

Chapter 2

My mouth felt dry, and I couldn't help but swallow hard before reaching for the water bottle again.

The cold water rushed down my throat, suppressing the restlessness and anxiety bubbling inside me, jolting me back to clarity.

Jonathan still hadn't moved his leg. He just let me stay pressed against him like that.

For a moment, my heart felt as if it had stopped entirely. Then it picked up speed, racing uncontrollably.

But just then, the car suddenly swerved sharply.

Kimberly let out a startled cry from the front seat. "That scared me, Jazzy!"

She patted her chest dramatically, then softened her voice to praise him. "But your reaction was so quick, Jazzy. If you hadn't turned the wheel in time, that rock would've hit our car."

Jasper chuckled. "Impressed? My driving skills are top-notch."

Kimberly suddenly leaned over and kissed him on the cheek. "You're amazing, Jazzy! Here's a kiss!"

"Cut it out," Jasper scolded, pretending to be annoyed. At least he hadn't forgotten his girlfriend was sitting in the back.

He shot her a mock glare. "Act your age, will you? Kathy is right here."

Kimberly widened her eyes, putting on an innocent, pure expression.

"Kathy, Jazzy and I grew up together. I see him as my elder brother—you don't mind, do you?"

I pulled a blanket over myself, forcing a cold smile. "Oh? Do you kiss your brother like that at home too?"

Kimberly immediately put on a pitiful look. "Jazzy, see? I told you Kathy doesn't like me. Maybe I shouldn't go... I don't want to upset her."

Jasper frowned right away.

"Enough, Katherine. You're two years older than Kimmy. Can't you be a little more mature? She's just a kid at heart, spoiled and playful. Why do you have to be so harsh?"

In that instant, I didn't even have the strength to argue anymore.

Be more generous, huh? Sure.

But in the future, I hope you would be just as generous too.

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Beneath the cover of the blanket, my leg pressed even tighter against Jonathan's.

As the car jolted slightly again, my knee and calf brushed against him once more.

Suddenly, his long, warm hand slid over and grabbed my thigh.

His palm was hot against my cool skin, and that warmth seeped into me, wave after wave.

In that fleeting moment, my senses felt magnified a thousand times over. I could even feel the faint calluses on his fingers—calluses from years of holding surgical scalpels.

I could feel the subtle friction as the pads of his fingers grazed my skin. So, I couldn't help but glance back at him, just a quick look.

But it was enough to catch him sitting upright, his shirt collar neatly buttoned. Yet, his Adam's apple bobbed sharply, betraying his tension.

From the side, those razor-sharp contours of his face were strikingly handsome.

It was the kind that made your heart skip a beat without warning.

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Jonathan was an outlier in Jasper's social circle.

If it weren't for some roundabout family connection between them, a man like him—cold, indifferent, and obsessed with cleanliness—would never mingle with this crowd.

After getting together with Jasper, I naturally got to know him too. But every time we met, it was nothing more than a polite nod and greeting.

He liked silence, wasn't much of a talker, and his personal life was as blank as a sheet of paper.

At gatherings, while others played cards or sports, Jonathan often left early. If he stayed, he'd sit alone on a corner couch, eyes closed, resting quietly, never joining the lively chaos around him.

Jasper used to joke about it.

"My cousin is practically a monk—pure and untouched. He's 27 and probably never even been with a woman.

"But he's gotten better this past year. Invite him to ten gatherings, and he shows up to three or four.

"If it was a few years ago, you can forget about it. You'd never even catch a glimpse of him."

I'd actually heard of Jonathan back in college and had even seen him from afar a few times.

To me, he always seemed like the kind of man girls fantasize about for their first crushes. Distant, unattainable—a moon hanging high in the sky.

We never had much contact, except for a couple of times when I went to the hospital due to discomfort in my bosom.

By coincidence, I ended up with an appointment under his name.

I'd initially felt a bit embarrassed, but Jonathan was completely professional. That quickly put me at ease.

I even secretly scolded myself afterward.

After all, Jonathan was a surgeon—what hadn't he seen before?