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Julian's Stand-In Wife chapter 451

The lights in the dining hall dimmed soon enough, giving the room an even more antique feeling than usual.

Diana recalled Julian mentioning that his grandparents had personally designed this place. Just like how Julian's villa was filled with traces of their time together, this place was also filled with traces of his grandparents.

However, his grandmother was the only one who remained now in this old mansion.

Perhaps no matter how great a relationship was, it could never withstand the passage of time. They would either part with death, or time would change how they felt.

No... Julian didn't have a change of heart. He had simply been too focused on one thing.

Diana rubbed her head in exasperation when she realized her thoughts had once again turned to him.

Fortunately, Madam Fulcher soon appeared in her line of sight again. The older woman slowly approached her, pushing a large cake toward Diana.

"Look!"

The cake was pink and had three layers. A princess figure was sitting in the middle, and the words 'Happy Birthday' were written on the cake.

It was a cake Diana and Julian often had back in the villa, so it wasn't surprising that Madam Fulcher had ordered the same one today as she had sometimes come over when they had it.

Anyway, it was impossible for Julian to have ordered it. Their relationship could be described as distant and even under control, but it was definitely not affectionate or loving.

In fact, the idea that those words would apply to their relationship was absurd.

Diana had never celebrated her birthdays before she turned eighteen. However, Julian had been with her every birthday she had after she was eighteen; this was the first time he was absent.

She felt an indescribable sense of loss, but she raised her head and tried not to let anyone see the emotions in her eyes.

Madam Fulcher observed everything, but remained silent. She simply pulled out a birthday hat, placed it on Diana's head, and continued chatting merrily with everyone.

After a while, she asked Diana, "Shall we cut the cake?"

If Diana didn't eat the cold soba soon, it would turn into a lump of dough.

"Okay!"

Diana took the knife from Madam Fulcher and cut one-third of the cake to share with everyone.

After a while, she felt like the missing portion of the cake was more than what she had cut.

But there were only a few people here, and no one had finished their portions or gone to get a second helping. Since it wasn't important, she brushed the thought aside.

"Why don't you eat your soba? I'll take a picture for you," Nina suggested.

Diana considered this. She put down her cake and picked up her fork to eat the soba.

Though the soba noodles used to be many strands, it now sat in the bowl as one big fat lump; it had been soaking in the sauce for too long, and had expanded several times in size as a result.

Despite its now unappetizing appearance, Diana still remembered that it was something her mother had personally made for her.

However...

The taste wasn't at all great.

In fact, it was too salty.

Diana took one bite and nearly spat it out. She laughed at how stupid she was, and said self-deprecatingly, "I'm so silly, bringing noodles like this on a long journey here."

Madam Fulcher noted Diana's changed expression and asked, "Was it too salty?"

"Yeah," Diana replied with a nod.

As always, Nina was quick to speak her mind. "Rather than the taste of a mother's love, it's the taste of salt..."

"...You're right," Diana agreed.

Perhaps because of the lack of love in her life, Diana had always been easily amused by jokes like that. She even added, "If I ever miss Kate in the future, I'll just eat some salt to remember her."

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After she said that, Diana stuffed a mouthful of sweet cake in her mouth before finally calming down.

But in her haste to wash down the salty taste with the cake, the icing ended up smeared across her nose. Its pink color gave her the image of a mischievous cat that had been caught stealing from the kitchen.

Despite that, she excluded an overwhelming sense of vulnerability.

Oliver reached for a tissue to help Diana wipe off the icing, but Madam Fulcher intercepted him and handed Diana a damp cloth instead.

Oliver's expression fell for a brief moment, but he quickly stepped back to give Madam Fulcher space as he clenched the tissue in his hand.

Madam Fulcher only had eyes for Diana, and she chuckled at the icing on the latter's face.

"You're still like a child. You even got cake on your face."

Diana grinned playfully. She accepted the cloth, wiped the frosting off her face, and replied cheekily, "The cake you got me was just too good. Grandma."

Diana had no idea why she had bothered going to the Winnington family residence in the first place. Even if it was to get revenge on Kayla, there was no reason for her to foster a good relationship with that family.

After all, she would only end up hurting herself.

As she savored the sweetness of cake melting on her tongue, she recalled the ridiculously salty taste of soba in her mouth and shuddered. It was clear that whoever made them had no culinary talent.

Perhaps Kate was trying to send Diana a message through those noodles, warning her not to mess with Kayla. However, she was Kate's birth daughter, not Kayla. The fact that Kate had done so despite this made Diana feel sad and insignificant.

"Don't dwell on it," Madam Fulcher said suddenly, pulling Diana out of her musings as she urged Diana to sit down and eat. "Those who don't cook often have trouble getting the seasoning right. Today's your birthday, so you're the boss! If you're upset about the noodles. I'll take you to the Winningtons and complain to Kate. With me there, I'm sure James will beg Kate to make a delicious bowl of noodles for you!"

Diana laughed at Madam Fulcher's teasing. "You're amazing, Grandma."

"Of course!" Madam Fulcher smiled at Diana's reaction, relieved. "Remember, Diana. Never bottle up your sadness and frustration. If you run into any trouble, don't hesitate to voice them out, whether it's to Kate or James! If this soba makes you uncomfortable, just confront them or ignore them as you please! They're still your parents, after all, even if they don't want to admit it. Their blood runs in your veins. If they can treat you as they please, then you can do the same! Don't keep your loneliness or sadness to yourself. We're all in this together." Madam Fulcher's eyes roamed around the room. Her gaze settled briefly on the door, but she quickly shook her head and continued solemnly, "Otherwise, all of us will be sad too."

Everyone here truly felt happiness and joy because of Diana's existence, and they were here today to celebrate her birthday with genuine sincerity.

The unhappiness Kate gave Diana dissipated, and she nodded determinedly at Madam Fulcher.

“I know what I should do now.”

It was more important to care about the people who cherish her.

As for Kate, James, or even Kayla... Diana didn't need to bottle up her dissatisfaction toward them, nor did she need to back down.

She didn't need to retreat because of some measly soba, or because she failed to drive a wedge between Kate and Kayla. After all, she hadn't wavered when Kayla conspired with Mr. Carter to drug her before.

Diana should just do what she wanted with Madam Fulcher and her friends' support!

The heavy rock in her heart vanished silently. At that moment, Nina held her hand and whispered gently, “Happy birthday, Diana.”

Diana smiled and gripped Nina's hand tightly. The confidence in her face was now stronger than ever.

“Thank you, Nina.”

“The food's really good,” Vans said as he placed his hand back on the table, which he previously hid under the table. He made exaggerated motions while eating and exclaimed, “The meat's tender, and the vegetables are fresh!”

He deliberately made loud sounds as he ate, and looked at Diana. “Come on, have some too!”

Then, he called out to Madam Fulcher. “Go ahead and eat too, Madam Fulcher. What are you waiting for?”

The atmosphere became lively again, but Oliver didn't pick up his utensils and start eating. Instead, he pulled a photo from his pocket and placed it before Madam Fulcher. “Actually, I came here today to ask for your help in identifying someone.”

The photo was of a chubby little boy. Diana felt that he looked somewhat familiar, but she couldn't remember who he was for a moment.

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Oliver looked at Diana and explained, "This is my birthday gift to you.'

Diana was confused at first, but then she quickly understood what he meant. No wonder the boy in the photo looked familiar to her! It was the one she had saved when she was a child.

Impressed with Oliver's efficiency, she exclaimed with wide eyes, "I didn't expect you actually to look into the incident!"

"Of course I would.'

Oliver wanted to help her identify the boy she had saved so he would have an excuse to see her a few more times. "Now that we have a photo, we just need an adult who knew the children in Richburgh well to identify the boy."

Madam Fulcher was listening, but she didn't understand their conversation.

"What are you two talking about? What boy?"

Oliver pushed the photo further toward her. "This boy. As an elder who's familiar with majority of the noble families in Richburgh, can you tell us who he is?"

Madam Fulcher was chewing on some food at this moment, and she choked a little when she saw the photo.

"That's..."

Oliver asked anxiously, "Who is it?"

Madam Fulcher glanced at Diana, hesitation flashing her eyes. She swallowed the food and wiped her mouth before saying, 'I don't know.'

Oliver was disappointed. "Even you don't know?"

He had exerted a lot of effort to get his hands on this photo, and he wanted to let Madam Fulcher have a look as she should have seen most of the noble families' children in the past. Unexpectedly, even she knew nothing about it.

"Yes," Madam Fulcher said, her eyes flickering slightly. "I've never really seen this boy before. This photo must be quite old."

It seemed Madam Fulcher truly didn't know who the boy was.

Oliver couldn't stop the frustration that hit him, and Diana even more so. Although she hadn't really expected anything before, she now had a strange feeling about it.

She felt as if she had known the boy in the photo for a long time, and this inexplicable familiarity made her eager to discover the boy's true identity.

Evidently, Oliver noted the disappointment on her face and said, "It's okay. I'll continue looking into it."

Even if he had to scour the entirety of Richburgh, he would continue investigating this as long as Diana was interested in it.

Unexpectedly, Madam Fulcher suddenly called him back just as everyone was leaving Diana's birthday party. She led him to the backyard, avoiding everyone else along the way, and took him on a stroll.

"What do you plan to do with that photo?" Madam Fulcher asked sharply. All prior kindness from the celebration just now had disappeared.

Oliver immediately became alert. He could already guess why she reacted this way.

"Then, the boy in the photo..."

Madam Fulcher nodded. "Yes, it's Julian."

Lightning seemed to have struck Julian's body whole.

Oliver never imagined that the boy would turn out to be Julian.

The person Diana saved when she was a child turned out to be Julian, and Oliver had been the one to discover this?!

For a moment, Oliver was stuck between wanting to cry and laughing at the irony of the situation. He clutched the photo tightly, feeling as if someone had knocked him in the head, leaving him somewhat disorientated.

Seeing the sorrow and loneliness in his eyes, Madam Fulcher knew that Oliver had no bad intentions and was a clever man.

With that thought in mind, she quickly explained, “I didn’t mention it just now because Diana was there. She’s been feeling conflicted about Julian recently, and I was afraid that mentioning his name on her birthday would upset her...”

“I understand.”

When it came to considering Diana’s feelings, Oliver and Madam Fulcher were on the same wavelength.

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As it turned out, the little boy Diana rescued when she was a child was Julian. It was a fact Oliver found hard to accept.

“I saw Julian when I was younger, and he wasn’t as chubby as he was in this picture. His face doesn’t look quite the same, either. Are you sure this is Julian?”

Right after he asked this question, Oliver felt that he was a clown.

Julian was Madam Fulcher’s biological grandson. Obviously, it was impossible for the older woman to make a mistake.

“Yes. Back then, the activity for all the heirs to gain experience was arranged under my husband’s orders. I remember that you participated in it as well. My husband praised you, saying that you were a talented child who’s just as good as Julian.’

Here, Madam Fulcher gave Oliver an admiring look.

“Back then, my husband was a little muddle-headed. He was afraid his health wouldn’t allow him to support the family for long. He seemed to think that others would be intimidated by Julian’s identity and wouldn’t display their full abilities while competing with Julian. So, he pulled some strings and had Julian’s appearance changed in a short period of time.”

It was also to increase the difficulty in Julian’s training.

Not only did her husband make Julian fat, but the man also modified Julian’s originally handsome face. He feared the children from other prestigious families would recognize the boy and defer to him.

“I see...” Oliver finally understood. “Do you remember Julian having a high fever back then?”

“Of course,” Madam Fulcher said. She got angry as soon as the matter was mentioned. “His grandfather tortured him so much, to the point that a high fever was deemed insignificant!”

Madam Fulcher had been affectionate with her husband her whole life, but she would never let go of her grudge toward him when it came to Julian.

“Back then, Julian suffered a lot. Fortunately, someone saved him,” Madam Fulcher said with a sigh. It was obvious she refused to talk about it anymore. “It’s getting late, and the weather forecast said it’s going to rain tonight. You should leave now, my dear.”

Whenever she thought of Kayla saving Julian, her heart would ache.

If it weren’t for that heavy debt of gratitude, that accursed girl wouldn’t have the chance to cause such a ruckus in the Fulcher family and meddle in Julian’s marriage!

During their conversation, the sky had already turned gloomy. Fall was a season filled with heavy rain and thunderstorms, after all.

Oliver knew it was inconvenient for him to stay for too long, but he still pressed on, “Do you know who saved Julian in the past?”

“I do,” Madam Fulcher said. “But nobody wants to bring that up again.”

Was that why Madam Fulcher was so good to Diana?

But judging from Madam Fulcher’s tone, it sounded like she didn’t want to talk about it anymore.

Oliver didn’t press further and left the old mansion with mixed feelings. He got into his car; instead of driving away in a rush, he sat in the driver’s seat and lit a cigarette. The dim glow illuminated his features, and faint traces of sadness could be seen on them.

He wasn’t sure what Diana would think once she found out. Her connection with Julian went far beyond their marriage. Was it fate that Oliver had uncovered the facts of their bygone past?

Raindrops fell quickly from the sky; Oliver raised his hand, holding his cigarette outside the car.

It spluttered and went out upon coming into contact with the rain, leaving him in the throes of melancholia.

Back at the old mansion, Julian stood by the window with a displeased expression.

“Why didn’t Oliver take Diana home after dinner?”

Vans, who had supposedly already left the mansion, appeared behind him. He couldn’t help but shake his head as he replied helplessly, “Maybe something else was going on. I saw him talking to Madam Fulcher.”

“What could be more important than taking Diana home?” Julian sneered in response, annoyed. “He even stayed behind to chat with Grandma on purpose. He’s clearly avoiding her!”

He then threw a photo on the table; it was one of Oliver and Diana in the studio, taken last night.

“Look at this! Diana’s shown interest in him, but he keeps backing away. Even when he left, he didn’t bother to look back. Diana was the one who chased after him to say something. It’s obvious who’s pursuing who!”

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Vans seemed to choke at Julian’s words. He could vaguely feel something was amiss, and said slowly, “Julian, I don’t think things are like that...”

“Then, what?!” Julian shot back, his piercing gaze sweeping over to Vans.

There was a hint of anger in his eyes, and the coldness he radiated was like ice; as if he could freeze the whole room instantly.

Vans was suddenly at a loss for words.

“Uh...”

Pausing for a moment, he moved away from Julian’s oppressing figure ever so slightly and replied, “It’s just... With Diana’s personality, I doubt she’d fall for someone else so quickly. It’s obvious that she loves you...”

“Then why did she insist on divorcing me?” Julian cut Vans off. “If she loves me so much, wouldn’t she want to be with me all the time?”

Vans cleared his throat awkwardly, quite bewildered. He never imagined that the great chairman of Fulcher Inc. would one day be struck with the desire to be glued to someone’s side all day long.

Julian could tell what Vans was thinking, and demanded, “Don’t you feel the same way about Nina?”

Vans pursed his lips. “No.”

Julian threw Vans a sideways glance and muttered disdainfully, “Scumbag.”

Vans chose to ignore Julian’s comment. Instead, he asked, “Anyway, why are you monitoring Diana all this time?”

“To help her.”

“What exactly do you want to help her with?”

“That’s none of your business,* Julian snapped. He immediately shoved Vans out the door, closing it loudly behind the latter.

Vans saw stars for a moment with how hard Julian had pushed him. He wanted to turn back and ask for an explanation, but found that the door was firmly locked.

This man...!

Vans knocked on the door, but Julian refused to open it.

“Julian! What the hell are you planning to do?”

However, there was no response from Julian whatsoever. Vans thought about the latter’s ridiculous actions throughout the time he had known Julian during his relationship with Diana. He also pondered about the strange confidence Julian had, especially regarding the latter’s insistence that Diana was in love with Oliver.

Vans quickly connected the dots, and alarms blared out in his mind.

No, this wouldn’t do! He had to inform Diana!

With that, he hurriedly whipped out his phone.

On the other end, Julian was on the phone with Noel.

“It’s time to carry out the plan.”

He couldn’t wait any longer, not even a single second.

He wanted to do all he could to give Diana everything she wanted!

Unbeknownst to all, Kayla had stood outside the old mansion for a long time. A sinister and jealous glint could be seen in her burning eyes.

She saw Diana leaving the place and the sign hanging outside the gate. She even saw how Julian had hung up the sign himself!

Unbelievable!

That proud and dignified man had actually compared himself to a dog, just to please Diana and make her feel at ease.

‘Dogs like Julian are not allowed inside...’

Kayla kept repeating that sentence in her mind, and the jealousy in her heart continued to grow like seeds sown in the rainy season. They quickly took root and sprouted through her body, from her heart to her eyes, then her limbs. They grew rapidly like vines and wrapped around her entire body tightly.

The love Julian had for Diana should be Kayla’s! She was his savior! She and Julian were childhood friends! She was the woman whom Julian spent his youth with!

And yet, why did everything fall apart because of a single trip abroad?

That wicked old hag who deliberately helped Kayla go abroad was to blame!

Diana...

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Kayla wanted Diana to wish she was dead!

Kayla's hair and clothes were completely soaked from the rain, but she didn't take notice of them. She silently vowed to herself that she would take back everything that belonged to her.

She slowly detached herself from clinging to the mansion walls and drifted away like a wandering spirit. The rain washed away all traces of her presence, and everything returned to its peaceful state like nothing had happened.

James, who had been waiting for her at the crossroads, saw the malice on her oddly blank expression. He couldn't help the pang that went through his heart and quickly asked, "What's wrong, Kayla?"

He, Lucy, and Kayla had gone out of the Winnington residence today with the intention of enjoying a nice meal together. Kayla had even tried to get into his good graces. However, Lucy's spy in the Winnington residence informed her that Kate had called Diana to the residence and had even given Diana a bowl of noodles before she left.

Even though Diana hadn't been asked to stay for dinner, this incident still rang warning bells in Kayla's heart. She quickly recalled that today was Diana's birthday.

"Kate's a complete moron, but at least she's an obedient one. She didn't even care about her daughter's birthday! She only had my feelings in mind when she kicked Diana out."

After the fact that Julian didn't love her was exposed, Kayla had become more and more brazen when talking in front of James.

Lucy chimed in, "Yes. I'd love to see that stupid Kate's face when I take over the family!"

On the other hand, James muttered slowly, "Today is Diana's birthday..."

Kayla could see his wavering thoughts. "That's right, it's Diana's birthday. It's quite sad to see her carrying a bowl of cold noodles all by herself after getting kicked out of her home by her own mother. Why don't we follow her and celebrate her birthday with her?"

Despite Kayla saying she wanted to celebrate Diana's birthday with her, the truth couldn't be more far off. She actually intended to tail Diana and laugh at the latter's misfortune.

Diana going to the old mansion was beyond Kayla's expectations. This mansion, a place Kayla desperately wanted to come and go freely but only had a chance to attend a banquet on the day of her return once, had now become like Diana's backyard. It looked as if Diana could come anytime she wanted!

But... But Julian and Diana were already divorced!

What right did Diana have to enjoy such a privilege?!

Resentment burning in her heart, Kayla followed Diana all the way to the old mansion.

Unexpectedly, Kayla glimpsed the sign.

After which, she heard laughter and joy from inside the mansion.

Madam Fulcher even went so far as to invite several people for Diana, including that vulgar woman Nina!

And yet, Kayla could do nothing but watch and listen to the happy chatters from outside the old mansion.

Diana... Diana... Diana...!

Diana's happiness, as well as the fact Julian loved her, was a painful nail in Kayla's heart.

Hah...

Kayla narrowed her eyes and looked up at James before saying, "Daddy, take me somewhere."

James drove his car over to pick her up and asked, "Where are we going?"

"To the cemetery."

Where Diana's children were buried!

After Oliver left, Madam Fulcher wandered around the study. She couldn't help but flip through some of Julian's childhood photos, which represented the most trying time in his life. Madam Fulcher hadn't mentioned it to a single soul, much less shown these photos to anyone.

When she saw the photo Oliver had given her today, she felt a mixture of emotions. She spent a long time scolding her late husband in front of his portrait before finally feeling better.

“If I could do it all over again, I’d never let you treat Julian like that!”

Madam Fulcher placed all the photos back in the small box and directed a final accusation toward the sky before finally regaining her composure.

“Grandma,” Julian called out.

He initially wanted to ask her about what she and Oliver had talked about earlier. Once he saw this scene, he radiated an unapproachable air and walked up slowly to her.

Madam Fulcher turned around with red eyes.

“Are you cursing Grandpa again?”

“That old b*stard...” Madam Fulcher sniffed. Her white hair exuded a different charm that hadn’t diminished due to her age and appearance.”

Who told him to die so early? Since he did, he deserves to be cursed by the living!”

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Once no one cursed or thought about a person anymore, then the person would have truly disappeared from the world.

That would be the end of death.

Julian could feel the contempt and dissatisfaction in Madam Fulcher’s words. More than that, there was regret, reluctance, and longing. If only his grandfather was still alive...

If he was, Julian wouldn’t have gone to the countryside to attend the inheritance activity when he was a child. He wouldn’t have met Kayla. He wouldn’t have bonded with her because she saved his life.

He wouldn’t have mistaken his true love, nor would he have mistaken Diana as Kayla’s substitute.

“You’re right,” Julian said, signing as he looked over at the petite and energetic old woman. “He should be cursed.”

Madam Fulcher’s face darkened, and she slapped him hard on the head. “You brat! Your grandpa was my husband! I can curse him, but you can’t!”

“Tsk,” Julian clicked his tongue and chuckled. Then, like a spoiled child, he leaned against the old woman.

He looked like a big lost puppy whining for attention.

“Grandma...”

“Hmm?”

Julian sighed. Then, in a soft tone he had never used before, he murmured, “If only Diana loved me like you loved Grandpa... That would be great.”

When Madam Fulcher heard this, she pushed him away angrily and admonished him sternly, “You foolish boy! You lost her because of your own actions!”

Julian was momentarily stunned, and his eyes were filled with regret. He lowered his head with a self-deprecating smile on his lips. “Yeah. I lost her, and it’s my own fault.”

He hadn’t even managed to protect their babies.

It was all his fault.

“But it’s okay,” Madam Fulcher said. Sensing his sorrow, she didn’t continue rebuking him and instead said, “You can get her back! I completely approve of Diana being your wife. Even if you’re now divorced, my opinion stays the same.”

“Why?” Julian had always been confused by his grandmother’s unreasonable favoritism.

“Silly boy,” Madam Fulcher muttered as she brushed her hair back from her forehead and looked at Julian. “Have you never heard of the saying, love me, love my dog?”

Julian stood rooted to the spot, as if someone had hit his head; he got a sudden realization from it.

“You knew all along that I love her? Even when I thought I had feelings for Kayla, you thought that I loved Diana?”

“That’s your own problem. Figure it out,” Madam Fulcher said, unwilling to say any more on the topic.

Leaving him with such a vague sentence, she turned and left the study.

Julian stood alone in the room for a long time.

When exactly had he started having feelings for Diana?

The funniest part was that even he hadn’t realized it!

And yet, he had done so many excessive things toward her!

Madam Fulcher had said he could go after her and get her back, but that was a dream he could never hope to achieve.

The person Diana loved now wasn’t him.

He didn’t dare to be a hindrance and hurt her again

Hopefully...

He could make up for past wrongdoings toward her by treating her well in the future.

In the cemetery, an unmarked car slowly drove in. The license plate had been deliberately removed after driving off the main road.

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Kayla sat in the backseat, watching the droplets continuously fall and join into a long line and pounded against the vehicle with a deafening noise.

Lucy was the first to leave the car.

“The autumn rain this year is so annoying!” she whined.

She was wearing new lambskin soft-soled shoes James had bought for her. When soaked, they were as good as ruined. She was in a terrible mood because of that.

“Yeah.”

Kayla had been smiling the entire time, but it wasn't radiant or bright. It was ominous, and there was blatant malice in it. She looked at the bright yellow headstone not far away, and her smile widened.

“It seems even the heavens are helping me.”

Every time she committed something heinous, it would be raining, which easily washed away traces of her wrongdoings. Moreover, the headstone for the two babies was so bright and prominent in the cemetery that she didn't even have to look for it.

Recently, the more James spent time with Kayla, the more fearful he felt.

“Kayla...” James said hesitantly. “Do you really intend to desecrate the grave?”

“What? Do you feel sorry for them?” Kayla sneered. “Have you finally understood that Diana's your daughter?”

Kayla suddenly raised her voice. “Don't forget! She already knew that you deliberately lost her when she was a child! Even if you want to break away from Mommy and me now and jump ship, Diana will retaliate against you if you go to her now!”

Sticking to the path one had chosen to the end was better.

This was the second time Kayla had warned James.

Panic flashed through his well-preserved middle-aged man's face.

“I didn't mean it that way, Kayla.” James hurried to explain.

He only felt that Kayla's recent change had frightened him. In the past, he was the one who ordered her around. She and Lucy had always behaved submissively toward him; but lately, Kayla had been yelling and threatening him constantly.

It challenged his self-esteem and pride.

Strangely enough, when Kayla got angry, his own anger would dissipate.

“Don’t be angry,” James tried to coax her, his tone resigned. “You know I’ve always pinned my hopes on you. If you think something should be done, I’ll do it for you.”

“Good,” Kayla said with raised eyebrows. She went to the car trunk, grabbed an iron bar, and ordered, “Go and dig up that grave for me!”

Another thunderclap boomed through the sky, illuminating their faces clearly. Except for Kayla, Lucy and James had terrified expressions on their faces.

“D-Dig up the grave?!”

“Yes!”

Kayla’s hair was still soaking wet, but she didn’t seem to care.

Her sinister smile spread wider, the madness in it more and more evident.

“Diana doesn’t care about her position as the firstborn of our family. We’ve extended an olive branch to her, but she refused it. Of course she would!

Julian loves her, and that old Fulcher hag dotes on her! She doesn’t even care about her marriage! Hell, she was the one who brought up the divorce first!”

Rain dripped down Kayla’s face, and it looked like her face would be torn in half. Lucy watched in horror, and hurriedly shifted the umbrella to cover Kayla.

Lucy didn’t even notice how cautious she was trying to be as she said slowly, “Kayla... Wasn’t Diana divorcing Julian something we wanted? It’s a good thing, isn’t it? W-Why are you so angry?”

“Hah...!”

Yes, they had gotten divorced; but it was the opposite of what Kayla wanted!

Instead, Julian had fallen deeper in love with Diana!

Diana had been the one to initiate the divorce, not him!

“Everything I’ve dreamed of... What right does Diana have to give it up just because she can?!” Kayla screamed, her eyes snapping wide as she

grabbed James. Her grip was so forceful that the older man staggered in shock.

The iron bar made a piercing sound as it crashed to the ground. Kayla’s blood boiled even more as a manic gleam flashed in her malevolent eyes.

“Start digging!”

She would bet on what Diana cared about!

Kayla was certain if this grave was dug up, Diana would feel misery far more potent than death!

She would feel pain... She would feel the deepest regret!

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Kayla looked like a crazed woman, malice and destruction burning in her unblinking eyes.

James shivered in fright as he carefully approached his daughter.

“Kayla...”

But Kayla glared at him with bloodshot eyes and screamed again, “Start digging!”

Fearing that James would feel uncomfortable, Lucy threw away the umbrella, ignored her ruined shoes, and said, “Dear, I’ll help you.”

Lucy was always so understanding and gentle, but Kayla...

What had Julian reduced her to?!

James couldn’t help but feel some resentment toward the man. Yet as soon as he thought of Julian’s status, the resentment turned into smoke and dissipated.

He whispered to Lucy, “The children buried here aren’t just Diana’s. They’re also Julian’s...”

If they really dug up this grave and Julian discovered the culprits, they would be in big trouble!

“Don’t forget, Kayla saved Julian’s life,” Lucy said. Guilt flashed in her eyes for a brief moment, but it was gone as soon as it appeared. “James, you know Kayla drugged Diana and even sided with Luke to corner Julian, right? Luke died and the Pabian family suffered a lot, but have you seen anything happen to Kayla?”

James shook his head. “No...”

Kayla was still free to roam about, and her temper only worsened by the second.

“Then that’s that, isn’t it?” Lucy said, looking at Kayla. With a clear conscience, she said, “Whether it’s Diana’s miscarriage or Julian getting beaten up, nothing related to Kayla has been investigated! With that said, think about how significant the saving grace is to Julian. So what if he likes Diana? What does that matter? After all, it was Kayla who saved his life! As long as we have that, he’ll never do anything to Kayla!”

James agreed with that statement.

Lucy could tell he was still wavering, so she continued to press on. “James, the babies are already dead. It’s just a headstone! Can it compare to when they were alive and well in Diana’s belly? No one was punished at that time, so what’s the harm in letting Kayla have her revenge now?”

James sighed, and finally nodded.

“You’re right...”

He looked up at the increasingly crazed girl and said weakly, “TH dig it up...”

“Okay!” Lucy said with a smile, her gentle hands resting on his shoulders as she offered him comfort. “Don’t worry. It’s raining heavily today. As long as we don’t say anything, no one will know it was us who dug up the grave.”

Her hand felt so comforting on James’s back. If it weren’t for the inappropriate situation they were in right now, James would’ve definitely taken Lucy to bed.

Lucy noticed where his train of thought was going. She turned and squeezed his butt teasingly.

“You’re such a naughty boy! Hurry up and dig. After Kayla gets her revenge, you’ll have your turn!”

Lucy was much cleverer than Kate, and knew how to handle the man before her.

James clenched his fist tightly and exclaimed, “Don’t worry. If I don’t knock down this tombstone, I’ll eat my shoe!”

“Knocking it down won’t be enough!” Kayla said, suddenly standing next to him with a malicious glint in her eyes. “We’ll soak the ashes in the rain!”

That’s the only way it’ll be enough!”

Her voice was shrill and hoarse, and on this rainy day, it sounded extremely eerie.

James hesitated once more, realizing that he was technically the grandfather of the babies in this grave. However, he quickly pushed the thought away and said, “But they were only fetuses. They didn’t have bones, let alone ashes...”

Kayla shot him a look. “It doesn’t matter if they’re only fetuses! I’m sure the grave isn’t empty. If they were buried as fetuses, then let the rain soak those too! Smash them to pieces with that iron bar! If Diana burned them into ashes, let the water wash them away!”

Then, she gritted her teeth and hissed venomously, “Yes, that’d be good...!”

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Rain continued to pour as Kayla listened to the sound of iron hitting the ground, and her smile widened at every passing second.

Finally, the sound stopped.

As the rain continued to rush down, the bright yellow headstone toppled over.

Soon after, the babies’ ashes were exposed.

Kayla sneered and stepped on the box, stomping her foot cruelly on it.

Not long after, the content of the box slowly flowered into the sewer as the rain washed them away...

It was a rainy day, and Diana had been feeling down all day.

"It doesn't seem to be a peaceful day for my birthday this year," Diana said. The joyful mood she had from the old mansion had vanished. "I've never felt like this before, Nina. What do you think is going on?"

"If it's anyone else, I'd say you might want to hurry and check in with your parents," Nina said as she drove calmly. 'But... Well, I doubt anything would've happened to them.*

Diana felt a twinge of sympathy go through her after hearing Nina's words.

"I'll give Kate a call."

However, there was no answer from the other end.

Thinking for a moment, Diana decided to call James.

Over at the cemetery, James's phone screen lit up. His eyes widened, and as he stood before the ruined headstone, he looked as if he had seen a ghost.

Lucy saw his expression and couldn't help but ask, "Who's calling you?"

"I-It's...Diana..."

When Kayla heard this, her cold eyes instantly fell on James.

He knew full well that he was now fully bound to Kayla, especially after the atrocious thing he had done today at the grave.

"I haven't contacted her privately or anything,' James said as he picked up the call.

"You harbinger of doom! Why are you calling me? Do you think you can really become my daughter just because you gave me the plaque?!"

On the other end of the line, Diana remained silent. She already knew she would only humiliate herself by making this call, but since she had already made up her mind to drive a wedge between her parents and Kayla and take them back, she wouldn't compromise or back down.

Therefore, despite James's anger, she remained calm and said, "I was just worried about you and Mom since it's raining so heavily. If you're okay, that's all that matters. Today is my birthday, so please thank Mom for the noodles she made me.'

Was this still the same rural girl who came alone from the countryside to look for the Winnington family to claim kinship?

James was amazed by her sophisticated demeanor, composed voice, and sincerity. It seemed Diana wasn't the slightest bit affected by what James had done to her when she was a child.

This kind of open-mindedness and generosity...

James's nose twitched, and he looked down at the iron bar in his hand.

His hands trembled, and even his voice shook. "Umm..."

Suppose he hadn't gone too far today. Would he still have had the chance to beg for Diana's forgiveness and use her to connect their family to the Fulchers instead of relying solely on Kayla, who was becoming increasingly difficult to control?

But now...

On Diana's birthday, he desecrated her children's grave with his very own hands...