

The next day, Hope dropped Luke and Willow off at school. Before they entered the building, the two little ones didn't forget to remind her about the dinner with Waylon Lewis.

“Why are you two suddenly so concerned about his matters?” Hope's suspicious gaze rotated between the two little ones.