

Be Gentle 1601

Chapter 1601

"Yes." Luke put his hands in his pocket, maintaining a certain distance from Luca.

He looked at her beautiful face. He could not imagine what she had gone through for the past three years. Why did she change her looks and return here?

She did not acknowledge him when she came back. She still loved her children, but she was willing to treat the kids like how a stranger would.

Why did she become like this...

Luke wanted to question her so badly, but it was not the time yet. He could only keep her close and figure out who was the mastermind behind her.

Even though three years had passed and things were no longer how they used to be, he still believed that the woman in front of him had never changed. She must have a reason for becoming like this.

"But my research has reached a critical stage now. I can't leave..." Luca declined. She had to accomplish the mission, but she could never deceive Luke.

Although she had been lying to him all this while, she could not bear to do this to him as it was related to the whole corporation.

It was especially so when she found out how beneficial the project would be for T Corporation to achieve its yearly target during the meeting just now.

"I can get you another two assistants if you need help. You'd only have to assign them their tasks. As for the research, you may leave it to the others to complete. It won't delay the launch of the new drug," replied Luke.

The more she tried to run away from him, the more he would try to stop her from escaping.

startled. Did he just say he was going to hire an assistant to take over her

left her with no choice.

added, "The project has started. I'll need someone who knows how to speak Russian to follow me around to do some diplomatic interpretation or translation jobs. Do you have any problems with

remained silent. Everything he said was reasonable and made sense. Even though Luke could find a temporary translator or interpreter out there, the problem was that the person he hired could not be exposed to the

think of it, she was indeed the most suitable candidate. After all, she had translated the document, so she might as well just finish the job. It was a matter of

"Is there anything wrong?" Luke asked.

shook her head. She had no choice but to accept his

will be heading to your apartment to clean it up. Did you change the passcode to the door lock?" Luke remained stiff but her brain was quickly churning. Why was he sending someone to tidy up the apartment again before she managed to ask the question, "Alright, that should do it. Change the passcode after they finish cleaning up. Tell me the passcode after that."

"Why?" Luca finally asked.

"It's an important project. I might stay in the apartment temporarily," Luke explained. He was looking for an excuse to approach Luca. "Don't worry. I'll stay in the maid's room. You can still sleep in the master bedroom."

Luca was shocked. He was going to stay in the **maid's room**?

"Mr. Crawford, I can make room for you and move back to my apartment. My apartment has been tidied up." She politely declined.

Although the culprit behind the security guard's murder was still at large, they had lifted the ban on the site. She had sent someone to clean the apartment so that she could move back **in**.

It was just that she did not move back as it was more convenient for her to stay in **Luke's apartment**.

She should return the place to him now since he wanted to stay there. After all, it was not her apartment.

"**That's** unnecessary." Luke noticed she was refusing to get closer to him. He frowned as he felt unhappy about it.

Could it be that she had someone else in *her mind*?

It did not seem like it. He guessed that Luca was controlling her emotions, and she still cared about him after everything that had happened in **the past**.

"There's no need to. I told you I've given the apartment to you, so it's yours. I'll be busy, and you'll be busy with your things too. It'll be easier for you to stay in that apartment when you **work overtime**."

Luca was at a loss for words. He was making her stay in that apartment only because it was convenient when she had to **work overtime**?

seemed like they did not interact with each other except when it came to work.

was convinced. She thought that Luke would take care of the kids no matter how busy he was. He would probably only sleep over at the apartment occasionally, and that was why he was willing to sleep in the maid's room. It was unlikely that he would bear to separate from the kids for days.

replied, "Mr. Crawford, I'm going back to work if there's

office downstairs will still be there. You'd still have to return to your office after the project ends. I've sent Mr. Doyle to decorate the new office for you. Tell him if you need anything." Luke had already done so many things for her that would violate the articles of

project that Luca was in charge of would be able to generate a huge amount of profit for T Corporation after it was launched. However, compared to the design project, the profit gained from her research was far from

what he did was unreasonable, he had his reason to keep everyone

Luca realized she had no other better words to

looked at how reserved she was. He reckoned that she would never have thought he would arrange things this way. He opened his mouth a little as the words were at the tip of his tongue. Eventually, he held back the doubts in his heart and said in a cold voice, "Go back to work if there's

looked down. She could feel a subtle change in her emotions when she thought about running into Luke in the apartment in the future.

was hoping to see Luke more often. She was satisfied even if she had to look at him from

now it seemed like they were getting closer and closer to each other. They were even about to stay under the

Chapter 1602

Luca did not expose Jason when she listened to his explanation. It would be difficult to change anything once Luke had made his decision.

"Mr. Doyle, I'm going downstairs," said Luca. The office was still in the midst of being cleaned. She had no choice but to head to the office downstairs to organize the meeting minutes.

"Alright. They'll finish cleaning the office today. Dr. Craw, you may come upstairs to work tomorrow morning." Jason smiled politely. Although he had no idea why Luke made this arrangement, nothing would ever go wrong if he listened to his boss.

"Sure." Luca nodded.

She went back to her office downstairs. She received an email from the company after a while.

It was her transfer letter.

Rhett knocked on the door and entered. He had seen the transfer letter as well and wanted to ask what had happened.

"Dr. Craw, are you busy?" Rhett was wondering if he would be disturbing her when he saw her with her earphones on and her fingers continuously typing on the keyboard.

Luca stopped what she was doing and pressed the pause button on the recording pen. Then, she looked at him. "What's the matter?"

"Well, I saw the transfer letter. I'd like to know what's going on," answered Rhett. Who would be leading their research if Luca was transferred upstairs?

Luca was the one who guided the research team. It would be unfair to Luca if someone took over her job.

of you seen the transfer letter already?" Luca took off her

everyone is confused. That's why they wanted me to ask you." Rhett was not a gossipy person, but he had to find out what had happened

was unfair to Luca if someone took over her job, and was the project going to be put on hold if no one was taking

they would not want the project to be put on hold after all the hard work they had put in. Moreover, their research on the new drug boasted the fastest progress in the

The project will go on as usual, and I'll still be guiding the research. But I'll have to manage both sides. Oh, I'd like to promote you to assistant manager. Mr. Crawford will be sending a few assistants here in a couple of days. You'll be managing things here most of the time. And you can head upstairs to look for me if there's any major problem," said Luca. The new assistants would be here to take up some of her work responsibilities. She would not have to worry about passing her job to Rhett and letting him lead the whole team

Craw, I can't do that." Rhett shook his head immediately, thinking that he would not be capable enough for

even though it did not take him long to achieve such a good performance in this industry, it was all because Luca had been guiding

can. You're capable. And it's not like I'm leaving. I'm busy with the current project that the company is currently handling, so I'll need your help to watch over the team for me. If anything happens, I'll handle it." Luca tried to convince him. She had done such projects before, so she knew that this tender project would keep her busy.

thought that Rhett would not have to manage the research team for too long. She would be able to leave the job to the Russian translator after she came

no choice but

Luca put on her earphones again and switched on the recording pen after he left. She continued to listen to the recording and transcribe the meeting minutes.

She checked the document thoroughly for any spelling mistakes after organizing the minutes. Then, she sent the document to Jason's *email*.

Luca let out a sigh of relief and put away the recording pen.

She looked at her current office. Luke had prepared this office for her with a security camera installed.

Would he install another security camera when she moved into the *other office*?

Luca's phone notification rang. She glanced at it and saw a string of *numbers*.

She translated the message, and it was asking her how things were going now.

Luca replied to the message with the number code as well. She told them that everything was **going smoothly**.

Then, she received another string of numbers. They were warning her not to play tricks with them. She would be punished if she could not get the tender *document*.

After she saw the threat, Luca leaned on the office chair and was lost in thoughts.

She was not afraid of being punished. Instead, she was afraid that she might **disappoint Luke...**

a plan in mind when she thought

called her to inform her that the office was ready when it was about time to get off work. He asked her to come upstairs to take a look if she needed anything

was going to say there was no need to. She was fine with anything, but she could not take Jason's persuasion. Hence, she could only head upstairs and look at

into Zoey when she walked out of her office.

was carrying a form in her hands and walking toward her. "Dr. Craw, here's a document I need you

"What document is that?" Luca asked.

for the expenses of the office supplies in the office. It's not a big deal. All you have to do is sign it," Zoey smiled as she said. "Won't you be working upstairs from tomorrow onward? That's why I advanced funds for the office supplies expenses in the next quarter. You can just

at it. It was indeed the document for advancing office supplies expenses. She briefly looked at it and checked if there was anything wrong with it. Then, she signed her name on the paper and handed the document back to

took it from her. It looked like she had something to say but she did not know how to start.

the matter?" Luca knew she had something to tell her, so she took the initiative

Chapter 1603

"Dr. Craw, come over and take a look. The office table is placed here, and the computer is here. Is that fine?" Jason asked when he saw her come in.

"I'm fine with anything. The sleeping bag..." Luca pointed at the sleeping bag on the couch. It was her first time seeing a sleeping bag in the office.

"Oh, about this, you might need to work overtime. You may have to stay in the office when it gets busy. A sleeping bag is a lot more comfortable than sleeping on the couch," said Jason. He was a detail-oriented person.

Luca nodded. She would indeed be busy. However, she would always just rest her head and arms on the desk whenever work got too busy. It was nothing like this. There was even a sleeping bag in her office now.

The cleaner left after cleaning up the office.

Jason said, "Take a look around. Tell Tina if you need anything else."

"It's well-prepared. Thank you, Mr. Doyle." Luca glanced at the office desk. Nothing was missing.

"Don't mention it. It was the boss' orders." Jason brought up Luke, then he added, "Oh, I'll need to get the rest of my work done if there's nothing else. I'll be right beside your office if you need anything."

"Alright." Luca nodded.

She was enthralled looking at the office. It was different from the one downstairs.

The office downstairs was safely secured because of the confidential research data. There was a safe to keep the data in her office. However, it was different here. There was only a filing cabinet here, but it felt more like an office.

She looked around the office with her naked eyes. She did not spot any surveillance cameras.

However, that did not mean there was none installed. Luke probably hid the surveillance camera in a corner somewhere...

"Are you satisfied with the office?" Luke's voice came from behind.

startled. She snapped back to her senses and saw the man standing at the door. His footsteps were so quiet that she did not even

She looked at the man with glazed eyes. How long had he been standing

satisfied with the furnishings and decorations?" Luke asked

good enough for a temporary office." It took Luca a second to reply as she looked down. She could feel butterflies in her

he starting to care if she was happy with

Luke raised his eyebrows. Temporary?

he had told her that this arrangement would last until the project was over. However, it would take a year or so to finish the

he would never let her go even after the project was over. She would be in the office downstairs if she left, and he felt that she would be too far away from

to keep her close

at the time. It was time to get off work. He said, "You should clock out. After you do that, do me a favor."

What favor?" Luca lifted her head and looked at him with a puzzled look on her

know about it later. I'll be waiting for you at the parking lot downstairs." Luke left right after he said

looked at him from behind. She was stunned for a moment. What kind of favor would

She did not want to keep Luke waiting. She carried her briefcase and left after clocking out. Many employees were driving out of the building when she reached the basement parking lot.

They would be busier with their work soon. Hence, they were not working overtime today. The parking lot seemed to be congested at *this time*.

Luca stood there for some time. The transfer letter was just sent out. She might get into trouble if other employees saw her getting into Luke's car.

After ten minutes when most of the cars had left, Luca slowly walked toward the parking lot that was reserved for **Luke**.

He got out of the car and walked across the front of the car when he saw her coming. He opened the door to the passenger seat for *her*.

Luca was surprised by his gentlemanly act. She looked around her to make sure no one saw her. Then, she trotted toward his car and *got in*.

The moment she sat in the passenger seat, she lifted her head and thanked the man outside the door. "Thank **you**."

Luke raised his eyebrows when he looked at her acting like a thief, afraid of being seen by someone **else**.

Indeed, it would get her in trouble if someone saw **her**.

It was because she was not Bianca now. She was Luca...

Luke replied to her stiffly, "You're welcome." Then, he closed the car door.

Luca frowned. He had closed the car door a little too hard just now. Was **he angry**?

She did not do anything wrong, though...

like he did not cherish the car

back into the driver's seat. He drove the car and left right away after fastening his

him drive the car down the street after he went out of the parking lot. Luke did not mention where they were going or what kind of favor he needed

no choice but to ask, "Mr. Crawford, where are we going?"

silent. He switched on the radio instead.

her nose. She felt embarrassed being like this, but she insisted on asking, "Then, can you at least tell me how I can help you?"

always this impatient?" Luke did not answer her question. Instead, he glanced sideways

radio and Luke's voice overlapped in Luca's ears. She almost thought she misheard

Impatient?

did she feel like something was hidden behind those

had not done anything

Luca let out a sigh. She had no idea what she did to piss him off. She could sense his
Luke kept silent.

Chapter 1604

Luca pushed the car door open. She was still confused as to why he would bring her here to try the dishes.

Would it not be better if he brought the old master or his children here?

They were a family, after all. They would know what each other's preferences were.

Luke got out of the car and closed the car door. He walked toward her side.

He stood tall beside her. It made her feel like she was protected standing next to him. She would be happy if it were in the past, but now she felt stressed standing beside him.

She probably felt guilty for lying to him...

Luca tried to behave naturally, but she still felt stressed. The man's aura was too strong. She might just tell him everything right now if he questioned her.

Luke shot her a glance and sensed her anxiety.

She was probably wondering why he chose to bring her here, right?

Before this, she was responsible for organizing Old Master Crawford's birthday every year. The old master loved everything she arranged for him, be it the venue or the meal.

Old Master Crawford even told him that no one in the family could do it better than Bianca.

Hence, when Luke found out that Luca's real identity was Bianca, he brought her here without any hesitation.

"The old master has tried your cooking before, and he told me that it suits his taste. He likes the food you cook, so I brought you here to try out the dishes. He'll probably like what you choose," Luke explained. Old Master Crawford had held his birthday at Hotel Viking before. However, the hotel's chef was a different person now. He could not cook the dishes that the previous chef made.

here, she would be able to pick the dishes that Old Master Crawford

how it is..." Luca was relieved after she knew the reason. She could set her mind at ease after he explained it to

of them walked into the hotel's lobby. The hotel's manager came up to welcome them. "Welcome, Mr. no expression on Luke's face when the manager and the female receptionists greeted him passionately. Luke glanced at Luca before saying, "Are the dishes

The kitchen has finished preparing the dishes. We were just waiting for you to try the dishes and make your selection," the manager replied enthusiastically. They could gain a significant amount of profit if the Crawford family decided to hold their celebration at

nodded and said to Luca,

Luca nodded as well.

manager shot a glance at Luca. She did not look like Mrs. Crawford, whom he had seen in the magazine. Who was

would be impolite if he asked. He could only smile and lead them to the private room. "Mr. Crawford, Miss,

and Luca walked into the private

private room was spacious, while the decorations were resplendent and magnificent. There was a big dining table in the middle of the room and a rotating top table on

of them would not need such a big

only here to try the dishes. The hotel would serve them their specialties and let them pick.

Luke sat down, and Luca sat opposite **him**.

Luke frowned when he noticed the distance between them. He stood up and walked toward her. He pulled out the chair beside her and sat down.

"Mr. Crawford..." Luca looked at him, puzzled. Even though it was considered a normal distance, they seemed to be too close to each other in such a spacious private **room**.

Luke took a sip of the tea, and he said in a soft voice, "It's more convenient for us to communicate this way."

Luca was at a loss for words. What did he mean *by that*?

It would be convenient to communicate with each other even if he sat opposite her. After all, the private room was a fixed space regardless of how big it was. It was not a hall, so how could it be difficult for him to communicate with her if he sat *opposite her*...

Luca thought that in her heart, but she dared not say *it out*.

The manager who stood beside them asked respectfully, "Mr. Crawford, shall we serve the *dishes now*?"

"Sure." **Luke** took another sip of tea and shot a glance at the woman beside him. It seemed like she was unwilling to sit beside him.

That was not how she used to be. Three years had gone by and she seemed like she was afraid *of him*.

Luke could not help but feel depressed. He had always been kind to her. How did things turn out **like this**?

Luca took a sip of tea too. The hotel had specifically prepared the tea for them. It was for them to cleanse their palate. They were about to try out a variety of dishes, so they needed a palate cleanser.

manager bowed and said, "Alright. Please give us a

to give instructions to the waiters in the kitchen through the walkie-talkie. After a while, a few waiters carried plates of dishes over and stood in a circle. They served the dishes on the rotating table top on the

looked at the colorful, aromatic, and tasty dishes on the table. She realized she did not know where to begin. She naturally turned to look at

looking at her too. The moment their eyes met, he asked, "What's

shook her head, telling him that there was nothing wrong. "Mr. Crawford, which one should we

with the appetizer," replied Luke after thinking for a moment. An appetizer certainly had to be the first course of the meal, and Hotel Viking provided a variety

watched the waiter fill the plate with different appetizers before serving it to

picked up the spoon and tried all

Luke tried them out too.

had to choose the appetizer first. The manager asked politely, "May I know which one you

"Sweet potato salad."

"Sweet potato salad."

two of them said it at the

Chapter 1605

Luke picked up the piece of paper with the course meal written on it and glanced at it. He handed it to the manager without making any changes to it. "We'll pick these for the banquet."

Luca was startled. Had he made his decision?

Was Luke not going to consider it again?

The manager did not expect Luke to make his decision so quickly. He confirmed with him after glancing at the piece of paper. "Mr. Crawford, are you sure you want this course meal and there are no further changes?"

"Yes." Luke ordered, "Leave the dishes we selected her and take the others away."

The manager replied to him and hurriedly asked the waiters to take the other dishes away.

After three minutes, only the dishes that Luca picked were left on the table.

This was the first time the manager saw someone picking the dishes so quickly. He said happily, "Enjoy your dinner."

He left the private room with the other waiters.

Luca and Luke were left alone in the private room. Luca stopped and looked at the man.

"If there's anything you'd like to say, just say it." Luke sliced a piece of steak. The meat had a light cherry appearance. It looked juicy and tender.

Luca shook her head and remained silent. She was almost full after trying out all the dishes. She put down her spoon after taking two bites.

"You don't eat much?" Luke frowned. That explained why she was so skinny.

had gone by, and Bianca finally showed up again. However, she came back with a different identity this time. Something had changed in her, but somehow, she was still the same.

a poor appetite." Luca picked up the tissue and wiped her mouth. She did not put on makeup, hence it saved her the trouble of touching up her makeup

it would be rude if she urged Luke to quickly finish his meal while she looked at him.

want desserts?" he suddenly

were not listed in the course meal for the banquet. Hence, they did not try any desserts earlier.

her head and said, "Never mind. Thank you, Mr.

like desserts?" Luke asked

her brows with embarrassment. It was not because she did not like desserts but she only wanted to end the dinner.

he claimed that he brought her here to try out the dishes, there were only two of them in the private room now. It looked like they came here on a date instead of trying out the

not that I don't like it. I'm trying to lose weight these days,"

You don't have to lose weight." Luke picked up the spoon and thought of refilling her plate. Then, he realized that her identity had changed. Even so, he picked up the serving spoon and refilled her plate.

"Have some

could sense he had been giving her special treatment. She forced herself to suppress the uneasiness in her heart and lowered her head to finish everything on her plate.

satisfied. He picked up the napkin on the table and wiped her mouth with it when he saw the stain at the corner of her

Luca was startled. She widened her eyes and looked at him with her mouth slightly **opened**.

Why on earth did Luke do that?

Luca noticed that she was dumbfounded. He put the napkin aside and explained, "You had something on the corner of your **lips**."

"T-Thank you." Luca picked up the napkin and hurriedly wiped her mouth. She looked down and wondered what his gestures meant just **now**.

Luke would never do that to a stranger. Even though she was not a stranger to him, he had no reason to do that to **her**.

Luca's mind was all over the place now. After she finished eating, she took out her phone and casually scrolled on it to distract herself from the chaos in her mind.

They left the hotel after dinner.

Luke stood at the hotel's entrance and glanced at the dark sky. Before Luca said anything, he made the decision and said, "Let's go. Let me send you home."

"Mr. Crawford, you don't have to. I'll take a cab back home. You can go home earlier." Luca wanted to be alone after experiencing the strange feeling in her heart just **now**.

Luke stared at her and recalled what he had done today.

Luca had returned with a hidden identity on purpose. What he just did was not something he would usually do. She must be panicking *now*.

He was being too impulsive.

Luke nodded and replied, "Sure. Off you go. Go to the new office for work *tomorrow*."

walked toward the parking lot after

impatient just now. After knowing that Luca was Bianca, he even had the urge to bring along the DNA test report to question her why she was concealing everything from him and the

was the reason behind her

him from behind. There was sadness in her

'I'm sorry...'

apologized to Luke in her heart. She had let him down, but she could not tell him

around and left in the

Luca was waiting for the taxi at the roadside, her mind was full of how unusual Luke's behavior today was. He did not say anything, but everything he did told her that he was trying to get closer

was lost in thought. She did not notice that a small van was approaching her. It quickly stopped in front of her, and someone pushed the car

she noticed that she might be in danger, two masked men had already come out and covered her head with a gunny sack.

Luca shouted as she was dragged into the car by the

people around took a step back when they saw what was

two men pushed Luca to the back of the car. One of them grabbed a knife and warned the others who were waiting for their rides. Then, he closed the door and drove

Chapter 1606

If she were some other woman who got kidnapped and was threatened with a knife, she would have been so frightened till she started begging for mercy or she would just pass out.

However, Luca was unusually calm. She did not cry or ask for forgiveness even when someone was holding a knife in her face, which was covered by a gunny bag.

She was different from the others.

The man who held the knife was slightly surprised. He sneered and kept the knife away.

Luca could sense that the knife was kept away. She said, "I can't breathe with the gunny bag over my head."

"Cut the nonsense. Believe it or not, my brother and I will kill you right now!" Another man was feeling uneasy because of her unusually calm demeanor. He was trying to frighten Luca with his loud voice.

"I know both of you don't want me to see you, that's why you covered my head with a gunny bag. I'm guessing you're also wearing masks right now. How are you going to explain to the mastermind behind you if I run out of breath?" Luca was not afraid of his loud voice.

"You!" The man was pissed off after she got on his nerves.

"Enough. Take the gunny bag off of her," another man said with a deep voice. They had put on masks before they took action to prevent people from seeing their faces.

The gunny bag was meant to make the woman lose her sense of direction.

There was another simple reason behind their action. It was because the mastermind told them that the woman in front of them was good at kicking. She was not an easy target.

The man heard him and took the gunny bag off Luca's head while cursing.

Luca looked down, only to see that her hands and legs were tied together. Even though she was pretty good at kicking, she would not be able to break herself free anytime soon.

you sent by Pierre?" She tried to sound them

of the men sneered while another stuck a piece of cloth into her mouth. "I didn't take the gunny bag off your head to listen to your bullsh*t. Shut

did not struggle when the man shoved the cloth into her mouth. It was useless for her to struggle to look at

noticed her gesture and hurriedly pulled the curtains. Luca turned around and shot him a cold glance with a menacing look in her

man shivered for a moment when he saw the look in her

woman's gaze was terrifying, and there was a hint of menace in it. It seemed like she was not a woman who could be

man felt a little regretful, but he came back to his senses all of a sudden. It was merely a glance, and there was nothing to be afraid of. Why should he regret

behind them was a rich man. They would receive a reward with a huge amount of money if they handled the van was still new and clean. Why were they using such a good van to

if it was not Pierre, it looked like the mastermind who was behind this was a wealthy person. Otherwise, they would not have been able to use such a good van.

if Pierre was not the one behind this, who was? Why did they kidnap

just an ordinary person in A City.

Luca could not figure it out.

...

On the other hand.

Luke drove back to Crawford Manor. Tommy came to him the moment he stepped into the house.

"Daddy, what did you do today?"

"I tried out some dishes," replied Luke. He took his coat off, which the maid took from him.

Luke looked at his youngest son as he pestered him. He knew the child would throw a tantrum if he did not explain to him.

"**Why** didn't you bring me along to try the dishes? I want to eat something delicious too." Tommy looked upward with a greedy look on his face while wondering why his father did not bring him along.

Luke stroked the back of his head and thought of the DNA test result. "Where's Lanie and Rainie?"

"**They're reading** upstairs," Tommy answered honestly. However, he felt unhappy and pouted his mouth.

"**Ask** them to head to your bedroom. I have something to tell all of you," said Luke.

Tommy nodded as he broke into a run and headed **upstairs**.

Old Master Crawford, who was sitting in the living room, asked curiously, "What are you going to tell the kids? Can I join too?"

"Grandpa, it's about them." Luke decided not to tell him.

old master had always wanted him to have a normal family. He would do something if he knew that Luca was

was still hiding her identity now. Hence, it would be inappropriate to tell the old master

should care more about your children. Lanie and Rainie's class teacher came to visit today. She told me about how the kids are doing at school. Rainie is obedient and behaves herself at school. She enjoys having fun with the other kids. But the teacher told me Lanie seems to be an asocial person." Old Master Crawford told him what the children's class teacher had told

raised his brows. Lanie's personality was similar to his. He was cold and quiet, but not completely unsociable.

thought that the things taught in school were too simple for him, and his classmates were too childish. It was not a big

the child's father, so he naturally knew about

were not because Rainie was studying in the same class as him, he would have let Lanie skip a

was good in her studies, she was not as smart as Lanie. She would not be able to catch up if she followed her brother and skipped a

chose not to let Lanie skip grades so that both of them could be together. The children understood why he did so

I'll talk to him," said

Master Crawford shook his head as he knew it would

was because Luke had behaved like that too when he was young. Like father, like son. Lanie resembled his father in

Luke raised Lanie all by himself since the child was young. It was normal for him to resemble his

Chapter 1607

The three of them sat on the rug while staring at Luke. They did not say a word.

"I took Tommy's hair for a DNA test." Luke nodded and admitted that he took the child's hair for a DNA test.

The three of them suddenly got excited.

Lanie asked, "Daddy, did you find out where Mommy was?"

"Yes." Luke's gaze fell upon the three of them as he looked at their faces one by one. Be it Lanie, Rainie, or Tommy, Bianca had spent a period of time away from their lives.

Lanie and Rainie were still fine with it. He raised them all by himself since they were young. Hence, they were only upset after Bianca was kidnapped. It was not hard for them to get used to it.

However, Tommy was raised with Bianca around him. He cried so much and it took a lot of time for him to get used to her absence.

Luke spent so much time keeping him company to cheer him up.

"Is Mommy back?" Tommy looked at him with a look of disbelief.

"Your Mommy has always been around you. It's just that her looks have changed, and she didn't choose to reunite with us. But I believe that it's not her intention. She must have her reason for doing that. Can you understand?"

Tommy had someone in his mind once he said that. He looked at his father straight in the eyes and asked, "Daddy, is Ms. Luca our mommy?"

Luke nodded his head. "Yes. She has already come back to us."

up in dismay, refusing to believe what he heard. "Daddy, you're telling us that Ms. Luca is

looks and her identity might have changed, but not her DNA." Luke looked at his son. Although he was still young, he should have understood what he said. All of them must have understood.

shocked. He sat there and recalled the first time he met Ms. Luca. He found her familiar and instinctively wanted to approach her.

though she was a stranger, his instincts told him that she was not a

the smell on her body and the taste of

could still remember that it was their mother's smell although it had been a few years. He thought he was willing to approach Luca because of these things, but he did not expect that she was actually

why is mommy doing this to us..." Rainie was upset. Why did their mother come back but did not reunite with

because they had misbehaved? They had been behaving themselves, though. They had not done anything wrong, but why was their mother

did Luca hide her identity and refuse to reunite

knew her daughter was upset. He stroked her head and spoke on behalf of Luca, "She probably has her own reason that's forcing her to do this. Even though she's hiding her identity, she still loves all of you. She treats you all kindly,

his head, agreeing with what

Luca was kind to the three of them. Although she did not come clean to them and tell them that she was their mother, she still adored them very much. She protected them well when they were **outside too**.

Rainie asked again, "Daddy, what reason could Mommy have to act like **this?**"

Luke thought for a moment. Then, he shook his head and said, "I don't know yet. But no matter what, your mommy has returned. I won't let her leave us this time."

Tommy clenched his fists. "Mommy can't leave us anymore."

Lanie looked at his younger brother, then he turned to look at Luke. "Daddy, can we acknowledge her as our mommy *now?*"

This was what mattered the most. The mother and her children were not allowed to reunite...

Luke looked at his children and let out a sigh. "She doesn't know that we've found out about this. I need to figure out why she's doing what she is. So, you're not allowed to reunite with her for **now.**"

Tommy put on a disappointed expression once he heard that. "But I want to live with Mommy every day."

Luke knew how much they wanted to be with her. He wanted her to be back as much as they *did*.

However, Luca could not reunite with them for the time *being...*

"Tommy, Mommy returned with a different appearance, and she has yet to reunite with us. She must have her reasons. Spare Daddy some time. Let him investigate it." As the eldest son, Lanie helped to advise Tommy *too*.

and said, "We should be happy that Mommy came back alive and she still loves us like how she used to. We shouldn't be in a hurry. Let Daddy

turned to look at Tommy while listening to what they

hesitated for some time, but he decided to listen to what his elder brother and sister said. He nodded and said, "Alright. I'll listen to

after convincing the three of them. Luca probably thought that she could hide it well from them. She had no idea that they had already found out the

like how you always have when you run into her next time. Don't be kick up a fuss, and don't throw a temper tantrum. Do you understand?" He reminded

and asked, "Daddy, can I call Mommy like how I used

Ms. Luca for now." Lanie corrected him, afraid that Tommy would make it a habit and give it away in front of

stroked his head. "You have to pretend you don't know anything about it. That'll help me figure things out regarding why she's doing

and exchanged a quick smile with his brother and

they could not reunite with their mother now, they were happy to know that their mother had

mother had come back to them safely, and she was still kind to them like how she used to be back

Chapter 1608

Tommy got even more depressed when she did not pick up the call. It was nothing like last time. There was not even a loading page this time.

He sent Luca an audio message. "Ms. Luca, are you busy? I miss you. Please send me a message after you're done with your matters."

Tommy put down the tablet after the message showed that it was successfully sent. He walked out of the bedroom looking depressed.

The excitement when he knew Luca was his mother a few minutes ago had disappeared all of a sudden after she rejected his video call request.

Mr. Griffin saw Tommy and came to him. He asked with concern, "Young Master Tommy, what happened? Did someone bully you?"

Tommy lifted his head and looked at the butler, complaining, "Mr. Griffin, Ms. Luca isn't picking up my calls!"

"Ms. Luca?" Mr. Griffin was wondering who Ms. Luca was. Was it Dr. Craw?

"Yes. I sent her a video call request just now. She didn't pick it up. Sob, sob, sob. Does that mean she doesn't like me anymore?" Tommy rubbed his reddened eyes. Although he was not crying, he looked like he could burst into tears anytime with that pitiful look.

The butler immediately comforted him. "How could she not like you? Young Master Tommy, you're everyone's favorite. You're handsome and cute. She's probably busy with something important and that's why she rejected your video call request. It's alright. She'll call you back when she's free."

Tommy blinked his eyes and looked at him. "Is that true?"

"Of course. I never lie." Mr. Griffin cheered him up.

so too. Luca usually cared for him so much. She would never ignore his calls. She must be busy with something else, and that was why she could not accept his video

would call him back when she saw his missed

I'll wait for Ms. Luca." Tommy was happy again. He nodded with an innocent look on his face.

noded his head. He remembered why he came upstairs after cheering up the child. "Oh, Ms. Nancy made some desserts. Hurry up and get some for yourself, Young Master

cheered and ran downstairs immediately once he heard there was something for him to

On the other hand.

watched them take her phone away and rummage through her bag. They said disdainfully, "What? You wear such glamorous clothes but there's nothing valuable in your bag. Are you trying to deceive

laughed mockingly and threw Luca's bag to the back of the van. "We'll have money once we finish this. Do we still need to take money out of her bag?"

This woman will be our cash cow." The two men gave each other a fist bump and laughed

thought it would be hard to kidnap Luca, but they did not expect it to be so

woman who knew how to fight was so easily taken into the car. It was clear that she was pretty unaware of the danger around

Luca glanced at them coldly and watched them cheer before they even succeeded. If it was not because she was busy thinking about what had happened in the hotel, they would not have had the chance to catch her so easily.

The van stopped after driving for some time.

Luca could hear the vehicle's engine switch off. She knew they had reached their **destination**.

One of them lifted the curtains to check if they had reached their destination. Then, he took out a dirty-looking blindfold and wrapped it over Luca's head. "Don't let her see **the building**."

Luca only caught a few glimpses of the scene outside the window the moment he lifted the curtains.

The place was clean, and the plants on the roadside were nicely trimmed. It looked like a fancy place.

The van that was used to kidnap her was luxurious too. The place where she would be kept captive was fancy too. It seemed like the mastermind behind them was not a simple person.

She had yet to figure out why they wanted to kidnap **her**.

Luca was held by two men on both sides. One was on her right and one on her left. She was blindfolded when she got out of the van. She could not see anything, but her ears and nose had become more sensitive.

She could smell the fragrance of lilies in the air. Lilies were planted around this place, and they had already bloomed.

even heard footsteps that did not belong to the two men. It must be the

for quite some time. She did not struggle. She knew she would be the one to suffer if she thought of struggling

who was on her left sneered and said, "Looks like you know what's good for you since you're not struggling or trying to

not say anything as a piece of cloth was still stuffed inside her

man on her right chimed in, "This is my first time kidnapping such a cooperative

man on her left made an evil grin. "And she's a beauty too. Do you think we can have some fun with her for a

even think about it." A stranger's voice came from behind Luca. She reckoned that it was the driver's has told you that you won't receive any money if you dare to touch this woman. You might even lose your lives." That voice continued to warn

course, the man on Luca's right knew the consequences of touching her. He sneered and replied, "We can't be bothered to touch this kind of woman either. She has the looks but she's not our cup of tea. Is there any woman we can't get once we have

we won't do that. We're just talking big." The man on the left instantly went along with

was brought into a house. She was sure that she had walked into a house. It was because she could feel the difference in the floor. Moreover, it was already dark outside. She could not sense any light with the blindfold on her when she was

Chapter 1609

Luca was secretly upset when she heard what he said.

She thought she might have a chance to escape once her legs were untied, but although she was able to walk freely now, she could not get out of here.

The blindfold was taken off as well. Luca looked at her legs. Indeed, there were two big iron balls chained to her feet. She was always cuffed with two big iron balls when she underwent physical training on the Island of Despair back then. Hence, such weight was nothing to her.

However, her hands were tied up. There was little chance for her to escape.

Luca did not look around. She stared directly at the three masked men in front of her. She knew they would not simply touch her after listening to their conversation. She was still safe for now.

She had been behaving herself to let their guard down.

Indeed, the three men left the room when she did not say anything or struggle.

They kept a light on for her even though they had left the room.

Luca looked around the room and noticed that there were no splendid decorations here. However, based on the paint job, the house must be beautiful and majestic.

She did not continue to look at the decorations. Instead, she began searching for tools that could cut the rope on her hands.

At last, her gaze fell on the edges of the bed.

like this was the only thing that could grind and cut the rope around her hands. She would need some time to grind and cut the rope. She did not know when those men would come in again, so she had to wait till the middle of

sat down on the floor and leaned beside the bed to take a rest after she made

why she did not sit on the bed was simple. How was she supposed to carry her legs up onto the bed with two iron balls chained to her

alert the two men if she lifted her legs onto the bed and

not figured out what was the purpose of them kidnapping her. Hence, she had to be careful in everything she

two men sat in the living room. No noises were coming from the room. After a while, they felt uneasy and pushed the door open to check

Luca was sitting on the floor and taking a rest. The man sneered and mocked her in a low voice, saying, "She's taking it very

to his seat and said to his boss,

able to fall asleep?" The other man raised his brows and

but her legs are cuffed. She's sleeping on the floor. I wonder what's with that woman. She's taking it so well. She's not even crying or yelling. She even fell asleep like a normal person. Doesn't she realize that she's been kidnapped?" The man

"It's good that she's not shouting. That saves us the trouble. Come get some *supper*."

...

On the other hand.

Nina had just walked out of Anna's ward. She headed straight to the supermarket after she got off work to prepare some soup for Anna and Jean. Anna criticized her unhappily after she sent the food to the hospital. It was because she could not deliver her three meals a day. Anna could not get used to the meals in the hospital, and she complained they tasted **awful**.

Nina explained to her that she had to go to work, so there was no way she could prepare three meals a day for Anna. She got scolded **after that**.

Hence, she left the ward right away without bringing the thermos bottle along *with her*.

Anna was in poor health. Nina did not want to quarrel with her, but she also refused to listen to **her complaints**.

She came to the hospital's outdoor car park. She no longer dared to park her car in the basement parking lot after she got stalked. She was worried that no one would be around to help her if she **was kidnapped**.

She was all alone now. She had to learn how to protect **herself**.

However, she ran into the last person she wanted to see on earth at the parking lot.

It was Pierre Mallory.

leaning on her car, waiting

on a bright yet mischievous smile on his face when he saw Nina walk

met his eyes under the light. She felt that something was

my car. Please step aside. Otherwise, don't blame me for being aggressive." Nina showed a cold face.

She was already in a bad mood, and now she had run into Pierre, this *sshole. It made her feel even

world going against her? Why did the person she did not want to see the most show up in front of her?

All the things that she did not want to happen were happening to

you talking like that? Don't you want to see me?" Pierre grinned. The more she behaved like that, the more he wanted her.

rolled her eyes. "Why did you even show up when you know you're not welcome here? Get lost! I don't want to see anyone from the Mallory family!"

stroked his chin. He was not frightened by what she said. He frowned and replied, "Why? Is it because my brother dumped you? You can't blame me for

Neither of the Mallory brothers was a good person. If she were not living in a society of rules and laws, she would have hit the accelerator after she got into the car. She would have crushed Pierre's body with the tires by going back and forth a few

to the driver's seat and prepared to pull the door open. Pierre grabbed her hands instead. "I came here for you today. Don't be

Chapter 1610

Nina did not stop worrying even as she watched Pierre leave. She leaned beside the car door helplessly, watching the man's back. Although she could not see his face, it seemed like she was still able to imagine how ruthless his expression was at this moment.

This was insane...

Nina felt uneasy. As she recalled the vivid images in her head of him threatening her, he must have done something.

Still, what had he done?

A worried expression appeared on Nina's face when she thought of his treacherous means. She was not afraid if Pierre were to do something to her. However, she was afraid that Pierre would hurt the people around her.

It was because he was a vindictive man...

Nina suddenly thought of Luca. The only person around her who had offended Pierre before was Luca...

She would be the one to suffer if Pierre wanted to do anything...

Nina took her phone out of her bag at the thought of this. She dialed Luca's phone number, planning to tell her to watch out for herself.

When she called her, however, she was informed that Luca's phone had been switched off...

"Did her phone run out of battery?" Nina muttered to herself. After all, Pierre had just warned her. It was unlikely that he had taken action that quickly. Therefore, she left a message for her on Instagram, asking Luca to call her after she charged her phone.

Late at night.

her eyes. There was only a dim lamp in the room where she was being

the men came in and switched off the other lights an hour

though Luca had been resting with her eyes closed, she had been alert the whole time. She was aware of all the noises going on outside. Hence, she could tell when they were coming in.

continued to listen to the noises outside. It took a while before everything became silent. She slowly sat up

not make any big moves with the two big iron balls chained to her feet. The iron balls would roll, and that would alert the two men outside the room if she moved even

that there could be a chance for her to escape if she behaved

was alone in A City. No one would come looking for her even if she went missing. She had to keep calm when facing this kind of situation.

moved after glancing at the bed. At last, she crouched beside the bed and placed her hands on the edge of the bed. Then, she slowly started to grind away at the rope on her

not turn to look at her back, so she could only follow her instincts. The edge of the bed was not sharp enough, but she made up her mind and strengthened her resolve. Hence, she would feel bouts of sharp pain sometimes when she accidentally grazed her hands.

it as she continued to move her hands. At the same time, she was focusing on the situation outside the up and immediately sat on the bed. She looked in the direction of the door when she heard noises coming from

door was being pushed open. A masked man walked into the room and saw that Luca's gesture had changed from lying on the floor to sitting on the bed. He lowered his voice and asked, "What are you

Luca replied frankly, "I didn't feel comfortable sitting on the floor, so I'm sitting on the bed. Am I not allowed to do *so*?"

The man thought that the bed was placed here to let her sleep. There was nothing wrong with what she was doing. He checked around and found nothing odd. He was about to turn around and leave.

Luca said, "Can you take off the iron balls on my feet at *night*?"

"No." The man rejected her without hesitation. When a person wanted to escape, there was no differentiating day and night. Furthermore, the mastermind behind them had told them to be careful of the woman.

"I want to lay down on the bed to sleep. But the iron balls are getting in the way," said Luca. The iron balls rolled whenever she moved her *feet*.

The man stared at the iron balls on the floor that were hanging on her slim ankles. She indeed looked pitiful.

However, when he had to choose between beauty and money, he would surely choose the second option. He replied in a cold voice, "Go to sleep. Stop talking nonsense."

"I don't want you to hear noises and come in every time." Luca looked down and moved her legs graciously. The iron balls rolled a little. "I can't lift them. They're so heavy."

"*Don't* pretend to be weak. You're clearly capable, so don't try to play tricks here." The man left right after he gave her a **warning**.

Luca watched him close the door. The kidnapper was very cautious. He did not forget to wear his mask before coming in. It seemed like they were not planning to **hurt her**.

That also indicated that she had a chance to escape. It depended on what the mastermind had in his mind and his **mood**.

listened to the noises outside. There was dead silence after the man went out. She went back to her crouching posture and continued to grind the

Suddenly, the door was pushed open.

man standing at the door saw what she

was startled when he saw her grinding the rope. He came over and lifted her hands to look at the rope. Indeed, the rope had worn off a

man got furious. He lifted his hand and slapped her in the face. "I was wondering why you were behaving so well! Are you trying to escape? Not a

tilted aside and knocked on the columns of the

sharp pain spread across her forehead. She could feel something wet streaming down

man did not manage to control his strength and hit her head

lifted her head to look at the man. She could not see his face clearly with that hideous mask on his face. She only heard him calling his

walked in and saw what had happened. He asked with surprise,

b*tch was trying to escape. Grab a few more ropes here. Let's see how she's going to escape after this." The man did not care when he saw blood on Luca's forehead. He ordered his partner to do as he instructed right

man immediately grabbed a few more ropes from