

Be Gentle 951

Chapter 951

"Louis is quite egoistic. We shouldn't interfere in his family matters." Louis took the book from Rainie's hands and underlined the difficult words.

He and Louis were brothers, and they knew each other's personalities well.

Bianca nodded. She sat next to Rainie and listened to her read.

In Louis's bedroom on the second floor, Yuri hugged Thea and gently coaxed her.

The little girl was crying miserably in Yuri's arms. Her huge eyes were blurred with tears, which made people pity her.

"Alright, don't cry. I'll buy a ballet dress for you." Yuri was angry after hearing what her daughter said.

Louis was inferior to Luke in every aspect. He could not even afford a custom-made ballet dress for her daughter.

'Our daughter wouldn't want something that Rainie can't wear, you good-for-nothing!' She cursed in her heart as she listened to the heart-rending sobs of her daughter.

"Mommy, I want a better dress than Rainie's dress." Thea did not want to be outdone.

"Of course. Your dress will be better than Rainie's best dress. You're the true granddaughter of the Crawford family," Yuri said. Her daughter would be better than Rainie.

Luke was the son of his father's mistress. He could not be considered a true Crawford.

Yuri had just finished speaking when she saw Louis enter the bedroom. Her expression instantly sank.

Louis did not look too pleasant either. He shot a glance at his wife and daughter, then opened the closet and took out a set of bedding and pillows.

stood up and put Thea down. "Are you sleeping in the guest

would sleep in the guest room every time he faced a setback. It was his sixth time this month sleeping in the guest

were already gossiping about it, wondering if there was something wrong in the couple's

"Mm," Louis replied.

in front of the door. "You can't go. Who do you think I am? Do you think you can sleep anywhere you want depending on your

sank a little. He stood there, glaring icily at the obstacle who stood in

to panic when she saw the coldness in

did her husband become

grabbed the bedding from Louis's hands and threw it on the floor. "You can't sleep in the guest room tonight. Sleep here! You are my husband, not my pillow

bedding fell on the floor. Louis clenched his fists tightly. He did not hit women, but Yuri's tantrums repeatedly challenged his

Thea, who was standing behind them, bawled loudly out

frigid expression warmed up a little. He turned around and

Thea fell into his arms. "Don't be angry, Daddy, don't ignore *me*."

Seeing his daughter like that, Louis was not in the mood to argue with Yuri. He carried her, sat down on the couch, and coaxed her softly, "I won't **ignore you**."

"*I don't* want to learn ballet anymore, Daddy. I don't want the ballet dress anymore. Don't blame Mommy, it's all my fault. Don't leave, Daddy." Thea grabbed Louis's shirt **tightly**.

"Don't worry, I'm not leaving. Good girl, Thea," he coaxed her while staring at Yuri at the door.

She was afraid that Louis would leave, so she did not step away from the door.

Thea was only a small child. What would she know?

Louis was angry that Yuri had taught Thea to say such things.

He coaxed Thea patiently until she stopped crying and fell asleep in his *arms*.

Even though she was asleep, her hands continued to grab Louis's shirt tightly.

Louis's heart wrenched when he could see that she was insecure.

He carried Thea and placed her in the middle of the bed, while he slept close to the edge, indicating his rejection with his *distance*.

...

The next morning, Bianca, Luke, and the children went *downstairs*.

Thea were already sitting at the dining table waiting for breakfast. Yuri was nowhere to be

guess that something must have happened between Louis and Yuri the night before, so she did not ask where Yuri was. Instead, she smiled and greeted everyone at

The children also greeted everyone.

did not eat much during

concerned. "You're not eating your breakfast, Rainie. What happened? You're a growing girl, and you should eat

a performance later today, Uncle Louis, so I shouldn't overeat. Don't worry. Mommy prepared some toast for me. I'll eat it after my performance," Rainie

slapped his forehead. "Right, you have a performance today! Thea, do you want to see

bore some resentment toward Rainie. If Rainie had not been around the night before, her parents would not have

remembered what her mother taught her and managed to keep her father in

remembered what Thea told him the night before while she was crying. He thought that it was a pity for her to give up ballet just because of the

father, Louis wanted to see Thea dancing elegantly on the stage and receive applause from the
pinched Thea's cheek. "It's rare that Rainie gets to perform. Shall we go and watch it

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Bianca walked down the stairs with Lanie's backpack in one hand and Rainie's ballet dress in the other.

The ballet dress had been pressed, and it could not be folded, which was why she did not put it in a bag but instead covered it with a plastic dust cover. Thea saw the dress and tugged her father's hand.

"Daddy, I want that dress."

Seeing that his daughter was interested, Louis asked, "Where did Rainie get that dress, Sis?"

"Luke got it custom-made overseas," Bianca replied awkwardly. The scenes from last night were still fresh in her mind.

Louis turned to look at Luke. He could still afford it for his daughter.

Luke nodded. "I'll send you the address later."

"Thank you, Luke." Louis patted Thea's head. "After you get the dress, I'll enroll you for ballet classes."

"Yes, Daddy." Thea thought of something and went to Bianca. "Can I touch the dress, Aunt Bianca?"

Bianca noticed that Thea's hands were clean. She nodded and handed the dress to her.

Thea greedily caressed the high-quality cloth. She was jealous of Rainie. Why would everyone in the family love Rainie? Even Great-Grandpa had nothing but praises for her.

As for herself, no one loved her other than her mother.

When Thea thought of that, she grabbed one of the lace strips tightly and gave it a sharp tug. Then, she handed the dress back to Bianca as though nothing happened.

"Here, Aunt Bianca." She smiled sweetly. No one knew what she did.

Bianca took the dress, smiled, and walked out of the house with Luke.

The twins were already waiting outside.

went next to Louis and spread her arms, wanting a hug from

down and carried her in his arms. "Do you like that

I want one too, Daddy. It feels so good, just like Mommy's wedding gown," Thea said. She was thinking that she would look better than Rainie in that

Thea's face was full of joy, he nodded and said, "Alright, I'll get one made coldly when she saw the interaction between father and daughter. "You'd better keep your promise. Don't lie to your daughter," she said

frowned. "What are you saying in front of the

coldly. She was only telling the truth. Louis had spent all his money on his studio; there was no spare money for their

not going to argue with him. Instead, she took her handbag and went out of

what her mother said. She looked at Louis. "You'll buy the dress for me, right,

Louis gave her his

packing up, the family left the house in

car carried Bianca and the twins, while Louis's car carried Yuri, Thea, and Old

Luke dropped off Lanie at school, then drove toward the ballet **theater**.

At the theater, Bianca escorted Rainie backstage. Ms. Shannon, the ballet teacher, was already *waiting there*.

"**Good** morning, Mrs. Crawford," Ms. Shannon smiled and **greeted Bianca**.

Bianca smiled. "Thank you for your hard work, Ms. Shannon. I'll leave Rainie in your **care**."

"*You're* welcome. Go and get changed first, Rainie. I'll put on your makeup for you later," Ms. Shannon patted Rainie's head and said *proudly*.

She felt a great sense of achievement that she had such an **outstanding student**.

"Yes, Ms. Shannon," Rainie took the dress and went into the changing room.

Bianca stood there and waited.

A while later, Rainie ran out of the changing room toward Bianca. Her lips were pressed together tightly. "*Mommy!*"

Bianca looked at her. "Why aren't you changing your clothes?"

"**The** dress is ruined." Rainie handed the dress *to her*.

"That can't be! I checked it when I pressed it this morning." Bianca frowned. She unfurled the dress and noticed that the lace that was supposed to be sewn to the hemline **was detached**.

"**What** should we do, Mommy?" Rainie looked like she was about *to cry*.

dress was very important to her. Not only had her father given it to her as a present, but she had also worn it when she won the

loved the dress and treated it with

no!" Ms. Shannon exclaimed when she saw that. "How did the dress become not sure either. She was very careful when she pressed and packed that dress, and she did not notice anything torn. The dress was hand-stitched, so the needlework should be Shannon, do you have a sewing kit?" She it's almost Rainie's turn to go on stage. Will you make it in time?" Ms. Shannon said worriedly as she took out the sewing kit and glanced at the on Rainie's makeup first. I'll be quick." Bianca picked a needle and threaded some white thread through it. "I'll fix the dress for and sat on the makeup chair, watching Bianca's movements was hard to work with. Bianca had to be that Bianca remained backstage for so long, Luke went to find her Luke was curious about why Bianca was messing with Rainie's ballet dress is torn. I'm repairing it," Bianca explained. She was very anxious, but she stitched very gasped when the needle accidentally poked

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Bianca's hand was enveloped in warmth. The pain seemed to have subsided a little. She shook her head. "Maybe I accidentally tore it when I packed it..." Luke frowned hard. The tailor store had been renowned for generations. Their handiwork should have been better than that. Bianca knew that Luke was suspecting someone. However, she considered that Thea was only a child, and the little girl might be afraid that the adults would scold her. Bianca decided not to say it. Rainie came out of the changing room. She would be going on stage after the current performance. "Thank you, Mommy." Rainie hugged Bianca. Bianca hugged her and said, "I'll be in the audience with Daddy cheering you. Do your best, Rainie. You're our precious little princess." "Yes, Mommy!" Rainie hugged her again. She looked at Luke, who gave her an encouraging glance. Then she went to the area behind the stage. Bianca took Luke's hand and left the backstage area. They returned to the audience seats. Bianca was sitting next to the aisle. Next to her was Luke, then Louis's family and Old Master Crawford.

Louis noticed Luke and Bianca's return. "Where were you, Luke? You were gone for so long," he asked softly out of concern.

Luke shot a casual but profound glance at Thea, looked away, and said, "It's nothing."

Louis glanced at Thea, wondering what was going on.

held Bianca's hand and gently massaged her fingers. She did not say what happened, but Luke

Thea was still young, and he was not going to hold

Bianca held his hand too.

the performance ended, Rainie would be going on

when she saw Rainie elegantly walk on the stage. She turned her head and looked at

was looking at her too. There was a certain gentleness and pride in

at him. When the music started, she turned her head to look at the

might be very young, but she was in her

on the stage, she was as beautiful as a swan. Every gentle yet firm movement earned her the audience's praise. She was the youngest performer in the group, but she was the

boy sat in the last row of the theater. He was guarded closely by several burly men. His field of vision was only about half an

Winston Macdonald's purple irides followed the little girl's movements closely. A smile suddenly appeared on his usually stern

'Rainie Crawford...'

first met the girl in the flower field, he thought that she was a mischievous little fairy. Seeing her on the stage, she was like an elegant and noble

'Princess...'

Winston watched her take a bow. The theater erupted with applause once the music **stopped**.

He told her that they would meet again, but now was not the **time**.

Winston stood up. "Let's go."

"Yes." *The* bodyguards surrounded him and escorted him out of the theater.

Bianca was clapping her hands together with the rest of the audience. The feeling of pride in her heart was *genuine*.

Rainie Crawford was her precious daughter!

Louis turned to speak to Thea. "Do you think that Rainie danced **very well**?"

Thea was pouting, and her hands covered her ears. She thought that the thunderous applause was very **annoying**.

She had ruined Rainie's dress so that her performance would be less than perfect. She did not expect that Rainie's dress would be repaired, and everyone would be showering Rainie with applause. 'What's so good about it? I'll be a better ballet dancer than her,' *she thought*.

Yuri helped to cover Thea's ears. She said to Louis coldly, "Why are you so happy? It's not like she's *your daughter*."

Before he was married, Louis was also responsible for taking care of Rainie. As her uncle, Louis was proud of her **achievements**.

Yuri's attitude was like a bucket of cold water on Louis's enthusiasm. Louis frowned and turned his *head away*.

After the entire performance, Luke and Bianca went on stage, hugged Rainie, and took a *photo together*.

schools approached them, intending to recruit Rainie as their

Luke rejected them all.

daughter is very talented, Mr. Crawford. She seems to be born for the stage. Won't you consider enrolling her in our academy? We have the best dance teachers, and your daughter will receive the best instruction," one of the principals of a dance academy tried to

of all, Rainie was truly talented. Secondly, her father was Luke

Rainie enrolled in her academy, sponsorships would not be a problem

Rainie's hand and said firmly, "I would like my children to develop in multiple fields. If Rainie is interested in pursuing ballet, I will nurture her talent. However, I will leave the choice to

told Rainie the same thing when he hired a private ballet

did not have to dance too well. She would have to do her best in her classes, but she could also spend some time on her other hobbies and

be a professional dancer in the future, but there were other options

she got tired of dancing, she still had other talents and

not force Rainie to take over the family business. That was Lanie's

Rainie was young, Luke had planned for her future, though he would not make her do the things that she did not

was moved when she listened to his words. She could feel tears welling up in

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After the performance, Luke and Bianca planned to send Rainie back to school.

The family of three went to the parking lot, and Luke said to his wife and daughter, "I'll go and fetch the car. Wait for me here."

"Alright, Daddy." Rainie was holding Bianca's hand when she suddenly sensed something. She turned her head to look.

"What's wrong?" Bianca noticed her daughter's abrupt movement. She also turned around to look but did not see anything.

"Mommy, I think someone is watching us." Rainie had a keen intuition, but she did not see anything after she turned her head.

Bianca took a closer look. She saw cars parked in rows but did not see anyone. "There's no one around. Could you have been mistaken?"

Rainie shook her head and turned away.

Luke drove the car over. Bianca and Rainie got into the car and left.

Winston came out from a corner of the parking lot, staring profoundly at the Land Rover that was leaving.

"We should leave, Prince Winston. Otherwise..." A burly bodyguard reminded him.

"You don't have to tell me." Winston's eyes were transfixed in that direction for a few minutes before saying, "Let's go."

"Yes." The bodyguard snapped his fingers, and a Rolls-Royce drove over.

After Luke and Bianca dropped Rainie off at the school, the couple went to a nearby restaurant to have lunch.

Luke ordered several iron-rich dishes.

not sure how to react to that. After the waiter left with the order, she glanced at her finger. The needle wounds were almost

me take a look." Luke took Bianca's hand and wanted to examine

did not get a close look while at the theater. He could see that her finger was reddish, and he felt bad for the woman whom

reddishness had dissipated, and the needle pricks could not be

really fine. It's only a little bit of blood, I don't need to eat that much iron-rich food," Bianca

wondered if he had overacted. He ordered the iron-rich food to make up for her blood

case, the order was already made. He cleared his throat and said seriously, "I want to

Bianca could not help but chuckle.

his wife, Bianca knew what Luke's

was full of indulgence as he looked at her mischievous smile. She was as delectable as a delicious dish. "It's normal for me to change my tastes,

Luke was the last person that would change his

cook in Crawford Manor had told her that Luke's stubbornness also extended to his food preferences. He would never change

Bianca gazes at his stern face. That was the face he showed to other people, though she knew that he was gentle toward her and their children. She was moved when she recalled what he said on the stage earlier. "Mm, I know. I'll eat with you **then.**"

Soon, the waiter served the food.

Bianca gently touched her face. She wondered if she would break out in pimples after eating **all that.**

She felt a little worried.

"You should eat more," Luke said as he placed some liver on **her plate.**

Bianca looked at the entire plate of liver in front of them. She could already imagine the pimples showing up on her face by the **next morning.**

Luke saw that she was not eating. "What are **you thinking?**"

"*I'm wondering* if we should finish it all." Bianca pointed at the liver and pork dishes on **the table.**

"Eat as much as you can. I'll finish the rest," **Luke said.**

Bianca picked up her knife and fork and began to eat. She cleared half of her plate before she was **full.**

After Luke cleared his plate, he took Bianca's plate without any complaint and finished the food *there.*

He did not show any disdain toward eating her **leftovers.**

food on the table rapidly diminishing, Bianca wondered if she should cook something light

Luke and Bianca walked around the block to help

was almost afternoon, Luke sent Bianca back to

was about to get out of the car when Luke grabbed

around, and Luke said, "Give me

was momentarily confused, and Luke took the opportunity to lean forward and kiss

was a fresh scent on his lips, as though he had not eaten those pungent foods

was instantly captivated by the fresh scent. He removed himself when she was about to lose control of herself and gently pecked her on the cheek. "I'll pick you up after work,

face was flushed red as she slumped on the seat. She gulped large breaths of air with her mouth, and it took her a while to

could hear Luke's resonant voice next to her, and she knew that he would kiss her if she did not leave the car at

her strength had been sapped away. After getting out of the car, her footing was unstable, as though she was walking on

Luke waved at her.

the wave, turned around, and walked toward the office

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Sue shook her head indignantly. "Not good. Ever since that incident, we've received far fewer orders. Some clients would rather pay the penalty for breach of contract than let us do the design for them."

Bianca was not too flustered, knowing what those people were thinking. "How does it compare to the previous month?"

"It's at least a forty-percent decrease. We're not a big company, and there are several designers without any work on hand. Even St. Heckler Hotel is already looking for another company," Sue reported.

St. Heckler Hotel was a three-star hotel construction project in A City. It took Bianca a lot of effort to convince them, but Riley's incident happened right before they were about to sign the contract.

She was not at liberty to continue negotiations, so she delegated the task to Sue and Nina.

"Have they signed the contract with the other design company?" Bianca asked.

"No, they're still negotiating. I've heard that the company is charging a high price, which is why St. Heckler hasn't agreed to their terms yet," Sue replied.

Bianca nodded and spoke to Nina, "Nina, can you contact St. Heckler? We'll have to get them to sign with us."

There was a chance that they might win the contract, especially when the media had been reporting about Bianca's innocence.

Nina nodded. "No problem. I'll set up an appointment now."

She took out her phone, tried to make her sound as docile as possible, and managed to make an appointment with the developer.

After Nina ended the call, she said, "The developer said that he's free tonight. I told him that we can meet him."

company was desperate for business, so they had to comply with the other party's

problem. Nina, can you go with me tonight?" Bianca asked and made a mental note that she would have to inform Luke

Nina did not want to return to Percy's mansion so soon. She would rather stay

"Should I go too?" Sue asked.

shook her head. "You've been working hard for the company lately, Sue. Let us do this. You should go home early and spend some quality time with Kari and

thought of her daughters. She had indeed neglected them because of work, so she nodded and said, "The developer was quite keen to collaborate with us, and they would've already signed the contract if not for the incident. Now that we're asking for their business, I'm afraid that they'll be asking for

understand. I'll try to negotiate so that we don't lose out too much." Bianca

the discussion, Nina and Sue left the

Bianca sent Luke a message.

Ding!

Luke heard the message notification, he stopped working and unlocked his

Jason also stopped giving his report.

Luke played the voice message, and Bianca's gentle voice was heard. "Luke, I'll be having a business dinner with St. Heckler's developer tonight. You don't have to come and pick me up. If you're working overtime, remember to get the driver to pick up Lanie and Rainie from school."

As busy as she might be, she did not neglect her children.

"Alright," Luke replied gently.

Jason was not surprised anymore when he saw that gentle side of his boss. Only Bianca had the magic to make his boss fall in love with her.

Luke put the phone away but did not indicate Jason to continue reporting. Instead, he asked, "What's going on with St. Heckler's developer?"

As a professional assistant, Jason naturally knew what was going on. He briefly explained the incident about St. Heckler's developer changing design *companies*.

The developer of a three-star hotel would want to save as much cost as possible. They would not engage in **T Corporation's services**.

Luke frowned and continued asking, "Which other company did St. Heckler look **for**?"

"Genial Engineering Design LLC," Jason replied. He knew about that mainly because *of Sue*.

"Boss, Ms. Laviere is working there after she left our company," Jason reminded Luke.

'Mavis Laviere?'

was surprised. Mavis was a talented worker. Several multinational companies tried to poach her before she left T Corporation, and she could have found employment anywhere. Why would she work in a small

"Boss?" Jason called out.

Luke said. He did not make a comment because he was confident

be a formidable opponent, but Bianca was also

Jason nodded and continued his report.

Bianca and Nina went to the Westin Hotel. The other party wanted to meet them there, and they reserved a private room to show

Nina sat down in the private room, ordered dinner, and waited for the developer to

hour passed, but the developer was nowhere to be

the table impatiently. "Are they doing this on purpose? We've agreed to meet at seven o'clock, but it's already

wait for a while more." Bianca calmly sipped her tea. If the other party had not signed the contract with the other company, it meant that they were still

other party's tardiness was also part of the negotiation process. As the developer, they would want to keep the cost as low as possible. Bianca thought that it would be quite tough for them to win the

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"Yes, I've met her before. I always remember the beautiful women I meet. Your company really has a lot of beautiful women. Ms. Langdon is one, Ms. Rayne is too." Mr. Steven's eyes on his corpulent face narrowed into slits as he ogled brazenly at the two women in front of him.

Bianca and Nina exchanged glances. Both of them thought that Mr. Steven's perverse gaze was quite disgusting.

Bianca tried to hold back her disgust as she smiled and said, "Please have a seat, Mr. Steven."

Mr. Steven's beautiful secretary pulled a chair, then removed his coat with her delicate fingers and hung it on the rack. "Please sit, Mr. Steven," she said coyly.

"Yes, yes." Mr. Steven copped a feel as he sat down on the chair.

The secretary smiled and said nothing. She sat down next to him.

Nina could not help but wonder how that perverted man managed to get to where he was.

She smiled brilliantly, hiding the disgust in her heart, and poured some tea for the man. "Please have some tea, Mr. Steven."

"I'm honored to have a beautiful woman pour tea for me." Mr. Steven tried to grope Nina's fair and tender hand when he took the cup, though Nina dodged it.

"Have you had dinner yet, Mr. Steven? Do you want to order some food?" Nina said as she handed him the menu, stopping the man from having perverse thoughts toward Bianca.

"Yes, yes." Mr. Steven was indeed hungry. He would have come earlier if not that he wanted a lower price.

had been hungry after waiting for so

listened as Mr. Steven rattled his order to the

many expensive dishes, including seven of the restaurant's ten signature

the smile on her face. After ordering the food, Mr. Steven also ordered a bottle of red wine. He smiled and looked at Bianca while saying, "I hope you don't mind me having a drink or two, Ms.

to drink at the dining table." Bianca's expression did not change

assertive women like you, Ms. Rayne. Let's drink together later." Mr. Steven did not disguise his intentions of making Bianca drunk. He gestured a thumbs-up and flashed an ugly, perverted smile at not stop cursing in

had heard that Mr. Steven was not from A City. He probably found out about Riley's incident through his secretary, but he did not know that Bianca was Luke

found out that a man coveted Bianca to that extent, he would have broken Mr. Steven's legs before kicking him out of

about me, Mr. Steven." Nina smiled. She did not want Bianca to drink

good friend, she knew Bianca's capacity for alcohol. Meanwhile, her capacity for alcohol changed a lot over the past three

She drank whenever she was depressed, and now, she could drink three bottles of hard liquor in one sitting.

Of course, the Percy brothers contributed to a lot of it.

Bianca tugged Nina's shirt under the table. She knew that Nina would be at a disadvantage if she drank with that perverted man.

Nina squeezed Bianca's hand, indicating that she would *be fine*.

Mr. Steven laughed at Nina's hospitality. He continued to talk about something else.

They talk about various topics except *for business*.

Bianca and Nina were not worried. After all, it would be rude to talk about business before they had dinner. In any case, it would be easier to negotiate after *some alcohol*.

After the dishes were served, Mr. Steven did not hold back. He ate and drank with his secretary, while Bianca and Nina *barely managed*.

Mr. Steven thought that one bottle of wine was not enough. He hinted that he **wanted more**.

Bianca got the waiter to serve another bottle of wine. After pouring a fresh round of drinks, they began to *talk business*.

out several design samples to show him what their designers

took a sip of his wine, stood up, sat down beside Nina, and narrowed his eyes. "I'm old and I can't see clearly. I'd better come

nearly choked when she smelled the alcohol in Mr. Steven's breath. However, she maintained a professional smile and said, "Look at these designs, Mr. Steven. These are some examples from our previous projects. Our designers are top-notch. Many of them have graduated from overseas

gentle tone of voice made Mr. Steven at ease. He draped his plump arm over Nina's shoulder and massaged her through the thin fabric of

her fists and loosened them repeatedly, then continued to introduce the company to Mr.

frowned slightly. She could not tolerate it when she saw the man taking advantage of her good

lifted her wine glass, stood up, and clinked Mr. Steven's glass. "Don't you find all that talk boring? Come and let's drink, Mr.

bad, Ms. Rayne. No wonder you're running a successful company. Let's drink. Bottoms up!" Mr. Steven's arm shifted away from Nina's

the contents of her glass and shot a glance

stood up, moved some distance away, and lifted her glass. "A toast to you, Mr.

that they needed to satisfy the man's desire for alcohol or women. If they did not want to be taken advantage of, they would have to drink

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Mr. Steven took a step forward in front of Bianca, sniffed the air in front of her, hugged her waist brazenly, and smiled. "Yes, we can talk about the price. After all, your company seems quite capable. So how much will it be, Ms. Rayne?"

Bianca turned her head away in disgust when she saw his oily, sausage-like lips leaning close to her face. She discreetly distanced herself and said, "We can talk about it, Mr. Steven. How about if we sit down and talk?"

"Alright, alright, alright. Sit on my lap and we'll talk." Mr. Steven prepared to sit down while hugging her.

Nina stepped in between the two. Mr. Steven let go of Bianca and hugged Nina instead.

He did not mind that. After all, both of them were beautiful. He smiled at Nina and said, "Would you rather sit on my lap, Ms. Langdon?"

After many drinks, all Mr. Steven wanted was to cop a feel.

Nina was appalled, but she would rather Mr. Steven take advantage of her than her good friend. "How about if we give you a five percent discount on the original quote?" She suggested.

"I'll have to think about it." Mr. Steven might be intoxicated, but he seemed lucid when money was involved. He sat on the chair and tried to pull Nina toward his lap.

Bianca wanted to stop him when the room door opened abruptly. "Oh, Mr. Steven, I've heard that you're here. I didn't expect to bump into you."

The person who walked through the door was Mavis Laviere. She was dressed in office wear and wore impeccable makeup. There was a hint of contempt in her eyes when she glanced at Bianca.

Bianca frowned. Why was Mavis here?

coincidence, Ms. Laviere. Why are you here?" Mr. Steven let go of Nina, smiled, and walked

also a beautiful woman, and she was not any lesser than the other

Mavis had maintained an arrogant air in their previous negotiations, and Mr. Steven knew to keep a distance away from her. However, he could sense that Mavis was a lot friendlier this time, and he could tell that she wanted the project

would consider himself lucky if either of the women accompanied him

Steven brought a glass to Mavis. "Are you here to negotiate upon the project too, Ms. Laviere? Would you like to have a drink

he spoke, he rested his hand on her

gently pushed him away and said coyly, "I'd like to negotiate with you, but aren't you negotiating with Brilliant Architecture

were slightly pouted, indicating her dissatisfaction. Mr. Steven was even more bewitched when he saw her like that. "It's fine to negotiate a little more. How about all of you negotiate with me at the

women in the room knew what he meant. Bianca furrowed her brows and looked at

realized that she forgot to tell Bianca that Mavis was working as a general manager in Genial Engineering, and so she whispered into her

Bianca instantly understood, though she was surprised that someone as capable as Mavis would work in a small *company*.

Mavis grunted contemptuously. That man was so naïve to think that all three women would want to please him at the same *time*!

She would not have come if she had not received news that Bianca wanted to snatch the contract from her!

She had built an extensive network of connections. Even if she lost the project, Genial Engineering would continue to *thrive*.

However, she wanted the project because of Bianca! Bianca had snatched her beloved man from her. She swore that she would make Bianca's life as difficult as **possible**!

That was why she decided to work in Genial Engineering. She would not be able to oppose Bianca if she joined a major **company**.

Mavis smiled and shook her head. "I'd love to talk to you tonight, but too bad I'm engaged somewhere else."

"Oh..." Mr. Steven knew what she meant. His expression became cold, and he prepared to walk **away**.

Mavis grabbed his hand and hinted, "We can discuss the price, Mr. Steven. What if I meet you in a nightclub tomorrow and talk about *it*?"

Mr. Steven beamed instantly. "Tomorrow night?"

night. I'll reserve a private room, and we can talk about it as much as we want!" Mavis whispered into his ear. Then, she stood up straight, straightened her hair, and said seductively, "I'm almost late for my engagement. See you tomorrow,

furious when she saw Mavis arrive. She was hoping to win the contract tonight, but Mavis had upended her plans. She knew that Mr. Steven was a lecherous man and would not sign the

vixen!" She clenched her fists and cursed under her breath as she watched

had made all their arrangements

walked away victoriously, Mr. Steven returned to the table while smiling. "Sorry, Ms. Rayne and Ms. Langdon, you can see that you're not the only ones who want the project. As for the

He leaned forward as he spoke.

tried not to lose her temper as she stood in front of Bianca. "Yes, I know. I'm confident that you'll eventually choose us because we are the more capable

very confident, Ms. Langdon. I'd like to see your sincerity in your promise," Mr. Steven

down her wine glass and said, "Our company is very sincere, Mr. Steven. Let's not beat around the bush anymore. Our cost is ninety-three percent of the original quote. I have to pay my employees, and you should understand that it doesn't make sense to lose money just to secure a project. If we win the contract without any regard to the cost, we can't guarantee the quality. You're a developer, and you should understand that quality is an important factor,

Steven was quite surprised. He thought that Bianca would comply with his demands to win the

Chapter 958

Percy's dark eyes dripped with spite. He stared intently at Steven's fat hand that was on Nina's waist. 'How dare this pig lay his hands on my woman? Is he tired of living?'

Percy asked Bianca, "Is Luke aware that this is how you have business meetings?"

Bianca's scalp felt numb. If Luke found out, she would never hear the end of it.

Just as she was about to explain further, Nina got closer to Steven and said in a chilly tone, "We're just talking about work and didn't do anything else. What's wrong? Does it feel dirty? To a dirty man, everything looks dirty."

Steven hugged her and said triumphantly, "Yeah! Who are you? You barged into our private room, how rude!"

One could seemingly smell gunpowder in the air, and Bianca was caught in the middle. She tried her best to diffuse the situation. "This is Ms. Langdon's—"

"Nina, come home with me now." Percy clenched his fist, walked over, and grabbed Nina's hand.

"Hmph..." Nina snorted and was taken away by a strong force.

The next second, she was held at Percy's side.

"Are you trying to pick a fight?" Steven was furious that Nina was so close yet so far. He wanted to charge at Percy.

Bianca was taken aback. Luke said that Percy had practiced martial arts for multiple years and was not the typical playboy who was frail. Even if Steven was capable, he would be the one who suffered in the end.

All she wanted was for this cooperation to go smoothly. She did not want to see any bloodshed. She said, "Steven, don't be angry. This is Ms. Langdon's boyfriend, he's here to pick her up."

his eyes and looked at Percy who was taller than himself. He was discontented and shouted, "So what? Ms. Langdon seems more willing to stay by

stared daggers at the man in front of him who did not know chalk from cheese. No one had ever dared to fight with him for a woman. 'This fat good-for-nothing is sick and tired of

looked at Nina and domineeringly held her waist. He held her so tightly that it almost hurt her. "Would you rather stay by his

pursed her red lips, not wanting

hated Steven, but the moment Percy appeared, she became courageous due to the influence of alcohol. She did not want to ask him for help. She wanted to pick a fight with him by going against his

that Nina was keeping quiet, Percy's grip

the pain in her waist getting worse. Even so, she insisted on not saying

of gunpowder was getting stronger. Bianca saw Percy clenching his fist. She knew that if Steven took a step forward, Percy's fist would greet him the next

anxiously, "Nina, maybe you should go home with

wanted to get rid of Percy, but she was well aware of the consequences. She was there to help, not to cause any trouble for Bianca. Eventually, she said, "Let's

gloomy handsome face was full of dissatisfaction. His eyes were hazy as though there were countless knives hidden in them. He seemed ready to kill Steven

that Percy was refusing to leave, Nina felt impatient and thought to herself, 'What else does he want? I said we're

Bianca gave Nina a look.

Nina's expression was a little depressed, and she said impatiently, "If you don't want to go, I'll go back by myself."

Percy looked at Steven's fat face and put his arms around her waist. He refused to let go and they walked out together. "Let's go."

Bianca understood this look. It meant that Steven would be suffering **soon enough**.

She sighed in her heart and watched them leave. Bianca was concerned.

Percy was in a bad mood. Besides Steven, she was afraid that Nina would also suffer.

Bianca felt guilty. If she had known that their potential partner was such a person, she would not have brought Nina *along*.

Percy left with Nina. They arrived at the parking lot and Percy sped all the way back to the villa. He was too high-strung and almost collided with other cars several times.

Nina drank a lot but was not drunk. However, after being swayed so intensely, her stomach began to **feel weird**.

After arriving at the villa, she opened the car door, held on to it, and vomited like her life depended **on it**.

Percy frowned in disgust but stood still at the front of *the car*.

smell of alcohol with food scraps was horrible. After Nina vomited and emptied her stomach, she stood upright holding the door of the car. She laughed with joy seeing the disgust on his face that was highlighted by the

were wrinkles above his furrowed eyebrows, his face filled with disgust for her. Not only was she not sad about it, but she even felt physically and mentally

a lunatic. If they were not lucky, he and she would have both met their doom on their

was not afraid of death and even thought that being dead could solve all her problems. She would be able to get rid of Percy and have no regard for the situation at

laughed enough?" Percy's brows knitted together. He thought it was odd that she was laughing even though she had

very happy, and her smile seemed to be

owner of the Westin Hotel was his friend. He happened to be there tonight and when he passed by the private room, the waiter was delivering

waiter recognized at a glance that the woman pestered by the pig-headed man was Percy's woman, so he immediately called to inform

immediately put down his work and went to pick up

had burned with rage when he saw Steven putting his hands all over her. What was more, not only did she not resist but she even greeted him with a smile!

had not shown up, would that man have kept harassing

could she offer her body just because she wanted to close the partnership? It reminded him of the time she left her dignity to be with him for

Chapter 959

Percy's body temperature turned warmer as he pulled off his tie impatiently.

The smile on Nina's mouth carried a touch of mockery. She was well aware of what was coming next. She stood up and took off her coat with one hand.

"I reek, I'll go wash up first." She was still sober. As the most special character around him, she was well aware of his likes and dislikes. Percy hated women who smelled like alcohol. She planned to take a quick shower before they got down to business.

Percy gave her a push and she landed on the sofa. "No need, I want you right now!"

After an hour, Nina was exhausted and lay on the sofa. She watched him dress himself up and leave.

She slowly let out a sigh when she heard the sound of his car driving away.

In Percy's heart, she was nothing more than a tool. Her status was lower than that of bottle girls in the nightclubs.

Bottle girls could choose which customers they wanted to accompany. They had money in their pockets and were happy. However, she had no choice and she was never happy afterward.

Nina had no strength left in her. She felt sluggish, and the disgust in her heart grew every day. How long would it take her to move on from this kind of life?

She missed her old self...

Nina picked up the phone that had fallen to the floor and saw that she had an unread text. She tapped on the notification with trembling fingers. It was a text from Bianca.

[Nina, are you home yet? Are you okay?]

worried that Percy would make things difficult for Nina. His mood seemed terrible when they left.

okay.] Nina tried her best to muster her energy to reply to Bianca. [How about you, have you wrapped things up? Are you

minutes, Bianca replied: [I'm home. I'll talk to you about it tomorrow.

put down her phone and stared at the

were not meticulous enough. There was a spot on the ceiling. It was just like her life; it was not completely dirty, but a big part of it

phone rang and Nina picked it up. It was

did not want to answer it. She knew that her mother would only call to ask her for money. No matter how much she was earning, Anna would take

was like a vampire that was still not satisfied after sucking her dry. She had to eat her corpse to finally

stopped, and after a while, her phone rang

over and over again. Eventually, Nina received a text message that said: [Nina, if you don't want me to kill myself in front of you, pick up my

phone again and Nina was forced to

Her voice was feeble. She thought about whether Anna would have some pity for her when she heard

In reality, she was hit with a wave of verbal abuse over the phone. She screamed at Nina for being unfilial and ruthless. "You b*tch! I called you so many times! If I didn't get through to you this time, should I have called the police to check and see if you died somewhere? How many days have you not been home? If it weren't for the scar on my stomach, I would've thought I had never given birth to a child! You unfilial b*tch! Since you were born, bad things have been happening all the time. Come *home tomorrow!*"

Nina gave a wry smile. The Langdon family's undoing was their fault and had nothing to do *with her*.

After she was born, the family was happy until Jean Langdon and Marie Rayne showed up and completely destroyed *the family*.

Could anyone blame her?

Anna yelled at Nina again when she did not hear a reply, "Why aren't you saying anything? Are you off being a **h*e?**"

Nina tried to sit up but was too dizzy. She frowned and lay down again. "Mom, how much do you want this *time?*"

Every time Anna called her, it was to ask her for money. Whenever Anna asked her to go home, it was so that she could force her to pay *up face-to-face*.

She used to have some hope for Anna, but she had learned not to trust her mother a long time ago.

Anna was stunned as it was easier than she expected.

She calmed down and said, "One million. If you don't have time, just transfer it to my bank account. You don't have to **come back**."

Nina collapsed. Anna's appetite had grown over the years, and she was using her as a limitless ATM. Were they *really related?*

"I **don't** have that much money," she *said indifferently*.

soon as Anna heard that, her tone turned sharp. "If you don't have money, who has? You haven't given me even a few cents after working for so long. I don't care, transfer me a million dollars this week. Or else, I'll let everyone know how ruthless

bitterly. 'Money? Haven't I given

her money was given to her so-called

I just gave you a large sum last month. What happened to it? I have no money to give you this month!" Nina had to be

threw a tantrum. "No money? Your brother in prison needs money. When he's released, he needs to buy a house. He needs a house to get married. Can you bear to watch him die alone? Your father is in poor health, and that takes a lot of money too. How can we survive with the little money that you gave us? If you don't give me more, you'll never hear the end of it! Just how useless are you? You can't help with anything and even worked with an outsider to send your brother to jail. Nina, how could you do this

was drained after the conversation. She did not cry when she was treated roughly by Percy, but at that moment, she could not stop her tears

continued cursing at her over the phone. Eventually, she stopped listening, ended the call, and then turned off

gave a wry smile. 'How useless

have to satisfy Anna's growing appetite until all that was left of her were her

was a great boss and paid her enough to sustain her family. However, if Anna's appetite could be filled, she would not still be with Percy. She had been bullied by him again and again. Her soul was already

was only left with a body without

kept streaming down her face, and in the end, she could no longer restrain herself. She sat on the sofa and curled into a

Chapter 960

After Percy left with Nina, Bianca had to spend some time reassuring Steven and promising that she would arrange for another meet-up soon enough.

Steven was dissatisfied but did not say much.

Bianca knew he was upset and bought two bottles of fine wine at the hotel. When she sent him off, she handed him the wine and the other's mood seemed to ease a little.

She was relieved when she watched him leave with his secretary.

Bianca was not confident that she could secure this partnership.

Bianca massaged her face, which had been cramping from smiling all night. She sighed helplessly. She called for an Uber because she did not want to drive after drinking.

When she got home, she walked into the living room and found that Luke was not working in the study as he usually was. He was sitting on the sofa waiting for her.

"Luke?" Bianca called out to him softly. The moment she saw the man waiting for her in the living room, her foul mood was gone.

She did not want to think about how to secure the partnership with St. Heckler Hotel. At that moment, all she wanted was to be with Luke.

"Come and sit here." Luke pointed to the seat next to him while holding a teacup.

Bianca sat down and leaned on him.

Luke could smell the alcohol on her clothes. He picked up the lid of the teacup and passed it to her.

"Drink some tea."

Bianca smelled the sweet honey, and after drinking several glasses of red wine, her stomach was not feeling the best. This honey tea could ease her discomfort.

"Thank you." She took it and drank several sips.

was perfectly warm as if Luke knew when exactly to start preparing

tea slid down her throat and into her stomach, alleviating a lot of the discomfort she was

put down the teacup, smiled gently, and looked into Luke's

it was because she had a few to drink, she seemed to see thousands of stars in Luke's eyes. She could not help but say, "Luke, I'm so glad to have you by

at her blushing face and sighed. The fury in his heart was instantly extinguished by her beautiful

dinner?" He squeezed her soft hand and gently played with the diamond ring on her ring finger. It was glowing under

and sighed when she thought about

go well?" Luke asked. He thought about Percy's text and decided that he would take her side no matter what

though she had a wedding ring on, there were still men who coveted

Luke was pissed.

her head and did not intend to tell him about Steven. That was because Mavis Laviere

one of Luke's best assistants before leaving. She did not want to ruin their relationship

did not feel the same way for Mavis as she felt for him, they had a good working

"It's nothing." Bianca picked up the teacup and took another sip. The honey tea made her stomach feel better. She gently leaned her head on Luke's **shoulder**.

Luke noticed that she was avoiding the topic and asked her directly, "What did the developer of St. Heckler do *to you*?"

Bianca was stunned! She looked up and uttered, "How did you know?"

Before he answered her, she knew that it must be Percy who said something to **him**.

When she met Luke's gaze, she told him everything, including *Mavis' involvement*.

Luke had already guessed that Bianca was taken advantage of by the developer, but when he heard it from her, his heart burned with anger.

He was not mad at Bianca but at the pig-headed man who was about to meet his doom.

Bianca tried to calm him. "Luke..."

Luke asked, "Where did he touch you?"

Seeing his serious expression, Bianca knew how terrible things would get if he was this angry. She feared for Steven's **life**.

She smiled and replied, "He didn't touch me too much, and Nina helped me block most of it. Poor *thing*."

Luke snorted. "My love, be honest *with me*."

His aura was so strong that Bianca could not put up with it. She obediently told the truth, "My hands... *and waist*."

did not dare to tell him that Steven tried to kiss her on the cheek but she dodged

be angry." Bianca felt his mood turn gloomy just after she

not easy for a woman to set up a company, so there might be more events like this in

to build a company of her own and did not want any help from Luke. She wanted to prove to everyone that she was worthy to stand by

were unavoidable. Bianca could still accept what had happened

angry." Luke's face relaxed a

going to check on the kids." Bianca was missing her three babies. They were already in bed but she wanted to check on them before getting ready

asleep. You can see them tomorrow." Luke stretched out his hands and wrapped them around her

Bianca wanted to continue speaking, she noticed that Luke had tightened his grip on her waist. She asked, "What are

"You belong to me, no man is allowed to leave a mark on your body." He held her waist so tightly that it seemed that he wanted to imprint his mark on

sensed his raging jealousy, and when she was thinking about what to do, he suddenly

"Ah..." The sudden movement startled her.

loved to carry her. Despite having done it many times, she would still be startled.