

## Be Gentle 991

### Chapter 991

"Dad, Mom, Sister, why are you so early?" Leia knew that Queenie had invited Bianca over. Although she was unhappy about it, she did not show it. She had to behave with poise in front of the Hiltons.

Brody greeted them, "Uncle Jack and Aunt Queenie, good afternoon."

Jack saw the two but did not see the rest of the Hilton family. He put away his smile and turned serious. He handed Bianca's phone back to her.

"Good afternoon." After greeting them back, Queenie glanced at Jack, stood up, and took Leia's hand. "How did the check-up go?"

Leia paused, and her face quickly turned pale.

Upon seeing this, Queenie was concerned and asked, "What's wrong? Is there a problem?"

Leia shook her head, returned to normal, and said with a smile, "Mom, I'm just messing with you. The check-up went well, there's no problem."

"Cheeky! You're going to be a mother but you're still so naughty. Sit down." Queenie nodded at her and pulled the chair out for Leia.

Leia smiled and felt inexplicably guilty.

She had gone to the hospital for a Down's screening and color Doppler ultrasound. The results were not ideal. The doctor told her that it was likely that her child would be deformed.

Brody happened to be buying water for her when she got the report, so he did not know about it. The doctor also said that it was highly probable that the deformity was caused by the ineffective abortion pill.

The doctor advised her to go for further examinations. If the child had a problem, he told her that she would have to immediately go for induced labor to avoid giving birth to a deformed baby.

asked the doctor to keep it a secret. The doctor agreed on the basis of doctor-patient confidentiality, but he repeatedly urged her to take the

helped her sit on the chair and said proudly, "The doctor said that our child is healthy. In a few months, I'll have a son as great as

smiled as she touched her belly. When she saw how excited Brody looked, she decided to give birth to

Hilton family only agreed to have lunch because she was pregnant. If she aborted the baby, what leverage would she have to compete

how important this baby was, so she would never give

sat down and was in a good mood when she heard that Leia's baby was healthy. Leia would move in with Brody in two days. This lunch with the Hilton family was to discuss the

care of Leia well because of the baby. He was pouring tea for her and being mindful of her preferences while looking at

was satisfied with how Brody treated Leia. Although his attitude toward her and Jack could be improved, she was willing to turn a blind eye as long as he treated her

a while, Tania Ridley walked into the private room while holding Julius

saw his parents but not his grandmother, so he asked, "Mom, where's

called them, they told him that they would drive

"**Your grandmother** isn't feeling well, so she's resting at home," Tania explained with an indifferent expression. Grandma Hilton refused to show up in protest of their wedding.

"Have you called the doctor?" Brody was concerned about Grandma Hilton's **health**.

"Yeah." Tania wanted to move on from it. She glanced at Leia and eventually, her gaze landed on Mr. and Mrs. Norman. She put on a faint smile and greeted them with her husband, "Mr. Norman, Mrs. Norman, how are you?"

They were polite and treated the Normans like friends, not *in-laws*.

Jack and Queenie also greeted them. They had been in politics long enough that they were sick of acting *polite*.

Tania and Julius sat down. They looked at Bianca and asked curiously, "*This is?*"

Queenie introduced, "This is my eldest daughter, Bianca."

Tania's eyes suddenly brightened as she looked at Bianca with admiration. She had done her research and knew all about the eldest daughter of the Norman family. She was a career woman, and after hearing about what Bianca had gone through, she related to Bianca and admired her. Tania wished that instead of the whiny Leia, Bianca was the one marrying Brody instead. Both were daughters of the Norman family, so how could the daughter raised by the Normans and their long-lost daughter be so different?

**It was** a pity that Bianca married Luke Crawford a long time ago. The Hiltons would be counting their  **blessings otherwise**.

**Leia noticed** that Tania was looking at Bianca with admiration. She was exasperated that everyone was looking at Bianca *that way*.

*The fire* of envy was burning within her, and Leia stood up while saying, "Please excuse me, I need to head to **the bathroom**."

*Brody* also stood up and said, "I'll accompany you."

just go myself." Leia chuckled to hide her jealousy and walked out of the room with her hands on

Leia. She would never have agreed to this marriage if it were not for the sake of

handed the menu to the Normans. Although the Hilton family's business was all abroad, it would be great if they had local government officials as their in-laws. Tania politely said, "Mr. Norman, Mrs. Norman, what would you like

pushed the menu back to her and said, "You can order whatever you like. My wife and I are not

gaze fell on Bianca as she asked, "Mrs. Crawford, would you like to order

softly. She did not want to be involved. "Mrs. Hilton, you can go

order some dishes to share." As they did not want to order, she opened the menu and ordered some of the restaurant's

Julius stood up.

Tania asked, "Where are you going?"

want to smoke. Mr. Norman, do you want to come with me?" Julius took out his packet of cigarettes from his pocket and invited

had quit smoking, so he shook his head and said, "No, I've quit

## **Chapter 992**

Leia touched her belly and said coquettishly, "This is your grandson. We have to at least wait until he's born..."

After three months, her pregnancy was deemed stable but she was still very cautious. She did not allow Brody to touch her even when he wanted to, so she was not willing to take the risk with Julius as well.

The Hilton family only agreed to let join their family because of Brody's persuasion and the role that Julius played. He had persuaded Tania to agree to the marriage by bringing up the baby.

Leia, on the other hand, had used herself to persuade Julius.

Men like him looked like great husbands on the surface, but in fact, he had cheated on Tania behind her back more than once. All she needed to do to win him over was to go along with his likes.

Julius's gaze was aggressive as the corners of his mouth curved into a lazy smile. He did not care about the baby at all. "I've been waiting for too long."

"Can I interest you in other offerings for the time being? What do you think of Zoe? She's a new model who's highly in demand." Although Leia was no longer in Hollywood, she was well aware of the current happenings.

Julius thought about it for a while. Considering that it would be a while until Leia could give birth to the baby and how it would be nice to enjoy a younger model, he nodded and said, "Make sure that my identity is kept hidden."

In recent years, Tania had taken charge of the company. It was not that he did not want the power but doing so would mean that it would be difficult to keep this side of him hidden. He needed anonymity for the womanizer lifestyle that he enjoyed

"I will." Leia touched her belly habitually. From the time she started using the child in her belly as a bargaining chip, she had become accustomed to this motion. It was a reminder that her life was about to change for the better.

Seeing that they were done talking, Julius turned around and intended to head out.

grabbed him and said, "I've been out for a long time, so I'll head back first. Wait at least ten minutes before you go

took out a cigarette, and they left the nursing room. They walked in opposite directions. After smoking a cigarette, Julius returned to

served the dishes one after

the two families had lunch, they were done with small talk and went straight into talking about the

talking about the overall theme, they moved on to talk about the

to pay for half of the wedding and went along with everything that

to Tania while holding Brody's hand the entire time. She was smiling faintly, but she was feeling

only offered to pay out of politeness, but Tania just went along with it.

man's side of the family would pay for the wedding. Her own family paying for the wedding would cause her to lose her dignity in front of her

where the wedding would be held was equally important as well. The Hiltons were wealthy enough to get a six-star hotel to hold the wedding. However, they ended up with an ordinary local

*Leia* was more furious the more she listened, but she could not interrupt them to express her dissatisfaction. She thought about it and decided to make Brody compensate her in other ways.

*Tania glanced* at her and said, "Now that Leia's belly is so big, she won't look as nice wearing a wedding dress, nor would it be a good idea to stress her out. Should we set a date after the child is born and after she gets enough *rest*?"

"No." *Leia* was anxious and raised her objection without waiting for others to *speak*.

Everyone stared at her.

*Leia* was embarrassed and realized that she was a little too loud, which may arouse people's suspicion as to why she was reacting so strongly against it. She immediately returned to normal, smiled sweetly, and grabbed Brody's hand. "I can't wait to be Brody's wife. It's not a problem. We just need to get a bigger size for the wedding dress. We can simplify the wedding ceremony so that I won't *be tired*."

In any case, she could not afford to postpone the wedding until after the child was born. If the child was deformed, the Hilton family would change their minds and not allow them to get married. She wanted to make sure that their wedding was held as soon as possible.

"I think it's better to hold the wedding before the child is born too." Queenie agreed. She and Jack wanted the same thing. They wanted to avoid rumors about the **shotgun marriage**.

**Tania smiled** and understood their intentions. She nodded and said, "Okay, then we'll have this wedding soon. It may be a *little rushed*."

"It's okay, I'm more than happy to keep it simple," Leia said thoughtfully. She was willing to sacrifice the grand wedding she had always wanted to avoid a *potential delay*.

*After they* covered all grounds, Brody and Leia's wedding was in motion.

two families sat together and caught up for a little. Aside from talking about the wedding, Tania showed her interest in Bianca and kept talking to

had planned to keep quiet, was forced to talk to Tania with a smile on her face. Leia's jealousy started raging once more when she saw how the two were being so

the meal, Bianca left with

returning to the office, Bianca and Sue had a short meeting with Shireen. After discussing their next steps, the meeting

not leave and sat opposite Bianca. She checked in with her on Nina, "Ms. Rayne, how's Ms.

discharged from the hospital today. She should be fine." After Sue mentioned Nina, Bianca wondered what Nina was up

to hear that." Sue nodded and noticed that she was somewhat absent-minded. "When will Mr. Crawford be

uncertain yet. Why? Do you miss Mr. Doyle?" Bianca teased Sue. Jason had gone along with Luke on this business trip, and the two of them were occupied with work

went off, Jason had asked Bianca for a favor to monitor Sue so that she would not work overtime. Teri and Kari would feel more at ease if she got back home

his message, Bianca knew that Jason and Sue's relationship had eased a

### **Chapter 993**

After she was done laughing, Bianca began to worry about Luke. It was early morning over there and he was still working hard. She quickly replied: [You're still working?]

Luke quickly replied to her: [Yeah, there's a lot to attend to.]

Bianca sighed. She knew that he was working hard so that he could come back soon. She replied: [Work can never be finished. Get a good rest and continue tomorrow.]

Luke replied: [Okay, my love.]

Bianca put down the phone and stopped replying for fear of interrupting his work.

She turned on her laptop and searched for recipes that were good for those who worked into the night. She planned to cook for him when he came back.

Three days later.

Bianca received news that Luke was coming back tomorrow and excitedly asked for his flight number. She wrote it down in case she forgot.

Later that night.

Bianca checked the ingredients in the refrigerator. She would have to go grocery shopping to prepare for Luke's return.

His flight would arrive early in the morning, so she would not have time to go grocery shopping before picking him up from the airport. Hence, she prepared the ingredients one day in advance.

She looked through the recipe again and checked the ingredients one by one. Bianca smiled contentedly at the thought that she would see Luke tomorrow.

Tommy walked over while holding half an apple in his hand. He looked at the ingredients in the refrigerator and said with a cute voice, "Mommy, are these for Daddy?"

her cheeky son, Bianca touched his head and answered, "Yes, these are all for

Blanche and Rainie found out Luke was coming back, they were very happy and said they would accompany her to go grocery shopping. Hence, they went to the supermarket to buy the ingredients after the

got married, Luke had gone on fewer business trips. Even if he had to go, he would make it a short

Tommy have some?" Tommy looked at her with a blank expression and took a bite of

course, you can." Bianca grabbed his hand and walked to the living room. She was looking forward to their

happy when he heard it. He turned around to go upstairs. "I want to tell Rainie and Lanie that there'll be yummy food for us

at his cheeky face and smiled as she nodded. She glanced at the time and realized that it was almost ten o'clock. The children should be in bed

Tommy's hand as they headed upstairs to tell Rainie and Blanche that it was time to go to bed. Then, she took Tommy to wash up and told him a story to help him fall

Ten minutes later, Tommy fell asleep.

put down the storybook, turned off the lights, and tiptoed out. She sneaked a glance at Blanche and Rainie and found that they were deep asleep as

up her phone and saw that there were no new messages from

him a lot so she sent a text: [Have you arrived at

*Looking at* the time, he should be almost at the airport.

**Bianca was** lying on the bed and holding her phone. Luke did not reply even after she waited for a while. She held her phone tightly and scrolled through Facebook, waiting for his **reply**.

**She waited** for a long time and eventually closed her eyes, **falling asleep**.

Three o'clock in the morning.

**Luke was** carrying a suitcase as he opened **the door**.

*The living room* was dark, and the only light that was on was the one at *the staircase*.

In the past, if he had to come back late because of work, Bianca would always leave the lights in the living room *on*.

He came back earlier just to **surprise her**.

*Luke put* down his suitcase, changed into his indoor slippers, and went upstairs. He gently pushed open the bedroom door.

*The bedroom* was still lit, with Bianca sleeping peacefully on the bed. His heart became warm the moment he saw her. He walked to the bed and looked at her peaceful sleeping *face*.

Luke missed her every second that he was away. He touched her **face gently**.

Bianca rolled over when she felt a sense of warmth on her face. She slowly opened her eyes.

not believe it! She had been dreaming of him but Luke was now in front of her. 'Am I

again. His hands gently cupped her face, the temperature of his skin letting her realize that it

"Luke?" she called out to him.

just woken up, so her voice was soft and slightly raspy. Luke felt as though his heart was being gently stroked. He could not bear the itch he felt for her and replied,

rang in her ears. Bianca sat up and said excitedly, "You're

Luke looked at her surprised expression and smiled gently, his gaze

period when they were both apart from each other, it had been torture. Bianca held him and could not believe that he was home. Even if he was just a few hours earlier, she

you say that you'll only be back tomorrow?" She could not suppress the excitement in her heart and started tearing. In the past week, she missed him every moment that she was awake. Every time she woke up after dreaming about him, she would feel a pang of

my flight to an earlier one because I wanted to surprise you." Luke hugged her as he touched her face with

Bianca snuggled in his arms, and she could hear his strong heartbeat. She could not help but keep repeating to herself that he was really

raised her head and looked into his deep-set eyes that were full of love. When she thought about how he had changed his flight to surprise her, she lightly hit his shoulder and said, "You did it on purpose. You didn't tell me that you changed

his hand and gently held her hands in his. "I wanted to surprise

## Chapter 994

The next morning when Bianca woke up, she saw that Luke was still asleep.

He needed the rest after a week of high-intensity work.

Bianca turned her head and looked at him. He was a light sleeper. In the past, any movement from her would lead to him waking up and hugging her tighter. However, she turned over and Luke was still asleep. He must be exhausted.

After she saw the dark circles under his eyes, Bianca tiptoed off the bed without disturbing him.

When she walked out of the bedroom, she gently closed the door. Tommy was walking out of his bedroom at the same time. When he saw his mother, he excitedly wanted to greet her.

Bianca immediately stepped forward and covered his mouth. She hugged him in her arms and said softly, "Shh, Daddy is still sleeping."

"Daddy?" Tommy followed along and lowered his volume, his big eyes filled with curiosity as he asked, "Mommy, isn't Daddy coming home later?"

Bianca gently opened the bedroom door and had Tommy take a look.

When Tommy saw Luke, he was beyond thrilled! He wanted to go up and tell Luke how much he missed him, but Bianca hugged him tightly in her arms.

Bianca carried him to the living room. She raised her fingers and said, "Shhh, Daddy is tired and still sleeping. You shouldn't wake him up, okay?"

Tommy nodded. Although he wanted to tell Luke about his recent good behavior, he was a good boy who listened to his Mommy's words.

Bianca put Tommy on the floor and opened the door of Blanche's bedroom. He was awake. He had even washed up and changed into a new set of clothes.

good morning," Blanche greeted Bianca

at their eldest son and thought that he looked like Luke. They were both handsome.

Blanche's collar was flipped, she walked over to tidy it up for him. She then said, "Lanie, we don't have to go to the airport to pick up Daddy

woke up early so that he could get ready to pick Luke up. He asked,

because Daddy is back and he's sleeping now!" Tommy walked to him and said it as though he was an adult. He did his best to control his volume while

is back?" Blanche's cool expression brightened up with

care of your brother and make sure that he keeps quiet so that your father can rest. I'll go check on Rainie." They had planned to pick up Luke from the airport, so all the children had set their alarms to wake up



Although Blanche was young, he was sensible. Knowing that Luke had worked hard, he took Tommy's hand to prevent him from running around and making unnecessary

opened Rainie's bedroom door and saw that she was awake as well. Rainie was combing her hair in front of the

turned her head when she heard the door opening while holding her hair

morning, baby." Bianca walked over. She usually helped Rainie to tie her hair every morning, but Rainie was sensible and knew she was busy this morning. Hence, she did not ask her

"Mommy, good morning. Can you help me?" Rainie could not get her braids right.

"**Okay.**" Bianca picked up her comb and brushed her hair as she said, "Rainie, Daddy is back. We don't have to pick him up at the airport *today*."

*Rainie asked in surprise, "When did Daddy **come back**?"*

*"Last night. He came back in the middle of the night and all of you were still asleep."* Bianca took the rubber band and tied her hair. She was overjoyed and proud when she saw how beautiful Rainie looked.

"Is Daddy still sleeping?" Rainie asked *again*.

"Yes, he's too tired. Let's not bother him, okay?" *Bianca asked.*

"Okay, Mommy." Rainie thought of her brother, stood up, and said, "Oh no, Tommy is too noisy. He'll wake up Daddy!"

"Don't worry, Lanie is taking care of him." Bianca grabbed Rainie's hand and they walked out of the bedroom. They went downstairs with Lanie and Tommy.

**The** three children sat in the dining room together. They did not turn on the TV even though Bianca allowed them to watch it as they were worried that they might wake Luke.

Bianca was glad that her children were so sensible.

**She cooked** breakfast in the kitchen and planned to bring it to the dining room so that the children could eat first, but when she stepped into the dining room, she found that Luke had woken up and was with the kids. All of them were **excited**.

did you miss Tommy?" Tommy looked at him with his eyes wide

freshened up and shaved before he came down, so he looked a lot better now. He smiled, touched his son's cheeks, and said, "Yes, I missed all of

Blanche glanced at each other and smiled at the same

answered, "Dad, we missed

out breakfast, put it on the dining table, and said to Luke, "Why didn't you sleep a little

enough sleep." Luke did not need more sleep. If it were not for him being too tired, he would not have slept in. Luke felt a burst of warmth in his heart as he watched Bianca make breakfast for

stood up and wrapped his hands around Bianca's waist from behind. He whispered in her ears as he looked at the spread on the table, "My love, thank you for your hard blushing a little from being hugged by him. She reminded in a low voice, saying, "The kids as he was used to seeing his parents being intimate in front of them from time to time. He said cheekily, "Mommy, we didn't see face turned redder, and she tried to break away from Luke's grip. "I made fresh bread, I'll go get no choice but to let go of her. He looked at the kids who were all staring at him and said, "In the future, please excuse yourselves in situations as

## **Chapter 995**

Bianca was pleased as she watched him eat happily. She passed him a bun and said, "Try this, this has raisins."

After Luke finished the bread that he had, he picked up the raisin bun and quickly gobbled it down.

Bianca looked at him and could not help but laugh.

Luke had always been elegant while eating. Today was an exception. It seemed that he had been starving the entire time he was in New York.

Like Bianca, Tommy was looking at Luke with a smile. He pointed at the corner of his mouth and said to Luke, "Daddy, you have some crumbs there."

Luke picked up the napkin and wiped the corners of his mouth. As expected, there were a few bread crumbs on his mouth. He took a sip of his soy milk and said with glee, "It's wonderful."

"Do you want more?" Bianca asked. She felt a sense of accomplishment when she saw them finish the breakfast she made.

"I've had enough," Luke said.

When Tommy saw that Luke was done eating, he blinked his big eyes, climbed off the seat, and ran to Luke's side. He placed his chubby hands on Luke's lap and asked, "Daddy, Tommy has been behaving well. When will you take us to the carnival?"

Luke took out a tissue and wiped his greasy mouth for him, saying, "I'm proud of you, Tommy. Thank you for being so well-behaved. How does this Friday sound?"

"Yay!" Tommy clapped his hands with glee before looking at his brother and sister. "Daddy, you have to bring Lanie and Ranie too!"

"Of course." Luke loved all his children the same. If one went, all the others would too.

you, Daddy." Rainie and Blanche were excited about their

how sensible the kids were, they were still kids who loved to have fun. Bianca had a big smile on her face as she looked at the joy radiating from their

stood up, cleared the table, and told Rainie and Blanche, "Rainie, Lanie, go upstairs and get your school bags. I'll drive you

taken a half-day leave for the children when she thought that they had to pick Luke up from the airport. Since there was no need to pick him up now, she had to send the children

Mommy." Rainie nodded and went upstairs happily. She was excited about going to the carnival on Saturday and started planning her outfit.

also nodded coolly. Although he understood everything that was being taught in school, he also knew that his attendance

all the dishes on the kitchen sink. The nanny would be there in five minutes, and she would help clean these

the dishes, she turned around and saw Luke standing by the

was wearing gray loungewear that made him look casual and kind. He did not have the kind of seriousness he had when wearing a

are you standing here? Aren't you going back to the office today?" Bianca smiled and walked over. When she reached the door, Luke grabbed her waist and they walked out

Luke had her in his arms as they walked across the dining room. He did not want to let her out of his sight even for just a moment. That was why he was standing by the kitchen and waiting for her to

**"Why aren't you getting ready, then?"** Bianca smiled while facing him and holding his *hand*.

*Luke said lovingly, "Will you help me with my tie?"*

**Bianca smiled** and nodded, then she went upstairs with him to the bedroom. After he changed into a suit, she chose a deep navy blue tie to match it with. She tied it in a beautiful Windsor **knot**.

*She turned to look at the full-length mirror and was satisfied with her work. She asked, "Do you think it's okay?"*

She was great at pairing colors. The Windsor knot crafted by her was *elegant*.

**"Craftsmanship** of a master." Luke held her hand and leaned in to kiss her again *and again*.

**Rainie stood** by their bedroom door and knocked on it. Her bright eyes narrowed into crescents when she saw her parents being lovey-dovey. "Daddy, Mommy, the nanny *is here*."

*Bianca pulled her hand away and blushed. She got embarrassed every time one of their kids saw them being intimate. She nodded and said, "Okay, go downstairs. I'll send you to school later."*

**"Okay, Mommy."** Rainie nodded and went downstairs with a school bag on *her back*.

**Bianca** looked at Luke and said, "I'm going to send the kids to school."

*"I'll drive all of you."* Luke put on his jacket and planned to drop them off before heading to **the office**.

Do you want to go back to the manor for dinner tonight?" Bianca asked him because they had not gone back to the manor since he went on his business trip. They should have a meal to catch up with

Luke said, "Tomorrow is Friday. It's not the best idea to run around with the kids. Let's spend the night in the manor

you please tell Grandpa? I'll pack Tommy's storybook." Bianca agreed. They had clothes and toiletries in the manor, but none of Tommy's storybooks

him a story, Tommy would never let them go to bed

Luke drove Rainie and Blanche to kindergarten, he sent Bianca to her office and watched her walk in before he drove back to

CEO's office.

walked into the office with a large stack of documents and put them on Luke's desk. "Boss, these documents urgently need your review and sign-off. This pile isn't urgent, so you can save it

was taking over Jason's role for the day considering that he was still on

at the large stack of documents that were several times thicker than that of a high schooler's textbook. He said without frowning, "I see, thank

Crawford, do you want me to make a cup of coffee for you?" Tina

replied as he picked up one of the documents from the urgent pile. Having a cup of coffee would help him go through the documents more

## **Chapter 996**

At noon, Bianca was worried that Luke would be so busy with work that he would forget to eat. She picked up her phone and ordered a takeaway for him before she went downstairs to have lunch with Sue.

Bianca and Sue sat facing each other. Bianca stirred the tea in her cup with a smile and said, "Sue, do you know that Mr. Doyle is coming back today?"

Sue paused and wondered why Bianca was bringing up Jason out of the blue.

"Ms. Rayne, can we not talk about him? It'll ruin my appetite." Although Sue addressed Bianca as Ms. Rayne, her tone was casual and endearing.

Bianca knew that she was lying. "Do you know about it?"

"Yes," Sue replied. Jason had told her the moment he booked his flight.

Seeing her pretending to be unaffected, Bianca took a sip of her tea and said, "Kari and Teri must miss him."

Sue nodded and stayed silent.

Some habits were easy to form but difficult to quit. Jason had spent a lot of time with their daughters before he left for the business trip. He was patient with them and told them stories before they fell asleep every night.

When he was away on the business trip, Kari and Teri were not used to the stories that she read and often said that her skills were not as good as Jason's.

Sue was a little upset when they said that to her. She had read them the stories the same way Jason did, but it seemed like they favored their dad much more. 'I thought that daughters will be closer to their mothers?'

protests made her feel upset. They never disliked the stories she read before

the matter?" Bianca asked when she saw her nodding but not

love Jason very much, so much so that they've been having complaints about me as their mother." Sue was depressed and thought that she was not a good mother. She was trying her best to be one for

not easy being a single mother. She was working hard to take care of her two

"He's the child's father. Blood is thicker than water. Of course, they love him, but it doesn't mean that your kids don't love you." She knew that Kari and Teri were both sensible little

and said, "I don't know how to say it. They make me feel like I've failed as

a suggestion. "Actually, it's not difficult to get along with children. Why don't you ask Mr. Doyle out this weekend and then take Kari and Teri to

best way to get along with children was to do what they liked. Bianca had done the same thing to get closer to Lanie and

had it easier than others. Their family bond

the kids myself." Sue did not want Jason there so that the kids' attention would not be

love spending time with their parents. You should ask Mr. Doyle to join you. The more the merrier, right?" Bianca said, "I haven't seen Kari and Teri for a long time. We'll be going to the carnival this weekend. Do you want to go

"Let's talk about it next time. I have to work overtime this week." Sue was not a fan of Jason and used work as an excuse to turn Bianca *down*.

Bianca knew that there was nothing more she could say to change Sue's mind.

**Just** then, her phone rang and Bianca saw that Luke was calling. She answered the phone. "Hey, Luke."

*Luke's* deep and sexy voice came from the other end of the call. "My love, did you order lunch for **me**?"

"**Who** else do you think it would be?" The big smile on Bianca's face made Sue, who was sitting across from her, **envious**.

She did not long for love for herself, but she admired the beauty of true love.

"*There's* no one else, you're the only one who knows what I like." Luke looked at the sumptuous bento on the table. When the phone rang just now, he thought that the other party had called the wrong number. However, after confirming the name, he realized that it was **his takeaway**.

"*I'm* glad that you like it. Fill up your tummy before you continue working." Bianca gently reminded him. After being together for so long, she knew exactly what he liked.

"**Okay**, I love you." Luke's voice was lingering and flirtatious, making her face **slowly blush**.

*After* Bianca ended the call, she raised her hand and fanned her face.

Sue teased her and said, "Ms. Rayne, you're blushing."

tried to explain, "The weather is getting warmer, and the air conditioners here don't seem to be

and did not tease her further. After the two had lunch, they went back to

the evening, Luke picked Bianca from the office after work. They picked up Blanche and Rainie, then went home to pick up Tommy. At last, the family arrived at

and Susan Armstrong were both in the living room. They sat as far away as they could from each other with looks

walked into the living room and greeted them

and said, "My lovely grandchildren! You're so polite compared to some other

deliberately glanced at Susan as if hinting to her that she was talking about

no manners. When Louis was not around, she would never take the initiative to greet Allison when she saw

snorted and said, "Some kids sure can act. It's pointless to act polite if they're

face was pale. 'How dare she suggest that Luke doesn't care

saw Luke walk in, she was visibly taken aback. "Luke, you're back from the

## **Chapter 997**

Susan was not convinced. Allison's skin was good, but it could not be attained from just getting enough sleep. She mockingly said, "What a joke! You spent God knows how much on your face. Just admit it if you're old, there's no need to spend a lot of money to try to maintain your aging face. Fortunately, Luke still has money. Otherwise, your face would be rotten now!"

Allison sneered and said, "Susan, you're jealous that I'm better-looking and younger than you!"

Bianca saw that the two were quarreling again and glanced at Luke. His expression was neutral and he did not seem to plan to do anything.

She thought that it was not appropriate for them to quarrel in front of the children, especially since they were back for the first time in a while. When she wanted to say something to ease the tension, Old

Master Crawford's majestic voice sounded. "Both your ages combined add up to 100 years old. Enough with the fighting!"

Susan and Allison looked at the old man. Even though they were still furious and wanted to continue tearing each other apart, they both stepped down.

The battle finally came to an end.

Bianca and Luke looked at Old Master Crawford, greeting him.

Old Master Crawford nodded in response. Seeing that he looked tired, Luke asked, "Grandpa, why do you look so tired?"

"It's nothing. I'm getting old and just need some rest," Old Master Crawford replied. He sat on the sofa and instructed the caretaker, "Go get the chessboard, I want to play a game with Luke."

Bianca glanced at the staircase. Lanie, Rainie, and Tommy had not come down. They were probably playing upstairs, which was a great thing seeing as what had just happened.

"Okay, Old Master." The caretaker went to prepare the chessboard.

took Bianca's hand and sat on the other end of the

looked at them and wondered why they were here.

was out of money and planned to steal Old Master Crawford's antiques. She chose this day to come back to the manor and had even asked the caretaker to clean up her room so that she could spend a night here. She would say that her villa was experiencing a power outage. She was back to be Jon's

not expect that Luke would

More people meant more trouble.

she watched Luke play chess with Old Master Crawford, Allison was thinking about whether she should put a stop to her

if she did, she would not have any excuse to spend the night. Since she moved out, she had barely come back to spend the night. If she came back too frequently, it would arouse suspicion

was the one to look out for. If she lost something, she would blame Allison

thought that the living expenses Luke gave her would not last her that much longer, so she made up her mind to go forward with her

played a game of chess with Old Master Crawford, Louis returned

his eldest brother and sister-in-law, he was very happy and said, "Big Brother, Sister-in-law,

"*Louis*, good to see you!" Luke stopped playing chess and responded to **Louis**.

Thea always acted polite in front of Louis. She greeted the people present, "Hello, Great Grandpa Crawford, Grandma Susan, Grandma Allison, Uncle Luke, and Aunt *Bianca*."

"Thea, you're such a good girl. Come to Grandma. I've prepared chocolates for you." Susan was overjoyed to see her granddaughter. She beckoned toward her and Thea walked **over**.

*Louis* put Thea's school bag aside and said helplessly, "Mom, Thea has tooth decay. Don't give her so many sweets."

"**One or** two is okay." Susan cuddled Thea. She tore open the packaging and stuffed it into Thea's mouth. "Do you **like it?**"

"Grandma, it's delicious," Thea said with a sweet smile while clapping her hands *happily*.

**Allison sneered.** "Louis is right. It's not good for children to eat so many sweets. You should take better care of your granddaughter instead of spoiling her blindly. She'll grow fat if this continues."

Thea did not understand the meaning of her words and looked at Susan, asking, "What does **fat mean?**"

**Susan** stared at her coldly and replied, "Why do you care? Thea is growing up and there's nothing wrong with eating sweets. Who are you to say anything? You didn't buy it with *your money*."

*Allison* wanted to refute but Old Master Crawford was watching them closely, so she decided to keep *quiet*.

She started the fight and knew that Old Master Crawford might reprimand her. She played with her delicate nails as though she did not hear what *Susan said*.

sensed that the atmosphere was off and waved to Thea. "Thea, it's time to go

Thea nodded and walked over.

up, squatted in front of Thea, and touched her head. "Thea, you've grown a lot taller. You're getting cuter by the

Yuri's influence, Thea was not a fan of Bianca but she was happy when praised. The corners of her mouth lifted into a smile, making her

secretly figuring out Thea's size. She had not forgotten the matter she discussed with Luke

Old Master Crawford continued to play chess. Bianca stood up, sat beside him, and watched them

she was an amateur, Old Master Rayne had taught her the basics and the rules. Hence, she was not lost when she watched them

playing two rounds of chess, dinner was ready. The family had a meal in the dining

Luke took Bianca and the children for a walk in the

was summer now and the daytime was getting longer. Bianca watched the sunset, then looked at the children playing around. Her gaze ultimately shifted to Luke, who was standing by her side and enjoying this rare moment

walked with her for a while, and they sat down when they got to

**Chapter 998**



Bianca fantasized about the carefree lifestyle after she and Luke retired.

Their hair would have been graying, and they would be living a relaxing life with their children and grandchildren without the troubles from work.

As the sky continued to darken, the family walked back to the mansion.

Old Master Crawford was sipping tea in the living room and watching financial news on the television. Susan and Allison had already retired to their bedrooms because they were not interested in that.

Louis and his family were not in the house. They were at a dinner banquet.

Only Old Master Crawford was in the spacious living room. Bianca looked at Luke and said, "I'll go and help Lanie and Rainie with their homework."

"Mm." Luke nodded and let go of her hand. He went to the couch and prepared to spend some time with his grandfather. "Grandfather."

"How was the walk?" Old Master Crawford turned his head and glanced at Bianca and the three children.

Bianca smiled gently and replied, "I'll go and help the children with their homework."

"Go then." Old Master Crawford nodded and turned his head back to look at the television screen. He had retired from T Corporation, but he kept a close eye on economic trends.

Luke saw that his teacup was already empty. He helped refill his grandfather's cup.

The newscaster was reporting on national tax reforms and analyzing the impact the changes would have on various industries.

you think?" Old Master Crawford asked. Before Luke moved out, they would watch the news together and discuss the

won't be too big," Luke said impassively as he listened to the

tax reforms were targeted toward small and medium businesses. The impact on a multinational company like T Corporation

Crawford seemed satisfied with the answer. Evidently, he had come to the same conclusion. "Not bad. Do you know about the changes

Not only did Luke know about it, but he had also studied it

What else is the government up to these days?" Old Master

that they're preparing to rezone a piece of land in the east of the city for commercial use." Luke folded his long legs, made himself comfortable, and continued to analyze the situation for his grandfather. "The eastern side is quite close to the main city, and that area is currently undergoing rapid development. It will be very profitable if we can develop

T Corporation manages to acquire the developmental rights, our profits in the next few years will increase greatly. However, you'll have to pay attention to our liquid assets. Don't overspend it on investments," Old Master Crawford said and drained

Luke refilled his cup again. They chatted for a long

o'clock was Old Master Crawford's bedtime. He stopped talking and went upstairs

Old Master Crawford left, Luke remained sitting on the couch and

down the stairs. She frowned when she saw Luke sitting there. The living room would have been vacant if Luke had not come

*She smiled* and walked over. "Why aren't you resting yet, *Luke?*"

"It's still early." Luke was watching the news on foreign stock markets. He had just sent Thea's measurements to the *ballet dressmaker*.

"Look at you. You must've gotten those eyebags from the business trip. That's enough financial news for the day. You should go upstairs and rest." Allison pretended to be concerned *about him*.

**With** Luke in the living room, she could not record the locations of the security cameras and install the *signal jammer*.

**The caretakers** were usually in the living room during the day, so she could not do that. That was why she waited **until nighttime**.

She had to give Jon the quantity and locations of the security cameras. After all, the signal jammer might not be *totally efficient*.

**The high-tech** surveillance system in Crawford Manor was updated once every half a year. She wanted to be absolutely sure that the heist was successful.

**Luke turned** off his phone. He wanted to analyze the stock market in peace, but Allison was talking non-stop into his ear. He stood up and headed toward the stairs.

"Luke." Allison suddenly thought of something.

"**Hm?**" Luke turned his head over. He seemed impassive.

*Allison was* not too pleased about that. Luke had been treating her coldly ever since he got together with *that woman*.

Louis and the rest back yet?" She asked. She knew that Louis brought his wife and daughter out, but she did not know if they were back yet. She was not going to knock on their door to

Why do you ask?" Luke was getting suspicious. His mother was never concerned about Louis and his asking," Allison said with a smile, though she was

That made Luke even more suspicious.

explained, "I'm planning to turn off the lights. I won't do that if they're not

Luke nodded and went upstairs.

seeing Luke disappear past the corner, She took out the signal jammer and placed it under the coffee

was her first time doing something like that, and she was afraid that she would

activating the signal jammer, Allison took out a pair of

managed to find her a pair of special glasses. He thought that Allison would attract suspicion if she recorded the cameras with her

lifted her head and spun slowly, pretending to look at

took out her phone and asked Jon. [Did you receive the

## **Chapter 999**

"That's not what you originally told me, Madam." Jon thought that it was very troublesome. Allison had told him that he could dispatch anyone that tried to stop him, and that would have been a much easier job.

"What do you want then?" Allison was getting annoyed. If things went her way, she would not have wanted Luke to stay in the mansion for the night.

Other than Luke and her three grandchildren, she did not care if anyone else in Crawford Manor lived or died.

Jon saw the antiques in the study and thought that Allison had paid him too little. It was the right opportunity to ask for more. "It'll be easier if you pay up," he said.

"How much?" Allison had expected him to say that. However, she had no other choice.

"Five hundred thousand," Jon said.

"That's daylight robbery!" Allison was reluctant to part with that much money. After all, that was ten days' worth of living expenses.

"Those antiques are worth a lot of money, even in the black market. The more I take, the more you'll earn, isn't it?" Jon tried to persuade her.

Allison thought that it made sense. She had to give some to earn more. "Alright, I'll give you another five hundred thousand. You'd better not leave any traces. Also, if you fail, don't implicate me in this."

"I won't fail, don't worry," Jon promised.

Allison could not sleep because of the anger and anxiety. Thinking that Louis and his family had not returned yet, she kept the pair of glasses in her handbag, then took the glass of water and sat down at the second-floor hall.

She would definitely see them return.

his wife, and his daughter only returned at midnight. He noticed Allison sitting on the second-floor hall and asked her, "It's already so late, Aunt Allison. Why aren't you in

ready to fall asleep. She did not want to go back to her room before she saw them

a rare smile at Louis and said, "I haven't been sleeping in this bed for a long while, so I'm not used to it. I'm out here to get some fresh

not suspect anything, though he found it curious that Allison was in a good mood even though she could not

so that's the case. Sleeping late isn't good for your health, and you should lie on your bed even if you can't sleep. We'll be heading to our bedroom," he

I'm falling asleep already. I'll be sleeping soon." Allison stood up and headed back to her room before

that something was amiss when she saw that. "Don't you think that she's acting weirdly?" She said

Louis declared that he had no intention of taking over T Corporation, Allison remained hostile toward him and

that it was strange that Allison was smiling at Louis as though smiling at

thought it was strange too, but he did not think too much about it. He looked at Thea sleeping in his arms and said, "It's weird indeed. Maybe she heard some

puzzled. Allison would not smile at them even if they gave her ten

*She* seemed to be hiding something behind that kind smile.

"Let's go to bed." Louis was getting worn out after carrying Thea for so long. They went back to **their bedroom**.

Three o'clock in the morning.

Allison woke up, took out her phone, and sent a message to Jon. [*You may begin.*]

Jon replied, [Roger that.]

**He changed** into black clothes, wore a ski mask to prevent his face from being captured, and switched on the signal *jammer*.

*In the* mansion, Allison's phone lost its signal. She knew that Jon was about to break in.

*She stood* behind the door, held her breath, and listened to any sounds from the *living room*.

Twenty minutes later, she heard a slight noise, though it was not loud enough to wake anyone **up**.

*Jon* successfully broke into the mansion, evaded the security cameras, and went up the second floor.

*He had* studied the video that Allison sent to him, and he was familiar with the place like the back of his hand. He went to the second-floor hall, then quickly sneaked into Old Master Crawford's study. He turned on his flashlight and noticed the inkwell on the *desk*.

**He carefully** wrapped up the inkwell with newspaper and bubble wrap before stuffing it into his bag. If he accidentally damaged it, its value would drop by *half*.

all the antiques from the desk and the bookshelves, Jon smiled smugly. It was a beneficial transaction receive five hundred thousand dollars plus ten percent of the sales from the antiques. His backpack was already quite heavy, but he still looked around

was a safe in the room, but it seemed quite high-tech, and he did not want to take the risk. He opened the door and prepared to leave when he bumped into Thea, who had woken up to get a glass of

was half asleep, but she was shocked by the

"Ahh!" She screamed.

suffered a fright. Reflexively, he grabbed an antique vase and struck her forehead. Thea fell on the floor with a bang, though her scream had already woken up the people on the second

ran away without caring if Thea lived

Allison thought when she heard that

skipped a beat when she heard the crash and subsequent fall. Jon did not keep

could tell that the voice belonged to a little girl, but she could not tell if the girl was Rainie

wanted to rush out of her bedroom to confirm the casualty, but she stopped herself when her hand touched the doorknob. She could not go out before the others did. It would be

## **Chapter 1000**

Luke quickly drove his car to the front door. Louis carried Thea into the car while Yuri pressed the bandage tightly on her head.

Susan also went along to the hospital.

Bianca looked at the bloodstains and the broken shards of the antique vase on the corridor. The stench of blood was thick. She could not forget how lifeless Thea seemed as she lay on the floor.

"I'm scared, Mommy." Rainie took a step back and hid behind Bianca. She stuck her head out to look at the blood on the floor.

"I'm scared too." Tommy also hid behind Bianca. He did not know why Thea was bleeding or why she did not answer when the adults called her name.

Bianca covered the children's eyes and glanced at Lanie. His cute little face remained cool, and Bianca was impressed by his maturity.

"It's fine. Let's go back to bed," she coaxed the children softly.

"Mm," Rainie replied softly and looked away from the bloody floor.

After Tommy fell asleep, Bianca went to Rainie's bedroom to check on her. The little girl's eyes remained open, and Bianca could see that they were filled with fear.

Bianca's heart wrenched. She sat on the bed next to her and tucked her in. "Don't think about it, Rainie. Close your eyes and sleep."

"Mommy, will Thea be alright?" Rainie turned her head to look at her. After her father's ordeal, she knew what was injury and death.

she heard Thea scream and saw her lying motionless in a pool of blood as though she were dead. Rainie was worried

gently patted Rainie's shoulder and comforted her. "She's at the hospital now, and the doctors will do their best to save her. Don't

still be very young, but Bianca did not want to make empty promises to her. Even an adult would be shocked by the scene earlier, much less

have been so cruel as to harm a

want to sleep, Mommy. I want to wait for Thea's news." Rainie gripped the blanket tightly because she felt safer

gently touched Rainie's forehead. "Be a good girl and sleep. If I have any news about Thea, you'll be the first one to

Rainie blinked and closed her

quite traumatized by the incident, but she did not show it so that her mother did

Rainie fell asleep, Bianca carefully stood up and quietly left

Master Crawford and Allison remained in

When Old Master Crawford saw Bianca, he asked her, "*Is Rainie asleep?*"

"*Mm, she is.*" Bianca nodded. She looked at the drying blood on the floor and asked, "Shall we inform the police, Grandpa?"

"Yes, we must!" Old Master Crawford tried to keep his angry voice down in case he woke the children **up**.

**He** would not forgive the person who had stolen his antiques and *harmed Thea!*

"**I'll do** it now." Bianca shot a glance at Allison when she walked past her. Allison was staring at the bloodstains, seemingly in a *daze*.

**When** the police knew that someone had broken into Crawford Manor, they said that they would immediately send **someone over**.

After Bianca ended the call, she heard Allison say, "The blood looks so scary, Dad. How about we get the caretaker to clean it up? If Rainie or Tommy comes out from their rooms later, they'd be frightened. Also, look at the broken vase. I don't want anyone to get hurt."

Old Master Crawford glared at her. That woman seemed to have dropped her brain when faced with danger. The broken vase and the bloodstains were important evidence, and the police might find some fingerprints on them. "Wait for the police," *he said*.

"But it's scary." Allison shuddered as though she was scared.

She was not too concerned about Thea being hurt, but she was afraid that the police might collect evidence that led to Jon. If that were the case, she might be exposed as **the mastermind**.

was anxious that Old Master Crawford did not let her clean up the

Master Crawford glared at her. She was already in her fifties, but she got flustered so easily whenever an incident happened. Even Bianca

back to your room if you're scared," he reprimanded

was surprised by Old Master Crawford's reaction. She did not do anything, but the old man had released his anger on her. She kept her mouth shut, but she had an additional thought in her

great would it be if Jon had smashed that vase on that old man instead

she was brought into the household, Old Master Crawford had been prejudiced against her despite putting up an unbiased front. She might have already lost her foothold in the family if not that Luke was more capable than

burned in Allison's chest as she lowered her head and looked at

walked over and said softly, "The police will be here soon, Grandpa. I've also informed the manager of the security company, and he'll be

job," Old Master Crawford praised her despite

meticulous and thoughtful. Compared to Allison, Bianca seemed to be the more