

Be Gentle 1721

Chapter 1721

Luca went to the washroom when the banquet was halfway through.

When she was in the cubicle, she coincidentally heard the two women outside talking about her.

"Who's the woman who walked into the hall with Luke while holding the two kids' hands? I remember that his wife doesn't look like that," one of the women asked.

"So, is she not really his wife? I thought I remembered it wrongly. Then who's that woman?"

"Luke's wife is still abroad. There's no news of her returning here. Who knows who that woman is? After all, she looks well-behaved. Perhaps she's that kind of woman."

"What kind of woman?"

"A mistress. Isn't it normal for a man as outstanding as Luke to keep a mistress?"

"That can't be. How dare a mistress show up on such an occasion? Even if she dares to, Luke wouldn't dare to bring her here. Isn't he afraid of pissing off the old master?"

"I agree, but did you notice how close the kids are to that woman? I heard Susan mention that this woman's identity is unknown and she refuses to say too much about it. She's afraid that the old master will scold her if he finds out."

"That's not good. Let's go. The Crawford family is really complicated. I thought Luke was a good man. I didn't expect him to be someone like this."

"Are there any men who never cheat on their woman? They just go undetected without getting caught by us. Come on, let's go."

Luca stood in the cubicle and listened to the two women discussing her. She shook her head helplessly. Susan was willing to go that far to ruin the Crawford family's reputation and talk nonsense to others.

walked out of the cubicle. After she washed her hands, she left the

returned to the ballroom, many people were still looking at her. Luca ignored them and returned to her

Luca left her seat and went to the washroom just now, the people who were sitting at the same table with her asked Wanda and Queenie about Luca's identity almost immediately. Hence, both of them knew what the others were thinking of

Luca's hand and felt that her palm was icy-cold. She frowned and asked caringly, "Are you

her head, telling her that she was fine. Then, she picked up her spoon and continued to help herself with the

the dinner ended, Luca thought of hailing a ride to go home. However, Zander walked toward her and said in a low voice, "Ms. Craw, Young Master Luke gave me his orders to ask you to stay here first. If you're feeling tired or bored, you may head to the lounge to take a rest. He'll send you home after he's done sending off

speechless. She thought of leaving secretly when Luke was not paying attention to her, but the man acted faster

had no choice but to nod her head, indicating that she

heard their conversation, and a gleam flashed across her eyes. However, she did not say anything. She patted Luca's shoulder, smiled, and said, "Luca, I'm going home first. Let's keep in touch. Feel free to come to my house to have dinner when

"Sure." Luca waved to her.

left after he passed Luke's message to her. After a while, he brought along the three kids

Tommy leaned over on Luca's lap and asked, "Ms. Luca, you haven't left yet? Why don't you follow us *back*?"

Luca shook her head and said, "It's alright. I'm leaving after these people have left. It's late. Hurry up and go **home**."

Tommy could not bear to let her sit here alone, so he insisted, saying, "Ms. Luca, please follow us back home. Let Uncle Zander drive you home."

Lanie looked at his younger brother who refused to leave their mother. He shook his head helplessly and said, "Someone will pick Ms. Luca up. Tommy, let's **go**."

Then, Lanie took Tommy's hand and left.

Tommy was reluctant to part with Luca. He kept turning around to look at Luca until he followed Zander to leave the hotel. He got into the car and complained, "Brother, why didn't you let Ms. Luca *follow us*?"

"*Silly* little brother." Lanie looked at his younger brother as though he was hoping that Tommy could live up to his expectations. He reminded him. "There be must a reason why Ms. Luca is sitting there. Daddy must have given his orders. He probably wants Ms. Luca to wait for him there so that Daddy can send her back home after he's done entertaining **the guests**."

"*Is that* true?" Tommy refused to **believe**.

Lanie turned to look at Zander and said, "Uncle Zander, tell me. Is this Daddy's arrangement?"

He saw his father speak to Uncle Zander just now. Then after a while, Uncle Zander walked toward his mother.

"*Yes, Little* Young Master Blanche. Your father is going to send Ms. Luca home later. Don't worry," answered **Uncle Zander**.

replied, "Oh." He fell silent after knowing that someone would be picking

On the other hand.

Luke sent off some of the annoying guests, he came to Luca's side. There were only waiters cleaning up the tables in the

at Luca, who was busy scrolling her phone, and said, "Sorry to keep you waiting. Some drunken guests were busy chattering. Let's go. I'll send you

Luca nodded her head.

all, the people who were invited to the dinner were either related to the Crawford family or his business partners.

matter what kind of relationship it was, the chances of meeting Luke were slim. That was why they took the opportunity to talk with Luke. It was normal to do

up, followed Luke, and left together with

of cold breeze blew past them once they stepped out of the hotel. Luca, who was not prepared, could not help but shiver.

this and took his coat off. He put it on her shoulder.

was about to reject and tell him that she was not feeling cold, but she heard him saying in a low voice, "Put it on. Don't catch

Chapter 1722

The car was moving slowly and steadily. Luke did not turn on the radio this time. There was dead silence in the car.

The coat was still on Luca's shoulder. She turned around and looked at the man beside her. She pondered before lifting her hand to take off the coat.

Luke spoke, "Put it on."

"It's warm enough in the car. It's a little hot for me..." Luca explained. Luke turned on the heater once they got into the car as he was worried that she would catch a cold.

"It'll be cold outside when you get out later," Luke said, telling her to leave it on her.

Luca had no choice but to leave the coat on her. She looked outside the window and realized they were not going to Nina's apartment.

"Mr. Crawford, are you going the wrong way?" she asked. He should have made a right turn just now if they were heading to Nina's place. The road they were driving on now would take them back to his apartment.

She thought Luke had accidentally taken the wrong turn.

Luke continued to drive forward without planning to turn back. "Percy wants to win Nina back."

Luca nodded her head. She knew that, and she knew Percy had never given up. The current situation was just because he could not detangle himself from the Johnston family.

Then, Luke said, "It's hard for Percy to make a move if you stay with Nina."

Luca was startled. She had no idea that she was the third wheel.

She knew Percy wanted to win Nina back, but Nina had asked her to accompany her. There was no way she could reject her.

from Nina's personality, she did not like to be disturbed. Percy must have freaked her out. Otherwise, she would not have requested her to

me to keep her company," said Luca. Besides, her belongings were still at Nina's

wants to avoid Percy. She doesn't need someone to keep her company." Luke insisted as he parked the car below the

they had already returned to the apartment, so she put on a helpless expression. "She'll be worried if I don't go

me your phone." Luke held out

had no idea what he wanted to do, so she just handed her phone to him. She did not know if he did it on purpose but her fingers touched his palm. It was

took her hand back. The warm touch was like an electrical current quickly enveloping her

at her. He picked her phone up and tapped on the screen, but the screen was locked.

only gently touched each other just now, but Luca acted as though she had touched something she should not have touched. He changed his mind. Instead of asking her for the passcode, he held out his palm to her and grabbed her

was stunned. She thought of withdrawing her hand away unconsciously.

it." Luke held her finger and pressed it down to unlock

what he was going to do. She bit the bullet and let him hold her hand without struggling to

After the phone was unlocked, Luca withdrew her hand quickly. Remnants of his warm still lingered on the spot where he held her hand. She twiddled with her fingers gently and kept silent.

Luke noticed that something was wrong with her, but he did not expose her. He opened her contacts on her phone and found Nina's number.

At the same time, he noticed that the name Luca had saved his number with was 'Mr. Crawford'.

How formal...

Luke was slightly dissatisfied, but he sent a message to Nina: [Luca is drunk. I've brought her back to the apartment. You don't have to wait for her tonight. Someone will come over to your apartment with the spare key and access card tomorrow. They'll bring Luca's belongings back.]

He returned the phone to Luca after he sent the message.

Luca took it from him and read the message he sent to Nina. She was **speechless**.

Luke was still as overbearing as usual. He would decide everything for her. He was also helping Percy by *doing this*.

Luca did not say anything at the thought of their friendship. She knew she should not stay at Nina's place. If she could have dodged it, she would not have stayed at Nina's place **either**.

After all, there was a misunderstanding between Nina and Percy. If they wanted to clear the air between them, they would need to get along with each other.

However, it was obvious that Nina refused to listen to anything Percy had to say now. If Luca stayed at her apartment, he would not have the chance to talk to her at **all**.

"Let's get out of the car." Luke reminded her when he saw her remaining silent after taking back her **phone**.

back to her senses and unfastened the seat belt.

asked carefully when she saw Luke not doing anything, "Mr. Crawford, are you going back to Crawford at her. There was a hint of tease across the bottom of his eyes as he said in a deep voice, "Do you want me

like something was going on

sense the teasing in his words. The nerves in her body were trembling because of what he said. She replied hurriedly, "I prefer staying alone."

not get angry when he heard her reply. Luca was still the person she used to be. She would always pretend that she could not pick up his subtle hints when she was

"I have to go back to handle some matters. Pass me the spare key and access card. I'll ask someone to send them over tomorrow and bring your belongings to

handed her bag to Luke. "It's all in there. Oh, Nina usually wakes up around seven in the morning. You'll disturb her if it's

was a little jealous when he heard her reminding him about

she had in mind was other people. She did not seem to think of him even one little bit. It seemed like he had to do something to stop Luca from

was tired of her keeping her distance from him. They were husband and wife, but they had become like this because of what had happened three years ago. He wanted to find out the truth, but she kept pushing

It was not going to

Chapter 1723

After Luca returned to the apartment, she stood at the balcony and looked down. However, it was too high. She could not see when she looked down.

The weather was getting cold. Luca, who was wearing a dress, felt a little cold. She walked back into the room and turned on the heater.

She took off her dress and quickly washed up. After she changed into her pajamas, she let out a sigh of relief.

She was intentionally provoked and gossiped by the others tonight, but it was finally over.

She lay down on the bed. Her phone suddenly rang.

Luca picked up her phone. She thought it was Nina who called, but she did not expect it to be a video call request from the Island of Despair.

She quickly tapped on the screen to answer the call.

Her youngest daughter, Nyla, showed up on the screen.

"Mommy!" Nyla called out to her in a baby voice when she saw her mother. Her eyes reddened as she missed her mother so much.

Luca was surprised to see her daughter. She sat up straight and looked at the phone screen. "Nyla?"

"Mommy, Nyla misses you." When little Nyla saw her, she told her how much she missed her. Her tears trickled down her face.

When she saw her daughter like this, Luca said, "Mommy misses you too. How did you manage to make this video call?"

of Despair was always heavily guarded. They would usually limit the time she spent with her daughter when she was there back then. Now that she was away from the island, it was almost impossible for her to make a video call to her daughter as Abel would

was allowed to sit in front of the computer and make a video call to her today. Was it Abel's

was worried about her daughter. She comforted her in a soft voice, saying, "Alright, alright. Stop crying. Can you please tell Mommy why you're able to make this

was Uncle Shanks who brought me here so I could go on a video call with Mommy." Nyla shot a glance at the man beside her and turned to look at the screen again. "Mommy, when are you coming

listened to her baby voice. It reminded her of Lanie and the other

spending time with them tonight. Still, her youngest daughter was stuck on the Island of

she did not do something about it, she could only choose between Nyla and her other three

that was not right. If she did not do anything about it and simply followed Abel's instructions, she probably would not have the chance to choose either option.

away the tears that streamed down from the corners of her eyes and said, "Mommy is working now. I'll be back to see you after I finish

listened to her and pouted her mouth. "Mommy, can't you finish it quickly? I saw that many of them have already completed their jobs, but you haven't. I'm still waiting for you to come back and keep me

heart-wrenching for Luca to hear that. She intentionally bought time so that she did not have to hurt Luke, but she was unaware that she was also hurting her youngest daughter who was waiting

Nyla was still young, so she could not leave her side for a long time.

Although Abel allowed Aler to take care of Nyla when she left the Island of Despair, she was still worried about her daughter.

After all, Abel was a devious and cunning person. There were barely any good people on the Island of Despair too. She was worried about Nyla living in such an environment.

"Alright, I'll finish my job as soon as possible and go back to keep you company," Luca promised. She felt guilty looking at her daughter's tender face.

She decided to keep the child, but she could not give her a good living environment. She looked at her daughter's fair and pretty little face. She wished she could get her out of the Island of Despair.

However, she was still incapable of doing that...

"Alright. Mommy, Uncle Shanks told me I can't talk to you for too long. I'm very happy to have seen you today. Mommy, I'll be good and wait for you to come back here," said Nyla. She grew up on the Island of Despair since she was young. Even if Luca tried her best to protect her, her personality would still be affected by the organizational discipline of the **island**.

For example, Shanks limited Nyla's time to talk to her in a video call. No matter how much she missed her mother, she would listen and obey Shanks' instructions. She would take the initiative to end the video call when it was time.

Luca watched her daughter jump down from the chair. Her tiny figure disappeared in front of the camera. She covered her mouth, stopping herself from making any noises.

Shanks glanced at Eler, who was beside, and said, "Bring **her back**."

"Yes." Eler nodded, pulled back her gaze, and carried little Nyla in her arms.

they left, Shanks sat down in front of the

at the man who was sitting there. She took a deep breath and regulated her

watched her and asked coldly, "Do you miss

at the man. He had not changed even though it had been a long time since she saw

of all the people on the Island of Despair, Shanks was the one whose mind she could not read. He would save people, but he would also develop those deadly drugs for Abel that could manipulate people.

could not be considered a good person or a bad person. Even so, he had saved many lives with his

are you trying to tell me?" Luca asked, fluently speaking

Shanks replied, "I'm just a messenger."

did not say anything. She waited for him

is very unhappy with your progress now. If you'd like to see your daughter soon, or if you don't want her to get hurt, then get the mission done as soon as possible. He doesn't have that much patience to wait for the chance to take revenge," said Shanks.

could sense their intention to harm her daughter from these words. She suppressed the emotions in her heart and replied, "I'll complete the task as soon as possible, but don't hurt my

Chapter 1724

The next day, Luca opened her eyes as she woke up. She rubbed them.

Indeed, there were tears in them.

After the video call last night, she took some pills and fell asleep. She had nightmares all night. In her dreams, she was locked in a cage. When she looked out, she saw her youngest daughter, Nyla, getting tortured by Abel.

She screamed and yelled in her dream, calling Luke's name and hoping that he could save their child.

However, no matter how many times she called out, Luke never showed up in her dreams. There was only the sound of her miserable shouts and Nyla's cries.

Luca clenched her fists and covered her chest with her hands. Her heart was still aching after a night of torture.

"Nyla..." she called out in a soft voice. Then, she opened her phone gallery and found her child's photos.

Nyla was smiling innocently in the photos. Luca felt a sharp pain in her heart.

Luca stared at the photos for a while before she kept her phone away. Today was her official first day back at work. She could not be late.

After washing up, she made herself a simple breakfast. Then, she changed into her office wear and went downstairs.

She walked out of the neighborhood, planning to head to the place where she could hail a ride. However, she saw Jean walking carefreely toward her.

walking. She looked at him, not intending to avoid him. She knew she could not run away from an ignorant man like Jean.

was secretly rejoicing when he saw her standing there waiting for him. He trotted toward her and asked caringly, "Dr. Craw, are you going to

looked at Jean and glanced at a few gangsters who were standing not far away from them. She reckoned that they came with

out of my way. I've got work to do," she replied coldly.

stop to wait for me just now? Why are you asking me to leave now?" Jean looked at her. Of course, he was not going to let her go easily. He had been thinking of talking to her when he saw her at Nina's house a couple of days ago. He hung around here to keep an eye on her after he found out that she was

did not expect that she did not show up at all

Jean's hard work paid off as he finally saw her today. He had always seen Luca in her casual clothes. When he saw her dressed in her office wear today, his heart itched even more as more wicked thoughts came into his

looked at him coldly. She noticed that he was sizing her up with those eyes. She had the urge to gouge his eyes

her keeping quiet and thought that Luca was different from other women. He realized he had used the wrong technique, so he asked, "Hey, I'm just joking. Don't be mad at me. You're going to work, right? Well, you don't have to hail a ride. I can give you a lift. Mind letting me send you

at the motorcycle at the side of the road and replied coldly, "There's no need to. I'm hailing

Riding on a motorcycle is much more convenient. Besides, it's peak hours now. I can promise you it'll be a smooth journey if you ride with me,"

Luca could not be bothered to talk to him, so she immediately walked away.

Jean followed behind her. "Dr. Craw, come on. I promise to send you to work on time, and my riding skills are pretty *good*."

Luca did not say a word. She pretended that she did not hear anything.

When Luca passed by the gangsters, they called out to her at the same time, "Good morning, Sister-in-law."

Luca paused. She had always hated such annoying harassment. She turned around and gave them a death stare. Then, she said, "Don't blame me for being harsh to you if you call me that again."

After that, she trotted to the location where she could hail a ride. An unoccupied car happened to be there, so she got in right away.

The gangsters exchanged glances with each other, and one of them said mockingly, "Boss, is it true you've won over that woman? She looks tough to *me*."

They had seen a lot during their time on the streets. Was there any kind of woman they had never seen before? However, it was their first time seeing a woman with such a piercing glare.

When they called her their sister-in-law, she looked like she was about to kill them. It gave them the chills like they were on the verge of death.

Jean was given the cold shoulder too. He felt awkward, so he released his anger on them. "You know nothing. She's just shy!"

One of the gangsters said, "Boss, just be honest and tell us that you haven't gotten her. We're not going to laugh at you."

don't know anything. She's like a rose with thorns. That's the most attractive part about her. I'll make her mine no matter what. When the time comes, I'll be living a comfortable life, and so will everyone here!" Jean spat on the ground and swore to himself secretly.

the gangsters smiled wickedly and asked, "Boss, does that mean you're sharing your wife with you mad?" Another gangster smashed his head in. "Boss cherishes this woman so much. How dare you have such thoughts in

am I supposed to know that? Didn't Boss share his women with us the last time?" the gangster said innocently after getting hit in his

this one. I want to enjoy my life in the future. Don't even think about it!" Jean warned them spitefully not to have any evil thoughts

was only playing with those women back then. He would let them have some fun with his women after he got tired

However, Luca was different...

in the direction Luca had left and said in a low voice, "She'll be mine one day, and she's going to be your sister-in-law when the time comes. That'll be her only identity. Just wait until I take care of her. Will you still be afraid that there will be no women beside you? Your sister-in-law is a rich and capable

Boss, we were just kidding. We wouldn't dare to have such thoughts about your wife." The gangster who said it by mistake apologized quickly.

shot him a cold glance and hopped on his

are we going today?" one of the gangsters asked immediately.

Chapter 1725

"I was waiting for you." Pierre was smoking a cigarette and sitting in the car with one of his legs on the ground. He looked lazy.

The smile on Jean's smile disappeared. Pierre was waiting for him.

Jean would take different paths every day. However, Pierre had easily found him and stopped him at the junction. It clearly showed that he was capable enough to find his whereabouts.

Otherwise, he would not have blocked him at this junction.

"Mr. Mallory, what's the matter?" Jean moved his motorcycle beside. He dared not to run away.

Even though it was an alley and he could just turn around and escape on his motorcycle, Pierre would be able to block him again if he had already done it once.

There was no way for him to escape, so he had no choice but to face Pierre.

Pierre gave Jean a malicious look. Jean was trembling with fear. "Are you shaking? Am I that scary?"

"No. I just feel a little cold." Jean refused to admit that he was scared of him.

"Cold?" Pierre sneered and invited him, saying, "Mind getting in the car and having a talk with me? My car has a heater."

Jean shook his head immediately. He did not have the guts to get into Pierre's car. "No, no. My shirt is dirty. I'm afraid that I'll ruin your car. Mr. Mallory, what can I do for you?"

asked the question again, Pierre did not beat about the bush and asked, "Did you forget what I asked you to

his head immediately. He was shaking in front of him like a mouse surrounded by a cat. He was too afraid to move.

didn't. How dare I forget

quite some time. Why hasn't Nina come to me? Didn't you promise me that you can do it?" Pierre leaned his body forward slightly. He hated double-dealers the most. Jean promised him but he did not fulfill his promise. That was why he purposely waited for him

though Jean's whereabouts were inconsistent, he could still figure out where he was and block his

shivered and said, "Mr. Mallory, to be honest, I was discharged from the hospital not long ago. I need some time to carry out what you've asked me to

two days. Are you still telling me that you've just gotten out of the hospital? Do you think I have no idea that you went looking for Nina on the day you were discharged? As a brother, why couldn't you convince her? Is it because you think I'm not paying you enough? That's why you didn't try your best, huh? Or are you refusing to work for me after taking my money?"

was shaking all over. "No, no. How dare I not carry out the task you set for me?" Jean shook his head to deny it. "Mr. Mallory, I didn't manage to get a hold of my sister, but don't worry. I'll talk to her today, and I'll try to convince her."

looked at him suspiciously.

I swear!" Jean lifted his hand and swore. Then, Percy came into his mind. He was stuck in between, but Pierre, who was in front of him, looked scarier than Percy. At the thought of this, he had no choice but to say, "Mr. Mallory, I have something to tell

Pierre was impatient. The patience he spent on Nina was almost running

"I decided to tell you only because I can see that you like my sister very much. I'm telling the truth, and I'm not lying to you!" Jean was worried that Pierre might think that he was lying to him intentionally, so he emphasized his sincerity again.

"Say it!" Pierre shouted impatiently in a higher pitch.

Jean talked about Percy's matter as he shuddered, "I did go looking for Nina on the day I got discharged. But your brother, Percy, was there too. I couldn't do anything. Besides, he's very protective of Nina and he asked me not to disturb her anymore. Your brother is interested in my sister too. I'm put in a difficult **position**."

Percy?

A vicious gleam flashed across Pierre's eyes. They were brothers, but Percy was always better than him—be it career or women.

Why? Just because he was born a few years earlier *than him*?

Pierre knew Percy was behind the Johnston family's crisis. He also knew that Percy did that only because he wanted to call off the engagement with Madison.

However, he did not expect Percy to look for Nina right after he announced to the public that their engagement was **called off**.

He knew Pierre had feelings for Nina, but Percy still **cut in**.

"Mr. Mallory? I'm not lying. It's true. Please believe me," Jean said when Pierre did **not respond**.

Pierre looked at him. He sneered and said, "I know. My brother has always been interested in Nina, but he's my elder brother. He'll have to humor his younger **brother**."

startled. Percy did not seem like he was going to let

dared not to say a

Pierre asked, "Have you met him?"

He warned me and asked me not to disturb Nina," Jean

tell him about me giving you money?" Pierre continued to

didn't dare to. After all, Nina is lucky to have you be in love with her..." Jean truly thought that Nina was lucky to be loved by the two young masters of the Mallory

that there were two sides, it was hard

with a gloomy expression on his face, "What do you think? Will she choose me or

replied right away without a second thought, "Of course, it'd be better if she's with you. Percy never gave my sister an official status after all those years they spent together. She suffered so much with him. I can't bear to see her like that

"Good. Then you have to help me. If this works, I'll make it worth your while. But you'll have to contribute. Are you going to complete the task I gave

I'd love to!" Jean nodded. It did not matter who it was, the brothers of the Mallory family were the best among all. They were blessed and wealthy. If Nina could hook up with either one of them, he would still be able to live a comfortable life without

Chapter 1726

"Good." Pierre nodded his head with satisfaction while Jean got out of the car with a depressed expression on his face.

Jean was beaten up so badly that his face was all swollen up like a pig.

"Mr. Mallory, your subordinate went too far." Jean covered half of his face with his hand and cried out, "Ouch!"

Pierre looked at the state Jean was in now and nodded, feeling pleased. He said, "This is good. Show Nina your face and she won't turn you away."

Jean understood why Pierre did that. He was furious at getting beaten up, but he dared not say anything else. He had no choice but to go along with the arrangements. "Mr. Mallory, I understand what you mean now. It's indeed a good idea."

Pierre grinned while he looked at Jean's swollen face. "You must be feeling wronged now. Give it to him."

The subordinate heard him and threw an envelope to Jean.

Jean took it and glanced inside the envelope. Money!

There was lots and lots of money. It was a fat stack of cash!

"Mr. Mallory, thank you. Thank you so much!" The grievance in Jean's heart was suddenly gone when he saw the money. He reckoned that there must be more than 10,000 dollars inside.

at Jean, whose eyes brightened up when he saw the money, and said disdainfully, "There's 100,000 dollars in it. Your bones and muscles are still fine after getting beaten up this time. You'll only have to rest for a few days. The money is compensation for your medical bills. You'll be rewarded if you do me the favor. I'll give you plenty of money. You don't have to think about earning money anymore. You'll be able to live your life

Thank you, Mr. Mallory." Jean bowed and scraped, forgetting the pain on his

back into the car and reminded him again, saying, "I don't have much patience. And I've already done my part in this matter. I'll leave the rest to you, and you'll have to speed up the progress. You know the consequences if I'm not satisfied with your

"I know," Jean nodded and said.

the car door and the car drove

quickly kept the money in his motorcycle's storage compartment. His lips widened as he grinned, and it was as though he could not feel the pain on his face. Judging from Pierre's personality, it looked like although he was malicious and it was hard to figure out what he had in mind, he was indeed more generous.

Pierre giving him money, Jean decided to help

on his motorcycle and came to the hospital. He headed to Anna's

had just taken her medicine this morning, and she was lying on the bed attached to an IV drip. She was so nervous to the point that she almost got out of bed to check on Jean. Just then, she saw him come in with a swollen

happened to you?" she

Jean glanced at the caretaker Nina had hired to take care of Anna. She would report everything that happened to *Nina*.

Hence, he was not in a hurry to talk about Pierre's matter. Instead, he said, "Mom, I'm fine."

"*Your face* is all swollen and you're telling me you're alright?" Anna sat up on the bed. She could not be bothered that the needle was still attached to her arm. She said, "Come, take a seat. Let me take a look at you. Are you hurt anywhere?"

Jean said to the caretaker, "I'd like to have some fruits. Go downstairs and get me *some*."

The caretaker did not move even when she heard him. Instead, she said, "It's my duty to take care of Mrs. Anna. I'm not allowed to **leave**."

"Just go and get the fruits. Here's the money. Hurry up." Jean generously handed a hundred dollars to her and said, "Go and buy some fruits. You can keep the rest of the money."

Anna tensed up when she saw her son becoming so generous. "What's wrong with you? Do you have to spend so much on fruits?"

Jean gave her a thumbs up and said, "Mom, relax. I have something to tell you."

Anna wondered why her son had become so generous. She had no choice but to cooperate with him to send the caretaker away. "Alright. I'd like to have some fruits too. Go get some for me."

had no choice since Anna asked her to do it. She took the money and left the

sat down on the chair beside the ward bed and said, "Mom, we're getting rich this

you win the lottery?" Anna asked him when she saw him so excited. She could not think of any other way how Jean could

It was Pierre who beat me up," Jean said excitedly. He thought the wounds on him did not matter anymore when he talked about

he beat you up? You're badly injured. Does it hurt? Why don't you go see the doctor?" Anna was heartbroken to see her son get beat up so badly.

his head and said, "It doesn't hurt at all. There's no need to see the doctor. Besides, they didn't hit me on the vital parts of my body. Let me tell you something. Pierre is in love with Nina, and I promised him that I'll help him win Nina's

ached more when she knew that Jean had suffered because of Nina. "That's his business. Why did he beat you up like this? No way, I'm going to look for him and reason with him!"

quickly held Anna's hand and said, "Mom, please don't. He did it to help me. When Nina sees me in this state, she won't bear to see me like this. She'll definitely fulfill his request. Besides, he beat me up but he gave me 50,000 dollars and claimed that it's for my medical bills. These are just minor injuries, so the bills won't even amount to 50,000 dollars, but he gave it to me just like that. He told me that if Nina chooses to get together with him in the future, he'll make it worth our

was worried that Anna would ask for the money, so he told her half of the amount that Pierre

widened her eyes and stretched out

Chapter 1727

“Okay, I’ll play along with you.” Anna bucked up and agreed without a second thought.

The woman beside their ward bed shook her head helplessly when she saw this. She had been in the hospital all this while and knew what their situation was.

She thought the daughter of the patient beside was unfilial. After all, her daughter seldom came to the hospital to visit her mother.

She finally knew the reason now.

Anyone would have done the same thing. They would not want anything to do with this kind of mother and brother.

Jean knew he had successfully convinced his mother. A gleam flashed across his eyes. He picked up his phone and began to put on a show.

After Nina returned to her office, her phone rang. She glanced at it and saw Jean calling her. She thought for a moment. Jean must be up to no good if he was calling her. Hence, she hung up the call without a second thought.

After a while, Anna called.

Nina was annoyed. After Jean, it was Anna now. They must be up to something, and it was probably because of accommodation issues. She refused to answer the call and rejected it immediately. Then, she sent a message to her: [I’m in a meeting now. Just leave a message if there’s anything else you’d like to tell me.]

After a while, Anna sent a message: [I have a situation here. Get here as soon as possible.]

Nina did not stand up immediately. After all, Anna had been using such methods to lure her to the hospital. She refused to fall for it again.

to her message: [Just say it here.

what an unfilial daughter you are. You’ll have to deal with my funeral affairs tomorrow if you don’t come today!] Anna had to use such means when Nina refused to answer her call and come over to the

her head helplessly. Sometimes, trouble would come looking for her even if she did not go looking for it herself—just like what was

Nina with her death left Nina with no choice but to reply to her message: [I’ll head to the hospital after I finish

on the bed and saw Nina's reply. She could not help but scold angrily, "Look at this b*tch. Does she even give a damn about her

not care that much as long as Nina was willing to

He sat there and waited.

showed up in the ward when it was noontime. She was not surprised to see Anna and Jean together in the

it was Jean who looked for her first. Hence, Anna looking for her had to have something to do with could not help throwing a tantrum at her when she saw Nina coming in. "You damned girl! Why are you so

looked at Anna, who was perfectly fine. Then, she looked at Jean, who was beaten up so badly. She asked expressionlessly, "What's the

"Of course, there's a reason why we're looking for you," Jean said, "Look at what you've done to me."

Nina looked at Jean's face and asked, "Who did you mess with this *time*?"

"Thanks to you, Pierre did this to me." Jean made an angry expression and said, "Pierre released his anger on me just because you're ignoring him. Nina, well done. You're the reason why I got beaten up. I'll get you for this!"

Nina looked straight at him when she heard it was Pierre who beat him up. "Why?"

"Well, none of this would have happened if you had talked to him. Mr. Mallory told me that he'll kill me if you don't go to see him tonight. You know the Mallory family well. It's easy for them to kill someone. Nina, I'm your brother. Although we're not always on good terms, I'm still your brother no matter what. You wouldn't want to see me killed, right?" Jean pointed at his face, blaming Nina for it.

Nina fell silent.

Indeed, Pierre might do such things just to see her.

However, there was no need to kill Jean...

Although there was no doubt that the Mallory family could easily make someone vanish in A City, it was a waste of effort to do such a thing to a nobody like Jean...

Anna went along with Jean's act. She wiped her tears and said, "Nina, if you still have any conscience left in you, please have mercy on your brother. He went through this ordeal just because of you. How can you bear to put him in **such danger**?"

narrowed her eyes with confusion as she listened to their accusations. "You're not lying to me, right?"

think I'm lying to you? Nina, look at these. Do they look fake to you? I know you hate me, and I admit that I haven't been taking good care of our mother. When I was on the way to the hospital, Pierre caught me, pulled me into this car, and beat me up. What could I have done?" Jean quickly covered his face with his hand when he accidentally tugged the wounds on his face while he was

did not think they were putting on a

had threatened her that he would lay his hands on her family if she refused to listen to him. She did not expect that he would really do

What an evil and despicable man!

her fists. Just then, her phone rang and she received a
to Bibbler's Tale tonight if you don't want anything to happen to your
It was from Pierre...

her lips quietly, while Jean said, "Pierre said that I'll be in trouble if you don't go tonight. Nina, please, I
beg you. I don't want to lose my hands and legs at such a young age. I still have to take care of our
mother in the future. Please hurry up and settle this."

turned around with her back facing

thought she insisted on not going and scolded her, "Nina if you refuse to go and something happens to
your brother because of it, you don't have to come back anymore. I'll no longer have a daughter

Chapter 1728

Anna was worried that Nina would get killed if she refused to listen to Pierre. What would happen to
them if she was gone?

Anna only felt assured after Jean guaranteed that Pierre would not do anything to Nina.

After Nina left the ward, she did not leave the hospital immediately. Instead, she sat in the hospital's
garden, looking depressed.

When Johann passed by the garden after sending off a patient who just got discharged from the
hospital, he happened to run into Nina who was sitting there. He walked toward her curiously and
greeted her, "Ms. Nina, what a coincidence. What brings you here?"

"Oh, Dr. Park. What a coincidence," Nina greeted him gloomily.

Johann noticed that something was wrong and asked, "What's wrong? Why do you look down?"

"Nothing. Do I look down? It's probably because I didn't sleep well last night," replied Nina as she
touched her face.

"It doesn't look like you didn't get enough rest. You seem preoccupied. Is it because of your mother's
illness..." Johann asked. He had been busy these days. He had yet to have time to check on Anna's
condition.

Nina shook her head and said, "My mother is doing fine. Nothing happened."

"Then..." Johann continued to ask.

Nina lifted her head, glanced at the sky, and asked, "Dr. Park, aren't you busy?"

"I am. I have to perform another surgery in half an hour," Johann answered honestly. If he had not
noticed her sitting alone here, he would have returned to his office.

all, he and Nina knew each other. That was why he came over to ask about her wellbeing, hoping that he
could lend a

and said, "Hurry up and get

nothing that Johann could do since she refused to tell him. He comforted her, saying, "If something is troubling you, talk to a friend and you'll feel

Nina nodded and replied, "I will."

Johann stood up and left.

looked at Johann from behind as he walked away. Suddenly, Luca came into her mind. The only person who would listen to her now was Luca, right?

She called Luca.

assigning tasks to the researchers in the lab. She had spent an hour looking into the progress of the experiment that they had been working on. Then, she continued to guide the following experiments.

phone rang. She glanced at it and said, "Give me a minute."

The researchers nodded.

Nina's call and asked in a low voice, "Nina, what's the

noticed that there was something wrong with her tone and asked, "Luca, am I disturbing you?"

"I just got back to work today. I'm not that busy though. What's wrong?" Luca asked patiently.

Nina smiled bitterly. Luca had just returned to work today. How could she possibly be free? She lowered her voice as she spoke, so Nina thought there were probably people around Luca.

Even though she could not release the anguish in her heart, she said, "It's nothing. I just wanted to ask you out for lunch, but I didn't know you'd gone back to work. It's alright, then. I'll let you get back to work."

Luca could sense that something was wrong with her tone. She said, "Why don't we have dinner together **tonight?**"

Nina wanted to say yes, but she had to meet Pierre later in the evening. She replied, "I'm busy tonight. Maybe some other **time.**"

"Alright." After Luca said that, Nina added, "Alright. I'll let you go now. Bye."

She hung up the phone after that.

Luca shook her head helplessly as she listened to the busy tone on the other end of the line. She thought of giving Nina a call to check on her after she was done with her job here.

After Luca finished assigning the tasks, she was summoned to go upstairs before she managed to catch a *breath*.

Luca went upstairs hurriedly. Jason placed five folders in front of her. "Dr. Craw, we need these to be translated. Thanks for your **help.**"

"Sure. When do you need them?" Luca asked. She looked at the five thick folders without any *complaints*.

the better. The documents are piling up. I didn't see these yesterday, so it's a little urgent now," Jason said apologetically.

and replied, "Alright. I'll try my best to finish translating them as soon as possible."

there'll be a meeting in the lab downstairs half an hour later. Remember to attend the meeting." Jason

Do I have to attend the meeting too?" Luca asked with a glazed look.

of the team now. Of course, you have to attend the meeting. Boss had it all arranged." Jason paraphrased what Luke had

Luca nodded.

hour later, she went downstairs with the laptop in her arms. When she walked into the meeting room, she realized the people attending the meeting were the senior management who were in charge of the seemed like she was the only one who was a nobody.

management team was not surprised to see Luca. Their expressions were normal, and they were busy talking about

walked with a cup of coffee in her hands. She saw Luca standing there, not seated yet. She reminded her in a soft voice, saying, "Dr. Craw, your seat is on the right, beside the

back to her senses and nodded. Then, she went over to her

not here yet. The senior management team was still discussing the project. The atmosphere was quite peaceful, but somehow, she could feel that something was

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Chapter 1729

The meeting ended two hours later.

Every senior manager walked out of the meeting room with a depressed look. They were keenly aware of the problems in their department after the meeting.

They almost got fired because of it...

Luca looked at them, feeling indifferent. Luke was serious about his work and the project.

Many people intended to harm him during all these years. However, he would always pull through, and it was probably because of his serious attitude at work.

"Are you tired?" Luke suddenly asked her after everyone in the meeting room had left.

Luca snapped back to her senses. She quickly tidied up the recording pen and meeting papers, saying, "No."

"You've been typing on the keyboard all this time. Aren't your hands sore?" Luke asked.

"No. I'm used to it." Luca finished packing everything and stood up.

"Let's go eat." Luke invited her.

Luca was startled. Was he inviting her for lunch?

Where?

"I'm sorry but I brought some light food with me today," said Luca. When she was on the way to the office today, she got out of the car when she almost reached the office. She noticed that someone was selling sandwiches near the office. Hence, she headed there and bought two sandwiches for herself as she thought of having them

she ate a lot of good food during the banquet last night as Queenie and Wanda had kept taking food for her. It was a little too greasy

food? Sandwiches?" Luke had seen her buying some sandwiches when he drove to the office this
embarrassingly, "Yes. You

saw you buying sandwiches. Why are you eating sandwiches?" Luke

ate too much greasy food last night, and I feel like eating something simple today to soothe my stomach," Luca explained. She did not expect that he would catch her buying sandwiches this

want to eat something light to soothe your stomach, it doesn't have to be a sandwich. Get ready. I'm bringing you out for lunch," Luke said as he walked out of the meeting

looked at the man from behind. She felt helpless. Was he bringing her out

would run into other people if they went in and out of the

atmosphere in the meeting room was already strange enough today. She reckoned that it was because of her relationship with Luke. If she went in and out of the office together with him, those people would probably make wild guesses.

her head helplessly as she watched Luke leave. She had no choice but to accept it. Then, she stood up and carried the laptop in

Luke had already gotten into his elevator to **go upstairs**.

Luca took the employee's lift to get upstairs. After she reached the floor, she ran into Tina when she passed by **the pantry**.

She thought Tina might know something about it, so she walked into the pantry.

"Tina, what are you making?" Luca asked.

Tina turned around and looked at Luca. She smiled and replied, "I've gained weight recently, so I'm making a meal replacement milkshake to fill my stomach. Dr. Craw, why are you still here? Did you *order* *takeaway*?"

"No, the meeting has just ended. I haven't had the time to order anything," Luca said with a hesitant look on her face.

Tina looked at her expression and thought that Luca might want to ask her something. She asked, "Dr. Craw, is there anything you'd like to say?"

Luca nodded and let out a sigh. She said, "When I attended the meeting today, I noticed the senior managers were acting weird. Did something *happen*?"

Tina took a sip of the meal replacement milkshake. She chuckled and asked, "Don't you **know**?"

"Know about what?" Luca was startled. Sure enough, something *did happen*.

Tina said, "You went to attend Old Master Crawford's birthday banquet, right?"

nodded. Now that Tina mentioned it, she finally understood why those people had weird expressions on their faces when they saw her. "Is it because of the birthday banquet last

Although the employees of T Corporation weren't invited to the birthday dinner, one of them who attended the dinner works in the company. I heard he's one of the Crawford family's distant relatives. He took a photo of you entering the venue."

was speechless when she heard that. That turned out to be it. She had stayed close to Luke last night to catch up with his pace. She was also holding his children's hands. That scene made her look like she was Luke's wife. That was why they had misunderstood

photo is being spread around in the office, right?" Luca continued the

You looked stunning in that dress last night. You two made a beautiful couple when you stood together. Tsk, tsk, tsk. So beautiful." Tina recalled how amazed she was when she saw how well-matched they were in the photo. She could not help but

Stop saying that. You know that there's nothing going on between me and Mr. Crawford. Everyone has misunderstood us." Luca was incapable of explaining it.

But after looking at that photo, everyone can't help themselves from overthinking. You were holding Mr. Crawford's hands. From the photo's angle, you were looking at him and there was a hint of gentleness in your eyes. Dr. Craw, so many women were jealous of you when the photo came out,"

got even more speechless. She knew she was going to be the topic of their

everyone who attended the banquet was a guest invited by the Crawford family. She thought they would not leak anything to the reporters, so the people in the office would not know about it

expected that the news was already all over the office.

looked at Luca, who looked troubled, and said, "Hey, you don't have to put on that expression. Even though those people are envious of you, they can't do anything to you. Mr. Crawford has given the orders that no one is allowed to talk about this anymore, and no one is allowed to tease you about it. Mr. Crawford knows you hate it, and he's protecting you well."

Chapter 1730

Luca returned to the office and placed her laptop down. As she was afraid of making Luke wait any longer, she hurried over to the elevator.

Luke was standing there.

Luca walked over and said, "I'm done, Mr. Crawford."

"Alright," Luke said as he nodded and pressed the elevator button. The elevator had already arrived at that floor beforehand, so the doors immediately opened when he pressed the button.

Luke walked in first, and Luca went in after him with her head lowered. When she noticed that Luke had been pressing on the door open button, she felt her heart flutter once more at how considerate he was.

He only let go after she walked in.

The elevator doors closed slowly, and Luca watched Luke press on the button for the first floor. She asked, "Mr. Crawford, don't we need to go to the parking lot first?"

"We'll be eating at a place nearby, so there's no need to drive," Luke explained.

Eating at a place nearby...

In that case, it meant that not did Tina know but the entire company would learn about it too.

Luca felt apprehensive about it, but there was nothing she could do as he had made the decision himself...

When the elevator arrived on the first floor, Luke walked out first with his hands in his pockets while Luca walked behind him with her head lowered.

A group of employees happened to be returning from their meal. When they saw their boss and Luca, they hurriedly made way for them and called out in greeting, "Hello, Boss. Hello, Dr. Craw."

Luca felt like she was an attachment. It was because of Luke that not only did these people all know who she was now, but they also sounded like they were trying to curry favor with her when they said hi.

felt like they were spiraling more and more out of control. She felt her head begin to
aloofly in reply before walking out of the building.

Luca hurried after him.

the employees behind them watched, they could not help but discuss among themselves. "Hey, do you
really think that the boss has gotten together with Dr. Crawford?"

you forgotten? We can't discuss that here," another employee answered. "If Mr. Doyle or anyone else
hears you, you'll lose your

got it. Let's not talk about it anymore."

...

Luke to a cafe nearby. Once they entered, a waiter enthusiastically hurried over and led them to a
private

waiter began bringing dishes to the table once they had settled

reckoned that these dishes were pre-ordered. She recalled how Luke had been using his phone for a
while during the meeting and thought that he must have been placing his

not many dishes, but none of them seemed to be light foods. Luca was still staring at the dishes
hesitantly when the waiter brought over a fruit and vegetable

can have this salad if you find these dishes too greasy for you," Luke said.

that he was referring to the fruit and vegetable salad when he was talking about light foods.

Indeed, it was a light dish.

"Thank you, Mr. Crawford," Luca said as she lowered her eyes and gazed at the salad in front of her. It
was tastier and healthier than just bread. Thus, she picked up her fork and began eating quietly.

When Luke noticed that she was not going to have even a bite of meat, he frowned and placed several
pieces of meat on her plate. "You won't have enough energy by just eating that. Have some meat too.
The afternoon is going to be a busy one."

Luca nodded and looked at the meat on her plate. They were all meats that she enjoyed.

He knew her inside out...

After finishing the meat on her plate, Luca was just about to have some salad to soothe her stomach
from the grease when several more pieces of meat appeared on her **plate**.

Luke said, "Have some more. You'll have to work overtime tonight and might not have enough time
for dinner."

"Alright," Luca said as she continued eating the meat. After finishing that portion, she covered her plate
with her hands and said, "Mr. Crawford, that's enough. Please don't give me anymore."

Luke did not force her to eat any more meat when he noticed how she genuinely seemed reluctant to have more. He nodded and began eating.

After finishing their meal, the two returned to the office again.

This time, when the receptionists noticed them walking in, they hurriedly called out to them in greeting as well. When Luca heard how respectfully they were speaking, she knew that this time, there would be nothing she could do to remove the sigma from her name.

Luke walked into his private elevator, and when he noticed that Luca was not going to come in, said, "Hey, come on in."

She wanted to remain steadfast, but there were other employees nearby. It would not be the best idea to be stubborn now, which was why she lowered her head and walked into his private *elevator*.

doors slid shut, and they began traveling

"Mr. Crawford, misunderstandings are going to occur if you treat me this way."

for them to misunderstand?" Luke

to misunderstand that we're..." Luca spoke frankly, hoping that Luke would be more mindful when they were in public so that their reputations would not get

all, Mrs. Crawford would get involved in this as well.

raised an eyebrow and asked, "Have you misunderstood

I haven't. And I am perfectly aware of what's going on too. However, once gossip spreads, not only will it be very troubling for me, but it'll also impact you negatively," Luca said as she lowered her eyes. He had done things that would cause misunderstandings again and again. It made her feel

just let it spread," Luke said nonchalantly.

up at him with an incredulous expression on her face.

speaking, "I think it's time you and I talked. I'll talk to you in a few days after finishing everything there is to be done."

already decided he wanted to get closer to Luca, which meant that it was imperative he had this conversation

nodded resignedly. Although she had no idea what he wanted to say to her, she had no idea what else to do given their current situation now. Thus, it would be a good idea to set things

arrived at its destination. As usual, Luke walked out first, and Luca walked out after him. Their offices were in the same direction, which meant that he walked in front of her while she tagged along after