

Crazy Love 301

Chapter 301

True to his word, Harrison did exactly what he promised.

The next day, the police received an anonymous email.

The email detailed the case process extensively and provided such comprehensive evidence that it was enough to close the case on the spot.

The sheriff, after toiling for so long with nothing to show for it, was left without words.

What the hell was this?

A free lunch?

Even though it felt a bit odd, cracking the case was still good news.

After validating the email evidence and confirming its legitimacy, the police issued a statement.

Firstly, there was a video clip, seemingly shot by a hidden camera. It proved that Jane was murdered, and the perpetrator was that security guard.

Secondly, there was an audio recording. It appeared to be orders from a higher-up to the security guard, telling him to take out Jane and pin it on Ben and Susan.

Thirdly, the security guard had a small tattoo on the back of his neck. After checking, this tattoo was found to be the signature symbol of the Phoenix Collective. The archivist who committed suicide had an

identical tattoo too.

Putting these points together, the real situation was that both individuals were members of the Phoenix Collective, and their actions were directed by the organization to frame Ben and Susan in order to achieve the goal of inciting unrest in Coraland.

This announcement had evidence and logic.

A few minutes later, the Phoenix Collective even retweeted the official post, directly admitting to the

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case.

With that, the case was closed.

Online users passed the investigation findings to the security guard's wife. Yet, the individual who had earlier professed to be seeking justice for her father vanished abruptly once the evidence came to light.

The police then released another statement, indicating that the wife had abruptly left the country, believed to be leaving for Riowert.

For a time, everyone was somewhat speechless.

They'd been completely taken advantage of once more.

"Alright, I've been burned before. Next time I hear any gossip about Ben and Susan, I'll take it with a grain of salt."

“I was wrong again.”

“I just have to say that the way this couple flips the script every single time is beyond anything you could predict. Just when I thought we were looking at a straightforward murder, it spins into a plot cooked up by an international cabal. You wouldn’t even see twists like this on a TV show. I’m completely

blown away.”

“I’m done talking. I just need a moment to myself.”

Life threw another curveball.

Susan looked at the official announcement and was also very surprised.

She furrowed her brow, “Why does it have to be so complicated? Thankfully, the authorities uncovered the evidence. Without it, we’d have a tough time proving our innocence. And dealing with the Phoenix.

Collective is just a headache.”

Ben just smiled without saying a word.

Yet, he harbored different thoughts.

The true puppet master was certainly not the Phoenix Collective.

The Phoenix Collective was merely a scapegoat that Harrison had long prepared.

The real organization Harrison belonged to remained hidden in the shadows.

Harrison, a celebrity of global renown, also possessed a fortune in the hundreds of billions.

Someone like that might have been affiliated with a group, and chances are he wasn't a key player; if he were, they wouldn't have tossed him into the fray so carelessly.

This organization wielded enormous financial power and had covertly cultivated a network of devoted followers willing to lay down their lives for the cause.

Most importantly, this organization remained shrouded in secrecy, operating under the radar.

It was only because they made a move against Ben that he caught a glimpse of the tip of the iceberg.

Ben didn't grasp the full extent of the iceberg.

He had this nagging suspicion that after this whole ordeal, the organization would likely slip back into the shadows.

When it reemerged, it wouldn't be just minor scuffles like we saw this time.

Ben's eyes narrowed as if he could see a bloody, tumultuous future ahead.

He had many guesses and worries, but he said nothing.

He just gave a wry smile and said, "Yeah, the Phoenix Collective was absolutely despicable."

His Susan only needed to be happy and he would handle the rest.

The case was closed.

Ben and Susan were no longer confined.

When Ben and Susan came down, they found Charlie and Judith cozily sipping coffee together.

Eason and Penny were also there.

“Charlie, the cat’s out of the bag,” Judith said, letting out a sigh. “You’ve been on pins and needles all this time, haven’t you?”

Charlie grinned, taking a sip of his coffee, “Not in the least. This little episode? The kids could easily run the show.”

Penelope chimed in with a tease, “Dad, you’ve been going on these midnight walks for days now, or have you forgotten?”

Charlie’s expression soured, “What are you getting at? I just overate, that’s all. Couldn’t sleep because of it! It’s not like I was up worrying about them.”

“Well, well,” Penelope replied helplessly.

The others also started to laugh.

Then, after the storm came the calm.

Their mood was sky-high and each person seemed happier than the last.

Ben and Susan witnessed exactly that kind of harmonious scene.

Judith's eyes suddenly met Susan's across the way. A spark of recognition flashed, and she hurried over, eagerly taking Susan's hand in a firm, warm grasp.

Ben was squeezed to the side.

Seeing Judith holding onto Susan's hand, he felt a lump in his throat.

Judith couldn't bother with Ben's feelings. She ushered Susan over to the couch and flopped down beside her.

Ben had intended to sit on the other side.

But Eason was quicker on the draw. He stood up and swiftly claimed the seat next to Susan, the only other one vacant.

Ben was speechless.

Judith's move made sense

but Eason? Why was he jumping into the mix?

Wasn't that a bit too much?

Ben couldn't resist shooting Eason some dirty looks, but Eason acted as if he was completely oblivious.

"Susan, you look like you've dropped some weight recently," Judith noted, a touch of worry in her voice.

Susan felt a little sheepish as she replied, “Oh, not really, I just checked, and I’ve actually put on a little weight.”

“Then there must be something wrong,” Judith said decisively.

“Yeah, I thought you were looking slimmer,” Charlie agreed. “That scale’s not to be trusted.”

on a little

“I’ve brought a bunch of nutritional supplements this time. Susan needs to get stronger,” said Judith.

“Exactly. She’s not getting enough,” Charlie said, shooting Ben a stern look. “It’s pretty shameful that a guy like you can’t take good care of his wife.”

Ben was still left speechless.

“Don’t say that,” Judith quickly cut in. “Ben’s been managing fine. It’s just that guys aren’t always as detail-oriented as women. They’ve been cooped up together upstairs for days; it’s natural they weren’t paying much attention to their well-being.”

“Now that they’re off the hook, I promise I’ll look after Susan until she’s in tip-top shape,” Penelope declared confidently.

The group was abuzz with talk about Ben and Susan, but the pair found themselves unable to jump into the conversation.

After a lengthy conversation, Judith segued with, “There’s actually another reason I’ve come to talk to

you all.”

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“Alexander’s got a lot on his plate back home, so he had to head back. Me? I’m not as tied figured I’d stick around in Coraland for a bit.”

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“If I’m sticking around in Coraland, living in the embassy just won’t do. I’ve had Eason snag a villa right next to yours. Looks like we’re going to be neighbors.”

Judith said this nervously, stealing a glance at Susan, “Susan, you won’t hold this against me, right?”

Judith had a soft look about her, and when those hopeful eyes met yours, there was a kind of dreamy

vibe to her presence.

Susan always thought that if she said she would, Judith might just break down crying right then and

there.

So, she hurriedly said, “No, I won’t.”

Judith lit up with happiness, “So not rejecting me outright kind of means you’re open to the idea. Susan, you might not call me ‘Mom’ just yet, but I can tell I’ve carved out a little spot in your heart.”

It was indeed...

And it wasn't just Susan. Even Ben couldn't stop his eyelids from twitching.

Judith's mood lifted, and after a moment, she said, "I've recently settled into a new place and I'd love to have you over for dinner tonight. Would you grace me with your presence?"

Finishing her words, Judith looked expectantly at Susan.

Susan really couldn't resist Judith's gaze and nodded in agreement.

Judith got up with a smile, "I'll head home and get things ready. Come over when you can."

After Susan agreed, Judith then left with Eason and Penny, looking very delighted.

Penny observed Judith's gleeful display, her eyes dimming with a tinge of discomfort.

It had been many years since Judith had been this happy.

Ever since the loss, she's been crying herself to sleep every night, and at her lowest, she spent a whole year in silence, not uttering a single word.

Penny caught on quickly after arriving at the Nicholas family. She realized she was only adopted because she looked a bit like Judith; they figured having her around might ease Judith's ache for her missing daughter.

She understood the significance of her presence.

Thus, for over twenty years, she had been carefully gauging Judith's preferences, trying her best to take care of and please Judith.

Even though she sometimes managed to coax a smile from Judith, those smiles were forced, mere facades.

But the laughter now, it was genuine, full of joy – and it made her feel a twinge of envy.

Penny's hand slowly clenched into a fist.

Susan!

Susan!

Penny thought, "I've worked so hard for so long just to earn a bit of affection from them."

"But you? You don't do anything, and yet they treasure you like you're the most priceless."

"Why is that?"

"You should know that Judith and Eason have their own affairs in Tonico."

Judith had her royal duties to attend to, while Eason was busy running his business.

Yet, their attachment to Susan was so strong that they were prepared to give up everything back home just to stay here with her.

When Penny heard about their decision, she even subtly tried to persuade them.

Unexpectedly, Alexander was actually very supportive of them.

What else could she, an adopted daughter, say?

Judith thought she was not adjusting well to Coraland and asked her to go back with Alexander.

But how dare she go back?

If she went back, Susan would undoubtedly steal all of Judith and Eason's affection.

So where would that leave her in this family?

Penny even vaguely foresaw her own future of being kicked out!

Therefore, she cannot leave!

She must not only stay but also work harder to show herself.

She was determined to show Judith and Eason that, blood ties or not, she was the one who truly held a special place in their hearts.

Weren't they all buzzing for a bit back when they thought Yana was the long-lost daughter of the

Nicholas family?

But within a few days, Yana's selfish and vile nature disappointed them, didn't it?

And Susan, likewise raised in the Miller family, how much better could she be?

As Judith and Eason really spend a few days with her, they will surely be disappointed as well.

Thinking this way, Penny barely managed to calm down.

What she needed to do now was to perform well.

The evening banquet was her best chance to showcase herself.

As evening set in, Judith, eager to please, rallied top chefs to whip up an array of delicacies tailored to Susan's and the Landors' known preferences.

She even braved the kitchen, dedicating an afternoon to experimenting until she nailed a recipe for roast ribs, which was said to be Susan's favorite.

The Landors showed up right on schedule.

Judith, with a warm gesture toward Susan, eagerly greeted everyone else to take a seat.

At the table, Judith kept suggesting dishes to Susan, encouraging her to help herself to more.

Susan obediently and cleverly ate.

Seeing how much she relished her meal, Judith grew fonder of her by the minute.

She carefully served a piece of roast ribs onto Susan's plate.

Susan didn't think too much and ate it straight away.

Judith suddenly became nervous, "How is it?"

The roast ribs weren't quite chef-level, but catching Judith's hopeful look, Susan understood. She grinned and said, "They're delicious, definitely the highlight of the meal."

Judith immediately relaxed, her smile becoming even more radiant.

Eason said with a grin, "Susan! Mom whipped this up herself. It's been nearly thirty years since she last got behind the stove."

Susan's face lit up with surprised delight and she said, "You wouldn't guess it's been thirty years since she last cooked with skills like that."

Judith's laughter grew even warmer. She gestured to the platter, encouraging Susan with a smile, "Help yourself to some more."

Susan graciously complied, enjoying the meal contently.

Penny observed Judith's satisfied expression, her gaze shifting subtly.

She nudged a portion of fish onto Judith's plate with a gentle reminder, "Mom, you've got to look after yourself as well, not just take care of Susan all the time."

Judith responded and took a bite.

Penny's voice was gentle, "Mom, I remember you like your fish with a tangy kick, so I tossed in some tomato for that extra zing. How's the taste?"

"It's delicious," Judith said with a smile, "It's my taste."

Penny said gently, "After all, I am your daughter. If I didn't know what my Mom likes, what kind of daughter would I be?"

Ben glanced at her, his gaze indifferent, and quickly looked away.

He lowered his eyes to Susan.

Susan missed the subtle hint in Penny's words and just kept on enjoying her meal.

Ben offered a small smile and helped her to more of the spread.

Penny glanced at Susan and saw her carefree appearance, her eyes narrowing slightly.

If it had been Yana, she would have jumped at the chance to assert her authority after a comment like that.

But Susan... she seemed oblivious, continuing to eat gladly.

Was this woman feigning ignorance, or did she truly not care?

Penny was convinced it had to be the former.

Who wouldn't be curious about the lineage of the princess of Tonico? Susan's denial of any family ties was likely just a tactical move.

It seemed that this Susan was indeed more challenging to deal with than Yana.

An alarm sounded in Penny's heart.

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After dinner, Charlie and Penelope took their leave to go home first.

Judith invited Susan and Ben to stick around for a casual get-together.

Even though they called it a get-together, it was just an intimate affair with no one from outside their small circle.

Judith had prepared some exquisite pastries for everyone, and they all chatted and talked together.

Penny stood up on her own initiative, speaking in a gentle voice, "Shall I play a piano piece for you?"

Judith smiled at Susan, "Penny's been learning to play the piano since she was six and she's even won international recognition. We're in for a real performance."

Susan nodded, looking forward to Penny's performance with anticipation.

Penny was left speechless.

The naive and sweet look on Susan's face almost made her lose all motivation to compete.

No way! She couldn't let the enemy break her resolve.

Penny thought to herself, "Susan must be pretending to be foolish."

She must not be deceived by Susan's act.

Penny took a deep breath, performed an elegant curtsy, and then sat down at the piano.

"Miss Nicholas's demeanor is so graceful," complimented Susan.

Penny's every move was indeed beautiful.

After all, she had undergone years of department training; every stillness and motion was exquisitely graceful.

Penny found herself tongue-tied.

Listening to this praise, she was definitely not pleased.

She indeed intended to show off her grace.

But she did this to make Susan feel inferior and jealous, not to receive her sincere admiration!

After several such exchanges, Penny came to understand that without ever directly confronting her,

Susan proved to be a tough cookie: her nature made her formidable!

Penny took another deep breath, controlled her emotions, and then placed her hands on the piano.

This time, to show off her superior skills and to make Susan feel envious, jealous, and hateful, Penny chose a difficult piece.

"Moonlight Sonata"

A piano piece was both widely known and technically challenging!

Penny had practiced the piece many times.

Now, with the intention of making a striking impression, she played to the fullest of her abilities.

After her performance of the Moonlight Sonata, it was truly magnificent. She hit all the right notes, both. emotionally and technically.

At the end of the piece, Penny couldn't wait to see Susan's expression.

Was it envy? Jealousy? Or hatred?

She was suddenly looking forward to it.

And then, she saw Susan genuinely and heartily applauding.

A round of applause filled the house.

Penny's smile didn't quite reach her eyes.

This was not the reaction she wanted.

She wanted Susan to slam the table and storm off.

With a smile, Susan remarked, "Being a science major, I figured art was out of my league, but hearing this live, I've really come to appreciate the piano's beauty. Miss Nicholas's playing is something else."

Judith couldn't help but laugh, "Penny's level, compared to those masters, is still far behind. If you like it, I'll take you to that concert hall some time."

Judith said this partly out of modesty and partly as a matter of fact.

Penny pursed her lips, feeling a trace of displeasure..

She believed her piano skills had already reached a professional level, how could they be inferior to those masters?

Was her Mom saying this to start sidelining her, laying the groundwork for Susan's favor?

The more Penny mulled it over, the more her thoughts spiraled, leading her to impulsively say, "I'm definitely no match for the experts. But I'm curious about Mrs. Landor's talents. Maybe she could show us what she's got."

Susan was momentarily stunned.

Ben laughed.

Judith and Eason looked at Penny with some surprise.

Penny was visibly moved as she turned to Susan and said, "Back in Tonico, the daughters of high society usually play an instrument, be it piano, violin, or harp. Mrs. Landor, which do you play? We have a variety of instruments here, so whatever your choice, I'm sure we can accommodate you."

Susan held her gaze for a moment before a slight smile appeared, "Sorry, I don't play any instruments."

Judith held onto Susan's hand with a hint of nervousness, "Remember, an instrument is just a tool. If you can't play, it's not a big deal."

Susan herself didn't think it was a big deal. She smiled and said, "I didn't have the conditions to learn an instrument when I was young. If I had, maybe I would have learned."

Hearing this, Judith felt a pang of heartache.

She had later looked through the materials, understanding very well the life Susan had when she was

young.

The Millers would have taken everything Susan had to offer if they could; they didn't even care about her well-being, let alone let her learn to play an instrument.

Bringing up this topic felt like twisting the knife in Susan's heart.

"If you want to learn, I can find you a teacher. We can treat it as a hobby, no pressure to learn," said Judith.

Susan shook her head with a smile, "Forget it. I'm sure I don't have the talent."

"That's fine," said Judith, "If you like, we can just attend a few concerts. There's no need to learn."

Judith comforted Susan.

Penny's face became slightly sour.

She didn't believe Judith's words were accidental.

She felt that by saying playing an instrument was not important, Judith was denying her efforts.

Judith claimed that learning an instrument wasn't a big deal, yet Penny had invested so much time into it. Anyone could see that Judith was clearly downplaying her efforts.

Penny inhaled deeply before saying, "So, Mrs. Landor, if you don't play an instrument, what's your thing? I've got a friend who's a horseback riding champ and could've gone on the national team. Another friend's a whiz with flower arrangements, you'll find her work in galleries. And another friend

can chat you up in eight languages. In our crowd, you need a niche to shine, even blue blood gets the cold shoulder otherwise. If you haven't got a talent, Mrs. Landor, it might be time to pick one up."

Penny's words were somewhat piercing.

Susan raised her eyebrows and the smile on her face disappeared.

She was willing to treat everyone with kindness.

But if others do not reciprocate with the same kindness, then she would stop her kindness.

As soon as she finished speaking, Penny began to regret it.

She should not have been so impulsive!

But the sense of threat Susan gave her was just too strong, coupled with Judith's consistent favoritism toward Susan, made her lose control of her emotions for a moment.

Although she regretted it, the words were already out, and Penny could not bring herself to apologize, just stubbornly looked at Susan.

"Penny, what are you saying?" Judith looked at her with some anger and surprise, "If Susan wants to learn, she'll learn; if she doesn't want to learn, she won't. What's the big deal with those things?"

well.

Observing Judith's expression, Penny pursed her lips and said, "I spoke out of turn, but I meant I'm just concerned that once Mrs. Landor returns to the royal fold, her interactions with others might become fodder for ridicule."

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Susan couldn't help but chuckle.

She faced Penny with a serene expression, "Don't fret. I'm not planning on going back to the royals. So, there's no chance for anyone to mock me."

"Susan..." Judith went white, looking like she'd been sucker-punched.

Judith was convinced that with her genuine intentions, Susan would come around to acknowledging her eventually.

But did Susan's words really mean she was cutting ties with them for good?

For a moment, Judith felt somewhat dispirited.

Seeing this, Penny became slightly uneasy.

Susan was really in a league of her own.

It wasn't that she was unwilling to rejoin the royal ranks; it was clearly a tactical withdrawal.

With these words, Susan was really putting her on the spot. If Judith started to believe she was the reason for Susan's reluctance to come back, wouldn't that render all her years of effort meaningless?

No, she wouldn't let Susan pull her strings.

Penny bit her lip and spoke softly, "Mrs. Landor, let's not be hasty with words in the heat of the moment. Whether or not you plan to rejoin the royal ranks, as the wife of the wealthiest man around, it's important to stay informed. You wouldn't want to embarrass Mr. Landor, would you?"

Penny first categorized Susan's words as spoken in anger, then dragged Ben into the mix, aiming to confuse the situation.

Susan blinked and then looked over at Ben, "You don't think I'd make a fool of you, do you?"

Ben wrapped an arm around her with a laugh and said casually, "Of course not! You've just made us billions. If I dared complain about you, the board would probably boot me out."

Ben glanced at Penny with a playful look, "Susan's artificial intelligence project just got stamped with an S-level for super-secret by the government and is branching out into all sorts of areas. Even Tonic's bigwigs shot us a letter a while back, itching for a top-tier collaboration. So, Miss Nicholas, got any

piano accolades that can top that?"

Penny was stunned for a moment, her face turning slightly sour, "I..."

Susan's status as Mrs. Landor was too high-profile; it slipped her mind that Susan had racked up such accomplishments.

Penny found her words with effort, "Playing the piano refines your sensibilities. It's a world apart from pursuits reeking of money."

"Oh? Is this refined attitude of Miss Nicholas the result of polishing up your sensibilities?" Ben let out a sigh, "Now you've got me wondering what Miss Nicholas used to be like."

Most of the time, Ben was very calm, but once he started his sharp-tongued mockery, not everyone could bear it.

Penny was feeling a bit unsteady now..

Ben chuckled and stood up, "Thank you all for your hospitality. It's leave now."

Getting late, Susan and I will take our.

Susan also stood up.

Judith held onto Susan's gaze, her eyes brimming with a silent plea, clearly not ready for her to leave.

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Susan softened for a moment and said softly, "If Mrs. Nicholas has some free time, you are welcome to visit my place next time."

The implication was that she was welcome at the Landor's house.

But here, she probably didn't want to come again:

Judith heard Susan's implication.

She felt both embarrassed and a bit guilty.

"Then I'll see you out." Judith stood

1. up.

"I'll go as well." Eason followed.

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The large house was quickly left with only Penny by herself.

Penny pursed her lips.

She was ghostly pale and looked completely frazzled.

Her previous success against Yana had made her overconfident.

This time against Susan, not only did she fail to make Susan lose her composure, but she herself had been utterly embarrassed.

After today's events, how would Judith and Eason view her?

Could she still firmly hold the title of Princess of Tonico?

Penny started to panic.

A few minutes later, Judith and Eason came back.

"Mom, Eason." Penny greeted them timidly.

Judith

gave

her a look and said nonchalantly, "I'm beaten. I'm going to get some rest."

There were no words of criticism from Judith.

But this indifference made Penny even more panicked.

She reached out anxiously to Judith, "Mom, I'm sorry."

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Judith turned to look at Penny, “Penny, you shouldn’t be apologizing to me.”

Penny clenched her teeth, “I know. I’ll go apologize to Mrs. Landor tomorrow.”

Judith spoke with composure, “An apology is in order, yeah. But don’t forget what’s truly important. Whether or not Susan decides to come back, she’s my child in my heart, just like Eason and you are.”

The same.

Penny’s heart screamed in a frenzy.

How could it really be the same?

She’s just an adopted daughter.

Given how they reacted to Susan’s cold shoulder, Penny wondered if Susan ever gave them a smile, would there even be room for her in the Nicholas family?

Penny thought she had concealed it well.

Yet Judith saw right through her.

She let out a sigh, “Believe it or not, after all these years together, you’re just like my own kids to me.

But Penny! Eason and you have been pampered by me since you were small. You've been right by my side, living in the lap of luxury. But Susan? She was taken right after she was born, and the life she's

endured... it's unspeakable. Do you have any idea how much it hurts me, like a knife twisting in my heart, to see the reports Alexander dug up? Seeing all that Susan's been through since she was a child, can you even imagine how heart-wrenching that is for me?

"Now, having finally found her, I naturally can't wait to compensate her with all my love. I thought you would understand me, but I didn't expect you to reject Susan because of this. You've disappointed me

so much."

Having said that Lindith went untraceable without looking back.

"Mom!" Penny watched her with a lost soul.

Eason sighed and was also about to leave.

"Eason, are you disappointed in me too?" Penny looked at him pitifully.

Eason, seeing Penny's almost tearful expression, ultimately stopped in his tracks.

He said calmly, "Penny, Susan is doing well in the Landor family. She genuinely doesn't want to come back. You don't have to see her as an imaginary enemy."

"Eason, I didn't... I just..." Penny hurried to explain.

Eason

let

out a sigh, "Remember, we've been a family for more than twenty years. Penny, there's nothing you can think of or worry about that Mom and I can't pick up on. You joined us at five, and back

then, you were so reserved, always shy. I've been by your side ever since, just wishing you'd unwind and really feel a part of this family."

Reflecting on her childhood, Penny smiled faintly, "Eason, you've always been kind to me since I was a kid."

"But you've never been able to completely relax, have you? The more perfect you tried to be over the years, the more insecure you felt inside," Eason sharply pointed out.

"No, I haven't." Penny trembled all over.

It was a feeling of being completely seen through.

She thought her disguise was perfect.

But had they seen through it all along?

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Eason gazed at Penny, "We've noticed your anxiety. Actually, to ease your worries, Mom and Dad have gone to great lengths. You always thought Mom loved sour foods, right? That's not really true. She started saying that after you overdid the vinegar in your first solo attempt at cooking fish. You were disappointed, thinking it was ruined because it was too sour. To spare your feelings, Mom chimed in, claiming she liked sour things. That fish was incredibly sour, but Mom courageously ate a whole bowl just to make you feel better."

Penny's eyes flickered, "I always thought Mom was really into sour foods."

Eason raised an eyebrow, "You really think Dad likes morning runs, so you get up early to join him every day? Truth is, when you first came, you were skinny and didn't look too healthy. So, Dad started taking you on those morning jogs to help you get in shape."

Penny's face turned pale.

She had never known these things.

"So, Penny," Eason let out a sigh, "you're part of our family, always have been, always will be. You can count on that. Susan's my sister, and so are you. You two aren't at odds with each other. The reason Mom snapped at you today is because she considers you a real part of the family, so she didn't sugarcoat anything. You get what I'm saying?"

Penny nodded vaguely.

Eason calmly got ready to take his leave.

As she watched him walk away, Penny felt an indescribable impulse stirring within her.

She found herself asking, "Eason, what about you? How do you feel about me?"

Right after Penny spoke, she immediately regretted her words.

What's wrong with her today?

She said a lot of things she shouldn't have.

She glanced at Eason with a hint of apprehension, afraid he might have seen the embarrassing thoughts she was trying to hide.

Eason, unfazed, responded firmly, "Don't worry about it. I see you as my real sister."

After saying that, Eason left.

Penny felt even more dazed.

Eason saw her as his real little sister.

Thus,

she should be happy.

But she wasn't.

What should she do?

She wanted to remain with the Nicholas family, continuing to play the role of their little princess.

But she didn't want to be Eason's sister anymore..

What on earth should she do?

Penny spent the night tossing and turning, unable to sleep.

A sword of Damocles was hanging over her head.

She was the one who had secretly stashed away the test report.

Eason had not yet recalled that month's memory,

But considering Eason went to the lengths of running that test, he must've been in touch with Susan that month. What if Susan spilled everything about what happened?

If Eason got his memory back, he'd notice the missing memos on his phone and figure out that the crucial test report was stashed away by her.

He said he saw her as a real sister.

He said Alexander and Judith saw her as their own daughter.

She didn't believe it before.

But after Eason spoke to her, she believed it.

However, it was too late.

She had already made a mistake.

Once Susan spilled the beans about that month to Eason, he'd realize just how low and self-centered she was.

Would he still treat her as his real sister?

Would Alexander and Judith still see her as their own daughter?

She didn't dare to gamble.

Penny bit her teeth tightly..

Susan was always a ticking time bomb for her.

Even though it might not go off, the mere chance of it was enough; she couldn't let any accidents.

happen.

The Nicholas family was too important to her.

She couldn't bear to think how she'd feel if she left the Nicholas family and Eason looked at her with

disdain.

For her, it was nothing short of the end of the world.

Penny panicked and terrified. But she didn't know what to do.

Targeting Susan again?

That would only speed up the disdain.

Pleasing Susan?

Wouldn't that be too demeaning?

Penny had a dream that night.

In her dream, the Nicholas family looked at her with disdain. Despite her desperate attempts to explain and win them over, they just looked on with detachment, without saying a word.

When she woke up the next day, Penny still remembered that feeling of despair.

She was in a daze for a long time before she slowly got up.

If playing low was the key, then that's what she'd do.

Now, getting on good terms with Susan had become her only way out.

Getting along well with Susan would make everyone happy.

Then she would be able to stay in the Nicholas residence.

For now... let it be.

Penny knew she had made a mistake the night before. So today, she had to behave well to make up for her mistake.

Early in the morning, Penny had prepared gifts for her apology.

d prepared gifts for her apology.

As Judith and Eason came downstairs, she quickly blurted out, "Mom, Eason, I've reconsidered. I was overthinking things earlier. I'll make it up to Susan later. Can you guys take a look and see if these gifts are okay?"

Penny spoke sincerely, without any reluctance.

Judith's face softened a bit as she glanced over the gifts, then said, "Susan isn't in need of anything; the gifts themselves aren't what matter most. It's the thought behind them that counts."

"I understand. I will apologize properly," Penny hurriedly replied..

"That's good to hear," Judith said, feeling relieved as she gave her hand a reassuring pat.

"I've got to go," Penny said.

"Let's go, I'll come with you," Judith said with a smile.

"Let's go together," Eason raised his eyebrows.

Penny nodded obediently.

At the Landor residence, Penny approached Susan, gave a small bow, and said earnestly, "Mrs. Landor, I

owe you an apology. Yesterday, I let my fear of losing my place in the Nicholas family cloud my judgment, and I acted unfairly toward you. I know I was wrong. I'm not expecting forgiveness, but I promise to prove my sincerity through my actions moving forward."

Penny's apology was very earnest.

Susan was taken aback for a second, then replied, "Miss Nicholas, no need to be so formal. It was just a bit of a verbal spat."

Penny shook her head, "I know how despicable I was last night, I'm so jealous that even I can't stand myself."

Penny spoke so gravely that Susan was taken aback, "It's not that serious..."

"Either way, I'm committed to making changes," Penny declared resolutely..

Susan was at a loss for words.

She suddenly felt a bit panicked.

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Judith, however, looked on with satisfaction.

She said warmly, "Susan, Penny is really a good kid at heart. I've given her a talking-to about yesterday, and she understands she was wrong. I'm confident her apology is sincere."

Penny nodded again and again.

She was indeed very sincere.

To stay in the Nicholas residence, to not lose their favor, she had to give her all.

Now, Susan was key.

She had no choice but to be sincere.

Seeing Penny's earnest expression, Susan felt somewhat embarrassed.

She had just silently added Penny to the list of people to avoid last night, and today, here she was, making such a gesture.

Was it really her who was being too petty?

Chapter 306

Even though Susan still had her reservations about Penny, the sincere and heartfelt apology appeared to close the chapter on the issue, at least outwardly.

Lately, Susan had resumed some work she could do from home, but she was mostly pushed to rest.

Judith, Eason, and Penny came over every other day.

Judith found ways to cook various delicacies for Susan, and her culinary skills visibly improved by leaps and bounds.

Eason went above and beyond to collect all sorts of unique items for Susan, all in an effort to keep her entertained.

Penny did even more.

After that day, she truly lived up to her promise, showing her remorse through her actions.

She didn't just help Judith whip up an array of gourmet dishes; she was also constantly sweet-talking Susan, quick to offer her a glass of water with a glance or hand her some candy with a gesture.

Her attentiveness was so on point; it was as if she knew Susan's desires like the back of her hand.

That evening, Susan talked to Ben about Penny, her face showing a mix of emotions.

"I swear, Penny's practically reading my mind these days. She's one step ahead on everything, taking care of stuff before I even think to do it. Lately, I haven't had to lift a finger, not even to grab a cup."

Penny's actions had left Susan somewhat embarrassed.

However, every time she suggested Penny take it easy, Penny would insist that she was making amends.

Susan was at a loss for what to do.

Ben quirked an eyebrow, "It's normal."

"Normal?" Susan seemed puzzled. "But a normal person couldn't pull that off, right?"

Ben chuckled, "Consider the environment she grew up in."

Susan sat up straight, "Go ahead."

Ben began his analysis.

"Penny was taken in by the Nicholas family when she was young. Her outburst at you that night showed some deep-rooted discomfort. No matter how well they treated her, the feelings of insecurity and not quite belonging never fully went away. She always tried to win them over, to cement her spot in the family.

“To win people over, she had to reach their hearts, so she became adept at reading people and situations, turning it into a kind of instinct.

“For nearly thirty years, this has been Penny’s life. Now, using this skill on you is just the tip of the iceberg.”

Susan listened, completely taken aback.

She had to admit that Ben’s analysis made sense.

“So, Penny is really someone to feel sorry for, isn’t she?” Susan couldn’t help but remark.

Ben gently ran his fingers through Susan’s hair. “I don’t believe that’s the case. The Nicholas family is known for their rationality and strong moral values. They welcomed Penny into their fold and treated her as one of their own. Her challenges primarily stem from her struggle to overcome her past

circumstances. Nevertheless, the education and social opportunities she’s had since being adopted far exceed anything she could have imagined in her previous life as an orphan. Given the choice, she’d undoubtedly opt for the Nicholas family once more over remaining in the orphanage.”

Susan pondered for a moment, then shook her head. “I won’t dwell on it anymore. Whether Penny deserves sympathy or not, it’s not my concern.”

Ben observed Susan’s expression and let out a sudden chuckle. “You claim it’s unrelated to you, but you appear somewhat torn.”

Susan cleared her throat softly and said, “You can tell, can’t you? So, take a guess, what’s been bothering me?”

Ben arched an eyebrow, “Will there be a prize if I guess correctly?”

Susan, not swayed by his self-assured demeanor, shot back, "So, you're absolutely certain you're correct?"

Seeing her cheeks flush with defiance, Ben was moved, leaning down to kiss her.

Susan's eyes widened in shock.

"Getting my reward upfront," Ben remarked, sitting upright. "You're torn because, despite Penny's heartfelt apology and the excellent care she's been providing you, you still can't quite view her as a genuine friend. Am I on the right track?"

Susan had been a blend of timidity and frustration.

But after Ben spoke, only shock remained.

"How did you know that?"

Ben playfully teased her, giving her nose a gentle flick. "You reckon you're that tough to figure out?"

Susan grumbled softly, still skeptical, "Why does it feel like everyone thinks they know what's going on inside me?"

Ben found this situation somewhat amusing. Without acknowledging Susan's complaint, he sincerely shared his perspective, "I'd suggest you simply come to terms with Penny's behavior. However, you

don't need to go out of your way to label her as a friend. It's perfectly reasonable to exercise caution

when dealing with her.

"Penny is quite cunning. On that particular night, she was extremely anxious, which led to her showing her emotions. However, the following day, she managed to hide all her bitterness and present herself as cooperative and without remorse. Her ability to bounce back like that is rather unsettling."

Susan listened, feeling bewildered.

She couldn't help but say, "What if Penny has really come to terms with it? After all, I don't want to go back to the Nicholas family, and there's no actual conflict between us."

Ben raised an eyebrow. "That's a potential scenario. Whether she's plotting something or has genuinely moved on, she should understand that going up against you serves no purpose. So, unless there's a substantial change, it's unlikely she'll come after you again. That's why I'm fine with you engaging with her. Just exercise caution, just in case,"

Susan, still feeling a bit perplexed, let out a yawn. "You sure are talking a lot today, and it's making me

feel drowsy."

Saying so, she actually laid her head on Ben's chest and soon fell asleep, her eyelids fluttering shut.

Ben, watching her like this, felt a twinge of pity.

Ever since that blood test, Susan's health has been in this condition

She needed a three-hour nap in the afternoon

And she had to go to bed early at night

The doctor mentioned that Susan initially had a robust constitution, but the extended period of blood transfusions had taken a toll on it.

Before, her body was able to sustain equilibrium.

But that final blood draw had shattered the balance, becoming the tipping point.

In the following days, Susan would not only experience heightened fatigue but also exhibit reduced fertility.

He didn't actually concern himself with whether Susan could become pregnant or not, but he worried that she might dwell on it too much. That's why he chose not to share with her information about her lower fertility condition.

For him, whether or not they had children didn't matter.

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What was most important was that Susan could recover quickly.

Ben gazed at Susan with affection for a moment, then leaned down and softly kissed her forehead. "Goodnight, Susan."

Even in her slumber, it was as though Susan could sense Ben's affection, and the corners of her mouth formed a faint, contented smile.

Chapter 307 After her talk with Ben that night, Susan came to terms with things.

Penny continued to win Susan's favor, displaying a level of humility that was almost excessive. Susan would attempt to have rational conversations with her, but if persuasion proved ineffective, she

wouldn't let it bother her.

No matter how diligently Penny looked after her, Susan was aware that in her heart, Penny couldn't compare to Theresa, who was miles away, engrossed in her filming commitments.

Theresa was a friend to her.

If Theresa were to betray her, Susan felt she would be devastated.

However, when it came to Penny, it appeared to be of little consequence.

A simple pushback would suffice.

That was the difference.

Susan continued to exhibit this lukewarm disposition, neither overly enthusiastic nor completely indifferent. And Penny, with her keen senses, couldn't help but notice..

Her heart couldn't help but race.

Penny thought to herself, "Why is Susan so hard to deal with?"

She had made every possible effort anyone else would have opened up to her by now.

Susan?

Though she didn't reject Penny's attempts at closeness, it would be an exaggeration to say they were *ily* close.

True, her relationship with Susan had thawed somewhat.

But for Penny, that was hardly enough.

She hoped Susan would see her as a trusted friend, someone she could rely on like a good luck charm. At this moment, Penny was filled with regret.

Why had she been so impatient that night, revealing her intentions and making Susan wary of her? Otherwise, becoming friends with Susan would've been so much easier.

Naturally, there's also the issue of having made a wrong assessment of the situation back then.

She had assumed that, since Susan and Yana were sisters, Susan would display the same impulsiveness that Yana had shown, despite her seemingly perfect exterior.

She didn't anticipate that Susan and Yana were nothing alike.

The strategies employed with Yana had unintended consequences for Susan, achieving the opposite result. In the end, the one who couldn't keep her cool was herself.

Penny's poor judgment about Susan led her to a significant error, compelling her to alter her course of action.

Penny took a deep breath.

She had to remain composed. That was absolutely clear.

It was fortunate that she recognized the need for a change in her approach sooner rather than later. Given her talent for charming people, she couldn't fathom why she couldn't earn Susan's favor.

All she was waiting for was an opportunity.

A chance to truly earn Susan's trust.

Penny waited and waited; it had been such a long time.

But the opportunity she craved never came.

And Susan's heart was like a fortress, always keeping her at a distance.

Eventually, Penny started to feel anxious.

Over time, she noticed Judith and Eason growing increasingly fond of Susan.

If Susan ever told Eason about what happened that month, and if Eason remembered and found out she was the one who hid that test report, she couldn't bear thinking about how let down he'd be.

Penny was willing to swallow her pride, humble herself, and do whatever it took to stay by Eason's side. But she couldn't bear the thought of him looking at her with disappointment and disgust.

To avoid that, she knew she had to be proactive. She had to find a way to make Susan willingly help her cover up what happened that month.

Penny's goal was clear.

But Susan's emotional walls left her unsure of where to start.

Penny felt incredibly frustrated.

Yet, despite the frustration, she had to do what needed to be done.

mat day, Judith and Penny carefully prepared lunch to take to Susan's office.

er since Susan started working, they hadn't missed a single day.

san attempted to talk them out of it a few times, but Judith and Penny just turned a deaf ear. Susan gave up trying to persuade them.

Around lunchtime in the lounge, Judith watched Susan eating with a contented smile and said, "Enjoy your meal, Susan." For decades, Judith had lived a life in a haze.

Now that she had reunited with her daughter, her life finally seemed to have a purpose. Susan nodded and made an effort to eat, her cheeks bulging slightly with each bite.

As Susan considered reaching for some soup to moisten her meal, the bowl magically appeared in front of her.

Penny thoughtfully included a straw and handed it over, "Here you go. It's all set."

Seeing Penny's doting behavior, Susan felt a bit out of her element but still graciously accepted the gesture.

After lunch, Judith and Penny prepared to leave.

"I'll walk you out," Susan stood up to say.

"It's okay. We can make it on our own," Judith hastily replied.

"Come on," Susan said, smiling as she gently pulled on Judith's hand.

Judith's resolve softened on the spot, leaving her speechless and without any rebuttals. Their car was parked across the street.

Susan walked them all the way to the other side of the road.

“Okay, Susan, that’s enough,” Judith said with a hint of reluctance, “I’ll swing by after work.” Okay,” Susan replied with a smile.

Alright, off you go. I’ll keep an eye out until you’re back in the office,” Judith encouraged.

Susan nodded in agreement and turned to head back.

She encountered a green light and proceeded directly across the pedestrian lane.

She hadn’t gone far when sudden danger struck!

Out of nowhere, a car that had been at a standstill

Susan, looking ahead, was completely unaware of the peril.

Both Judith and Penny saw it happen.

Judith’s expression changed drastically.

“Susan! Come back!” Judith screamed as she dashed forward.

Huh?

At the sound of Judith’s voice, Susan turned around, a puzzled look on her face. Just then, the out-of-control car came hurtling directly toward Susan.

was panic-stricken, straining with all her might to pull Susan to safety!

Just as she was about to reach Susan, suddenly, someone stepped hard out of the way.

Then, the person rushed forward and shoved Susan forcefully too.

Susan, thrown off balance, fell to the ground, narrowly missing the car's path.

A bit dazed, Susan lifted her head only to see a car zooming by at a frightening speed. Her eyes widened in shock.

Now, it looked as though Penny was the one pushing her away!

Penny! Was she okay?

Across the street, Penny watched the speeding red car,

At this distance, she could have easily avoided the car.

But why should she?

A wild look briefly crossed Penny's face.

Wasn't this the opportunity she had been waiting for? Pretending to lose her balance, she fell just at the right moment. And the car's tire rolled right over her leg.

The pain was so intense that Penny wished she could pass out right then and there. Yet, a smile curled at the corner of her mouth.

She knew she had seized her opportunity.

From this day forward, no matter her past wrongdoings,

they were

all erased.

She had won her gamble.

Chapter 308

The red car whizzed past, speeding away.

Susan's expression shifted dramatically when she saw Penny on the ground, looking deathly pale.

"Penny, are you okay?" Judith also snapped to her senses, standing up and running desperately to Penny's side.

"Your leg!" Susan's heart sank at the sight of Penny's leg pinned under the car.

She had always been wary of Penny, but what happened next?

Penny had risked her life to save her.

Regret, guilt, and gratitude tangled in Susan's heart, leaving her feeling overwhelmed.

"Susan, it's alright," Penny said through her pain, soothing her gently, "It's just a broken leg. I'm not going anywhere."

"Don't talk like that!" Susan's gaze turned steely. "We're heading to the hospital, right now!"

Thirty minutes later, at the hospital, Judith was nervously walking back and forth outside the

emergency room.

Susan was by her side, her face etched with seriousness.

All she could do was silently pray that Penny's leg would be okay.

After all, Penny had gotten hurt because of her!

"Mom, how is Penny?" Eason rushed over in a hurry.

"I don't know," Judith was also panicking, "The car went right over her leg. I can't imagine her pain."

Saying this, Judith couldn't help but cry.

They had spent decades being together.

Besides, Penny was such a gentle and caring person.

Judith truly loved her like her own daughter.

Though now, she was wholly focused on compensating Susan for her past grievances, it didn't mean she didn't care for Penny anymore.

Especially considering Penny was injured while saving Susan.

"It'll be okay; it has to be," Eason could only hold Judith, continuously whispering reassurances.

“Susan.” Ben arrived soon after, his face etched with worry. He went straight to Susan and wrapped her in a comforting hug.

Susan’s hand was trembling, cold as ice.

Susan, pale-faced, looked at him, “Ben... she... she saved me. The car lost control suddenly, and if Penny hadn’t pushed me away, I would be the one lying there.”

Susan’s voice shook violently.

Brushing away her tears, Judith spoke softly, “Susan, don’t beat yourself up. It was just an accident.”

Yeah, it was just an accident.

Nobody expected that car to suddenly lose control.

But how could Susan not blame herself?

If she hadn’t been adamant about driving them, maybe this accident wouldn’t have happened.

And, Penny’s leg wouldn’t have been injured.

Remembering Penny’s injury, Susan suddenly clenched Ben’s hand tightly, “Ben, the car...”

Ben said reassuringly, “Don’t worry. I’ve already got someone on it. That area’s always packed and right near a traffic light with plenty of cameras. We’ll find that car in no time.”

“We must find that car.” Judith clenched her teeth, “If anything happens to Penny, I’ll make them pay.”

“We will find the car.” Ben nodded affirmatively.

What he kept to himself was a nagging suspicion lurking in his heart.

Could it be that this car was related to Penny, or even arranged by her?

If so, this act of rescue was worth pondering.

Regardless, he would investigate this incident thoroughly.

A bit later, the doors of the operating room swung open, and Penny was rolled out on a gurney.

It was just a local anesthesia, and Penny was still lucid.

Seeing everyone waiting, she smiled slightly, “Don’t worry. I’m okay.”

Judith approached, taking her hand, and then turned to the doctor, “Doctor, how’s Penny doing?”

The doctor responded, “Miss Nicholas has a serious fracture in her leg, but fortunately, you got her here quickly. She should recover with treatment, though her right foot might not regain full strength. There could be some noticeable difference in her walk compared to her left foot.”

The doctor put it mildly.

But everyone could read between the lines.

This meant Penny might limp in the future.

Judith's tears immediately fell.

No one knew better than her how much Penny pursued perfection.

crowd.

Then she devoted her entire day to mastering etiquette.

Only when she was as good as, or even better than the others did she relent.

Later, she took up piano.

She would practice from morning to night, never stopping until she earned her teacher's praise..

Such a determined person, and now she's hobbled!

With Penny's pride, how could she bear it?

But Penny was surprisingly calm.

From the moment she extended her foot, she had been prepared for this.

She thought it through clearly.

Even if it resulted in her leg being completely incapacitated, not just a limp, it was still a worthwhile trade-off.

By losing her leg, she won back their love and attention.

By losing her leg, she earned Susan's guilt and sincerity.

And from now on, whenever she walked, they would see her limp and remember how she got hurt!

She wanted them to feel guilty for the rest of their lives.

Only then would she truly have her amulet.

Penny thought it all through, making her exceptionally calm.

She reached out, tenderly wiping Judith's tears, "Mom, no tears, okay? It's just a limp. I'm a princess, after all. Who's going to have the nerve to laugh at me?"

Judith tried to smile, "Of course not. My Penny, you're always the best."

Penny just smiled in response.

"Penny." Susan bit her lip, "I'm so sorry."

Seeing Penny like this, she felt incredibly guilty.

Penny was such a good person.

She just lost her composure that night.

It was just because she felt so insecure.

She was always on guard against her, but Penny risked her life to save her.

O

This left Susan feeling as though she was unfairly projecting her own insecurities onto someone with a much nobler heart.

She was the petty one while Penny was the noble.

“Susan, it’s okay,” Penny said softly with a smile, “The important thing is you’re safe. Just think about Mom and Dad. What would they have done if something happened to you? This is really for the best.”

Judith felt like crying again, unable to help but grip Penny’s hand tightly, “Don’t talk like that. Whether it’s you or Susan, Mom would be heartbroken if anything happened to either of you.”

“I always knew I was Mom’s favorite,” Penny said with a playful smirk.

Seeing Penny in that state, Judith’s heart softened.

She even started to wonder if she’d been unintentionally ignoring Penny lately.

After all, Penny was still just a little girl.

Judith told herself that in her efforts to make amends with Susan, she mustn’t overlook Penny.

She had promised to treat them both like her own daughters, and she was determined to keep that promise.

Chapter 309

Carrying a heavy heart, Susan, weighed down by guilt, spent a long time caring for Penny at the hospital before she finally left.

“Okay, let it go,” Ben comforted, softly tousling her hair. “We’ll find a way to make it right with her. That’s what counts.”

“Yeah,” Susan agreed, attempting to sound more upbeat. “I’m the reason she injured her leg. Ben, I see now that I’ve been too small-minded. Going forward, I’m going to be genuinely kind to her.”

Ben nodded but didn’t say much.

He kept his suspicions to himself.

Everything would wait until the investigation results were in.

Penny was hospitalized for a few days.

During this time, Judith and Susan made several trips to the hospital.

Ben also spent these days thoroughly investigating the matter.

To his surprise, the incident wasn’t a self-staged drama by Penny.

He looked into the owner of the red car involved.

A man who had spent his whole life in Coraland, making any ties to Penny pretty much a long shot.

Moreover, the surveillance footage showed that the crash was caused by a sudden argument between

the couple in the car. In anger, the man drove recklessly, and unexpectedly, the brakes failed, leading to

the accident.

If it was intentional, the argument beforehand seemed unnecessary.

Moreover, the brake failure was indeed confirmed upon inspection.

Considering all other details, Ben believed it was truly an accident.

So, Penny really did save Susan.

Once everything was clear, even Ben felt a sense of gratitude toward Penny.

Without Penny stepping in, who knew where Susan might have ended up?

While Penny might have had her own reasons for rescuing Susan, the fact remained that she saved her life.

Ben thought to himself, "By saving Susan, Penny also saved me.

He and his wife truly owed Penny a great debt.

"The Beef Broth is ready. I'll take it to the hospital," said Susan, carefully placing the soup in a thermos.

"Okay, I'll come with you," Ben responded.

Susan looked at him, slightly puzzled.

Ben looked puzzled. "Why are you staring at me like that?"

Susan arched an eyebrow. "Don't play dumb. The last time I talked about going to the hospital, you didn't object, but you sounded pretty indifferent. Now, you actually sound concerned."

Just as Ben understood her, Susan was also attuned to his emotional shifts.

Ben couldn't help but laugh. "You can even pick up on that."

"Of course," Susan said, lifting her head slightly.

Ben spoke candidly, "I had someone investigate the incident thoroughly, and it truly was an accident."

"It was always an accident," Susan said, then suddenly realizing something, she looked at Ben sharply. Did you initially suspect it was premeditated

Piecing this together with Ben's response, Susan got it. "You think Penny orchestrated the whole accident? Isn't that kind of far-fetched? I mean, if the car had veered just a bit more, she could've been crippled."

Ben sighed, somewhat resigned. "Maybe I think too ill of people."

Susan understood Ben's concerns and sighed. "This time, Penny really saved my life. I don't know how to repay her."

"Take your time. There will be an opportunity," Ben reassured her.

Susan nodded firmly.

When they arrived at the hospital, Judith was also there.

Susan passed the Beef Broth to Judith, who then helped Penny with her meal.

Penny quietly had her meal and then turned her gaze toward Susan.

“Susan, you seem very serious today,” she observed.

Susan forced a smile, not revealing her guilt over Ben’s previous suspicions about Penny.

Judith patted Susan’s hand. “Susan, don’t overthink it. The driver has been punished; it was just an accident.”

“Yes, I’m really fine. I’ll be walking around as soon as the stitches are removed,” Penny said with a smile.

Penny’s warm smile only intensified Susan’s guilt.

Penny sighed.

She looked at Judith and Ben. “Susan seems troubled. How about I talk to her alone?”

Ben glanced at Susan..

Susan nodded slightly.

Judith stood up and let out a sigh. “I’ll leave you two to talk then.”

Judith and Ben left, closing the door behind them.

Penny looked at Susan with a knowing gaze. "Did Mr. Landor always suspect that I orchestrated the accident?"

Caught by Penny's words, Susan felt even more guilty. "He was just being overly cautious."

Penny smiled, "Susan, it's okay. With Mr. Landor's status, he wouldn't survive if he weren't cautious. I don't mind at all."

The more Penny said this, the more awkward Susan felt.

Penny's gaze flickered, and she spoke softly, "Susan, you don't need to feel bad about it. Actually, there's something I need to tell you."

Susan was momentarily stunned, then quickly responded, "What is it? Just tell me."

Penny asked gently, "Have you met Eason before our parents came to Coraland?"

Susan was caught off guard by Penny's abrupt shift in conversation. After a brief pause, she answered, "Yes, he had visited me earlier. He said I reminded him of his sister and even took a hair sample for a

DNA test."

Penny lowered her head, her face slightly pale.

"What's wrong?" Susan asked, puzzled.

Penny's voice was low and small, "Susan, I'm sorry. I... I did something wrong."

Susan looked surprised, then quickly said, "You don't need to bring up what happened that night anymore."

Penny looked up, her eyes brimming with hope; "It's not about what happened that night."

What is it then?" Susan was somewhat confused.

Penny pursed her lips, speaking cautiously, "Actually. By then, Eason had already received the test results. The report showed that you and he are biological siblings."

Susan nodded, still unclear about what Penny was trying to say.

Penny gritted her teeth, her face turning even paler, "Back then, Eason mysteriously lost his memory. It was me... I secretly kept the test results to myself and erased the memo from his phone. And when I realized Yana was a fraud, I didn't say a word. I knew she didn't have what it takes to overshadow the love our parents had for me. But you, you're different, more capable, and you've got a husband like Ben. I couldn't risk you coming back to the Nicholas family. I was terrified they'd abandon me if they found their real daughter."

Tears clouding her vision, Penny gazed at Susan and said, "I'm sorry. I was just... really scared. Since I was five, the Nicholas family has been my whole world. The mere thought of losing them someday

filled me with such dread, it made me do all sorts of crazy things."

As she spoke, tears began to stream down Penny's face, and she covered it with her hands. "I've made so many mistakes, I don't deserve to be our parents' daughter or a part of the family. Saving you was just my way of trying to make things right. Losing a leg is a small price to pay for all the wrongs I've committed. You don't have to thank me. Even if it meant losing a leg or my life, it's the least I could do."

Chapter 310

Penny was crying so hard that she was trembling all over.

Seeing Penny like this, Susan hesitated for a moment before reaching out to give her a comforting pat

on the shoulder.

“Susan, can you ever forgive me?” Penny, holding Susan’s hand firmly, gazed at her, her eyes brimming with tears.

Susan squeezed her hand back, speaking softly, “What’s done is done. The things you did before didn’t really hurt me. But now, you’ve actually saved my life, Penny. I owe you big time. Compared to that, all those past issues seem pretty insignificant, don’t they?”

Touched, Penny’s eyes welled up, “Susan, it’s so nice of you.”

Susan smiled, gently wiping away Penny’s tears, “Alright, no more crying.”

Penny’s emotions started to steady, and she held Susan’s hand firmly, “Susan, even if you’re not upset with me, I’m still really scared.”

“What for?” Susan asked.

Penny, through her tears, said, “Eason doesn’t remember that month, so he doesn’t know what I’ve done. But if he finds out about those experiments he did with you and it all comes back to him, he’ll realize how I selfishly interfered. Eason... he’s definitely going to be mad at me.”

Susan reassured her, “It’s just me, Ben, and Eason who know about the test. As long as Ben and I keep quiet, he’ll be none the wiser. And even if his memory comes back, after seeing how hard you worked to save me, he couldn’t possibly hold it against you.”

“But...” Penny still looked anxious.

“There, there. I’m here,” Susan said softly, “Trust me, whether Eason regains his memory or not, your relationship with him won’t change.”

Penny’s eyes grew even redder as she looked at Susan.

-After a long moment, she nodded heavily.

Susan tenderly helped Penny wash her face and calm her emotions.

Only when Penny’s mood had completely stabilized did Susan call in Judith and Ben.

Judith and Ben, whether they sensed something or not, didn’t ask any further questions.

Inside the car, Susan glanced at Ben, “Aren’t you going to ask what Penny told me?”

“Alright, what did Penny tell you?” Ben asked amicably.

Susan looked at him, somewhat speechless, but still honestly relayed the matter.

Having said that, she turned to Ben, “Let’s keep our earlier run-in with Eason between us.”

Ben nodded slightly, his eyes narrowing slightly, “Sounds interesting.”

He looked rather thoughtful.



Susan replied with frustration, “Are you on about your conspiracy theories again? Do you really believe Penny would sacrifice her legs just to keep this quiet? It doesn’t add up. Covering up the test results was a minor thing. Even if Eason finds out, it would just cause a bit of resentment. The idea that she’d risk her legs for such a slim chance? That’s a stretch.”

Keep this in mind: car accidents could happen when you least expect them.

Even though Penny was limping, it was a close call during the accident. The entire car had flipped over onto her legs. It could have easily cost her a limb.

To conceal such a trivial matter with the price of her leg seemed implausible.

This wasn’t something a normal person could do.

Ben cleared his throat, “Look, I’m not one for conspiracy theories. Fine, fine, I’ll drop the subject with Eason.”

Subconsciously, Ben did harbor some conspiratorial thoughts.

But what Susan said wasn’t wrong either.

What Penny asked for, and what she was willing to give, were worlds apart.

Even a fool wouldn’t make such a deal.

Not to mention, Penny was a smart person.

Only then did Susan turn around, “Just keep it in mind.”

In the hospital room, Judith had also been persuaded to leave.

Finally, only Penny remained there.

The gentle smile on Penny's lips quickly faded, her expression shifting to one of indifference in a flash.

She stared blankly out the window.

Outside the window, a gentle breeze stirred, the scenery exceptionally beautiful.

Penny reached out, rubbing her feet that still lacked sensation, her eyes slightly unfocused.

Was it really worth it, trading a lifetime of disability for Susan's promise?

Perhaps others wouldn't think so.

But she felt it was very worthwhile..

She wanted to remain an image of perfection and flawlessness in Eason's eyes.

She couldn't stand the thought of Eason seeing her at her worst: selfish and indifferent.

Right now, Eason wasn't clinging to the memories of that month. Without external triggers, he might never remember it for his entire life.

But maintaining contact with Susan ran the risk of her eventually making a mistake. And if Eason began to probe, he'd surely uncover their past dealings and potentially regain his memory.

This was the last thing she wanted to happen.

Previously, fearing that Eason would despise her after discovering the truth, she was tormented day and night, hardly sleeping.

But things were going to be different.

For such a small price, she could finally sleep peacefully.

For one, as long as Susan and Ben kept quiet, Eason might never remember it for his whole life.

Secondly, even if Eason accidentally remembered, with her selfless act of saving Susan, he probably wouldn't blame her too much.

Thinking of Eason's face, Penny's lips curved into a soft, involuntary smile.

Penny thought, "Eason! If you keep smiling at me, keep being kind to me, I'd do just about anything for that."

Even without any direct issues, she was open

to playing nice with Susan.

After all, Susan was now in her debt. Knowing her the way she did, Penny was certain Susan would have her back from now on. And thanks to this, the Nicholas family would surely value her even more.

Even if Susan came back to the Nicholas family down the line, Penny was confident her own place in the family would remain secure.

If things could continue like this, she could be a good sister to Susan for life.

As night fell, Penny slept more soundly and sweetly than ever this evening.

Half a month later, Penny was discharged from the hospital.

Judith, Penny, and Eason were still living next door to the Landor residence.

Due to Susan letting down her guard, the two families interacted more frequently.

Once her defenses were down, Penny was a very likable person.

She was gentle and understanding.

As long as she wanted, she could always speak right to your heart, making you feel constantly comfortable.

As for Susan, she was also quite approachable. Once she really saw someone as a friend, the experience

of her genuine warmth and sincerity was something you just couldn't resist.

Moreover, Susan and Penny were only a year apart, so they naturally had a lot in common. After some time together, they indeed developed a real friendship.

Even someone as calm as Penny began to feel that having a friend like Susan was a very good thing.

Of course, the premise was that their interests wouldn't conflict.

Penny sincerely hoped that they would never have a day of conflict.