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Julian's Stand-In Wife chapter 541

After all, James, Lucy, and Kayla had successfully deceived even Julian.

Why would they be afraid of Diana, who was merely a small obstacle?

Whether it was the secret of who truly saved Julian or Kayla marrying Julian, fate would surely be on their side in the end!

Kayla smiled, and didn't let Diana's deliberate provocation bother her. In her heart, she firmly believed she was the one in full control of the whole situation.

After all...

The two people involved didn't even know their true feelings for each other!

Just the thought of it brought great satisfaction to Kayla.

So what if they loved each other? So what if they were destined for each other?

Whether fate would work that way for them, Kayla was the one who had the final say.

"Don't laugh, miss," the nurse advised as she tried to change Kayla's bandage several times, though without success. 'If you laugh, it'll affect-"

Before she could finish, Kayla raised a hand and slapped her across the face.

"You're useless!"

Kayla's eyes were sharp, and they were frighteningly vicious. She was completely unaware of her own uncooperativeness, and instead blamed the nurse for being incompetent.

The young nurse wanted to cry at the unfairness of the situation, but Kayla yelled, "Call your dean! Tell him that Julian Fulcher's woman is dissatisfied with your hospital!"

James straightened his back a little after hearing that. Despite everything...

He knew things had yet to set in stone.

After what had happened yesterday, he was now more cautious than ever.

As such, he quickly comforted Kayla, "This isn't a big deal, Kayla. Why don't we just call the head nurse? There's no need to alarm the hospital dean for such a small thing. After all, I'm sure Julian will be upset to hear about his future wife's treatment."

It was obvious that the style of address pleased Kayla.

The way James said it made it seem as if she had already truly become Julian's wife.

Now in a good mood, she said in what she thought was a generous tone, "Well, I suppose that's true. If we call the dean and Julian finds out, he'll definitely be upset."

After all, Kayla's face resembled Diana's so much.

Julian may not judge someone by appearance, but it was obvious he had a preference.

The young nurse was stunned by Kayla's words. When she left and returned later, all the other nurses outside would know by then that Julian's woman was in this ward, and that the man whom every woman in Richburgh dreamed of was devoted to a horribly disfigured woman.

There was a hint of romanticism in the story, and it was quickly spread through the gossip-filled halls.

By the time it reached Diana's ears, two days had passed.

At that moment, she was packing her things and preparing to move back to the villa.

Julian was the one who proposed the idea. He said he wanted to wake up every day to her face, and that he hoped he could continue making breakfast for her every morning.

Diana hadn't said anything in reply and simply nodded, and had received a passionate kiss from him in return.

However, she didn't know who exactly Julian was kissing.

But today, upon hearing the gossip from the hospital, Diana confirmed once again that the person he wanted to kiss wasn't her; rather, it was the disfigured Kayla currently lying in the ward.

A wave of nausea swept through Diana at that instant, and she stood up hurriedly from where she was packing. She rushed to the bathroom and threw up in the darkness.

When she exited the bathroom, her lips were severely cracked once more.

She had scrubbed them repeatedly again.

Every time Julian kissed her, her disgust for him only grew.

"Why isn't your wound healing?" Julian asked worriedly; he had rushed all the way from his company just to pick her up. His fingers brushed the side of Diana's lips as soon as she slipped into the car.

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Diana's skin burned when Julian's fingertips brushed past, and a chill ran through her lips.

For some reason, she could feel a contradictory sensation of hot and cold in his touch; it was just like her suppressed love and hate for him.

At some point, she couldn't distinguish between the two feelings anymore. She felt like she was trapped in hell, unsure of which direction that could lead her to an escape.

At the same time, she didn't want to escape.

She still had things to do and people to get revenge on.

Julian's attention was entirely on her lips. The cracked spots punched holes in his heart, and just looking at them gave him terrible pain and discomfort.

"It keeps coming back," Diana replied easily. "I've applied medication to it. Don't worry."

Diana understood his unspoken rules.

She couldn't let her face be damaged in any way; to Julian, even her body belonged to Kayla.

She would forever be an accessory to Kayla, hence, didn't even have the right to be injured.

She had to maintain a flawless appearance at all times to give Julian the illusion that Kayla was doing well.

On the other hand, how could Julian not worry?

He immediately contacted Vans and instructed the latter to see the hospital's dean to prescribe medication for Diana once more.

Vans, who dealt with difficult cases every day, sighed helplessly at Julian's words.

"It's probably just a mouth ulcer. Do you have to be so worried? Even if you like her, you should exercise some restraint, you know? Excessive concern can be annoying after a while."

Julian was taken aback by that information.

So, excessive worry could also annoy a person?

And yet, hadn't he already restrained himself a lot? Julian wanted nothing more than to tie Diana to his side and never let her leave his sight. He wanted to carry her in his pocket and always have her with him.

And if she wanted to go anywhere, she would have to kiss him as payment for a request.

See if she dared mention divorce again with that!

"I already exercised a lot of restraint," Julian muttered.

Fearing his words may give rise to certain thoughts, he tilted his head to check on Diana. Seeing that she hadn't noticed his words, he immediately turned away and said to Vans in a tone of utmost seriousness, "Hurry up or I'll call the dean myself!"

"Please don't," Vans replied tiredly. "It's not that he wouldn't help, but your woman's being a little overboard."

Julian frowned. "What woman?"

"The dean has canceled all his appointments these past few days. He's currently with your other woman, busy changing her dressing."

"Kayla?" Julian was confused; he couldn't help but glance at Diana again. After confirming that she still was unaware of his conversation, he lowered his voice and covered his mouth with his hands. "Who said she's my

woman? I only have one woman, and you know perfectly well who that is!"

Diana initially wasn't paying attention to Julian's conversation, but when she heard those words, she couldn't help but feel slightly suffocated.

She thought her heart and feelings for Julian had long died, but apparently, he could still hurt her deeply.

Was he avoiding her this way to please Kayla? Was he telling her that Kayla was the only woman in his heart?

Hah.

Diana lowered the car's visor mirror and aimed it at herself before firmly pulling off the cracked skin on her lips.

The harsh treatment caused blood to flow immediately, and the pain on her lips alleviated the pain in her heart slightly.

Diana clenched her fist tightly and took a long, deep breath, and finally felt much better.

Julian was currently fully focused on the conversation on the phone, so he didn't notice Diana's actions.

He listened intently as Vans teased him, "I used to know, but I'm not so sure now. After all, Kayla's your woman. The need for giving her special treatment has already spread through the entire hospital. I even told Nina about it already."

"Vans!" Julian growled angrily.

Even over the phone, Vans could feel the drop in temperature in the air. He no longer dared to tease Julain and quickly amended his words. "I was just kidding."

With a shrug, he continued, "As for Nina, she heard about it herself and came to the hospital to confirm it with me."

But Nina hadn't told Diana, presumably because she feared it would hurt Diana.

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"Why did she come looking for you?" Julian asked. "I thought you two were still at odds."

"Did you think I was like you?" Vans shot back with a smirk. "You gotta coax a girl, you know? My relationship with Nina is still okay."

Julian was stunned. He didn't expect that Nina could even forgive Vans for getting engaged.

"What will happen now, then?" Julian asked.

"I don't know," Vans replied. "We'll take it one day at a time, I guess."

"You better tread lightly," Julian warned. "She's Diana's friend."

The implication behind Julian's words was for Vans not to do anything excessive.

Vans nodded somewhat helplessly. "I'll do my best."

That was the biggest assurance he could give as someone from the Stanley family.

In any case, Julian didn't intend to intervene too much in his friend's personal affairs.

"I'll be hanging up now."

He still needed to call the dean and dispel the rumors.

"Hurry up and prescribe the medicine."

Julian couldn't care less about where the dean was at the moment.

"He'll call you soon. I want something that works immediately.'

Diana was still carefully spraying her lips with the medicine her employee had given her. However, since the car was moving, there were several occasions when the powder sprayed into her nose instead.

"Don't use that-

Before Julian could finish his sentence on how he would get a more effective medicine, his eyes landed on her bloodied lips.

"How did this happen?" he asked, his expression darkening instantly.

Diana was prepared for his reaction in advance and said, "I'm sorry."

Her expression was calm, and there was no sign that she was in pain. Her face only showed remorse as she continued, "I shouldn't have messed up my lips like this."

As Kayla's substitute, it was a fundamental rule for her to maintain her perfect appearance from head to toe. It had always been the same throughout her three-year marriage with Julian.

Julian's hands paused at her tone.

"Diana, don't be like that."

"Like what?"

Julian pursed his lips. Like...apologizing to him without reason and disregarding the pain she felt because she didn't want to anger him.

He wanted to see Diana who was comfortable in her own skin and in perfect health, not one who didn't even care about her own body.

On the other hand, perhaps he prioritized his feelings far too much. In theory, he should be happy about it, but he couldn't feel that way, no matter how much he tried. In fact, he even felt repulsed by that fact.

"I don't like it."

His response was simple and blunt, with no further explanation.

He was still the same.

Her feelings didn't matter; it never did. What mattered was whether he liked it or not.

This man...truly hadn't changed.

What had Diana been expecting? Why had she hoped for something she shouldn't have?

Even if she had saved him when they were young children, it shouldn't have been the reason for her yearning to return.

After all, she had personally thrown that life-saving favor into the trash. Since she had done that, she shouldn't have entertained such thoughts.

"Alright." Diana nodded obediently.

She didn't ask him for a reason and didn't display any excessive emotions. She simply agreed with him.

Julian gripped the medicine bottle in his hand, crushing it slowly.

He wasn't an idiot.

He could sense something was deeply wrong with Diana. Although she had agreed to move back into the villa, her heart hadn't returned with her body.

What had returned was just a puppet-an empty shell!

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A surge of anger suddenly crashed through Julian.

"Come here," he ordered coldly, beckoning Diana with a finger as if calling a doll.

His posture was lazy and playful, his inky eyes devoid of any emotion.

"Kiss me," Julian commanded.

Diana hesitated, feeling uncomfortable as she licked her lips.

Her lips were injured, and it was clearly the reason Julian was currently angry. He was throwing a tantrum; he didn't really want her to kiss him.

But based on Diana's experience, not going along with him would only make him angrier.

If this incident reached Kayla's ears, it would make Diana look like a joke.

Diana couldn't allow that to happen.

She wanted only stories about how "loving" Julian was to her to reach Kayla.

Her eyes watered; grief and embarrassment flashed on her face. However, there was also a touch of curiosity in her voice as she called out coyly, "Julian..."

It had been a long time since she had addressed him in such a soft and gentle tone. Julian was momentarily surprised by it, and the majority of his fury dissipated.

"Hmm?"

There was an alluring property in his tone as he hummed deeply in response to Diana's tone, and it calmed her heart.

She looked into his eyes, as if she was trying to engrave her own reflection into the depths of his heart.

She didn't say anything further and leaned in to peck the corner of his mouth. The sensation was gentle and fleeting, accompanied by a slight tingling pain.

More than that, it felt sweet, like honey.

And it was enough to comfort Julian.

His gaze softened, and his previous displeasure vanished.

It could be said that Diana's grasp on his emotions had reached a level of a master.

She secretly breathed a sigh of relief, grateful that the three years she had been with him allowed her to understand him so thoroughly.

“Julian...” Diana called again softly. “Are we considered to be back together now?”

Julian hadn’t expected her to ask such a question, and he wasn’t sure how to respond.

“No.”

In Julian’s heart, they had never been truly separated, hence his answer.

However, Diana didn’t see it that way.

Even though she had been prepared for his answer, hearing it still made her bright eyes dim slightly.

“Then, what does it mean now that I’m moving back?” she asked.

“It means you’re coming home,” Julian stated matter-of-factly. “The villa is your home, and you can return anytime. So naturally, it’s called coming home.”

Julian believed that telling a woman to come home was the sweetest endearment there was.

It was as if he was entrusting everything he had to her.

“Home...” Diana repeated, a mocking and bitter smile tugging lightly at her lips.

Could that place truly be called home?

Her happiness, pain, and memories of betrayal were all tied to that place. The torrent of emotions she had for that place was far too complicated, and thinking about it made her feel uncomfortable all over.

It was like she had returned to the time when Julian had brought Kayla back to the villa, when the three of them once lived together under one roof.

However, Julian was unexpectedly comforted by the bitterness in her voice.

“If there’s anything that bothers you, you can always tell me,” he said.

Even if they argued and fought, it was better than seeing Dianan in such a detached state when she was with him.

He didn’t need or want a puppet.

What he wanted was the once vibrant Diana who had lived with him.

“In that case, I’ll tell you,” Diana said, looking at him, seemingly drowning him in a seductive wave that rippled in her eyes.

It was unbearable.

Julian swallowed as he struggled to suppress the growing desire in him.

He paused momentarily, trying his best to compose himself before meeting her eyes and saying softly, “Go on.”

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Diana got straight to the point and said, “I don’t want to see any traces of Kayla in the villa.”

Kayla had lived in the villa before, and had naturally left some things behind.

Seeing them gave Diana unease. She didn’t want any strong reminders of the woman who had harmed her babies to be present around her.

“Okay,” Julian agreed readily.

The more Diana requested of him, the happier he was.

“Til get the staff to take care of this right away.”

Julian realized he had overlooked this matter; rightfully, he shouldn’t have waited for Diana to bring it up before he handled it.

“No need,” Diana said, shaking her head.

Her distant and captivating eyes resembled the serene beauty of a painting that exuded an indescribable charm.

In fact, it gave Julian a strange sense of familiarity; something he felt the first time he had laid eyes on Diana.

However, this feeling had been overshadowed by Kayla's disappearance, and he had ignored it.

"Sometimes, it feels like I've known you for a long time," Julian said. "And not just since you came to the Winnington family."

If the acquaintance he spoke about wasn't based solely on knowing her name, then it was true they had known each other for a long time.

Diana wondered, had Julian said so because he knew about her saving him in the past?

Even so, it didn't seem like it.

Madam Fulcher had mentioned that the Fulchers valued gratitude above everything, especially the debt of saving one's life.

It was why Julian had been so good to Kayla.

Diana didn't know why fate played such cruel tricks on people. It hadn't only made her and Kayla half-sisters with different mothers, but also caused them to fall in love with the same man.

And at the same time, both sisters had also saved him once.

Julian remembered Kayla's favor, yet Diana's had long since vanished into the river of time...

As if it never happened in the first place.

Diana was the only one who vividly remembered her desperate efforts in the cave to warm the little boy up all those years ago; a memory that belonged solely to her now.

"You must be joking," Diana said, firmly shutting down any further attempt to discuss this topic.

She wanted to preserve the pureness of the memory of her first encounter with Julian.

Aside from that, she also hoped...

To not have any deeper involvement with him. She especially didn't want him to get any ideas about repaying her for saving his life.

She would consider it something that had happened when they were children, and that they now had a clean slate as adults.

"How could we have met before?" Diana said, rolling her eyes, her face becoming more energetic. "I grew up in the countryside, while you were born and raised in Richburgh."

Julian seemed to arrive at the same conclusion as well. "Perhaps I was overthinking it."

Diana smiled and said nothing. The soft hues of the light filtering in from the window were like the surface of a lake, emanating a bright and gentle glow.

Desire slowly swirled in Julian's eyes, and he pressed the button to raise the divider between the driver's seat and the backseat.

The air in the space gradually became tense. When the divider reached the roof of the car, Julian and Diana were completely isolated in the backseat, and the only sound they could hear was their own breaths.

"Diana," Julian called out again. "That's not the only thing I've been overthinking about."

Diana's heart skipped a beat as she looked at him in surprise.

Julian leaned in, his arms boxing her in and surrounding her with his overwhelming presence.

"Just now wasn't enough," Julian whispered, referring to her fleeting peck from before.

His eyes deepened as he looked at her, and Diana couldn't help but close her own.

A few moments passed, but the man before her seemed to make no further movements.

Instead, soft laughter reached her ears.

“Diana, what are you doing?”

Confused, Diana opened her eyes to look at Julian.

Julian couldn't contain his laughter; the few stray strands of hair that fell onto his forehead trembled with his movements, looking like a gust of wind had blown it.

It created an embarrassing mood between them.

Seeing how Diana had fallen silent, Julian leaned in closer and said playfully, “Did you think I was going to kiss you?”

His eyes were too bright, shining like stars in the sky. It caused her vision to go slightly out of focus, and she hesitated to meet his gaze.

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Seeing Diana's unusual expression and how she didn't dare to look straight into Julian's eyes, he chuckled softly, as if mocking her embarrassment.

Then, he raised his left hand and placed it on the seat behind her, putting her between him and the seat.

An uncomfortable Diana shifted slightly from his actions, but he pressed in closer.

Meanwhile, his other hand slowly caressed the back of her head.

His hold gradually tightened, and his breath grew closer to her face.

It appeared as if he was about to kiss her.

Although Diana wasn't at all pleased deep down, she ultimately didn't resist his actions. She was submissive, and she ignored his teasing and closed her eyes once again.

When he saw her like this, Julian couldn't help but laugh.

He placed his fingertips on her lips, and the scent of medicine immediately reached her nose.

She quickly opened her eyes, only to see that he had opened the medicine bottle. He had dipped his finger into it to apply it on her lips.

“There isn’t much left,” he muttered.

It was why this was the only way Julian could administer the medicine. It was much better than squeezing the bottle and spraying the remaining powder all over the place.

His thumb brushed her lips slowly, and his smiling features slammed heavily into her vision.

Julian was laughing at her.

He was laughing...because she thought he was going to kiss her.

At this moment, Diana felt deeply humiliated. She couldn’t believe that Julian wasn’t thinking about taking advantage of her; rather, he was applying medicine to her.

If that was the case, why do all those ambiguous motions?

She glanced at the divider, which seemed to have sealed them in the little space, leaving her no choice but to shrink further into Julian’s embrace.

There was no intimate contact between them, but it felt overly intimate.

Diana’s breathing slowed down considerably as she regained her composure.

She was afraid of making another mishap like earlier, as if she was too eager for his touch.

Julian seemed to understand her thoughts, but he didn’t move away from her. In fact, he moved closer until they were nearly nose to nose.

Only his finger on her lips remained like a barrier between them.

He slowly caressed her lips, and the icy cold sensation returned, bringing much relief to Diana’s cracked skin. Combined with the effect of the medicine, the stinging pain in her lips reduced slightly.

Yet, her breathing felt scorching hot.

Diana couldn't help but pull back, but Julian tightened his grip and forcefully pressed her face toward him.

His breath was hot on her face and his presence was overwhelming, leaving her almost suffocated.

She could only see the corner of his eyes from this distance, and it was filled with a hint of emotions. His eyes seemed to be brimming with passion and a sense of urgency, which disturbed Diana.

His breathing grew less ragged when his fingers finally stopped moving; but then his nose rubbed against hers, and the gentle touch almost made her shudder.

Both their bodies...

Were familiar with each other.

And yet, they were trying their hardest to restrain themselves.

Julian withdrew his fingers from her lips, and held her hand like he used to in a firm grip.

This time, Diana didn't try to break free.

God only knew how long he had been waiting for this day to come again.

Julian stared at her intently, almost greedily, as he said hoarsely, "Diana..."

He didn't even realize how hoarse his voice was until he spoke, and he chuckled when he noticed it.

He was shocked by how much Diana tempted him, but he was willing to drown in her eyes and breath if he could.

However, Diana was feeling the exact opposite.

She wasn't willing to develop a relationship with Julian, and she certainly didn't want to have any intimate moments with him.

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Diana was well aware of her goal, and was thus determined not to fall into the illusion of love Julian gave.

She turned her head slightly to once again avoid physical contact with him.

“Let’s take a picture,’ Diana said as she turned on her phone camera.

Before Julian could react, she cupped his face and pecked the corner of his lips.

It was soft and had a sense of sharpness in it, as if she had cut through his heart and left a lasting mark in it.

And Julian...

Truly savored the feeling.

Even such a fleeting kiss was enough to make him yearn for it for many years.

The click of the camera shutter captured their intimate moment.

In the photo, Diana was smiling, and she looked incredibly happy.

Julian’s face remained as icy as ever, but if one looked closely, there was a slight crack in his icy mask.

This was a true, meaningful photo of the two of them.

When they got married back then, they didn’t even take wedding photos. Even at their wedding ceremony, though Julian hadn’t slacked on any of the formalities, he still didn’t allow anyone to take photos.

Back then, Diana hadn’t understood the reason.

But later when Kayla appeared, she finally understood.

Julian was afraid that if he looked at the photos every day, he would notice the difference between her and Kayla. In that case, he wouldn’t be able to delude himself and continue living with Diana.

“Let me see,” Julian said, but Diana put her phone away.

“You’ll see it later, but not now.”

She had already posted it on her social media.

She wouldn't let Julian see it before Kayla. What if he ordered her to delete it otherwise?

If that happened, her efforts would be in vain.

Fortunately, Julian didn't press further.

This led to the misconception that Julian was indulging her now. Diana found the sensation somewhat different from when they had been married. In the past, the indulgence felt like what an ideal couple should have; but now, it felt more like he was indulging her like a proper boyfriend would to his girlfriend.

Diana shook her head to dismiss these unrealistic thoughts and opened the car window, allowing the breeze to cool them down. As the wind trickled in, it also seemed to bring some clarity to Julian, as he didn't lean in any closer to her.

Diana breathed a sigh of relief. It was uncomfortable to play the role of a loving couple with the man she once loved when she knew full well that she was only a substitute.

She even despised herself a little for what she was doing; luckily, the fresh air saved her. She breathed in greedily, as if it would make her feel better.

Julian noticed her stretching her neck to look outside. Thinking she was tired from the journey, he immediately asked the driver, 'Are we there yet?'

"We're almost there, sir," the driver replied respectfully. "Five more minutes. H

Julian nodded and closed his eyes to rest.

Seeing his closed eyes, Diana felt more at ease. She didn't strain her neck to look outside anymore, but leaned against the seat and gradually calmed down.

Taking the chance of the peaceful atmosphere, Diana raised the topic again. "Julian, about what we discussed earlier, about removing Kayla's things. Let me do it on my own, okay?"

"No," Julian replied easily. She would get tired from doing it, and he didn't want her to trouble herself.

There were clearly servants at home who could take care of such tedious matters. Diana shouldn't have to do such rough work.

On the other hand, Diana had waited so long to make this request; as expected, he still didn't agree.

It seemed he was still reluctant to let off any traces of Kayla.

His answer was within Diana's expectations, so she wasn't too disappointed.

However, in the next second, Julian added, "I'll do it."

"Huh?"

"I'll take care of it," Julian explained. 'You can be there and throw away whatever you want.'

This wasn't how Diana had expected the topic would go, so she was quite surprised.

"Are you willing to do that?"

Julian chuckled, then opened his eyes to take in the wide, fluttering eyes of the woman before him.

"Are you questioning me that to test me?"

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Of course not.

It had only been a rhetorical question.

But seeing Julian's excitement, Diana couldn't help but respond obediently, "Yes. It was a test to see if you would do it.'

Julian chuckled and didn't reply further. He would show her his sincerity through his actions once they returned home.

In the hospital after Kayla's tantrum, not only was the attending doctor changed, even the nurse who previously attended to her was switched out.

The new nurse was a greenhorn with little experience under her belt. When she came to Kayla's room, she avoided looking at Kayla after seeing the latter's horrendously disfigured face. She didn't even dare meet Kayla's eyes when she first disinfected the wound.

This annoyed Kayla, who exploded in rage and lashed out on the spot. She only stopped when the nurse's face was red and swollen.

Since then, even the most basic task of changing the bandage was taken over by the hospital's dean.

Kayla enjoyed her status where no one dared to criticize her, and her longing to be Mrs. Fulcher grew even stronger.

"How much longer do I have to stay in the hospital?" she asked the dean.

The dean was well-informed of her condition and answered readily, "At least three more days. Your face has recovered well, but only to the extent of being decent...after the disfigurement.'

Kayla's skin had been soaked in saltwater for a long time, and not even the heavens would be able to save her unless she underwent skin graft surgery after recovering.

However, the scars on Kayla's face were in a delicate position; close to her facial and oral nerves. Even with surgery, they would require a plastic surgery specialist to ensure no mistakes or accidents would occur during the process.

Regardless, it wouldn't be possible to do something like that in the next year due to the extent of her injuries.

Kayla knew how terrible her wounds were. Every time she thought about her pitiful state, she couldn't help but wish that she could tear Diana apart with her bare hands one day!

"Then arrange for my discharge after three days. I don't want to stay here another day longer!" Kayla demanded.

She needed to go to the company and quickly direct all her resources to the Winnington family to strengthen her position, as well as give James more benefits to ensure Diana couldn't harm a hair on them.

The hospital dean agreed. "Shall I inform Mr. Fulcher as well?"

Kayla pondered for a moment and said, "Yes. Go ahead."

Having the opportunity to let Julian know about her situation would help her make her presence known. Perhaps he would even pick her up from the hospital when she was discharged.

Kayla immersed herself in the beautiful fantasies, and picked up her phone to browse through her social media feed.

Soon after she started scrolling, her hands trembled...

From sheer rage.

She opened Diana's feed multiple times to make sure her eyes weren't playing tricks on her, and her face slowly twisted into an ugly expression.

Diana's post read: [Parting is always for a better reunion.]

Accompanying the post was a photo of Diana kissing Julian in a car.

Kayla was furious and threw her phone away in frustration, smashing everything she could get her hands on in the room.

But even after she had finished destroying everything in her room, the picture remained deeply engraved in her mind.

Diana's flawless face seemed especially vivid...

Diana had always been more graceful and elegant compared to Kayla; and now, compared to her-who had become a disfigured monster-Diana had outshone her even more!

How dare that b*tch, Diana!

This was clearly intentional!

She repeatedly claimed that she wanted to avenge her babies, but in reality, she just wanted to ruin Kayla's face completely!

Kayla couldn't at all fathom the importance of Diana's babies to the former, nor did she ever consider that she had done anything wrong.

Rather, the more she thought about it, the more she believed that Diana had long harbored intentions of stealing Julian away from her.

Perhaps even the divorce had been Diana's plan to trap her!

That b*tch!

How dare she...!

Kayla trembled with anger, her entire being shaking. When her gaze fell upon the mirror and she saw her reflection, she let out a crazed shriek and raised her hand to smash the mirror violently.

How could she have become so ugly?!

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After all Diana had done to Kayla, what right did the former have to live in such a carefree manner?

Kayla was dissatisfied with this outcome.

She wouldn't accept this!

She was seething with rage; despite all her rage, she didn't dare call Julian. After all, she had already used such a desperate plan to feign suffering during their encounter at the hotel in the past. Even then, her actions hadn't moved him the slightest!

What else could she do in the coming days to make Julian marry her, especially when she was cursed with this disfigured face?

Kayla sat amidst the mess of her ward, looking at the shards of mirror in her hand as she sank deep into her thoughts.

After a long while, an idea came to her, and she looked up.

Since the conventional path wasn't working, why not explore the crooked path once more?

Back at Julian's villa, Diana felt like it had been a long time since she had returned, even though she had stayed here just yesterday.

“I’ve already paid the rent for Nina’s place,” Julian said, noticing her slightly dazed expression. “You don’t have to worry about her.”

Besides, Vans was living next door.

Even if they were currently in a conflict, Diana understood that they wouldn’t separate for the time being.

After all, they still had feelings for each other.

By leaving, perhaps Diana could give them more space, and it would help their relationship.

That was one of the reasons she had agreed to move back to the villa so quickly.

“Thank you,” Diana said with a nod, making no mention of returning the rent to Julian.

Julian couldn’t help but breathe a sigh of relief, and even silently rejoiced that Diana was finally not being overly polite with him.

“Wait here,” Julian said as he took off his coat and unbuttoned his cuff, rolling it up to his elbows before heading upstairs.

Diana didn’t understand what he was doing, so she simply followed him.

However, she soon realized that he had gone into the room where Kayla used to stay.

Diana’s eyes brightened up, and she asked, “What are you going to do?”

“Throw things away,” Julian replied. He hadn’t expected her to follow him, but it was fine.

It would make things go quicker and more decisively.

Clearing out everything related to Kayla as soon as possible would be more beneficial for his relationship with Diana, anyway.

Julian pushed his sleeves up further, then glanced at Diana. “Are you coming in too?”

Diana walked in without answering.

She had to admit that though Kayla hadn't lived here for long, her presence was heavily marked as the room was filled with her belongings; from the small sample-size makeup to various jewelry, clothes, and decorations. Everything Kayla had treated as her own filled every corner of the place.

"We agreed that you'd decide what to throw away and I'd handle it," Julian said as he crouched down, the sunlight outlining his perfect profile.

Diana didn't look at him, but turned her attention to the items in the room.

"I don't want any of it."

Julian hadn't heard her speak in such a childish and domineering tone before, and it felt somewhat refreshing.

He couldn't help but tease her a little. "You don't want to keep at least one thing as a memento?"

Diana remained silent, confused.

She had thought that Julian was genuine in his support to remove all traces of Kayla in the villa, but in reality, he had only given her lip service. Deep down, he still wanted her to be a sensible substitute.

Seeing the change in her expression, Julian quickly backtracked, "I was only teasing you."

However, the damage was done, and Diana didn't believe him at all.

Julian was clearly pretending to be willing to go along with her whims.

"Forget it," Diana said, suddenly losing interest. "Just let the things be."

She could throw away the physical things for now, but it wouldn't remain gone forever.

The true owner of this villa would eventually be Kayla.

The only reason she could move back in was because Julian was affected by the physical disfigurement of his first love, and had again confused Diana with Kayla.

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If Diana wanted to make Julian happy, she shouldn't push her limits with him when it came to Kayla.

"I don't mind it anymore."

It was obvious Diana was lying, and Julian could sense her displeasure. He quickly said, "You don't have to choose. Just throw everything away."

With that, he started moving; throwing everything into a large cardboard box and then straight into the trash downstairs.

Diana found this scene somewhat amusing.

Had Kayla done the same with Diana's things when she first moved in?

No mercy, swift, and decisive actions.

And now, Julian was doing the same to Kayla's things.

How did he manage to navigate between her and Kayla like this? Didn't he get tired of it?

With these thoughts in mind, she couldn't help the words that escaped her mouth in a whisper, "Is it because...you don't love Kayla that much?"

Julian paused.

What did she mean by that?

He didn't even have any feelings of love toward Kayla at all!

He only had a sense of obligation toward Kayla, as well as a bond that had formed over the many years of knowing each other.

He had explained this to Diana countless times, but it seemed she still refused to believe it.

Julian felt a wave of helplessness wash through him. He didn't know how to explain things any clearer to Diana.

After thinking for a while, he raised his hand, gently caressed Diana's head as he used to, and said, "Don't think of nonsense like that."

This used to be how he comforted Diana and showed her affection.

But today, it sent a chilling sensation through Diana; his actions seemed to have pushed her into an icy cave.

Julian was always like this. He never gave her questions a straight answer, and simply pacified her like a mindless doll.

"I'm not thinking about anything," Diana said, shaking her head.

She was no longer interested in asking him such meaningless questions.

After all, she rarely told him any truths nowadays.

At this, a tinge of bitterness welled up in Julian's eyes.

"Diana," he said with a sigh. "Have you forgotten everything I've said?"

"What?"

Diana was confused. Julian had said many things, and she didn't dare make herself remember any of them. If she did, she would only be torturing herself.

The thing Julian referred to was when he had told her to laugh if she was happy, cry if she was sad, and curse if she was upset.

She didn't need to put up an act before him, nor did she need to pretend she was feeling something she wasn't.

Julian wanted to emphasize this, but seeing her lack of enthusiasm, he lost the desire to continue speaking and simply reached out to embrace her.

Sometimes, actions speak louder than words.

At this moment, Diana could clearly feel the warmth of his emotions. And yet...

She didn't dare believe that this warmth was meant for her.

She closed her eyes wearily.

If... If their babies were still alive, would everything be different?

Unfortunately, there was no such thing as 'what ifs*' in life.

Diana pursed her lips and concealed all her pain, only letting her superficial side to surface.

Julian knew that moving back home didn't mean that Diana had opened her heart to him. They still had a long way to go.

Ultimately, they were in such a position because he had been a complete and utter scumbag. His actions throughout this entire time before this had thoroughly shattered Diana's trust in him.

In the days to come, he would have to proceed slowly and cautiously. He couldn't afford to be impatient, and that was what he told himself.

Eventually, all of Kayla's things were thrown away. The guest room was once again empty, as if no one had ever lived there.

If only people could be cleared out of life as easily as objects, swept away without a trace.

Later, Julian noticed that Diana didn't eat much for dinner and was worried.

"Are you still not fully recovered?"

Diana's hold on the spoon tightened. So, he still remembered that she had recently miscarried! She thought he had long forgotten about her and the babies.

"I'm almost there," Diana replied, trying her best to suppress the shakiness in her voice and not allowing any emotions to leak through.