

Read Novel Julian's Stand-In Wife chapter 441-450

Julian's Stand-In Wife chapter 441

Julian felt his heart almost stop when Diana jumped out and shouted his name.

Still, he was confident that he hadn't revealed any flaws. Even his voice had been changed with the use of a voice changer, so it was impossible for Diana to hear the difference.

So, she was simply trying to fool him into thinking she knew.

"Who's Julian?" Julian replied, trying to seem innocent and asking in an even more ignorant tone. "Did you call someone else to come see me today, other than the lady beside you?"

Diana's confidence visibly drained away, and she looked a little confused. "I'm sorry, I called the wrong name by mistake."

Called the wrong name, huh?

Diana had obviously done it to try and surprise him, testing if he really was Julian.

The corner of his lips curled into a smirk, and he looked at the voice changer in his hand.

"It's fine. Go ahead and eat. We'll talk about the investment after the meal. I still have to collect rent after this."

The man behind the screen seemed to be a legitimate rent collector.

Had she been mistaken?

Diana sat back down in a daze and tried to look behind the screen again, but Nina pulled her back. "Let's just eat for now, okay? If you keep trying to look, he might be annoyed and pull back his investment."

"But..." Diana felt the man was just too familiar.

Even if she couldn't see his face or the outline of his back, and even though his voice was unrecognizable, she was almost confident that the man's tone and aura were Julian.

Though, Nina had a point.

Diana slowly reached over to pick up her utensils and dug into the dishes before her.

"This taste..."

The food also tasted a little like what the Fulcher family chef usually made.

But... The man behind the screen was only a landlord and didn't seem to know Julian.

However, the food was delicious, and Diana's guard lowered as she ate. During the meal, she tried to probe many times, but the man calmly brushed her off. It seemed he really had nothing to do with Julian.

Perhaps she really was mistaken.

Diana put down her utensils, wiped her mouth, and explained the investment conditions and benefits to him.

"Do you need some time to think about it?"

"No need," Mr. Whatever said in an arrogant tone. "Stop delaying me from collecting rent."

Today was the end of the month, which was the day to collect rent.

Diana was stumped for a moment, but she wasn't completely discouraged and persisted in asking, "Can I meet you face-to-face before signing the contract?"

"No," Mr. Whatever replied. "Just leave the signed contract on the table. I'll pick it up and send it to your studio after confirming everything is fine."

"...You're investing so much money. Don't you want to at least see me?"

Seriously, this woman!

Julian's eyes suddenly darkened, and a bitter feeling filled his heart.

“Do you want to meet men so badly?”

This harsh tone raised Diana’s suspicions again. It even gave her the urge to stand and push away the screen without hesitation, just to see the true face of this man.

But in the end, for the sake of the money, she bit her lip and held back her rash impulses.

Julian noticed the silence that had descended in the room, and he immediately understood that he had said something wrong again.

“Ahem. I just hate meeting people, especially beautiful women. My distant cousin mentioned that you’re gorgeous, so that’s all the more reason I can’t see you. If you want to see a man, I can have my assistant come out and see you instead.”

Julian’s Stand-In Wife chapter 442

It turned out the man wasn’t making the same taunting remarks that Julian had, but was actually sincerely asking her a question.

Because he didn’t want to meet women, he only asked a normal question: if she had wanted to meet a man.

His inability to properly express himself completely matched what her landlord had previously told her.

Diana relaxed and said, “No need. I’ve already signed it and placed it on the table. Just come out and get it once we leave.”

Julian nodded. “Alright.”

But when Diana reached the door and was about to leave, she turned around to look behind the screen without much thought. However, the man remained unmoving.

She gave Nina a wink and asked the latter to go out first while making a motion to close the door, pretending that they had both left the room. In fact, she was waiting in the room to see the true face of this man.

Diana wouldn’t be completely relieved until she confirmed it. Otherwise, she would always associate this man with Julian.

Unexpectedly, Mr. Whatever said, "Why aren't you leaving?"

Diana was stunned. 'You can see me from inside the screen?"

She couldn't see beyond the screen at all from where she was standing, and had thought that the screens were the same on both sides. It was why she had the bold thought of staying behind to see who the man really was.

"Of course."

Julian had these screens made specifically so that he could see outside from the inside, but not the other way around. He had no choice but to put in more effort to see more of Diana.

At the same time, he was also aware of Diana's suspicions and that she wasn't easy to fool.

Now it was all about who had the stronger willpower and who needed the money more. Thus, he continued, 'If you don't have the sincerity for this cooperation, Miss Winnington, then we should stop here."

From the way he spoke, it was likely he wasn't Julian.

Diana relaxed again and said, 'My friend went to the restroom, and I was waiting for her to return."

Julian didn't expose the flaw in her statement and simply said, "Okay."

After a minute, there was a knock on the door, and Diana opened it.

"Good bye, Mr. Whatever."

"Goodbye."

After they left the restaurant, Diana was still trying to sort out her thoughts.

"Do you think he's really not Julian, Nina?"

Nina was losing patience with how paranoid Diana was being. 'Diana, do you miss Julian that much? Why do you keep thinking about him after meeting that landlord?"

“But when you went into the room and saw the food on the table, you also suspected it was him, didn’t you?”

“But we’ve checked in secret, haven’t we? Those dishes were the restaurant’s signature dishes, which overlap with your favorite food,” Nina said with crossed arms. She forced Diana to turn and look her in the eyes and continued, “Be honest with me, Diana. Are you regretting your divorce from Julian and are thinking about him all the time?”

“No,” Diana replied exasperatedly. “I just feel that my failure to pull in investments has a lot to do with Julian.”

She briefly told Nina the reasons so many people had rejected her.

“More than one person said they wouldn’t end up with any good consequences if they helped me. Julian keeps asking me if I need money, and that he’d be willing to give me what I need. I keep feeling like he’s playing with me and is trying to get me to submit to him.”

“Why would he do that?” Nina asked. ‘Do you think he still cares about you and likes you?’

“Of course not,” Diana said, shaking her head. ‘I know very well the person he likes is Kayla.’

Nina nodded. “Then that’s all there is to it. Perhaps it’s just a string of coincidences. Don’t overthink it, okay?”

“But...” Diana said hesitantly. “What if Mr. Whatever is really Julian, or someone he hired? If I really use his money, what would that make me?”

Compared to this humiliation, Julian’s unpredictable heart scared Diana even more.

Julian’s Stand-In Wife chapter 443

When Nina saw the stunned and hesitant look on Diana’s face, she pressed further. “Do you have any proof that Mr. Whatever is related to Julian?”

“No,” Diana replied. “It’s just a gut feeling...”

“Feelings are just that, and it’s not facts,” Nina reassured Diana. “You’re in the early stages of your business, so you have to take good opportunities when

they come. And even if Julian had something to do with it, what could he force you to do? Make you submit? Remarry him?"

"That's impossible,' Diana said, looking at Nina in shock. "After all that's happened, can't you see I'm just a dispensable pet in his eyes that he plays with whenever he likes? I'm not his true love. Kayla is."

This was a matter that Diana had repeatedly reminded herself after the divorce.

"But I'm sick of this uncomfortable feeling he gives me whenever he plays with me," Diana added.

"Diana, you haven't been able to forget him nor stop loving him," Nina said with a sigh. "You just can't stop caring about him, and that's why you keep thinking he has something to do with things, whether they go smoothly or not."

Diana was taken aback by her friend's words. "Really?"

"Yes."

When she had spoken to Oliver back then, he had advised her to just let things with Julian take their natural course.

"I guess I'm still too uptight about it," Diana muttered after pondering about it for a moment.

"That's normal too. After all, you loved him for three whole years, and you even conceived two babies with him. Even though they're no longer..."

Regardless, no one can replace those experiences between the two of you, " Nina said.

In short, they've been through so much together that it's almost impossible to separate from him entirely.

"But I haven't forgiven him," Diana said, realizing this and feeling distressed. "As long as he doesn't resolve things with Kayla and Mr. Carter, I'll despise him every day. But... Why do I still think about him and involuntarily connect everything with him?"

“Letting things take their natural course isn’t enough. You need a new man, ” Nina said, not wanting Diana to dwell on the issues of the babies. “I think Oliver isn’t bad. Have you considered giving him a try?”

“I don’t have that kind of romantic interest in him,” Diana said with a sigh.

As they were walking, they made their way to the studio. Just as they entered the place, Diana’s staff handed her a document and said, “Ma’am, this is a contract we just received.”

Contract?

Diana accepted it and opened the envelope, and her eyes widened after she read it.

Nina leaned over anxiously.

“What? What is it?”

“Mr. Whatever really does whatever he wants, huh?” Diana wasn’t sure if she was happy or concerned. “He returned the contract so quickly.”

“Let’s see what his name is,” Nina said, scanning down the document for his name. Then, she snorted and laughed.

Diana followed suit after a while, and gasped, “How could he also write ‘ Whatever’ as his name? Is that really his name?!”

Nina questioned reasonably, “Is he playing with us?”

“I don’t think so,” Diana said in surprise as she handed Nina her phone, on which she had just received a text message. “The investment money has been transferred to me.”

This meant the man hadn’t only accepted all her requests, but had also helped her out with the fastest speed possible.

“That’s great!” Nina was happy for her best friend from the bottom of her heart. “Go! I’m sure you need to get to work!”

She bade goodbye to Diana and said, “I’m just glad everything worked out and that you’re okay now. I’ll head back to work too, then. When you’re done with what you need to do, let’s catch up again, okay?”

After a moment, Nina added, "Don't think too much about things, okay? Even if you want to, think about other men." "Yeah, sure." Diana knew who Nina was referring to. "I'll think about it."

Julian's Stand-In Wife chapter 444

Just as soon as Diana said those words, she received a call from Oliver.

Diana was startled by the coincidence, and she quickly answered the call, only for Oliver to start with, "Diana, who have you offended lately? Why didn't you tell me that your studio was in trouble?"

He hadn't spoken to her in such an anxious and urgent tone before. Diana was a little stunned, so it took her a few moments to gather herself before asking, "Where did you hear that from?"

After she finished speaking, the call was cut. She was confused, then looked up to see Oliver rushing into the studio, which shocked her even more.

"Why are you here?"

"I came to check on you," Oliver replied.

He was relieved to see that she was safe and sound.

"I heard recently that there was a deliberate attempt to sabotage a fashion design studio. I didn't pay much attention to it at first, but after investigating, I found out it was your studio."

"That's true," Diana said, handing him a paper and pouring a glass of water for him. She invited him to have a seat before explaining slowly, "Marvin Trotter tried to set me up."

After she finished her version of the events leading up to the current, Oliver shook his head.

"It's not about that."

The version Oliver had heard had nothing to do with Marvin. Seeing the confusion on Diana's face, Oliver hesitated but eventually said, "It's Julian."

Diana's heart skipped a beat when she heard the name, and she tensed even as a fog clouded her mind.

“Why do you say that?”

“Recently, those in the investment circle have been saying that they weren’t allowed to invest in B Studio as Julian didn’t allow them to,” Oliver said. “It so happened at the time when your studio needed additional funding.”

Once he finished speaking, Oliver couldn’t help but give Diana a hurt look.

“You should’ve told me when something so big happened. Fanny and I would’ve been willing to inject more capital in.”

Plus, they weren’t limited or controlled by Julian.

They would only do anything they were willing to do.

“I already have an investor,” Diana said, showing the contract she had just signed to Oliver. “It’s a distant relative of my landlord who’s not part of the investment circle you’re in, and has nothing to do with the design industry. He’s just a landlord with a lot of money, so...perhaps he might have slipped under Julian’s radar.”

“Hmm...” Oliver hummed as he studied the contract. “But this contract...”

There wasn’t much benefit to the landlord who had signed this contract. All terms prioritized Fanny’s interest as the first investor.

“He only wants some dividends. He has too much money on hand and doesn’t know what to do with it,” Diana explained. “Maybe I got lucky, since it isn’t easy for a person to avoid Julian’s control.”

But she couldn’t figure out why Julian had given her Marvin’s information, acted like a good guy, then turned around and tried to make things difficult for her behind her back.

Was he trying to force her to accept his money and investment because of how similar her face was to Kayla’s?

Even after they had divorced, was he still trying to control everything she did?

That was simply unreasonable!

Oliver saw that her mind was somewhere else, so he said, “Diana, don’t overthink this. If you want to talk to Julian, I can go with you.”

“No, there’s no need for that,” Diana replied. “I’ll just try not to get involved with him as much as possible.”

Anyway, the matter was settled.

There was no point going after Julian to ask more questions now.

But it did add another layer of disgust in her heart for him. Thinking about it, there was only one reason for him to do those things.

“He doesn’t want me to live well.”

“Why?”

Diana seemed stumped by the question. She was silent for a moment before laughing mockingly, “Why else? It can only be because of Kayla.”

That was the deepest bond between Diana and Julian.

Julian’s Stand-In Wife chapter 445

Nina was right. Diana couldn’t let nature run its course regarding this matter, because Kayla hadn’t gotten what she deserved.

And Julian...was still interfering with Diana’s life as he pleased.

This wasn’t the ending Diana wanted.

Thinking about it, Diana suddenly jumped to her feet and offered to wipe the sweat off Oliver’s face.

He looked at how close her face was to his, and his heart skipped a beat.

Instinctively, his eyes widened and he looked at her strangely, as if asking why she was suddenly doing this with the look on his face.

“Sorry,” Diana said, backing away slightly as she whispered, “I know it’s despicable of me to use you like this, but now, I have no choice because Julian might have someone nearby to monitor me. I want to remind him that I’m not Kayla. I’m Diana, his ex-wife, and I hope he can stop meddling in my affairs.”

Oliver finally reacted and said, “He’s spying on you?”

“I guess so,” Diana said with a weak laugh. “He seemed to know everything I do anyway, even which investors I’ve met for talks, where and who I’ve met, and what I was wearing.”

“Do you need me to step in?” Oliver asked.

Although he had a bad falling out with his family over his decision to become a doctor at the city hospital, he was still influential enough.

He didn’t want Diana to feel helpless again when faced with Julian’s machinations.

However, he also hesitated to interfere for fear of making her angry.

“No need,” Diana refused, as expected.

Oliver’s face stiffened instantly.

Even though he had gotten used to the deliberate wall and distance she put between them, his heart still throbbed when he heard the words from her lips.

He wondered when he would become the only one she wanted to rely on.

Diana’s mind was elsewhere at the moment, so she didn’t notice Oliver’s expression. She threw the soiled tissues into the trash can and said, “You don’t have to rush over like that next time. If there’s anything, you can always tell me over the phone.”

Oliver seemed to sense the distance her words made. His insides grew even colder as he said numbly, “I’ll take note of that next time...”

Diana looked down and glanced at the wound on his hand. Oliver was a good doctor, obviously, as the wound had been well treated. There were hardly any marks on it now.

She started slowly, “As for the matter I was considering last time...”

“Diana, wait a little longer,” Oliver said, looking up at her gravely. “Wait a few more days before telling me the answer. It’s not urgent.”

After that, he laughed and added, “If your answer doesn’t change, I’ll never let you say it out loud.”

The guilt in Diana's heart grew heavier when she saw him like this.

According to Nina, since Diana couldn't let things run its natural course, she needed a new man to get over Julian.

But she couldn't bring an innocent person into the mix when she hadn't dealt with the mess and the feelings from her previous relationship. Some things simply needed to be said.

"Oliver..."

"Okay, that's enough," Oliver said, standing up suddenly as if he was trying to avoid a predator with how fast he walked out of the place. "It's good as long as this problem doesn't affect you. Seeing how you handled it so well, I believe Fanny will be pleased as your first investor, and I didn't make a mistake. As for me helping you find the boy who you saved when you were a child, I'm looking into it. I already have a few leads, but confirming his identity will take some time. Just wait a little longer, and I'll contact you once I know."

Oliver didn't give Diana a chance to respond and simply repeated, "I'll contact you soon."

It seemed that if Diana didn't contact him, Oliver would take even more initiative to get in contact with her.

Diana sensed his intentions and wanted to say something about it, but Oliver childishly covered his ears, clearly not wanting to hear her words.

Diana was exasperated, so she could only poke her head out the door and call out, "Be careful on your way back!"

Julian's Stand-In Wife chapter 446

But since Oliver was covering his ears, he probably didn't hear Diana's words.

Diana shook her head helplessly, then rearranged things in the studio before returning to the hospital.

She had been living in the hospital for almost a month now, and she checked the date Madam Fulcher had set for her to stay. Noting that it was ending soon, she started to think about where she should go after it expired. Besides

renting a place, there really wasn't anywhere else she could go at the moment.

The next day, she received a call from Kate.

"Come home for a bit," Kate said, and there was even a hint of warmth in her voice. "I have something for you."

Kate had something for Diana? Plus, she had even taken the initiative to contact Diana?

From the time Diana had sent Kate flowers and after what Kayla had sent Diana after that, Diana never thought that Kate would contact her again, let alone have any real progress in their mother-daughter relationship.

Diana couldn't lie and said the call made her unhappy.

"Is Kayla not here?"

It was a holiday today, so Diana wondered if she would bump into Kayla in the Winnington residence. Yet, not only did she not see Kayla, but James or Lucy weren't there either. She couldn't help but look around and wonder where they all were.

Seeing how much she was affected by Kayla's absence, Kate looked at her calmly and replied, "Kayla moved into the apartment Julian bought for her two days ago, and hasn't come home since."

Two days ago...

That was when Diana had seen them smiling at each other after leaving the tea house.

So, it was the day Kayla moved into the apartment. It was no wonder she looked so happy.

Diana's searching gaze froze, and she felt a sharp prick in her heart. Staring blankly at nothing, she replied numbly, "I see."

Kate went out for a while and came back to see Diana's expression. There was a fleeting trace of heartache in her eyes, but it disappeared quickly enough. She brought the tray she was carrying and placed it on the table,

then spoke to Diana seriously, "It's only a matter of time before Kayla and Julian get married. As her sister, don't be upset at them, okay?"

Diana was silent for a moment. She was about to speak when Kate interrupted her, 'Come over here.'

Kate had a kind smile on her face, an expression that Diana rarely saw on the older woman that was directed to her. It was very...motherly.

Diana's heart warmed slightly, and she couldn't help but move closer to Kate.

"Look," Kate said, opening the lid on the tray.

Diana looked down and found...

"A bowl of soba?"

The noodles were well-proportioned. There were two green leaves floating on the top, a poached egg in the middle, and two shrimps on the side.

It was a dish that had been meticulously prepared.

"Yes," Kate said. "I made it myself."

With that, she handed the chopsticks to Diana and said, "Try it."

But as soon as she said that, she seemed to regret her words and had the servant pack it up in a container instead.

"Take it home to eat," she said.

The last time Diana had been over for dinner, Kayla had been deeply unhappy. Kate remembered Kayla tearfully begging her to never invite Diana for dinner ever again.

Still, today was...

"Since it's your birthday, I wanted to make a bowl of soba for you. It represents longevity. That's why I invited you here."

Diana was stunned, and belatedly realized that it was her birthday today. She had been so busy lately that she had completely forgotten about it.

Never did she imagine that Kate, of all people, would be the first person to bring it up.

Julian's Stand-In Wife chapter 447

Warmth gradually surrounded Diana, but as soon as she looked down, she saw that the noodles had already been packed away in a plastic box. The joy in her dissipated.

The smile on her lips vanished slowly, and even the warmth in her heart chilled.

"If you're celebrating my birthday and even asked me to come here, why would you pack it away?" Diana asked. "Is it because you don't want me to stay for dinner?"

There wasn't even room for her to eat a bowl of noodles in this family.

Kate grew awkward at her words. "Diana..."

She hesitated, but in the end, she admitted truthfully, "The last time you stayed for dinner, Kayla found out about it and got upset. I don't want this kind of trouble to happen again. You're her older sister, so you should let her have her way a little, okay?"

Older sister?

Hah.

"I don't have a younger sister like that," Diana said firmly. 'Much less having to give in to her whims.'

Kate grew angry with her words.

"You're so ignorant, Diana! Do you know how much strength Kayla gave me after your disappearance? If not for her, I would have..." Kate trailed off, hiding her face behind her hands as she sobbed. "I wouldn't be alive now!"

"So because I was lost, Kayla became your life?! I'm the victim here! Why should I have to compromise when she stole so many things from me?!"

“What do you mean, stole?” Kate was furious after hearing Diana’s accusation. “It’s your own fault for being unlucky! You’re the one who got lost, and now you’re blaming Kayla?!”

Kate now regretted inviting Diana to her home over and making the latter the bowl of soba.

“I shouldn’t have gotten close to you! Even if you gave me those flowers and your father that plaque, it still doesn’t change the fact that you grew up in the countryside with no proper upbringing!”

It’s your own fault for being unlucky.

You’re the one who got lost.

Grew up in the countryside.

With no proper upbringing.

Were these really words a mother would say to their child?!

Diana laughed, then said coldly, ‘ Kate.’

She didn’t even want to call this woman before her ‘Mom’ anymore, and simply called the woman by name.

“Did you ever consider how I, the daughter of the Winnington family, could get lost in plain sight? Did it ever occur to you why Kayla looked so much like James, despite her only being an adopted daughter?!”

The last time she left the Winnington family, she had been filled with frustration and anger.

Yet never once did Diana entertain the thought of directing those feelings toward Kate, let alone make the latter endure the pain of being betrayed by her husband.

Yet, this woman...

Kate kept pushing Diana to her limits, angering her repeatedly, and even insulting her.

“Where’s Lucy?” Diana suddenly asked, and Kate didn’t respond. Diana looked around and continued, “She used to come out as soon as I arrived. Why haven’t I seen her today? Also, where’s James? It’s his day off, but he isn’t at home?”

Her words were subtle, but the meaning behind them were crystal clear.

Panic and shock flashed in Kate’s eyes, but she hurriedly concealed it.

“I’m your mother, but I can’t even admonish you with a few words? I only said one thing, yet you seem to have hundreds of words waiting to refute me. And until now, we still haven’t acknowledged you as a member of our family. Your father gave you a chance back then, but you refused. You have no right to inquire about James or our servants* whereabouts!”

Diana was almost amused by the state Kate was in.

However, she simply gave Kate a disappointed look and said, “Okay. I don’t have that right.”

She had already said what she wanted to, but Kate didn’t seem to want to think about it. There was nothing Diana could do about it.

“Likewise, you don’t have the right to teach me how to be an older sister because I have no proper upbringing. I’m just an unruly girl from the countryside. My parents died a long time ago, so I’ll thank you to not contact me ever again, Mrs. Winnington.”

Diana was finally clear on this matter.

Even if she bluntly stated the fact that James had deliberately lost her, even if she revealed his adulterous affair with Lucky and Kayla’s illegitimate birth, Kate would still find a way to excuse them all.

After all, Kate would unfailingly choose to always stand the opposite of where Diana was.

She would always be on James’s side!

Julian’s Stand-In Wife chapter 448

Before Kate was a mother, she would always be first and foremost James’s wife.

In that case, why should Diana do something that could ruin Kate and Kayla's relationship? She had to admit that she had already lost to Kayla in terms of love; and now, she had also lost to the latter in terms of familial ties.

Kate had indeed hurt her today because the truth was within reach, but Diana could see the clear resistance

Kate exerted.

Perhaps Kate wasn't a fool. Perhaps it was Diana who was one who was a fool in the entire world.

She at first assumed that Kate had been kept in the dark all these years; but in reality, it seemed Kate knew everything all along.

"Since you don't want to accept it or face the music, I won't force you," Diana said, looking straight in her eyes. "I hope you take care of yourself."

With that said, Diana turned to leave.

Kate stepped forward and handed the packed bowl of soba without looking into Diana's eyes throughout the exchange. She said stiffly, "I already made it, and food shouldn't be wasted. Take it with you."

Thus, the joy of Diana's birthday celebration was thoroughly gone.

Diana accepted the packed soba, not bothered to argue with Kate again.

"Fine."

Walking to the door, Diana glanced back again and said, "Thank you for remembering my birthday."

"You're welcome," Kate replied. "Your birthday is also the day of my suffering. When you celebrate your birthday in the future, I hope you consider the hardships of being a mother a little more."

Diana was speechless. In reality, she was aware that every member of the Winnington family was ridiculous and unreasonable. And yet, Diana would always hold onto that elusive, damned blood relationship between them, and be unable to help but empathize with them and feel heartbroken about it all.

But tonight, she didn't turn back.

She was afraid that if she did, she wouldn't be able to stop the tears of anguish from falling.

After leaving the Winnington residence, Diana looked at the soba in her hand. She thought of everything that had happened in the Winnington residence, and felt even more bitter.

Yet, the soba was the first she had ever gotten of her mother's handiwork.

In the end, she didn't have the heart to throw it away.

Thinking about it, surprisingly, she didn't know where she should go today. After thinking for so long, she first went to the graveyard where the grave of her babies was. From there, she went to the old mansion.

Madam Fulcher would be there.

Diana wanted to spend this meaningful day with the older woman.

As soon as Diana arrived at the old mansion, she was met with a great shock.

The mansion's walls had been hand painted with careful brushstrokes. They added an elegant taste of landscape painting to the already beautiful, traditional architecture of the mansion, especially with how it usually stood tall and proud in the sun.

However, the usually elegant and heavy gate now had a huge wooden sign hanging on it.

It read, "Dogs like Julian Fulcher are not allowed inside!"

Diana was speechless.

Who in the Fulcher family would dare write such a thing?!

Was it...

Madam Fulcher?!

Diana recalled the last time Madam Fulcher had promised her that Julian wouldn't be allowed to come to the mansion as long as Diana was here, and her heart skipped a beat. She had a feeling that Madam Fulcher might have escalated this restriction.

It felt good to be spoiled and pampered, but...

Treating her own grandson this way must be giving Madam Fulcher discomfort.

Diana couldn't simply accept the kindness of Madam Fulcher and not do anything in return for the latter.

Julian's Stand-In Wife chapter 449

After thinking about it for a while, Diana called the servants to remove the wooden sign. However, Fulcher stopped her.

"No need to bring it down!"

As soon as the older woman saw Diana, her eyes instantly lit up.

"Diana, come here. Come to me, alright?"

Diana, however, refused to move and pointed to the sign. "Isn't this a little inappropriate?"

In this world, comparing Julian to a dog was something only his grandmother would dare to do.

She wondered how Julian would feel if he saw it.

But Madam Fulcher simply smiled mysteriously. "That's fine. It's good, in fact."

Then she added, "Think about it. If Julian saw this wooden sign, would he still come in?"

Madam

Diana replied, "He won't be embarrassed enough not to enter, but he'd probably be angry enough not to..."

After all, he was a proud and dignified man. And yet, his grandmother now hated him.

The thought of his furrowed brows made Diana feel inexplicably happy.

“Anyway, the results will be the same. He won’t come in.” Madam Fulcher’s smiling eyes showed that though she was an old lady, she still had the charming radiance of a young girl.

In that instant, for some reason, Diana recalled Mr. Crawford.

The woman he liked must be as interesting and beautiful as Madam Fulcher, who could leave such a deep impression and make someone remember her for many years.

“So,” Madam Fulcher said after noticing that Diana was distracted. “Just relax and stay with me, okay? I keep my promises, after all. As long as you’re here, and you say you don’t want to see him, I’ll never give you a chance to meet you!”

“Can you really bear to do that?” Diana asked.

“Of course!” Madam Fulcher laughed and pulled Diana towards the yard, refusing to let her go back to the sign.

After a few steps, Madam Fulcher reached out to take the package from Diana’s hand.

“What’s this? It feels heavy.”

“It’s nothing.” Diana shrugged. “It’s just a bowl of noodles.”

“Where did you pack it?” Madam Fulcher asked as she held up the bowl before her face and turned it around to study it. “There’s no brand or store name on it, either. Which store is it from? Do you like it a lot?”

Madam Fulcher also brought it up to her nose to sniff.

“Kate made it,” Diana confessed, not wanting to lie to Madam Fulcher. “Today...is my birthday. She called me to the Winnington residence and made me a bowl of soba. But then she told me that given Kayla’s bad mood the last time I was there for dinner, she couldn’t let me stay and eat. So she packed it in a box and told me to eat it outside.”

It was a brief explanation, but it was enough to break Madam Fulcher’s heart.

She looked at Diana in a distressed manner. Finally, she understood why Julian had called her so urgently earlier, asking her to prepare for Diana’s

birthday this year. Julian had prepared the food early on, flying in fresh ingredients from all over the world. Even the drinks had been made by top Michelin restaurants in Richburgh. All the food that had been prepared was everything that Diana loved.

“Diana..” Madam Fulcher pulled Diana to sit in the dining room. “Have a seat first.”

After saying that, Madam Fulcher opened the soba container. The noodles were now all stuck together.

She picked up a strand of noodles with her chopsticks and said, “It’s really soba, and it was made with great care.”

In truth, the soba noodles had been soaked in the package for so long that it looked extremely unappetizing.

However, Madam Fulcher still valued it.

Madam Fulcher had seen.

Diana knew Madam Fulcher was trying to comfort her, as the latter didn’t throw the soba Kate had made.

through Dilonging for her mother and thus, told her and explicitly and implicitly said that Kate had put in a lot of effort the soba for her; all to ease the sadness in her heart.

Diana knew very well how kind Madam Fulcher was to her.

Julian’s Stand-In Wife chapter 450

“But you can’t eat this anymore,” Madam Fulcher said with a sly wink. “Besides, I have a gift for you.”

Diana instinctively thought it was some jewelry or, god forbid, more company shares; she was terrified and almost refused on the spot. But before she could say anything, she heard familiar voices ring out.

“Happy birthday, Diana!”

“Diana, happy birthday!”

“Diana! Happy birthday!”

“Happy birthday!”

Diana turned to find Vans, Nina, Oliver and...a recording of Fanny’s voice?!

She was shocked. “W–Why are you guys here?”

“Madam Fulcher invited us!” Nina said with a smile as she sat down next to Diana. She studied the grand decor of the old mansion and the antiques on display everywhere as she lamented to Diana, “What? Did you think I’d forget your birthday?”

“Yes?” Diana’s eyes were red. “You brat! You didn’t even say a word to me!”

“If I told you about it, it wouldn’t be a surprise!” Nina laughed gleefully and pulled out her camera, snapping a picture of Diana before the latter could react.

“Go ahead and cry your heart out, okay? I’m going to get these photos done and show them to Aster and Star!”

!!

Diana grinned immediately. “No, don’t do that! Take more pictures of me smiling!”

She hoped her babies would be happy once they saw it. She didn’t want them to see her crying face while they were on the other side.

“I was always in a bad mood when I was pregnant with them,” Diana said. She couldn’t help but blame herself a little when she thought about it.

Seeing how her mood was about to plummet again, Vans and Olive spoke up. “Diana, all of us came here with Nina. Why are you only paying attention to her?”

It was only then that Diana remembered she hadn’t greeted the rest.

“Come sit with me!”

Diana asked the servants to add two chairs beside her. Once they were all seated, Diana told them, “Thanks for coming today.”

“Madam Fulcher invited us, after all.”

Vans had met Madam Fulcher a couple of times, so he was more relaxed than Oliver in here. Thus, he took the initiative to say, “She said it was your birthday today, so it’d be good to have a lively celebration. Oliver and I were working in the same unit today, and since it wasn’t busy, we came together.”

“This is Fanny’s present to you,” Oliver said as he pushed a small box to Diana. “She couldn’t come, but she sent her gift and blessings.”

Even Fanny had given her a gift!

This was the first time Diana had received so many blessings and wishes from her friends, so she eagerly accepted the gift.

Once she opened the box, a small note was lying inside.

It wasn’t jewelry or anything similar, which was very in line with Fanny’s style.

Diana smiled and opened the note; there was only one sentence on it, in cursive font celebrities usually used for signing autographs. “Keep going!”

Fanny must’ve found out about the situation with the studio and was encouraging her. To Diana, these simple words were worth more than gold. They gave her a sense of understanding, support, and valuable friendship.

Diana smiled and said to Oliver, “Please thank her for me.”

Seeing how happy Diana looked, Oliver asked curiously, “What did she give you? I want to see it. She didn’t let me read it.”

“It’s a note,” Diana said with a smile. “A very meaningful note.”

She could feel Fanny’s encouragement from the words.

Oliver shrugged. “I didn’t realize you guys had secrets.”

Diana showed a rare playful side and winked at him, then said, “Maybe we’ll have more secrets in the future!”

Oliver didn’t take Diana’s words seriously, thinking she was only joking. Much later, when he looked back on today, he realized that everything had been set

in motion early on, and that he had missed so much because he was careless...