

The Formidable Son-In-Law: The Charismatic Lucas Gray

Chapter 235 – 266

What Is the Truth?

Chapter 235: What Is the Truth?

Frightened by the scene just now, the two receptionists had hidden behind the marble counter and shivered in fear. When they saw the people suddenly come downstairs, they hurriedly dashed toward them and complained to the manager, “Mr. Perry, these people tried to cause trouble in the Ocean Bathhouse!”

As they spoke, they pointed their fingers at Lucas and the others.

The person addressed as Mr. Perry immediately glared at them hostilely and barked, “You actually have the audacity to cause trouble in the Ocean Bathhouse. You’re very brazen! You even dared to hurt my people. How are you going to settle this?”

As soon as Perry finished speaking, several more security guards walked over from the lobby with electric batons and other weapons. They surrounded the four of them and were obviously out to settle scores with them.

Once the answer given by Lucas and the rest was not to Perry’s satisfaction, they would either be beaten up or suffer more severe consequences.

William had rarely experienced such altercations, so as soon as he saw these people surrounding him, he became extremely nervous. He reached his arms out to shield his daughters, but a layer of cold sweat had already seeped out of his forehead.

“Dad, everything will be fine with Lucas here.” Cheyenne was touched and gently patted William’s arm while comforting him softly.

William took a glance at Lucas, who looked extremely composed. Only then did he realize that his son-in-law wasn’t an ordinary person. As long as he was around, he definitely wouldn’t let anything happen to Charlotte and Cheyenne!

Lucas really didn’t take these security guards seriously. Even if they were holding guns instead of electric batons, he wouldn’t be scared at all.

“You’d better find out what happened before doing anything. Otherwise, customers won’t dare to patronize your place anymore,” Lucas said calmly.

The manager, Perry, couldn’t be bothered to find out what exactly happened. In his opinion, he would deal with all troublemakers!

But there were also many other customers around who rushed out after hearing the commotion. Besides, considering what Lucas said, he was worried that the customers of the bathhouse might have a bad impression of it if he handled this inappropriately. So Perry forced himself to stay patient and said to a receptionist patiently, “Tell me what happened just now. Why was there a fight?”

This receptionist was the one who had called the security guards to come over and kick William out, so she definitely wouldn’t give a fair account of what had happened.

“Mr. Perry, here’s what happened. That filthy and smelly beggar suddenly rushed over to create trouble, causing a huge hindrance for the other guests. I just kindly tried to tell him to leave, but I didn’t expect him to suddenly go berserk like a madman and try to attack us. I suspect that he’s mentally unsound, and I was afraid that he might scare the other guests, so I got the security guards to send him out.

“But I didn’t expect his family to be waiting outside. As soon as they saw our security guards, they immediately started hitting them ruthlessly. They even knocked the captain out! They then caused a huge stir and said that it’s our fault. They’re obviously out to extort us!”

The receptionist was very articulate, and she even managed to twist the facts while adding fuel to the fire. Everyone in the lobby looked at William, Lucas, and the others with disdain.

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William hurriedly shook his head and clarified loudly, “No, it’s not like that! I’m not mentally unsound. I just wanted to come here to take a bath. I also brought enough money. Besides, I was even willing to pay a little more! But this receptionist called me a smelly beggar and chased me out without hesitation! Look at these footprints on my body. They’re from when they kicked me out!

“My daughter and son-in-law naturally came over to stand up for me and demand for an explanation when they saw that I was being assaulted. How is that considered extortion? You people are obviously the problematic ones. You discriminated against me and hit me for no rhyme nor reason!”

Everyone looked at William. There were indeed lots of footprints and mud on his body. Their eyes became full of bewilderment.

The receptionist hurriedly said, "Those footprints and mud on your body were already there when you stepped into our bathhouse. Who knows where you got those stains? You're even deliberately trying to frame us!"

William quickly tried to retort, but the receptionist asked, "You said you're not mentally unsound, huh? Look at how dirty you are. You probably haven't showered in weeks. Which person in their right mind who has a sane daughter and son-in-law would end up in such a filthy state?"

William opened his mouth, but he was no match for the eloquent and sharp-tongued receptionist. It was a fact that he was extremely filthy and hadn't showered in weeks. All of a sudden, he couldn't find the words to rebut her, so he immediately became flustered.

The onlookers around them also began discussing.

"I think this receptionist has a point. Which ordinary person would let themselves become so smelly and dirty? I can smell the stench from so far away. Tsk!"

"Exactly. Why did he come out before taking a shower at home? There must be something wrong with him."

"Maybe they're just here to extort money! When we were in the lounge just now, no one witnessed what happened. If it wasn't for this receptionist, we might have been deceived by them!"

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"Did you hear that? That's the truth. What else do you have to say?"

Hearing the discussion going on around him, Perry realized that they had started leaning toward the Ocean Bathhouse. He couldn't help but be smug and sneered.

"No, I really wasn't going to hit her. I just came in for a bath! You... you have to believe me!"

William looked at the people around him and then shifted his gaze to his daughters and Lucas anxiously.

He had finally reconciled with his daughters and made up his mind to turn over a new leaf, so he was really scared that they and Lucas would get the wrong idea about him. The opinions of the others paled in comparison.

Lucas grabbed William's hand and said sincerely, "William, I believe you."

Cheyenne and Charlotte also looked at William with great trust. “Dad, we trust you too. The staff of this bathhouse clearly bullied you!”

“The truth is right before you, yet you still have the audacity to slander us. You probably won’t regret it until you see the consequence, huh?!” Perry flew into a rage and was about to order the security guards to chase them out.

“Hmph!” Lucas sneered. “It’s just a few one-sided words from your own employees. How can it be considered the truth?”

Pointing at the few surveillance cameras on the ceiling around them, he hollered, “Aren’t there cameras in this bathhouse? Since you want to find out the truth, we can just look at the footage to see who’s lying and being the bully!”

Upon hearing his words, William was overjoyed. As long as there was footage from the cameras, they would be able to prove his innocence!

On the other hand, after the receptionist heard that Lucas wanted to see the footage of the surveillance cameras, her expression immediately changed drastically.

Chapter 236: Killing One To Warn Others

Of course, Lucas saw the nervous reaction of the receptionist.

Perry’s heart skipped a beat too, and he immediately understood that things definitely weren’t as simple as what the receptionist had told him.

The other people, who were surrounding them and watching the situation, immediately seemed interested because the receptionist’s account was completely different from that of William. Their claims were worlds apart, so one of them had to be lying!

But was the liar this filthy and smelly beggar-like person or the fashionably dressed receptionist who sat at the front desk of the Ocean Bathhouse all day?

Everyone watched the scene with interest. Every now and then, some of them would urge Perry to retrieve the surveillance camera footage to let everyone see what exactly happened.

As soon as Perry saw how nervous the receptionist was, he already knew that his staff must have made a mistake. Otherwise, how could they have asked him to produce the surveillance footage? If William and the others had done something wrong, wouldn’t the surveillance footage expose them?

But at this moment, the surrounding customers all started clamoring and asking for the surveillance footage to be shown, which really put Perry in a spot. It seemed that he had to let Lucas intervene and settle the problem.

Perry walked to Lucas and said softly, "Rascal, you injured one of my security guards today and even broke the door of our bathhouse. As long as you get lost immediately, I won't hold it against you for what happened today and can pretend that nothing has happened. Otherwise, I won't let you leave this place unscathed. Consider it clearly!"

He clearly wanted Lucas to take the initiative to drop the matter and let it go, but he acted haughtily like a snob. He was commanding Lucas and even threatened him.

Lucas wasn't the type to let himself be threatened. Besides, his father-in-law and sister-in-law had just been insulted. If he chose to pretend that nothing happened and just leave, what would that make him?

Lucas sneered. "Your staff made a mistake, but you framed my father-in-law. Now that everyone is asking for the surveillance footage to be shown, you're trying to threaten me because you're afraid that the truth will be to your disadvantage. What right do you have to do that?"

Lucas's voice was extremely loud. He was deliberately trying to make the watching customers get a clear idea of what was going on.

When Perry saw Lucas say that out loud, showing how unrelenting he was, his face became extremely sullen as he glared daggers at Lucas.

Indeed, the surrounding people also understood by now that Perry was actually threatening Lucas. Clearly, there was something wrong with this matter. They couldn't help but start discussing among themselves.

"Oh my god, I thought it was their fault and that they're deliberately trying to extort this bathhouse. But it seems that Mr. Perry doesn't dare to show us the surveillance footage. He must be lying then!"

"Yeah, he refuses to admit to his mistake or apologize. He even went on to threaten others. He's being such a snob."

"Oh gosh, I thought that the Ocean Bathhouse provides excellent service, but it turns out they're so two-faced. If I get dirty and come here someday, will they treat me like a beggar and chase me out?"

"Yeah, that receptionist was so full of confidence and gusto that I thought they really got bullied, but it turns out they were the bullies. I've really had enough! It seems that I have to go back and talk to my friends about this. From now on, we'd better avoid this place, lest we get framed by them. It'd be hard to explain then!"

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There was a sudden twist in the situation, and the reputation of the Ocean Bathhouse was greatly tarnished.

Perry was naturally glum. But since the matter had already happened, and the situation had escalated out of his control after so many mistakes, he naturally wouldn't admit to them!

No matter what, he had to put the blame on William and the others and then chase them out!

"Hmph, you people deliberately came here to twist the facts and slander the Ocean Bathhouse, yet you still have the audacity to cause a stir here. You're really arrogant!

"Security, break this man's limbs and throw him out. Strip those two women naked and throw them out too! I'm going to use this as a warning to everyone. Anyone who dares to cause trouble here will end up the same."

Perry's words were extremely ruthless, and his methods were vicious. Having their limbs broken and stripped naked would be immense suffering and humiliation!

But this also caused the surrounding people not to dare to discuss the matter loudly. If they messed up and got into trouble too, what would happen?

Many customers here were ordinary people here to enjoy a bath and massage. They always thought that this place was just a simple bathhouse, but they never expected the manager to be so vicious and ruthless. There was definitely a complicated reason behind it.

Many of them were terrified, and they made up their minds that they would never patronize this bathhouse again!

After hearing Perry's orders, the security guards immediately gripped their electric batons tightly and surrounded them.

There was a cold, murderous look in Lucas's eyes.

Lucas didn't take the threat of having his limbs broken seriously at all.

But Perry actually had the audacity to say that he wanted to strip Cheyenne and Charlotte naked and then throw them out to humiliate them. That was something that Lucas absolutely couldn't tolerate.

As long as he was here, no one would be able to do anything to them.

When the battle was about to begin, someone behind the surrounding crowd suddenly yelled in a clear voice, "Stop! I'll fight anyone who dares to lay a finger on Mr. Gray!"

The person who spoke quickly pushed aside the crowd of onlookers and walked over. He was bespectacled, slender, and tall, looking extremely harmless.

But those who knew him were aware that he was Joe Daniels, one of the few people in Orange County not to be provoked.

When Perry saw Joe, he immediately shuddered and asked softly, "Joe, why are you here? Is the service upstairs unsatisfactory?"

Joe pushed Perry away and walked toward Lucas. He bent forward and asked, "Mr. Gray, these dimwits didn't hurt you just now, did they?"

When he saw how respectful Joe was to Lucas, Perry inhaled sharply!

Chapter 237: Change of Attitude

Joe was a rare talent in the industry of underground businesses. He used to be in charge of the Opulence and had a ruthless style of doing things that made others submit to him. He was said to have become the new owner of Little Atlantis City recently and was in control of almost the entire industry of underground businesses in Orange County. His power and strength were absolutely not to be underestimated. A trivial lobby manager of a bathhouse like Perry was not fit to talk to him!

After learning that Joe had come to the Ocean Bathhouse, Perry had been incredibly nervous and had hurriedly instructed his subordinates to attend to Joe.

But why would such a big shot like him actually stoop so low in front of Lucas and respectfully address him as Mr. Gray?

Perry immediately had an ominous hunch!

"Is this part of the turf you manage?" Lucas asked calmly with a straight face, his emotions entirely concealed.

Joe hurriedly shook his head. "No, I just happen to be here to take a bath and discuss a business deal with someone. This bathhouse has absolutely nothing to do with me!"

Joe had always been smart and quick-witted. When he was behind the crowd, he had already heard of the conflict and knew that there must have been some dispute between Lucas and the manager. Thus, he had to draw a clear line between himself

and the bathhouse immediately, lest Lucas took it out on him and thought that it was a result of his lack of proper management or that he had given them permission to do it.

Just half a month ago, Joe had pledged allegiance to Lucas of his own accord, and only then did Lucas let him manage Little Atlantis City. In fact, Lucas had put almost all the underground businesses in the city under Joe's management in a bid to exterminate all businesses and industries related to the vices. Joe was tasked with a massive responsibility.

Besides, the Ocean Bathhouse had never had a clean background, so Joe was worried that Lucas might blame him for being incompetent.

Lucas nodded and suddenly said, "Since this place has nothing to do with you, go and get someone to draw up a contract for me now. I'm going to acquire this place."

Lucas's words immediately resulted in a drastic change in Perry's expression.

He never thought that the young man dressed in ordinary clothes in front of him would say that he wanted to buy the Ocean Bathhouse. He was really generous!

But when he saw how subservient Joe was toward this young man, Perry suddenly doubted his previous thoughts as he wondered, *Is this young man really a wealthy bigwig?*

Perry was making wild guesses in his head, but he was just the lobby manager of the Ocean Bathhouse and didn't have the authority to sell the bathhouse!

Things are about to get even more troublesome!

Perry frowned as the ominous feeling within him grew stronger and stronger.

As the lobby manager, he was well aware of what business was being run on the top floor of the bathhouse. He knew that this bathhouse couldn't be sold!

He would be in deep trouble if his negligence and mishandling of the situation just now caused the Ocean Bathhouse to be acquired by someone else! The higher-ups would definitely not spare him!

Perry's heart ricocheted in his chest. And while he was thinking about how he should deal with the matter at hand, he also decided that he had to send someone to quickly notify the general manager of the bathhouse upstairs.

After Joe heard Lucas's plans, his eyes widened in surprise. He then hesitated for a moment before walking to Lucas and saying softly, "Mr. Gray, this is actually not just a simple bathhouse. The owner is the Taylors, one of the four major families of Orange County.

“Moreover, the business on the top floor of this bathhouse is actually not very proper... So you have to think this through!”

Joe wanted to let Lucas know that the Taylors were the owners of this bathhouse so that he wouldn't accidentally offend them. And he also wanted to remind Lucas that they were running an illegal and improper business, so Lucas would have to pay an immense price to acquire it. In his opinion, the cons outweighed the pros.

Lucas was a little surprised to hear this. He didn't expect to have ended up choosing a bathhouse with a fishy background related to the Taylors when he intended to just randomly pick one for William to have a bath in.

Not long ago, Scott Taylor had once gone to Lucas's villa at Pearl Lake and tried to purchase it from him forcefully.

Now, the bathhouse that he was trying to acquire happened to be a property of the Taylors. It was truly fate.

Perry was full of regret now. *This young man should be a powerful figure I obviously couldn't afford to provoke. I was too careless with handling this situation!*

Perry swallowed his pride and forced himself to smile as he scurried to Lucas, bent forward, and said apologetically, “Mr. Gray, I'm so sorry to have offended you. I already have a clear idea of the situation. It's indeed the mistakes of our receptionists and security guards. I'll definitely fire them and give you an explanation! In addition, I also apologize on behalf of the Ocean Bathhouse. Please be magnanimous and forgive us!

“And this old gentleman, I'm really sorry. You just said you wanted to take a bath, right? No problem. We will arrange a top-notch private jacuzzi room for your enjoyment and gift you with a supreme annual membership card free of charge. For a year, you can come to take a bath for free as and when you please!”

William froze for a while before he reacted, feeling surprised and flattered. He tugged Lucas's sleeve gently and persuaded softly, “Lucas, let it go. Since they've apologized, let's not pursue it any further!”

William was timid and conscientious by nature. Seeing the change in Perry's attitude and considering the fact that he had apologized and even promised to give him a free membership card, William was no longer disgruntled. So he persuaded Lucas to let the matter go.

In his opinion, it was no big deal that he had been kicked, as he didn't lose anything else. On the contrary, Lucas kicked the security guard leader of the bathhouse to the point of losing consciousness and being severely wounded. If the bathhouse pursued the matter, they would have to bear a greater responsibility.

So in his opinion, the bathhouse was being sincere enough to drop the matter and offer them an apology.

After all, it was better to avoid unnecessary trouble.

But Lucas felt that the apology and compensation that Perry offered were insignificant.

Chapter 238: Buying the Bathhouse

In Lucas's opinion, Perry did that not because he really knew that they had made a mistake but because he could tell from Joe's attitude toward Lucas that Lucas might really be a big shot whom he couldn't afford to offend. So he began to be deferential and bowed to Lucas.

But if Lucas was just an ordinary person, they would definitely have suffered a huge loss!

If he was just an ordinary person who didn't have any combat skills, he would have definitely ended up having his limbs broken and thrown out of the bathhouse, thereby becoming a cripple for the rest of his life.

Moreover, the beauties Cheyenne and Charlotte would also have been stripped naked, humiliated, and thrown out of the bathhouse. That would have resulted in a huge uproar, and perhaps they would have become the subjects of public criticism and never be able to raise their heads high again.

How could the matter be resolved with just an apology and a membership card?

"Get your boss to come out. I'm going to buy this bathhouse." Lucas's tone was indifferent but full of determination, leaving no room for negotiation at all.

Cold sweat immediately emerged on Perry's forehead.

"What's going on? What's all the commotion about?"

At this moment, a middle-aged man in his forties with a slicked-back hairstyle slowly walked down from upstairs.

He frowned while looking at the commotion in the lobby below with a look of displeasure.

Perry's forehead twitched, and his heart was full of dismay.

He had received a report from his subordinates and specially went downstairs to deal with the ruckus. But he didn't expect it to spiral out of control, and now, things had escalated to the extent of Lucas wanting to buy the bathhouse.

Now, the owner of the bathhouse, Calvin Pearce, had also come downstairs. He found it hard to explain himself.

But things had already escalated to this point, so there was no way he could continue to cover it up.

Perry walked toward Calvin and reported softly, "Mr. Pearce, our staff accidentally offended these people just now, but I've also apologized to them and offered them compensation. However, they refuse to let it go and insist on buying the Ocean Bathhouse. What should we do?"

Anger immediately appeared on Calvin's face.

Although he was not the true owner of the Ocean Bathhouse, he was the legally appointed person in charge of the bathhouse. He had also relied on the illegal business run on the top floor of the bathhouse to build connections with upper-class figures of the county.

He thought that Lucas, whom he had never seen before, probably shouldn't be a descendant of a prestigious family in the county. Besides, his last name 'Gray' didn't ring a bell either because there was no prominent family with the last name Gray.

But the young man in front of him actually had the guts to claim that he wanted to buy the Ocean Bathhouse. In his opinion, Lucas was delusional and ignorant!

Calvin narrowed his eyes and said with a gloomy expression, "Punk, you want to buy the Ocean Bathhouse? You'd better ask around and find out who the owner of this bathhouse is before saying that. Who are you to buy this place?"

Calvin's eyes were full of obvious contempt.

Upon hearing his words, Joe immediately stepped forward and glared at Calvin before hollering, "Calvin Pearce, mind your tone! How dare you talk to Mr. Gray with such a rude tone? Are you tired of living?"

Although Joe didn't want Lucas to confront the Taylors, one of the four top families in Orange County, he naturally couldn't stand by and quietly watch a Taylor lackey insult Lucas.

After all, he had pledged allegiance to Lucas, so he was Lucas's subordinate. He had to intervene now that Lucas was insulted. Although he didn't want to go against the

Taylor's, Calvin was only the person in charge of the bathhouse. And when it came to authority and power, Joe wasn't afraid of Calvin at all.

Calvin frowned.

Just a short while ago, Joe came to the Ocean Bathhouse to negotiate a business deal with some distinguished guests, and Calvin had also tasked his subordinates to serve him well in a bid to get closer to him. But he never thought that Joe would have an extraordinary relationship with the young man in front of him and even stand up for him. Joe didn't even mind offending Calvin and the Taylor's for him.

The thought of it made anger surge in Calvin's heart.

Although he was usually kind and polite to Joe because he didn't want to offend him, Joe's power and authority were actually inferior to the Taylor's, even though he controlled almost the entire underground businesses of Orange County!

If Joe dared to offend him and the Taylor's because of Lucas, he would suggest to the Taylor's to have Joe killed!

"Joe, you're just an outsider. I suggest you don't interfere in our affairs!" Calvin warned indifferently.

Joe was about to lose his temper when Lucas shot him a glance that made him stop moving immediately.

"Yes, I've taken a liking to this bathhouse. Name your price. I'll buy it now," Lucas said composedly.

"Hmph, you're very generous, huh?!" Calvin snorted. "Which family do you belong to?"

Lucas glanced at him. But before he could say anything, the receptionist beside Calvin said, "Mr. Pearce, I know who this person is! Look, the woman standing there used to be known as the most beautiful woman in Orange County, Cheyenne Carter! That man is her good-for-nothing husband!

"He isn't the son of a prestigious family but a poor chauffeur!"

Hearing the receptionist's words, Calvin turned to look at the two beautiful women in the bathhouse.

When he came downstairs just now, he had already noticed how stunningly gorgeous they were, but he didn't recognize Cheyenne, the former greatest beauty of the county.

After he heard the receptionist's words, it finally dawned on him that the people in front of him were the same ones who had been disowned by the third-tier Carter family!

Calvin burst into laughter. “Hahaha, this is such a hilarious joke! A good-for-nothing who got kicked out by his wife’s family has the cheek to shamelessly want to buy the Ocean Bathhouse. Should I say that you are ignorant and fearless? You are really brazen!”

Lucas shook his head regretfully and sighed. “I was quite hesitant about buying your bathhouse at first because I felt that it wouldn’t be worth it, but I’ve decided that I’m going to buy it!”

Calvin immediately stopped smiling!

He looked at Lucas in disdain and sneered, “You? Sure, stop blowing your horn! As long as you can take out eight million dollars in cash now, I’ll immediately sell the Ocean Bathhouse to you!”

Chapter 239: Take Out Eight Million Dollars

Eight million dollars was not a small amount for any family, let alone Lucas, whom Calvin thought was a good-for-nothing the Carters had kicked out.

In Calvin’s opinion, it would be an impressive feat if Lucas could even take out 80,000 dollars in cash.

He was certain that Lucas would never be able to fork out the massive sum of eight million dollars!

He firmly believed that Lucas was just deliberately putting on an act and pretending to be impressive. He wanted to see how this good-for-nothing could afford to take out eight million dollars!

If he couldn’t, Calvin would definitely make sure Lucas got on his knees and crawled out of the bathhouse!

After Lucas heard the price Calvin named, his expression remained unchanged. Instead, he smirked calmly. “Everyone, you heard him clearly. Calvin Pearce said that if I can take out eight million dollars in cash, he will immediately sell the Ocean Bathhouse to me. All of you are witnesses.”

Then he turned to look at Calvin. “Give me your bank account number. I’ll transfer the money to you now.”

Calvin’s face twitched a little, and he sneered. “Hmph, go on, keep pretending. I’ll see how long you can keep at it!”

He pulled out a bank card from his pocket and dropped it on the front desk next to him. "My card is right here. Do the transfer now!"

Their actions immediately piqued the curiosity of the customers surrounding them and watching.

Since ancient times, it had been human nature to enjoy gossip and watch dramatic commotions, especially since the one taking place in front of them now was so rare and exciting!

Everyone was wondering whether Lucas could afford to take out eight million dollars or if he was just putting on a front.

There were also a few who were secretly speculating and making guesses among themselves, wondering whether or not Calvin would really sell the bathhouse if Lucas could really afford the eight million dollars.

Just as everyone was watching curiously, Lucas took out his phone and typed a series of digits. Soon, a text message notification popped up on Calvin's phone screen.

Everyone immediately looked at Calvin intently.

Some who were eager and impatient even urged him, "Mr. Pearce, hurry up and check. Has he transferred the money?"

"Did this person really fork out eight million in cash?"

"Wow, no way can a live-in son-in-law really take out so much money? That's terrifying!"

"Everyone, don't worry. It might be spam!"

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Everyone began discussing, and Calvin began to get the chills.

But he didn't believe that Lucas would really transfer eight million dollars to him. He took out his phone from his pocket and opened the text message while saying contemptuously, "Hmph, who knows how much money this punk actually transferred to me? He might have only transferred a dollar! Let's not be fooled..."

Before he could finish, his eyes suddenly widened in horror as he stared in disbelief at the string of numbers in the text message on his cell phone.

[A sum of \$8,000,000 has been credited to your savings account (ending with 9291). Your account balance is now \$8,041,000. Please verify as soon as possible.]

Calvin looked at the string of numbers several times in disbelief. He even rubbed his eyes vigorously, wondering if he had counted the wrong number of zeros or had read the message wrongly.

Seeing Calvin stand rooted to the ground for a long time without saying anything, the surrounding customers began to get impatient.

A few bolder ones even went up to Calvin and craned their necks to take a look at the screen of his phone. "Wow, he really transferred eight million dollars! I saw it! This person really transferred eight million to Calvin's bank account!"

The customers gathered around immediately exclaimed in astonishment.

There were many families in the county who had assets worth more than 15 million dollars, but there were very few who had enough liquid funds to casually take out 8 million dollars.

Even the direct descendants of the top families in Orange County were not that financially powerful!

The vast majority of people would have invested most of their money in their family businesses or in stocks, funds, or other financial products. They wouldn't leave it in the bank and accrue a meager amount of interest.

Besides, the fact that Lucas could casually take out that sum of money was enough to show that they were just an insignificant portion of his savings account.

There were only two possibilities. One was that Lucas had terrible financial sense and didn't know how to make his money grow itself. The other was that he was incredibly wealthy, so much so that he had more than enough not to bother about the eight million dollars!

With these thoughts in mind, Calvin couldn't help but inhale sharply as a wave of chilliness struck his teeth.

He didn't think that such a wealthy person would have such bad financial literacy. So the truth should be that Lucas's wealth was unimaginable!

In fact, Calvin had really read too much into this.

The 8 million dollars were actually a portion of the 24 million that Lucas had recently won from Tony at Little Atlantis City.

Not to mention eight million dollars, even if Calvin asked for twice the amount, Lucas would have transferred the money to him without hesitation.

After seeing that Lucas had transferred eight million dollars to Calvin, Charlotte and Cheyenne didn't seem to be surprised at all.

They had already known for a long time that Lucas had a powerful background and a massive amount of wealth. Although eight million dollars wasn't a small sum, it was indeed insignificant to Lucas.

However, William reacted much more differently. He widened his eyes in shock, unable to believe what he just heard!

His son-in-law, whom he had always thought was penniless, actually managed to casually transfer eight million dollars in cash. This was beyond imaginable for him!

The stranger thing was that Lucas had decided to use that money to buy the bathhouse all because William had been bullied and humiliated by the staff here!

This was such a generous move!

At this moment, William really wondered if he was dreaming because everything happening in front of him was too bizarre, outrageous, and unbelievable!

The crowd of onlookers was naturally amazed. On the other hand, Calvin, the person involved, turned as pale as a sheet.

Chapter 240: Acquiring the Bathhouse

Calvin casually said that he would sell the Ocean Bathhouse to Lucas if he could pay eight million dollars in cash right on the spot because he was initially certain that Lucas wouldn't be able to fork out such a large sum of money.

But the real owner of the bathhouse was the Taylors. Calvin was just the legally appointed person in charge of the bathhouse. How could he have the guts to sell it without permission?

Calvin knew for a fact that the Taylors definitely wouldn't spare him if he dared to sell the Ocean Bathhouse!

At this moment, a young lawyer in his twenties clad in a suit and holding a black briefcase entered the Ocean Bathhouse.

After he scanned the crowd, he walked straight to Joe and lowered his head respectfully. "Joe, this is the transfer agreement you asked us to prepare just now. The terms have been drafted, and this contract will take effect as soon as the transferor and transferee sign it."

Joe grabbed the document from the lawyer's hand, quickly looked through the contract terms, and then handed it to Lucas after ensuring that there were no problems. He said respectfully, "Mr. Gray, the contract has been prepared according to your orders. There are no problems. You may sign it."

Lucas took the transfer contract from Joe and said with a nod of satisfaction, "Good."

He then turned around to look at Calvin and said smilingly, "Mr. Pearce, what you said just now in front of everyone should still count, right? I've already transferred the money to you and drafted the contract. Take a look at it and sign your name."

Calvin's face was extremely sullen at this moment.

Large droplets of sweat appeared on his forehead as he stared at the contract in front of him in horror as if it was a ferocious beast.

Calvin definitely wouldn't dare to sign that contract!

"Uh, Mr. Gray, I was just kidding. I don't intend to sell this bathhouse," Calvin said embarrassedly with an awful, forced smile.

Lucas stopped smiling and said coldly, "In that case, do your words mean nothing at all? I didn't take it as a joke. I've already transferred eight million dollars to your bank account. Do you think I'm joking?"

Calvin hurriedly said, "I'll transfer that money back to you now, not a single cent less!"

Calvin then took out his phone and fumbled around while anxiously trying to transfer the eight million dollars back to Lucas.

Lucas grabbed Calvin's wrist to stop him before saying coldly, "I've already paid you the money. It's now time for you to complete the sale to me."

Then he took the transfer contract, quickly signed his name on it, and pushed it toward Calvin. "Mr. Pearce, it's your turn now."

Calvin gritted his teeth and roared, "I said I'm not going to sell it!"

At this moment, his eyes were full of fear, stemming from thinking about the Taylors.

As the person in charge of the Ocean Bathhouse, Calvin knew very well what it meant to the Taylors, especially with the illegal business secretly being run on the top floor. He definitely couldn't let the bathhouse land in the hands of an outsider, or else the Taylors would certainly kill him!

Thus, no matter what, Calvin didn't dare to sign his name on the transfer contract.

Lucas slightly narrowed his eyes that were full of impatience and annoyance.

Joe instantly understood what Lucas meant. He shot a glance at the bodyguards behind him, and the both of them walked over and grabbed Calvin's arm.

"What are you doing? What are you trying to do?" Calvin hollered in fear and anger.

Joe chuckled. "Mr. Pearce, I think we should go to a private room to talk about this matter!"

Then the two bodyguards held Calvin down like he was a prisoner and dragged him into a small room nearby before he could even say anything.

Soon, Joe came out of the room, holding the signed transfer contract. He then handed it to Lucas with both hands. "Mr. Gray, the procedures have been completed. You are now the new owner of the Ocean Bathhouse."

Lucas nodded and said politely to the surrounding customers, who were overwhelmed with astonishment, "Dear guests, the incident today has affected your experience at our bathhouse. As the new owner of the Ocean Bathhouse, I hereby apologize and thank you for your support!

"Our staff will give you each a small gift as a token of our apology later. At the same time, we also hope that you will patronize the Ocean Bathhouse frequently in the future! However, I hope you won't spout nonsense about what happened today."

The customers present nodded in agreement. "Sure, you're so generous, Mr. Gray. We definitely won't spout any nonsense."

"Yeah, Mr. Gray bought this bathhouse for eight million dollars, and all the legal procedures have been completed. Who is to say anything?"

In fact, the crowd had already made many guesses about Lucas's identity as soon as he had paid the eight million dollars in cash. Since then, they were sure that Lucas was definitely not an ordinary good-for-nothing and that he definitely had incredible power!

Seeing that Lucas had dealt with Calvin so quickly and even became the new owner of the bathhouse, they knew that the methods he had resorted to, as well as what happened in that small room, were definitely far beyond the limits of their imagination.

Likewise, they wouldn't dare to spread a word about what happened today, lest they provoked Lucas and ended up having to bear severe consequences.

Satisfied with the dramatic scene they had watched and Lucas's efforts to appease them by giving them valuable gifts, they all dispersed and returned to the bathing rooms, massage rooms, and lounge from where they had come.

Only the former employees of the Ocean Bathhouse, such as the two beautiful receptionists, the security guards who had wanted to attack Lucas with electric batons, and Perry, all stood up with looks of shock and fright.

The receptionist who had slandered William had already turned as pale as a sheet, and her legs were limp. She had despair and hopelessness written all over her face. She was well aware that since Lucas was now the owner, he definitely wouldn't let her continue working at the bathhouse!

The other beautiful receptionist also looked anxious, afraid that she would be implicated and end up getting fired by Lucas too.

On the other hand, after carefully looking at Lucas for a few moments, Perry smiled and walked toward him subserviently. He bent over and said politely, "Mr. Gray, I'm really sorry for what I did just now! Please forgive me! Do you have any other orders now? Let me know, and I'll get it done immediately!"

His attitude had changed really quickly.

But Lucas merely glanced at him coldly and said indifferently, "I won't keep an employee like you around. Go to finance to collect your final pay!"

Chapter 241: By the Time He Comes

Perry was an extremely mercenary person who would succumb to the powerful and do anything for his interests. Based on the fact that he had framed them without getting the facts right alone, Lucas would definitely not let him continue working for the bathhouse.

Perry was naturally unwilling to leave. Although he was just the manager of the bathhouse, whose salary was not high and authority was limited, he could gain a lot of benefits.

If he left this job, he wouldn't be able to find another one comparable to this, especially since he was already old.

Bang!

Perry dropped to his knees in front of Lucas. "Mr. Gray, it was all my fault. Please give me another chance! I guarantee that I will never do anything wrong again! I have a family to feed. If you fire me, my family will not be able to make ends meet!"

Perry was weeping miserably and trying to play the sympathy card. Lucas was well aware of what he was doing, but he wasn't moved at all and ignored him.

Lucas called Joe over and instructed, "I'll leave it to you to take care of everything in this bathhouse. Hire someone reliable to be the manager, and keep a close tab on everything that goes on here."

Lucas naturally had no time to personally bother about such a trivial matter like dealing with the insignificant staff.

"Yes, I'll have someone come here and take over now!" Joe naturally agreed and then took out his phone to make a call in order to make arrangements.

Meanwhile, Lucas strolled toward the tiny room that Calvin had just been pushed into, only to see that he was sitting despondently with a crestfallen look. When he saw Lucas enter, a trace of nervousness appeared on his face.

But Lucas wasn't interested in him. He merely said indifferently, "You can go now. If you don't want to die, run as far as you can."

As if he had been pardoned, Calvin hurriedly scurried out.

With his sharp sense of hearing, Lucas had already heard everything that Joe said to Calvin in this room just now while he was outside.

Joe promised to give Calvin \$1.2 million as long as he signed the transfer contract. He also promised that he would help him leave Orange County and stay far from the area within the Taylors' control.

If Calvin refused, he would still be forced to sign the contract and then face the wrath of the Taylors on his own.

Thus, between the two choices, Calvin naturally decided to be wise and chose the first one.

At this moment, Joe had already arranged for someone to take over the management of the Ocean Bathhouse and entered to report to Lucas. "Mr. Gray, I've already made all the arrangements. The person will come over in a while."

Lucas nodded. "Make a trip out with me later."

Joe naturally agreed quickly.

After walking out of the room, Lucas said to William, Cheyenne, and Charlotte, "William, go up and take a bath while I go out and buy some clothes for you. Cheyenne, Charlotte, get some rest here."

Joe asked his bodyguards to stay behind to protect Charlotte and Cheyenne, lest they got into a conflict with some mindless people.

Although Lucas had long secretly arranged for some people to protect the both of them, he was pleased with Joe's decision.

After leaving the Ocean Bathhouse, Joe drove Lucas along the road unhurriedly.

Lucas had already sent Joe's subordinate to buy some clothes for William and merely wanted to talk to Joe about some matters.

"What exactly are the kinds of dubious business dealings that go on in the Ocean Bathhouse? How important are they to the Taylors?" Lucas went straight to the point.

Joe didn't dare to hide anything and hurriedly told Lucas everything honestly.

"As far as I know, the Taylors were still just a second-tier family in the city more than ten years ago. Their mainstay was some underground businesses operated on a scale similar to Tony Zander's businesses. Later on, the Taylors opened the Ocean Bathhouse, but it's just a facade and smokescreen for the illegal business they run upstairs. They have brought in various beauties from all over the world and housed them upstairs to attract distinguished guests.

"With that alone, the Ocean Bathhouse managed to help the Taylors form close relationships with many wealthy and powerful figures of Orange County, allowing them to build a stable network of connections.

"Later on, those beauties became the secret weapons that allowed the Taylors to accumulate wealth and expand their businesses, propelling them to the high status of being one of the four top families in Orange County.

"However, according to the information I have, most of those beautiful women do not come from a clean background. They were either trafficked or forced to come here, and the methods used to do so were sordid and lowly as well. I heard that they often threatened and harmed the families of these women to force them to come here. But the Taylors' sources are very secretive, and they have tight security control, so no one has been able to expose all this for many years."

Lucas frowned with a sharp and cold gaze in his eyes. "Even if the control is strict, there's bound to be many traces and clues over the years. They've done so many unconscionable things, so surely someone must have stepped in to control them. Even if the Taylors have opened up many channels and sources, they have plenty of competitors too. Do their competitors and rivals just leave them be?"

Joe laughed bitterly. "Mr. Gray, the Taylors are relatively cautious, so they didn't register the Ocean Bathhouse under their names at all. For example, Calvin Pearce. He's the legally appointed person in charge of the bathhouse, and on the surface, he seems to have nothing to do with the Taylors. So even if someone reports the bathhouse, the Taylors won't be found to be involved, and they won't admit to it no matter what.

“If something really happens, they’ll at most give the person in charge a little compensation afterward and then arrange for another person to take over. There wouldn’t be any evidence against the Taylors at all.

“Besides, the Taylors have long relied on the Ocean Bathhouse to gain a strong foothold in Orange County, and they have now developed businesses in various industries in the county. Even if the Ocean Bathhouse is eradicated now, it won’t affect them much.”

After giving Lucas a truthful explanation, Joe looked at him again. “Mr. Gray, I shouldn’t be the one to say this, but we definitely can’t hide what happened today from the Taylors. If the Taylors find out that you bought the Ocean Bathhouse, they’ll definitely take revenge on you!”

Lucas snorted coldly, and a trace of killing intent appeared in his eyes.

They really deserved to die for trafficking women and forcing them into prostitution!

“I’ll wait for them to come knocking on my door!”

Chapter 242: Finally Home

After Lucas got a clear answer about the Taylors, he instructed Joe to drive back to the Ocean Bathhouse. At this moment, Joe’s subordinate had also bought the clothes and was waiting at the entrance.

Before Lucas got out of the car, he turned to Joe again and admonished, “You must keep in mind what I told you before. I don’t want to see any more entertainment joints and establishments that provide vice-related services. The same applies to the Ocean Bathhouse!

“Also, keep a close eye on the dirty business that the Taylors operate on the top floor of the bathhouse. Call me if something crops up.”

Then Lucas gave him his business card.

Joe was overjoyed. He hurriedly grabbed the business card and saved Lucas’s contact info.

“Okay, go and get busy with your matters. You don’t have to tag along with me.”

Lucas got out of the car, took the bag of clothes from the subordinate, and walked to the Ocean Bathhouse.

Soon, William, who had taken a bath and changed into a brand new Armani suit, walked out of the dressing room.

After washing off the dirt on his body, he looked a lot less disheveled. And due to his painstaking search for Cheyenne, he had lost a significant amount of weight, as well his beer belly.

But William's hair had already grown to his shoulder. He also had a full beard that added a touch of haggardness to his middle-aged charm.

"Wow, Dad, you're really handsome! I just realized that men have to take care of their appearance and dress up to look good! Let's go get you a haircut. I promise you'll become a great hunk with a new hairstyle. You're going to be really charming!" Charlotte exclaimed in amazement after looking at him a few times.

William poked Charlotte's forehead smilingly. "Silly girl! I'm already in my fifties. I'm not a hunk."

"You're only fifty. Age is just a number, and anyone can be a hunk at any age! Besides, Cheyenne and I must be so pretty because of your good genes! Right, Cheyenne?" Charlotte smiled at Cheyenne with her tongue out.

"Psht, self-praise is no praise. You're so shameless." Cheyenne pinched Charlotte's face embarrassedly, and they were all smiling and chatting with each other harmoniously.

Seeing this, Lucas had a warm and fuzzy feeling in his heart.

This was the way a family should be getting along—chatting and laughing together merrily.

They brought William to a salon where they picked a fashionable haircut that made him look much younger.

Charlotte and Cheyenne were both pleased with it. They then asked the hairstylist to give Lucas a sleek and clean cut that made him look even more handsome than he was.

"Lucas, it's time you dress up! You're so handsome. You look even more handsome than the celebrities on TV!"

After Charlotte teased Lucas again, they finally packed up.

Seeing that it was getting late, Lucas drove to the kindergarten to pick Amelia up.

As soon as Amelia saw William, she immediately leaped for joy. "Grandpa! You're finally back! I haven't seen you for a long time! I missed you so much!"

Amelia even gave William a kiss on his face.

William was immediately moved to tears while being hugged by his chubby little granddaughter.

They were all his precious family members!

From now on, I won't gamble again. I won't lose my precious family again!

Feeling heartened and gratified, Cheyenne and Charlotte both teared up.

As long as William could kick his gambling addiction, they didn't suffer in vain.

Soon, the family returned to the villa in the middle of Pearl Lake.

It was the first time William came here, and he was stunned by the luxurious and dreamy decor!

He had never dreamed that his son-in-law, whom they all called a good-for-nothing, would be able to afford such a large villa, as well as the lake island of Pearl Lake!

At this moment, William had completely changed his opinion of Lucas!

He managed to easily buy Ocean Bathhouse with eight million dollars and could afford a villa worth at least tens of millions. There's really more to my son-in-law than what we see!

They entered the house merrily, and Amelia dashed in and exclaimed at Karen, who was watching television and eating some snacks. "Grandma, Grandpa's home!"

But to everyone's surprise, Karen responded very coldly. She merely glanced at William calmly before gibing, "Hah, you didn't come home for such a long time. I thought you died somewhere!"

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William's joyous expression immediately froze on his face.

At the side, Cheyenne and Charlotte also felt extremely awkward.

All of a sudden, it fell quiet in the entire living room, but Karen pretended like nothing happened and continued watching TV while snacking.

After dinner, William had many things to say. But once he thought of Karen's nonchalance toward him, he felt disappointed and thought that there was nothing much for him to say to her. If he said something, she might reply to him sarcastically and destroy his confidence again.

A moment later, William decided to go and talk to Lucas.

There were many rooms in the villa, but Lucas had already gotten used to staying in the same room as Cheyenne, even though they slept on separate beds.

When he heard a knock on the room door, he walked over in puzzlement and opened it. He saw William standing outside while rubbing his hands.

"I'm not disturbing your rest at such a late hour, am I?" William asked formally.

"It's fine. It's still early. Dad, come in," Cheyenne said as she walked over after hearing the noise.

William walked into the spacious master bedroom and saw Amelia sitting in a corner of the room and playing with some toys. Looking at the calmness on Cheyenne's face, he felt emotional.

Two months ago, Lucas had promised him that he would let Cheyenne and Amelia live a happy life in the future. But back then, he was full of disdain and didn't believe Lucas at all. However, Lucas had proven it with his actions.

William hesitated for a while before finally saying, "Actually, I came here today to ask you for a favor. Lucas, can you help me find a job?"

Chapter 243: I Want to Work

William's words took Lucas and Cheyenne by surprise.

They looked at each other. Cheyenne held onto William's arm before asking softly, "Dad, why do you suddenly want to go back to work? You're already in your fifties. Just stay at home and let us show our filial piety!"

William sighed and shook his head. "Actually, I've thought about it a lot these days. I've done almost nothing my entire life. I've lived in vain for decades!

"Cheyenne, I may seem to have been idling about at home all these years. But when I was younger, I also wanted to carve a career of my own. However, I used to get criticized for everything I did just because I'm not a Carter, so my confidence was

affected. And later on, I gave up and decided to just stay in the Carter Corporation as an ordinary employee.

“But after my brother got into an accident, Dominic Carter lost his biological son, so he got furious whenever he saw me, his stepson. He chased me out of the Carter Corporation and forbade me from taking part in its management. Since then, I gradually developed an inferiority complex. I stopped going to work and stayed at home all day, living each day as it goes by. I ended up spending more than half my life like this.”

William sighed deeply. “So, I don’t want to continue living like this, wasting my life each day idling about. I might be in my fifties now, but there are still several years before I hit retirement age. I’m still strong and energetic enough, so I want to do some things that I wanted to do when I was younger but never ended up doing.”

He said with some melancholy and persistence, “So, I want to ask you two to help me find a suitable job. I... I used to be a senior executive, but I haven’t gone to work all these years, so I do feel a bit incompetent. But if I work from the bottom, I’m sure I’ll be fine! I just want to rely on my own abilities to earn some money and prove that I haven’t lived in vain all my life!”

Cheyenne’s heart trembled.

She never thought that her father, who was always either at home or outside drinking and gambling, would have such thoughts.

Of course, Cheyenne was very supportive of William’s decision to go to work and prove his own abilities with his own effort.

Lucas also had a look of approval on his face.

He was very much in approval of the fact that William, a man in his fifties who was neither old nor young, was willing to get a job and do something to prove his worth.

“Okay, since you have that intention, we won’t stop you. Actually, I think it’s an excellent idea. William, I actually own quite a few companies that lack management staff. Are you willing to help out at my company?” Lucas asked with a smile.

In fact, Lucas had several businesses under his name now.

The Stardust Corporation was the business left to him by his mother, and Charlotte was temporarily in charge of it. Cheyenne naturally managed the Brilliance Corporation. He had handed over Little Atlantis City and the Ocean Bathhouse to Joe for the time being. And Flynn was responsible for taking over and reorganizing the businesses in LA that used to belong to the Brookes.

However, he lacked manpower in Orange County. The Hales had handed over many businesses to him. Although Lucas had taken ownership of them, he left them to the Hales to manage. Otherwise, huge changes in the Hales would definitely have resulted in countless trouble.

There were a few other businesses that he hadn't found a suitable manager for, such as the Solar Corporation's Orange County branch that used to belong to the Brookes. Ever since the Brooke family collapsed, there hadn't been a suitable person to take over. Currently, it was being managed by the experienced employees of the company.

But Lucas had heard that those employees were not very dedicated to their work, so he wanted to get someone he trusted to take over. No matter what, the company had gained a foothold in the city with his support, so it would have great potential once it developed. He didn't want to let it go to waste in their hands.

Now that William wanted a job, it gave Lucas an opportunity.

When William heard that Lucas was willing to let him work in his own company, he immediately seemed overjoyed. But when he heard that it was as the general manager of a company, he began to get apprehensive and anxious.

"I... I haven't managed a company in years. I'm a little worried that I won't do well..." William said hesitantly.

Lucas reassured, "It's alright. You've had experience in management previously. Once you go there, I'll have someone help you get familiar, and you'll naturally remember the skills. Look at Charlotte. She hasn't had much work experience before, let alone management experience. But after I let her take over the Stardust Corporation, she is now the acting general manager and is doing a good job at it. Your daughter is so competent. What else are you worried about?"

After hearing this, William was again incredibly astonished.

One reason was that he actually heard Lucas say that the Stardust Corporation belonged to him too! The Stardust Corporation was a company that all the major families in Orange County wanted to cooperate with. It was a tremendous shock to William!

Second, he was also astonished to hear that his daughter Charlotte had become the acting general manager of the Stardust Corporation and was in charge of everything there.

Oh my God, all this news is getting more and more astonishing! William was in huge disbelief.

Seeing how astounded William was, Cheyenne glared at Lucas jokingly before wrapping her arm around William's. "Dad, Charlotte and I are now in charge of managing a company each. You used to hold an executive position too, so I'm sure you'll have no problem. Besides, if you really encounter any trouble, or if you have a problem you can't solve, come and talk to us. We'll figure out how to solve it together. We're all family!"

Lucas looked at William with a smile. "Yes, we are all family. William, don't worry or feel too pressured. Just do what you want to do. I plan to make you the general manager of the Solar Corporation's Orange County branch. What do you think?"

After hearing their words, William regained his confidence and puffed his chest up. He said seriously, "Sure. I'll work hard to do a good job. I won't disappoint you!"

Chapter 244: Embarrassing Matter

Watching William leave the room with his back straight and looking as if he was ten years younger, Cheyenne felt extremely emotional.

"Thank you so much, Lucas!" Cheyenne exclaimed.

It was not only because Lucas had changed William and given him a chance to start afresh in life, but because of everything that Lucas had done for them and their family.

If it wasn't for Lucas, they would probably still be living in the old and shabby house they had resided in for decades while suffering from the bullying and oppression of the Carters. They might have even had their assets and home seized and be driven out to end up living miserably on the streets without any support.

Anyway, it definitely won't be like the life they were living now, which was full of warmth and hope.

At this moment, Cheyenne felt immense gratitude and a strong sense of dependence on Lucas.

Lucas smiled. "Like I said, we are family. What's the point of being so polite with each other? It's getting late. Let's put Amelia to bed."

Cheyenne nodded but suddenly twisted her head and said with some anxiousness, "I'll go take a shower."

Then she walked into the bathroom with hurried steps.

Lucas thought that her reaction was a little strange, but he didn't think much about it and instead walked to Amelia. He brought her to the side of the bed, tucked her in, and told her a bedtime story.

Amelia was extremely obedient. After listening to Lucas's bedtime story, she closed her eyes and soon slipped into a slumber.

After a long time, Cheyenne finally came out of the bathroom.

Hearing the movement, Lucas turned around. "It's getting late. You should rest—"

He stopped speaking before even finishing his sentence because his mind went blank when he saw Cheyenne.

Cheyenne slept in the same room as Lucas, but they had never been as intimate with each other as a married couple should. She would usually wear conservative nightdresses after coming out of the shower. It wasn't that she didn't want to let Lucas gawk at her. But rather, she was naturally shy and would only feel a sense of security if she wrapped herself up in clothes.

But she had now changed into a thin nightdress that exposed her fair arms and smooth calves that seemed to glisten under the light.

In particular, Cheyenne's face was rosy, clearly from blushing. Under the light, she looked more and more ravishing, especially since she was stunningly beautiful in the first place. Coupled with the coy expression she had now, she looked absolutely alluring.

Lucas looked straight at Cheyenne for a long time, unable to snap back to his senses. Only when he felt a warm feeling under his nose did he realize that he had lost his composure.

He hurriedly covered his nose with his hand and wiped the blood while thinking to himself that she had fortunately not seen the embarrassing sight of him having a nosebleed.

Cheyenne bit her lower lip, overwhelmed with nervousness as her heart beat rapidly, as if it was going to pop out of her chest cavity.

It had taken her a long time to muster up the courage to make up her mind. She was really quite fond of Lucas and wanted them to become a genuine married couple, not just married in name.

"You..." Lucas was not a fool, and he was aware of her intentions. But he was still in disbelief as he asked hesitantly.

“What? What are you waiting for? Go take a shower.” Cheyenne glared at Lucas shyly while blushing, seemingly hesitant to say what was on her mind.

“Uh... Okay, okay, I’m going to take a shower now.”

After stammering, Lucas leaped into the bathroom.

It was rare of Lucas to have such a reaction.

No matter how calm you usually were, it was only normal to lose your composure when the person you loved finally reciprocated your feelings and took the initiative to get intimate with you!

At this moment, Lucas was standing under the showerhead in the bathroom and letting the cold water run down his body. Finally, he cooled down and became a little calmer.

The biggest reason that Cheyenne acted out of the ordinary tonight was actually due to the gratitude she felt toward him.

She felt even more grateful and guilty toward him because of the changes in William’s disposition and the situation of their family.

But Lucas was not quite sure how much of the reason was because of Cheyenne’s fondness for him.

It wasn’t that he didn’t trust Cheyenne. But after so many years of feeling guilty toward Cheyenne and Amelia, the changes in Cheyenne’s attitude toward him during the past two months were deeply etched in his mind, bit by bit.

Lucas found it a little unbelievable that Cheyenne was willing to accept him now. And at the same time, he was surprised and overjoyed. He even felt a little dizzy, as everything seemed surreal to him.

After Lucas finished taking a shower, he stepped out of the bathroom nervously and realized that Cheyenne was already lying on the bed.

However, she had fallen asleep!

Lucas blinked and confirmed the fact helplessly while caught between laughter and tears.

But Cheyenne had indeed been very busy with the matters at the Brilliance Corporation during this period of time while also being worried sick about William. She was often so vexed that she couldn’t sleep well at night.

Today, William finally returned home safely, giving her a huge sense of relief.

Lucas sighed slightly and gently pulled the quilt up to cover Cheyenne's exposed bare shoulders.

He said softly, "Goodnight, Cheyenne."

Then he returned to his bed.

They were both silent for the rest of the night.

Bright early in the morning of the following day, Cheyenne opened her eyes wearily and subconsciously lifted her quilt before sitting up.

But she soon noticed that something seemed different from usual.

She subconsciously glanced down, only to get a great shock as she exclaimed, "Ah!"

"What's wrong?" asked Lucas, who had already woken up long ago and was quietly sitting on the edge of his bed while reading some documents.

But he soon saw her bosom, which was too striking to go unnoticed.

Perhaps because the straps of the nightdress were too smooth, they had slipped off her shoulders and exposed her...

"Uh..."

"Ah! Hurry up and look away!" Cheyenne shouted shyly and covered her chest with her arms. After thinking about it, she felt that something was amiss and hurriedly pulled her quilt over her chest to cover herself.

For a while, an awkward tension arose in the bedroom.

Chapter 245: Bad Influence

"I-I didn't see anything." Lucas hurriedly turned away as he explained in a panicky manner. But his words made Cheyenne blush even more because he had obviously seen it.

"You... Go outside! I need to change!" Cheyenne exclaimed while blushing shyly.

Lucas hurriedly ran out of the bedroom in a moment of panic and almost forgot to close the door. After scurrying a few steps away, he returned again to shut the door.

If his subordinates in the Falcon Regiment had seen him, they would definitely have been stunned.

After Lucas left the bedroom, Cheyenne finally felt her burning hot face cool down a little.

Thinking about the bold move she had made last night after mustering her courage, as well as the slip-up she had when she had just woken up, she felt extremely embarrassed and wished she could wrap the quilt around her head!

“Oh my god!”

What have I done?!

Last night, after arduous contemplation, she had finally made up her mind and plucked up the courage to change into a thin and sexy nightdress for Lucas. But she ended up falling asleep!

What happened early this morning made her feel overwhelmed with shyness too!

She would rarely wear sleeveless nightdresses, so she didn't notice that she had a wardrobe malfunction... Lucas ended up seeing everything...

Ahhh! How am I supposed to face him in the future?!

“Mommy, what happened to you?” Amelia rubbed her eyes and climbed up onto the bed from beside Cheyenne. She opened her big eyes and looked at Cheyenne's reddened face curiously.

“Mommy, your face is so red. Are you sick?” Amelia frowned worriedly and reached out to touch Cheyenne's face to see if she was running a fever.

Cheyenne hurriedly hugged Amelia and squeezed her little hand. “I'm not sick. It's just a little warm today. Come on. Let's quickly wash up. What do you want for breakfast?”

She coughed twice and changed the subject. After hearing that Cheyenne wasn't sick, Amelia soon shifted her attention to the topic of breakfast.

“Mommy, I want to eat some bread rolls today. Can I?” Amelia asked with her eyes wide open.

“Of course you may. I'll prepare some for you later,” Cheyenne agreed as she helped Amelia get changed.

During breakfast, Lucas and Cheyenne sat on opposite sides of the table. They would occasionally make eye contact before immediately blushing unnaturally and then looking away from each other.

Neither of them said a single thing during breakfast, and they behaved rather awkwardly the entire time.

Charlotte looked at Lucas and then Cheyenne before asking in puzzlement, “Cheyenne, Lucas, what’s up with you guys today? You don’t seem too good. Did you two have a fight last night?”

When Cheyenne heard the word ‘last night’, she instantly remembered everything that happened again. She blushed again, even though the redness had just faded a little.

“No, how could we have had a fight? Quick, have your breakfast!” Cheyenne picked up a bread roll and stuffed it into Charlotte’s mouth.

“Waa!” Charlotte was caught off guard by the bread roll shoved into her mouth, and she hurriedly spat it out. “Cheyenne, are you trying to choke me to death? Since you don’t want me to ask you any questions, I won’t!”

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Charlotte grumbled for a long time before taking a small bite of the bread roll.

“Mommy said that she’s blushing because the weather is warm today! She felt so warm that she wasn’t wearing any clothes this morning!” Amelia explained to Charlotte while sitting on a stool for children.

“Pfft!”

“Pfft!”

“Pfft!”

...

All of a sudden, Charlotte spat out the bread roll she was nibbling on, Cheyenne spat out the mouthful of milk in her mouth, and Lucas spat out the coffee he was drinking.

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William was just about to reach out for some food, but his arm stiffened, and he didn’t know if he should retract his arm or not.

Cheyenne’s face was as red as a tomato.

She never thought that Amelia would see her lying naked under the quilt and even talk about it in front of the rest of the family!

Ahhh! I can't face them anymore!

"Ahem, all of you must be full. I'll go get ready for work." William coughed, put down his cutlery, and quickly walked out of the dining room.

As their father, he felt really embarrassed after hearing that!

But the only thing to be thankful for was probably that Karen wasn't at the dining table and so didn't hear those words. Otherwise, given how much she hated Lucas, she would have definitely lost her temper right on the spot.

Actually, it was rather strange that Karen's attitude toward Lucas had never changed even though they had stayed in the villa for quite some time now. She still glared at him in disgust and would call him a good-for-nothing or threaten to kick him out.

The three adults at the table had peculiar expressions on their faces. But Amelia, who had made the situation awkward, was still happily munching on her bread roll.

Charlotte looked at Cheyenne, who was blushing incessantly, and Lucas, who looked just as uneasy. "It seems like Amelia will have a little brother or sister soon."

When Cheyenne heard Charlotte teasing her, she couldn't help but reach out and pinch her face. "You're still going on with that, huh! Keep talking, and I'll find you a husband to marry you off quickly!"

Charlotte laughed out loud and dodged Cheyenne's hand. "Okay, okay, I'll stop! I'm full. I'm going to work now!"

Then she pushed the dining chair back and ran out with a wide grin on her face.

"This girl is really getting bolder and bolder," Cheyenne said angrily before turning to look at Lucas. She said shyly, "Hmph, it's all your fault!"

Lucas touched his nose speechlessly. *Uh... regardless of which perspective, it has nothing to do with me.*

But of course, he wouldn't be foolish enough to defend himself in front of Cheyenne. He simply took the blame quietly.

Well, women tended to be unreasonable at times. Actually, it was rare for Cheyenne to be unreasonable to him!

After finishing the meal, Lucas drove the few of them to work.

First, he sent Amelia to the kindergarten, then sent Cheyenne to the Brilliance Corporation, and finally drove to the Solar Corporation together with William.

In the car, Lucas briefed William about the general situation of the company and then said, "Don't worry. I've already explained to the branch's deputy general manager, Mr. Nelson. He'll help you familiarize yourself, and you can ask him if there's anything you're unsure of. If anyone is defiant, let me know, and I'll deal with it."

William nodded. "Okay, I know."

Then he looked at Lucas intently, seemingly hesitating to say something.

Seeing this, Lucas asked softly, "William, what do you want to tell me? Just say it."

William seemed a little uneasy, and he coughed before saying, "I just think that you can consider letting Amelia sleep in a separate room. She's turning six this year, and it won't be good to let her see some things."

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Then William opened the car door and quickly got out of the car like he was fleeing.

It was quite embarrassing to talk to his son-in-law about this!

Lucas froze for a moment while wondering why William had asked him to let Amelia sleep in a separate room. After he processed William's last sentence, he looked dumbfounded!

What is this all about?!

Just as Lucas was feeling speechless while watching William run away, his phone suddenly rang.

"Mr. Gray, I discovered an emergency here that I need to report to you." Joe started rattling on anxiously as soon as Lucas picked up.

Lucas frowned immediately. "What happened?"

"It may not be convenient to talk about this over the phone. Mr. Gray, where are you now? I'll drive to where you are right away," Joe said respectfully.

Lucas pondered quietly for a moment. Since the matter was so serious that it wasn't even safe to talk about it over the phone, it was probably extremely important.

Lucas said, "I'll go look for you. Where are you now?"

"I'm at the Ocean Bathhouse," Joe answered, informing Lucas of his current location.

As soon as Lucas heard where Joe was, he naturally understood that Joe had to be intending to talk to him about something regarding the Ocean Bathhouse.

Could there be updates on the matter I instructed him to keep close tabs on?

"Wait for me. I'll be right there." With that, Lucas hung up, floored the gas pedal, and turned the car around to drive toward the Ocean Bathhouse.

More than ten minutes later, Lucas arrived at the entrance of the Ocean Bathhouse.

Immediately after he got out of the car, Joe greeted him, "Mr. Gray, you're here."

Due to the fact that what Joe was planning to tell him was very important and confidential, he brought Lucas straight to a luxurious private room on the fourth floor of the bathhouse.

The private room was specially meant for some distinguished guests, and the walls had excellent soundproofing, thus making it the most suitable place for discussing some business cooperation and other matters. It was very much to the liking of the senior VIP customers of the Ocean Bathhouse.

After they sat down, Joe cut straight to the chase and reported, "Mr. Gray, we just took over this bathhouse yesterday, so the news of the change of ownership probably hasn't gotten out yet. At about three am, some people sent two gorgeous women here, probably for the business that had been operating on the top floor."

Joe raised his hand and pointed at the ceiling.

Lucas's face turned solemn. "What happened afterward? How did you deal with it?"

Joe continued, "I rushed here immediately after I got the call. I was afraid the people who sent those girls here might notice something wrong, so I let them leave the girls here. I've put those girls in a room near here for the time being. They seem really flustered, and I reckon they were trafficked and brought here forcefully, but we can't let them go yet."

Lucas nodded, thinking that Joe had made an appropriate decision.

"Who are those people who sent the girls here? Where did they come from? Did you send anyone to follow them?" Lucas asked.

The sordid businesses of the Taylors had harmed too many innocent women and their families, so Lucas would never sit idly by and not do a thing about it.

If he could search along the clues, find all the people involved, and then get rid of them completely, there would probably be a lot fewer women who would be harmed in this world.

After Joe heard Lucas's questions, his face immediately turned gloomy. "I sent someone to tail them and secretly placed tracking devices under their cars. But the news I've heard shows that the Taylors aren't the only ones involved. There must be many other forces involved too."

"What?!" This was beyond Lucas' expectations.

He originally thought that the Taylors relied on this chain of businesses to rise up high back then and that they were the ones who sent others to collect beautiful women from all over the world.

But after hearing what Joe said, Lucas realized that there was more to this than they thought.

"Have you found out where they came from, as well as the situation of the other forces?" Lucas asked.

Joe shook his head regretfully. "Unfortunately, they were very cautious, and they made numerous detours before finally pulling over at the side of an abandoned junkyard, where they got into another car and left. The tracking and listening devices we installed underneath their cars are no longer useful. In the end, we only managed to hear some of the things they said, but we can't find out clearly which forces are involved in this. I only know that there are definitely many of them, and they should be very powerful."

Lucas raised his eyebrows. "So, it seems that we have to start from the Taylors if we want to get a clear idea of the situation."

Bang. Bang.

Suddenly, someone knocked on the door twice loudly and impatiently.

Joe frowned in displeasure and got up to open the door.

"Joe, bad news. Preston Taylor is here!" a subordinate said in a panicky manner.

Lucas smirked. "Speak of the devil. I was intending to go look for the Taylors, but they took the initiative to come knocking on our door."

Joe seemed dismayed. After some thought, he reminded Lucas softly, "Mr. Gray, Preston Taylor is not an ordinary person. He's the most competent and accomplished descendant of his generation. He might be young, but he is very ruthless, and many

have died at his hands. The Taylors are definitely here with wicked intentions. You have to be careful!”

Lucas sneered nonchalantly. “They should be the ones to watch out, not me. Let’s go downstairs and meet this accomplished descendant of the Taylors.”

Lucas sounded rather derisive because he had had his fair share of experience with these so-called competent scions of top families, such as Logan Hale, Aston Brooke, and others, who didn’t live up to their reputations at all.

Besides, there was really no one in this world whom Lucas ought to be wary of.

But Joe had no knowledge of Lucas’s past. When he saw how nonchalant Lucas was about Preston Taylor, he was scared that Lucas might end up having his plan backfire because he underestimated the latter. He sighed but nevertheless followed Lucas downstairs.

At the lobby on the first floor...

A middle-aged man in his forties was questioning the receptionists with a furious expression. “Tell me, where is your boss, Calvin Pearce?! Tell him to come out here and see me!”

This middle-aged man was the very person Joe had just mentioned—Preston Taylor, the most accomplished descendant of his family, who would most likely take over as the helmsman of his family in the future.

The receptionists were two newly recruited staff, and they were so frightened by Preston’s domineering outburst that they were at a loss for words.

“We... We’re both new here, but our boss isn’t Calvin Pearce. Did you get the wrong person?” one of the beautiful receptionists said boldly.

“Bullshit! This bathhouse belongs to the Taylors. How can I be unaware of who the owner is?!” Preston barked furiously, causing the receptionists to shudder in fear.

“Since Calvin isn’t around, where’s Tim Perry? He’s the lobby manager. Get him to come here!”

The receptionist was on the verge of tears because, to her knowledge, their lobby manager wasn’t Tim Perry. She had no idea why Preston was making such a fuss.

“Neither Calvin Pearce nor Tim Perry is around. Calvin Pearce has already sold this bathhouse to our boss, and I’m the new manager of this place. Sir, how may I help you?”

At this moment, a young man dressed in a gray striped suit strode out from the back of the lobby.

Chapter 247: What's the Big Deal?

The young man was Zane, whom Joe had appointed to be in charge of the Ocean Bathhouse. Zane had worked with Joe for a long time, and he was competent in handling matters as well. His capability was the reason that Joe had decided to make him the manager of this place.

But he had always worked in a poker room previously and so didn't know Preston.

"What? He sold it?!" Preston asked in disbelief.

A wave of fury immediately surged in his heart. "Who is Calvin Pearce to sell this bathhouse?! Damn it. Get Calvin Pearce to come out here. I want to question him. What gave him the guts to sell the property of the Taylors?!"

Preston grabbed Zane by his collar and glared at him as if he was about to swallow up.

Zane began stumbling on an unsteady gait while feeling furious.

As a longtime worker at a casino, he naturally had some considerable strength. He grabbed Preston's wrist, squeezed it hard, and then twisted it forcefully with a loud crack. Overwhelmed by the excruciating pain, Preston shrieked uncontrollably and subconsciously let go of Zane's collar.

Zane held Preston's hand and pushed him backward, causing the latter, who had never exercised before, to almost fall onto the ground.

"You're really brazen, huh?! How dare you attack me?!" As the next successor of the Taylors, Preston had never been pushed and shoved like this before. "Someone, get him to kneel down!"

After Preston issued the order, the two bodyguards following him immediately pounced toward Zane.

Zane was astonished. He didn't expect this man to have two bodyguards with him, both of whom were extremely swift and athletic, so much so that he couldn't dodge at all. In no time, the bodyguards grabbed his arms, rendering him immobile.

One of them kicked Zane in the knee and caused his leg to turn limp before they both pinned him to the ground.

“Let go of me!”

Zane struggled to break free, but these two bodyguards were certainly not ordinary since they were Preston’s bodyguards. Their hands firmly clamped down onto Zane’s arms like iron cuffs, making him kneel in front of Preston.

“Break his hands!” Preston hollered while smiling in pleasure.

Without the slightest change in expression, both bodyguards grabbed one of Zane’s wrists each and tried to break them.

Zane’s heart started hammer violently when he sensed the sharp pain in his wrist.

I’m finished.

Both of his wrists were definitely going to be broken!

“Stop! I guarantee I will make whoever dares to touch him again die here!”

While Zane was in a state of despair and hopelessness, he heard an icy cold voice come from the corner of the stairs near him.

An incomparably domineering aura began to spread from that spot quietly.

The bodyguards immediately froze as they felt an inexplicable fear from within their hearts, as if they would really die if they dared to disobey that order and attack Zane again!

All of them raised their heads and looked at the source of the voice at the corner of the stairs.

With a cold and dark expression, Lucas made his way down from upstairs, one step at a time, while Joe followed behind him.

“Joe!” Zane, who just had a close shave with death, exclaimed in surprise when he saw Joe, whom he was the most familiar with.

Immediately afterward, he finally reacted and realized that the young man walking in front of Joe should be the true owner of the Ocean Bathhouse.

He was also the owner of the icy cold voice that he had heard, the person whose words saved his wrists from being broken!

Preston stared at Lucas with a hostile expression. “Who are you? What rights do you have to stop my bodyguards?”

Lucas sized up Preston, who looked much better than the pig-like Scott Taylor, even though he had a small beer belly and a chubby face.

But the immense animosity darting out of his eyes now had destroyed the kind appearance he should have because of the chubbiness of his face. He looked rather gloomy and malicious.

“You’re bullying someone on my turf, yet you asked me why I tried to stop you. Don’t you find yourself ridiculous?” Lucas gibed with a faint smirk of derision.

Only then did Preston come to a sudden realization. “So you’re the person who bought my Ocean Bathhouse from Calvin Pearce!”

At this point, he finally saw Joe standing behind Lucas, and he narrowed his eyes.

Preston had heard of Joe. And based on hearsay, he learned that Joe had recently become the new owner of Little Atlantis City with the help of a mysterious masked man and even gained control of almost all of the entertainment joints in Orange County. He had also almost provoked the Taylors on several occasions.

Is this young man standing in front of Joe that very mysterious masked man who helped him? As soon as this guess popped up in Preston’s mind, he quickly dismissed it.

“What do you mean yours? I bought this bathhouse from the original owner, Calvin Pearce, with cold hard cash. All the legal procedures have been completed as well, so it seems to have nothing to do with you, an outsider,” Lucas said indifferently.

Lucas’s domineering attitude immediately made Preston feel uncomfortable.

He was the next successor in line and the future helmsman of the Taylors, while the young man in front of him was a complete stranger.

Yet he had the audacity to speak to him like this. *He probably hasn’t faced the wrath of the Taylors before!*

Preston narrowed his eyes and said sinisterly, “Punk, I’m Preston Taylor, the next successor of the family! Don’t tell me that you don’t know how high our status is in this county.”

All the employees of the Ocean Bathhouse were immediately astonished.

Most of the employees here were locals of the county, so they were naturally aware of the Taylors, who were one of the four top families of Orange County. Being the next helmsman, Preston was a figure of power and prestige!

Zane began to get anxious too, because he had twisted Preston's wrist and even pushed him...

If Lucas hadn't hollered and interrupted them, his wrists would have been broken by the bodyguards!

Since this person was of high status, he was definitely not to be provoked. *What's going to happen to Mr. Gray...*

No one expected Lucas to remain cool and collected with a straight face even after learning of Preston's identity. He even asked rhetorically with indifference, "What's the big deal about the Taylors? You haven't become the true helmsman of the Taylors yet, so that makes you even less of a big deal, don't you think so?"

Chapter 248: Do You Dare To Touch Him?

Lucas's contemptuous attitude not only made the surrounding employees gape their mouths in shock, but it also made Preston even more exasperated!

The Taylors were one of the four top families in Orange County. They had massive wealth and great power that spread to all industries and businesses of the county. They were formidable existences at the pinnacle, and many tried to get acquainted with them. There was barely anyone who dared to say that the Taylors were not a big deal right in front of a Taylor!

Preston had always been proud of his identity as the next helmsman of the Taylors, yet he was being undermined by the young man in front of him. How could he not be furious?

"You..." With a grim expression, Preston was about to curse out loud, but he suddenly thought of another possibility.

The young man in front of me might really have a powerful background!

But he's very likely not from Orange County but a major family elsewhere!

It all makes sense now. This is the very reason this young man looks really domineering and could even help Joe gain control of Little Atlantis City. He even managed to buy the Ocean Bathhouse from us!

Preston's face was gloomy and sullen as he tried his best to suppress his fury. "Seems like you're not from Orange County. In that case, where are you from? May I ask which family you belong to? Your family might have cooperated with the Taylors before."

Since he was called the most accomplished descendant of the Taylors, Preston was undeniably not an arrogant fool who only knew to throw his weight around tyrannically. Not only could he suppress his emotions, but he even tried to pull some connections with Lucas.

Unfortunately, he had made a wrong guess about Lucas's origin. Besides, everything that the Taylors had done predetermined that Lucas would never bury the hatchet between them.

Lucas answered nonchalantly, "You don't need to ask about my origin. It has nothing to do with the Taylors anyway."

He then pointed at Zane, who was still kneeling on the ground with his arms pressed down, and said coldly, "I'd like to ask you actually. What explanation are you going to give me for barging onto my turf and harming my subordinate?!"

Lucas was being absolutely domineering.

Preston frowned in displeasure because there were very few people who dared to speak to him in such a manner.

Yet the young man in front of him seemed enigmatic, and Preston couldn't confirm the reason for his dominance and boldness. Besides, the fact that Lucas refused to reveal his family background made Preston even more sure that Lucas was the scion of a certain top family.

Before he could thoroughly find out the details of Lucas's identity, Preston decided to be cautious and not get into too severe of a conflict with him.

Thus, Preston raised his arm high, and his bodyguards immediately let go of Zane's arms and stepped backward.

Afterward, Preston turned around to face Lucas with his arms spread open to show that he had already expressed his sincerity.

Lucas raised his eyebrows and snorted coldly. "Is this the explanation you're giving me? It's too casual, isn't it?! If I had come two seconds later just now, my employee's wrists would have been broken by you."

"What else do you want then?" Preston asked, gritting his teeth and curbing his anger.

Lucas suddenly looked at Zane and said, "How did his men hit you just now?"

Zane rubbed his arms, which had been squeezed so hard that they had turned red. He then propped himself up against the ground before getting up with great difficulty. When

he was standing, his left knee was still trembling due to one of the bodyguards kicking that spot just now.

Although Zane was also a little afraid of the Taylors, he was naturally more biased toward Lucas since Lucas was the owner who had not only saved him but was now standing up for him as well.

“Boss, they just kicked my leg,” Zane answered with his head hanging low.

“Go and hit them too. Since your leg is injured and you can’t kick, hit them with a rod,” Lucas instructed. A quick-witted security guard next to him immediately walked forward to hand his baton over to Zane.

As soon as Lucas said this, Zane began to seem hesitant, while Preston’s expression became incredibly sullen.

Previously, he wasn’t aware of Preston’s identity, so he had the guts to twist his hand and push him away. But now that he knew that Preston was a Taylor, he obviously didn’t dare to hit them with the baton.

Seeing this, Preston suddenly guffawed arrogantly, “Hmph, I’m a Taylor, and my bodyguards are not ordinary people either. I don’t believe that a lowly employee like you would really dare to attack my subordinates!”

Zane’s expression kept changing while he was feeling hesitant and conflicted.

But Lucas merely remained standing indifferently with a straight face while Joe, who was standing near him, watched Zane closely.

Zane had started working here under Joe’s recommendation, and if he didn’t dare to obey Lucas’s orders out of fear for the Taylors, Zane naturally wouldn’t be able to continue working at the Ocean Bathhouse anymore. That would also be negligence in proper recruitment on Joe’s part.

At this moment, Zane was stuck in a huge dilemma.

He feared the power of the Taylors, but Lucas was clearly bent on going against the Taylors. In that case, he only had two options!

If he chickened out due to the fear of the Taylors, he would definitely end up losing his position as the manager of the Ocean Bathhouse while also losing Joe’s trust forever.

If he complied and adhered to Lucas’s orders to take revenge on the Taylors’ bodyguards, he might risk offending the Taylors, but he would also gain Lucas’s trust. As long as Lucas was strong enough, the Taylors wouldn’t be able to do anything to him!

His current choice concerned the fate of the rest of his life! His eyes were full of various fleeting emotions.

It seemed like a long time had passed, but he had only contemplated for a few seconds.

A few seconds later, Zane raised his head with a look of determination in his eyes. He gripped the electric baton tightly in his hand and then walked straight to Preston's bodyguards in front of him.

Preston was initially still guffawing arrogantly, as he was certain that Zane wouldn't dare to offend him. But he was soon proven wrong. He looked incredibly furious while glaring at Zane gloomily, wishing he could get someone to kill him immediately.

When one of the bodyguards saw Zane approaching with the electric baton, he threatened with a look of menace, "Try touching me if you dare. I'll break your legs!"

Zane paused for a while.

Preston smirked a little. *Seems like this nobody is still afraid of death after all. He doesn't have the guts to hit my subordinate.*

But in the very next instant, Preston's eyes suddenly widened in shock.

The reason being Zane actually raised the electric baton and swung it hard and mercilessly onto the bend of the bodyguard's leg!

Bang!

The bodyguard also didn't expect Zane to dare to attack him. Caught off guard, his knee went weak, and he almost fell onto his knees.

"Bastard, seems like you really have a death wish!" The bodyguard flew into a rage. He raised his fist and punched Zane's head!

Chapter 249: Compensation

The bodyguards that protected Preston were all experts that the Taylors had spent a lot of money to hire. Zane definitely wouldn't be able to take the punch. He would at least be severely injured, and in the worst-case scenario, he would die!

Feeling the gust of wind blown up by the swing of his fist on his face, Zane couldn't help but close his eyes while thinking to himself in agony that he might die today!

Suddenly, a phantom-like figure appeared beside Zane. Before the bodyguard's fist could strike Zane, the bodyguard was sent flying by a sudden kick!

Whoosh!

The bodyguard was instantly smashed through the glass door of the Ocean Bathhouse and landed far away in the middle of the road. He even almost got run over by a passing car.

Everyone watched with their eyes wide open, dumbfounded and unable to react.

They jolted back to their senses in horror only after hearing the screech of the tires of the car that had come to an abrupt stop and the curses of the driver who had slammed hard on the brakes.

The distance between the spot on the road where the bodyguard was lying and the lobby of the Ocean Bathhouse was at least more than ten meters!

Furthermore, his body had also been smashed through a thick layer of tempered glass. How strong must the impact have been?!

Everyone couldn't help but look at the bodyguard lying motionlessly in the middle of the road. It was unclear if he was alive or not.

What kind of person would be able to kick so powerfully?!

Soon, the crowd noticed that there was another young man behind Lucas sizing Preston up with a sinister smile.

The person who attacked just now must be this young man, who's clearly the other man's subordinate!

He must be a supreme expert. Otherwise, there's no way he could have kicked my burly bodyguard and sent him flying by more than ten meters!

Preston's facial muscles began to twitch, and he was so furious that he started clenching his teeth. It was not only because that young man had kicked his bodyguard more than ten meters away and knocked him unconscious, greatly embarrassing him. But it was because that young man was glaring at him hostilely as if he was about to kick him too.

Outrageous, detestable!

The young man beside Lucas was obviously Jordan.

In fact, Jordan had been helping Lucas gather various information for the past few days, so he naturally knew that Lucas had just acquired the Ocean Bathhouse, which used to belong to the Taylors, as well as the dirty business that went on on the top floor. He deliberately came over to see what was going on, but he happened to walk in on the Taylors causing a stir.

“Lucas, do you want me to get rid of this punk who’s here to cause trouble?” Jordan asked with a cheeky grin.

With a trace of anger on his face, Preston thought, *Punk? I’m the esteemed future successor of the Taylors. When have I ever been addressed that way?*

But he didn’t dare to flare up for the time being because he hadn’t gotten a clear idea of Lucas’s background yet, but such a powerful figure had already appeared.

Preston came here today with only two bodyguards, one of whom was already crippled and immobile on the road while the other was no match for Jordan. If he flared up, he would be the one to suffer!

“Hmph, it seems that you’re determined to go against the Taylors. I don’t know who you are, but don’t forget that we’re in Orange County, and this is our turf. You’re being too arrogant! You won’t end up well!” Preston said fiercely before glaring at his bodyguard and then turning around to leave. “Let’s go!”

“Hold it!” Lucas suddenly called out to Preston, who was about to leave.

“Your subordinate injured mine and even smashed my glass door. You should compensate me for it, right?” Lucas said slowly.

Preston turned around and glared at him in exasperation, almost driven to his grave in anger by Lucas.

“Get your facts right. Your subordinate was the one who injured my bodyguard and smashed the glass door. I’m being kind enough by not pursuing this matter. How dare you ask me for compensation?!” Preston hollered in infuriation.

At this moment, even Joe was shocked, not to mention the other employees of the Ocean Bathhouse.

He had long known that Lucas was definitely not an ordinary person and that he was exceptionally audacious. But Jordan had knocked Preston’s bodyguard unconscious, and Lucas even demanded that Preston compensate him. It was Joe’s first time witnessing something like this!

Lucas snorted coldly. “First of all, you’re the one who barged onto my turf. I didn’t invite you here. Second, you people are the ones who hit us first. Even if your bodyguard is

injured, it's because of his incompetence. You can't blame it on anyone else. Third, the glass door was shattered by your bodyguard's body. Are you blind?

"The compensation will be eight hundred thousand dollars. I will let you go once you've paid it."

What?! Preston naturally refused. He had temporarily let go of Zane only because he realized that the situation was amiss. But if he really paid the compensation before leaving, wouldn't he be really humiliated?

"One-point-five million," Lucas said coldly.

"You!" Preston was even more enraged because Lucas actually had the guts to double the compensation! It was a huge insult to him!

"Three million." There was no fluctuation of emotions in Lucas's gaze as he continued to speak indifferently.

"..." Preston curbed his urge to curse and hurl vulgarities.

At this moment, he could tell that the young man who appeared out of nowhere was specifically trying to go against the Taylors!

If he opposed, Lucas would double the compensation amount unreasonably without mercy.

It just so happened that he didn't bring too many subordinates with him and couldn't do anything to Lucas. If he didn't pay the compensation, he wouldn't be allowed to leave. It seemed that he had to take the loss today!

"Okay, I'll transfer the money to your account now!" Preston said through gritted teeth with a gloomy gaze, as if he wanted to devour Lucas.

As the successor of the Taylors, he had never suffered such a tremendous loss before. *I must investigate the background of this arrogant young man. I will never let him off!*

"Hah, wouldn't everything be fine if you had agreed sooner? You just had to make me raise the compensation from eight hundred thousand to three million before you'd comply. The Taylors must have too much money to spare," Lucas gibed with a smirk.

Preston felt an urge to vomit blood.

After he clenched his teeth and transferred three million dollars out of his account, his face turned sullen, and he immediately dashed out of the door, as he couldn't stay here a second longer.

The bodyguard behind him hurriedly followed Preston and continued to protect him while calling the chauffeur to come over and carry the seriously injured bodyguard lying motionlessly on the road.

As soon as Preston got inside his car, he immediately took out his phone and dialed a number with a menacing expression. "Find out who exactly the new owner of the Ocean Bathhouse is. I want a clear report! Where did Calvin Pearce go? He actually had the audacity to sell the Taylors' property! I don't care what method you use. You must bring Calvin Pearce to me!"

The encounter Preston had today was the most humiliating experience in his entire life!

Being insulted by such a young punk was simply akin to the prestige of Taylors being trampled all over by him repeatedly!

The most infuriating thing was that the young punk actually snatched the Ocean Bathhouse away from them!

Preston didn't believe that Calvin dared to betray the Taylors and sell the Ocean Bathhouse to someone else of his own accord. Back then, the Taylors had legally appointed Calvin to be the person in charge of the Ocean Bathhouse because they could tell that he wasn't too ambitious and was instead a little cowardly and extremely scrupulous toward the Taylors. So they thought that he definitely wouldn't dare to betray them.

But now that Calvin had fled, Preston was certain that Lucas must have coerced and even threatened Calvin into signing the transfer contract.

It didn't matter that Calvin had fled. But the fact that the Ocean Bathhouse, the dirty business secretly ran within it, and the beautiful ladies had all landed in someone else's hands made Preston overwhelmed with fury!

The Ocean Bathhouse was very important to the Taylors, and Preston had always been in charge of it. Once the news of this matter got out, the sly old foxes of the Taylors would definitely take advantage and cause trouble for him.

Thus, he was bent on finding the traitor Calvin and regaining ownership of the Ocean Bathhouse!

...

Putting aside what Preston was thinking, Joe was staring at Lucas solemnly and speaking to him in a private room of the Ocean Bathhouse.

"Mr. Gray, you have just ruthlessly undermined Preston and embarrassed him. He's known to be a vengeful person, so he definitely won't let it go. The Taylors are also very

powerful in Orange County, so they'll definitely come looking for trouble with you. In order to avoid suffering losses... would you like to leave the city and lay low for the time being?"

Lucas sneered nonchalantly. "It's just the Taylors. They're not fit enough for me to be scared and avoid them. Since the Taylors are secretly involved in those sordid businesses, I'm waiting for them to come looking for me!"

Seeing that Lucas had no regard for the Taylors, Joe was still unsure of what trump cards Lucas still held. He didn't know if Lucas was really powerful or because there were other reasons, so he had no idea if he should be worried or not.

In fact, Joe also secretly planned for the worst in his head. Since he had already pledged allegiance, it meant that he was Lucas's man. If Lucas really couldn't defeat the Taylors, he would try his best to make the most favorable arrangements so that he could at least save Lucas and himself.

At this moment, Lucas's phone rang.

It was a call from a number that Lucas didn't recognize, but he still picked up nonetheless. "Hello."

"Lucas, this is Lena. Do you still remember me?" said a clear and crisp voice belonging to a woman.

Lucas was stunned.

Lena was the daughter of Ethan Sawyer, the richest man of Orange County, and also Cheyenne's best friend. Previously in Little Atlantis City, she had protected Cheyenne with her life, so Lucas had a good impression of her.

But the fact that she suddenly called him made Lucas bewildered.

"What's the matter?" Lucas asked without much emotion.

"I want to treat you to lunch today to thank you for saving me the other day. Are you free?" Lena asked.

Lucas wasn't interested in invitations from other women, so he simply said indifferently, "No need for that."

With that, he wanted to hang up.

"Wait, don't hang up yet!" Seemingly having guessed what Lucas wanted to do, Lena quickly spoke in a tone that was much more eager than before. "Actually, I'm not inviting you to lunch alone. I've just returned to the country recently, and I haven't had the

chance to meet Cheyenne to catch up yet. So I've invited Cheyenne, and I'm just asking you along to join us as well!"

Hearing that Cheyenne would be going too, Lucas thought about it and agreed.

1

"Okay, send me the time and location. I'll head there now."

"Okay, no problem. I'll see you at noon then!" Lena exclaimed, clearly overjoyed.

Soon, Lena sent the address to him. It was a specialty restaurant called The Loft.

It was getting late, so Jordan naturally stood up to get ready to drive Lucas to the restaurant.

Joe originally wanted to be the driver, but Lucas turned him down. "Go handle the matters you have at hand. Find a way to keep an eye on that line of clues, and inform me if the Taylors show up again."

Then Lucas stood up and left the Ocean Bathhouse together with Jordan.

...

Meanwhile, Lena called one of the higher-ups of the Sawyer Corporation.

She then hung up and stared at a photo of her and Cheyenne saved on her phone while muttering to herself, "Cheyenne, don't blame me for trying to win your husband's heart. He's just such a fine man... We're best friends, so this should be fine, right?"

1

There was naturally no response.

But Lena had already dolled herself up, grabbed her purse, and left with a smile on her face.

...

Cheyenne, who was currently in the Brilliance Corporation, had indeed received a call from Lena asking her out for lunch and also informing her that she would invite Lucas along to thank him for saving her life.

Thinking that it had almost been a year since they got to spend some quality time together, Cheyenne agreed.

But when she was about to leave work for lunch at The Loft, her secretary suddenly came over to report, "Miss Carter, the director of the business department of the Sawyer Corporation, Mr. Mitchell, is here to discuss some cooperation matters with you in detail."

1

Although Cheyenne was a little surprised as to why Mr. Mitchell would come at this time, since he was here to discuss business, Cheyenne, who had a strong sense of responsibility, naturally chose to talk to him about the cooperation out of obligation.

So she naturally wouldn't be able to attend lunch at The Loft.

Cheyenne called Lena and said embarrassedly, "Lena, I'm really sorry. An important client suddenly arrived, and he happens to be from the Sawyer Corporation, so I'm tied up at the moment. I'll have to bail on you for lunch today."

While driving, Lena smiled and pretended to be vexed. "That's such a pity. I've already ordered the food, and Lucas is also on the way. But since something cropped up for you, and you can't make it..."

Cheyenne apologized sincerely, "I'm so sorry. Why don't you two go ahead today? I'll treat you to a meal and catch up with you when I'm free another day."

This was exactly what Lena wanted to hear. But she pretended to be embarrassed and said, "That doesn't seem very appropriate. After all, he's your husband... Wouldn't it be inappropriate for me and him to have lunch together without you?"

Cheyenne immediately laughed and said considerately, "It's okay. He's my husband, and you're my best friend. Besides, you've met him before. Rest assured. He won't take liberties with other women."

Lena raised her eyebrows with excitement in her eyes, as if she was about to take on a challenge. She smiled. "Okay, since you've said that, I'll get going now, Cheyenne!"

Chapter 251: I'm Drunk

When Lucas arrived in the private room of the restaurant that Lena had booked, he saw her sitting alone in her seat.

Upon seeing Lucas, Lena's eyes immediately lit up, and she stood up with a smile. "I've been waiting for you for a long time. You're finally here."

As she spoke, she took the initiative to pull out the chair at the side and asked Lucas to take a seat.

Lucas frowned slightly. "Hasn't Cheyenne arrived yet?"

Lena pouted her red lips slightly and said with some feigned dismay, "Cheyenne got held up at the office because an important client suddenly showed up and asked to meet her. So she couldn't make it, and she wanted me to tell you to finish this meal on her behalf. Lucas, you're not planning to leave me here just because Cheyenne isn't around, are you?"

Lena had dolled herself up before coming. She was gorgeous in the first place, and now that she was pouting, she looked bubbly and delicate.

Cheyenne was the only beautiful woman that Lucas had ever paid attention to, and he didn't notice Lena's makeup at all. He deciphered her words simply and understood that Cheyenne couldn't make it because she was busy with work.

No matter what, Lena was Cheyenne's best friend, and it would seem too childish of him if he just turned around and left. It was just a meal anyway. So Lucas shook his head and said with a polite smile, "Why would I?"

Then Lucas pulled out the chair opposite him and sat down.

1

Lena smiled, picked up the menu on the table, and handed it to Lucas. "The food served in this restaurant is very special. I've just casually ordered a few of my favorite dishes. Place your order if there's anything you'd like to eat!"

Lucas wasn't very particular about the food he ate and would usually eat just for the sake of keeping himself full. After taking a look at the menu and seeing that Lena had already ordered several dishes, he placed the menu back onto the table because he felt that the food ordered should be enough for two. "These will do."

Lena called the waiter over and requested for the food to be served.

Soon, the table was covered in plates of fragrant, appetizing, and delectable food.

Lucas ate very quickly. In front of another woman, he didn't say much and simply ate the food with his head lowered.

During the meal, Lena was extremely enthusiastic and talkative. Every now and then, she would ask Lucas if the food was delicious or ask him about his food preferences, hobbies, and interests.

But his answers were all very simple and brief, as he would merely say 'yes' and 'oh' or simply nod.

After more than ten minutes, even Lena, who had been full of confidence and well-prepared, couldn't help but feel like she had suffered a huge blow.

"Lucas, are your answers always so short? I've said so much, but you've been giving me one-word replies. You're being perfunctory to me, aren't you?" Lena once again pouted in dissatisfaction and complained, "Is having lunch with me that boring for you?"

She initially thought that Lucas would at least explain a little. But to her surprise, he merely nodded solemnly and said, "I don't have much to say to other women besides my wife."

"..." Lena was speechless. *Must he be so blunt and insensitive?*

She wanted to say, 'You won't get a girlfriend if you keep talking like that!', but she immediately remembered that Lucas had long been married to Cheyenne and that they were parents to an adorable daughter. But the realization made her feel sour.

It seems that he's indeed too insensitive. I can't tackle him by starting with talking and then gradually escalating.

Lena quickly changed her strategy.

She asked the waiter to bring over a bottle of fine red wine, poured it into two tall glasses, and handed one of them to Lucas.

"Lucas, if you hadn't saved me last time, I would be dead by now. Words are not enough to express my gratitude. Here's a toast to you!"

"It's just a small favor. Don't mention it," Lucas said indifferently and then downed the red wine in his glass in one go.

He had trained himself to develop a good liquor level during his time in the military, so the wine was just like an ordinary beverage to him.

Lena followed suit and downed her glass of red wine in one go.

But after she finished drinking them, she immediately coughed a few times while her face became rosy.

Sitting in her seat, she propped her hands on the table, looked at Lucas, and giggled.

Lucas immediately frowned and looked at Lena. *Did she get drunk from half a glass of red wine?*

He was already full, but Lena barely ate anything because she kept talking to him just now.

“Have you eaten enough? We can leave after you’re full. Call someone to come pick you up,” Lucas said.

Lena burped and stood up tipsily with her eyes glassed over. “I’m full. Let’s go!”

She stood up and walked toward the door. But when she passed by Lucas, her legs went weak, and she fell onto Lucas, who had just stood up.

Lucas subconsciously reached his hands out to hold her.

“Are you alright?”

“I’m fine... I’m just a little giddy and lost my balance,” Lena murmured while squinting and almost leaning all her weight against Lucas.

“Lucas, I... I drove here alone. Can you send me home?” she asked coquettishly, hugging Lucas’s arm tightly. The warm breath she exhaled permeated through Lucas’s thin shirt and landed on his chest.

Lucas was suddenly at a loss for what to do.

The feeling of having another woman hold onto him tightly and pressing her chest tightly against his arm was truly hard to describe.

If it were any other woman, Lucas would probably have pushed her away without any hesitation, but the woman in front of him was Cheyenne’s close friend. Besides, he thought that she was acting out of the ordinary only because she was drunk and that she didn’t mean to behave this way. He couldn’t just push her away and leave a drunk girl alone at the restaurant.

“Okay, let’s hurry up and leave.”

Lucas had no choice but to hold onto Lena as they made their way out. But he didn’t realize at all that Lena, who was buried in his arms, had a trace of triumphant joy in her eyes.

Soon after they walked out of the private room, they bumped into a richly dressed young man in his mid-twenties.

The young man was about to walk past the two of them, but he happened to see Lena’s face, which was pressing against Lucas’s body. He immediately stopped and exclaimed in shock, “Lena?!”

Chapter 252: Jeopardized Her Plan

When Lena heard someone call her, she squinted a little to glance at the young man before closing her eyes again immediately. She muttered, "Lucas, let's hurry and head back home!"

The young man's expression instantly became hostile.

One reason was that Lena was actually lying so intimately in the arms of another man and completely ignoring him!

The second was that she even told this man to hurry and head back home.

Go home?! What home? Whose home?!

Immediately enraged and full of fury, the young man walked over and grabbed Lena's arm.

"Lena, I'm Tristan Parker! Don't you recognize me?" the young man said, refusing to give up.

Tristan Parker... Hearing his name, Lucas pursed his lips.

Lena cursed at him in his head. Her plan was going well at first, but Tristan just had to interfere and sabotage her plan. Besides, Tristan was someone she utterly detested.

But she had to pretend as if she just recognized him and spoke as if she had only come to a realization now. "Oh, it's you, Tristan. Are you here for lunch too? Go ahead. We're going home! Bye!"

Then Lena dragged Lucas away in a desperate attempt to leave.

"Wait a minute!" But Tristan held onto Lena's wrist and refused to let go. Pointing his finger at Lucas, he questioned, "Who is this man?"

Lena shook his hand off in annoyance. "He's my friend. It's none of your business who he is!"

"Hmph. How is it none of my business? You are my fiancée, yet you are hugging another man in public. Am I in no place to question you?"

Tristan was incredibly furious as he glared daggers at Lucas. "How dare you touch my woman? Hurry up and take your filthy hands off her!"

Lena was enraged, and she seemed to sober up in an instant. "Who is your fiancée? Did I agree to your proposal?! Stop barking around here like a mad dog. If you want to throw your weight around, go home!"

She glowered at Tristan, threw his hand off, and started walking away.

"Stop! Don't go!" Furious, Tristan stepped forward to stop the both of them.

He glanced at Lena with an affectionate gaze containing a trace of infatuation.

Lena was gorgeous to begin with, and the exquisite makeup she had put a lot of effort into putting on, as well as the rosiness on her face due to her tipsiness, made her look even more delicate and alluring.

Tristan had carried a torch for Lena since he was young, and he had been pestering his father to arrange for him to marry her. But when he grew up and was about to reach marriageable age, she decided to stay abroad all year round, so it was hard for him to meet her often.

Now that Lena was finally back, Tristan actually chanced upon her hugging another man's arm and behaving intimately with him. Moreover, she was giving him the cold shoulder too. How could he accept this? *This scoundrel who popped up out of nowhere must have deliberately seduced Lena!*

"Punk, let me tell you, Lena is my woman. Forget about taking her away! Hurry up and get the hell away from her!" Tristan glared at Lucas with wide eyes.

"..." Lucas was quite speechless at this moment.

He had nothing to do with either of them, but he had somehow been put in an awkward spot.

Seeing Tristan putting the blame on Lucas, Lena naturally couldn't stand it any longer. She stepped forward, stood in front of Lucas to shield him, and exclaimed loudly, "I've already said I have nothing to do with you at all. It's up to me to decide who I want to befriend. It's none of your business!"

Tristan's face instantly paled before reddening again. Any man would feel embarrassed to have his fiancée lash out at him and draw a clear line between them in public.

He didn't want to vent his anger on Lena, but he had already thought of Lucas as the cause of his humiliation.

“Hmph, you’re just trying to get together with Lena for her money, aren’t you? Come on. You want money, right? I’ll give it to you!”

While speaking, Tristan took out a bank card from his pocket and threw it at Lucas. “There are tens of thousands of dollars in here. I’ll give it all to you! Take the money and vanish!”

After hitting Lucas’s chest, the light and thin bank card bounced off it and landed on the ground, causing it to be stained with some dust.

Tristan stood still in an overbearing manner and said condescendingly, “What are you waiting for? Pick it up.”

But he was destined to be disappointed.

Of course, Lucas wouldn’t want that card, let alone bend over to pick it up.

“Enough!” Incredibly angered by Tristan’s actions, with which he intended to humiliate Lucas, Lena trembled in pique and hollered, “Tristan Parker, I don’t want to see you again. Get lost!”

With anger boiling within him, Tristan reached his hand out and pointed at Lucas. “Lena, are you falling out with me for this outsider? You even told me to get lost?”

“He’s not an outsider. He’s my friend. How many times do I have to tell you?! I’ve also told you several times that I don’t like you at all, and I don’t want to marry you, so please stop claiming to be my fiancé and coming to pester me!”

Lena was really livid. Not only had her plan been ruined, but Tristan even accused Lucas time and time again, so she was quite harsh with her words.

When Tristan heard her heartless words, his pride suffered a massive blow, and his face turned gloomy with resentment. “Fine, you’ve decided to betray me for this gigolo, huh? You bitch!”

Tristan raised his hand to slap Lena’s face unrelentingly.

Lena’s eyes widened immediately. She didn’t expect Tristan, who often acted like a gentlemanly and noble scion, would suddenly hit her!

His usually handsome face suddenly distorted into a hideous grimace as well!

Stunned, Lena stood rooted to the ground and stared at the approaching hand that she couldn’t dodge!

“Enough!”

Just before the slap was about to land on Lena's face, a strong and powerful hand tightly grabbed Tristan's wrist, making it impossible for him to move.

Lucas despised men like him who resorted to violence after being turned down by women.

"Damn it, you dog. Hurry up and let go of me!" Tristan yelled furiously and tried to pull his hand back from Lucas's hand but to no avail because of how strong Lucas was.

He was struggling so hard that the veins on his forehead began bulging.

"I don't care what kind of conflict there is between you and Lena, but I just want to tell you that she's just my wife's close friend and that there's no relationship beyond this between us. You guys settle your own affairs and don't get me involved. But of course, I won't allow you to hit someone in front of me."

After saying these words indifferently, Lucas loosened his grip on Tristan's hand.

Lena's eyes dimmed when she heard Lucas say that there was nothing between them. Her heart was full of immense disappointment.

But thinking that it was only their second meeting today, she felt that it was normal for Lucas not to have any special feelings for her. *There's plenty of time in the future!*

"Your wife's close friend?" After thinking about it, Tristan suddenly said, "Is your wife Cheyenne Carter? Are you that infamous good-for-nothing husband?"

Hearing that Tristan knew Cheyenne, Lucas narrowed his eyes and said coldly, "Yes."

Very few people knew that Cheyenne and Lena were best friends because they rarely met and mostly communicated through emails or text messages.

The fact that Tristan knew exactly who Lena's best friend was showed that he must have deliberately investigated it.

His overly-controlling behavior was truly terrifying.

Tristan tilted his head upward and guffawed out loud. "Haha, I was wondering who it was that dared to covet my woman. I didn't expect it to be you, a good-for-nothing who freeloads off his wife! So, are you thinking of hooking up with Lena and marrying her to become the live-in son-in-law of Ethan Sawyer just because Cheyenne Carter and her parents have been disowned by the Carters? Let me tell you, forget about it! You're not even worthy enough to kneel down and lick my shoes!"

"That's enough! Tristan Parker, don't go too far! Lucas isn't someone you can slander!" Lena was really exasperated because Lucas was the savior of her life, and she felt that

there was no reason for Tristan, who had nothing except a wealthy family, to belittle him.

In Lena's opinion, Tristan was just a rich second-generation heir who did nothing except idle about all day. Besides, he was also extremely possessive of her. Since a long time ago, he had been repeatedly trying to interfere with her life, her friendships, and her interests. It was to the extent that he wished he could lock her up for his sole possession.

There was once a boy who confessed his feelings to Lena. But he ended up having both his legs broken, his tongue cut off, and his body battered with bruises the day after.

So Lena had long developed a fear toward Tristan's excessively possessive behavior, so much so that she would shun and avoid him whenever she saw him.

The thought of marrying such a person and spending the rest of her life with him gave Lena the creeps.

There was absolutely no way she would marry Tristan!

Seeing how protective Lena was of Lucas, Tristan flew into an uncontrollable rage. "Punk, you're really a freeloader and a coward, aren't you? You actually need a woman to protect you. Are you still a man?! I'm truly furious now! If you kneel down, kowtow to me, and swear that you'll never show up beside Lena again, I'll consider sparing you this time. Otherwise, I will make your life a living hell!"

Tristan was smiling sinisterly with a peculiar and terrifying expression.

Two tall and burly bodyguards walked over from behind Tristan to block Lucas, seeming as though they would take action once Lucas disagreed with Tristan's request.

When Lena saw the terrifying expression on Tristan's face, her heart sank, and she immediately thought of the boy who had his legs broken and flesh badly mangled years ago.

A tremendous sense of disgust arose in Lena's heart as she shielded Lucas and said coldly, "Tristan, get your facts right. This is Orange County, not your family's home ground in LA! If you dare to mess around and lay a finger on him, I won't spare you!"

At this moment, the pretty Lena, who had been behaving delicately like a dainty woman, was giving off a menacing aura.

Even Tristan was somewhat subdued by her domineering aura. But a moment later, his eyes were full of infatuation and zeal!

He had never seen such a side to Lena before!

She was much more attractive than before!

Sensing the disgusting gaze that Tristan cast on her, Lena took out her phone and immediately dialed a number. "Uncle Alan, it's me. Send all the senior bodyguards of the Sawyers to The Loft now!"

As the most powerful family in Orange County, the Sawyers naturally had tighter security measures for their family members than other powerful families in the county. They had a large team of competent bodyguards.

Lena actually called all the bodyguards over just to protect Lucas because Tristan wanted him to kneel and kowtow.

Tristan's face became extremely sullen, and he laughed mirthlessly before hollering, "Fine, Lena, you're really heartless, huh?! I've been putting in my heart and soul for you all these years, yet you're treating me like this for another man!"

Looking heartbroken because Lena had let him down, he said with great disappointment, "Lena, I truly didn't expect you to treat me like this!"

Lena immediately rolled her eyes. "I've already repeated myself many times. I don't like you at all, and I've never had feelings for you either. I just want you to stop pestering me! Please stop acting like you're so devoted to me, will you?"

Since the beginning, Lucas had been standing still, seemingly completely uninvolved except when he stopped Tristan from slapping Lena.

He turned a deaf ear to Tristan's insults and didn't feel any emotions about Lena's action to protect him.

After all, regardless of what happened between them, it had nothing to do with him.

The scuffle drew the attention of many patrons of the restaurant.

It happened to be noon, and there were many patrons currently in the restaurant. Moreover, they were arguing rather loud too, so the patrons guessed that Lucas, Lena, and Tristan were involved in a love triangle. Besides, the bodyguards were also present, thus attracting even more attention.

They whispered among themselves and began speculating about the cliché scenes that usually only happened in movies.

"Shouldn't love and marriage exist only between two willing parties? That girl has said several times that she's not willing to be in a relationship with him, but that man keeps pestering her. He's really going overboard."

“Yeah! That young man didn’t say anything, yet the other man wants him to kneel down and kowtow to him. He’s really arrogant!”

“Yeah, I heard he’s not even from this county. Why is he so arrogant? He’s acting like a king.”

“In my opinion, that beauty is obviously fond of this tall and handsome young man. They were just having lunch, and this person came out of nowhere to create such a ruckus. They might get into a brawl soon!”

...

When Tristan heard the chatter of the crowd, his face became even more gloomy and sullen as he hollered furiously, “Get lost! What are you looking at? I’m a Parker, and we’re a top family in LA. You people are just nobodies. Get lost now!”

After being lashed out at for no reason, the onlookers looked at Tristan like they were looking at an idiot.

But many people had heard of the Parkers before, and they were indeed a wealthy family whom ordinary people like them couldn’t afford to provoke.

At the thought of this, many onlookers snorted coldly before silently backing away.

Lucas narrowed his eyes slightly. “You’re one of the Parkers from LA?”

Chapter 254: I Like Kneeling Down

Hearing Lucas’s question, Tristan immediately raised his head proudly and said smugly, “Yes! I’m one of the Parkers from LA, and the current family head is Charles Parker, my grandfather! Are you afraid now, punk? Hurry up and kneel down to kowtow to me twice. Once you make me pleased, I might consider letting you off!”

Lucas smirked with some derision in his eyes.

Lucas was no stranger to the Parkers. Ever since he had acquired all of the Brookes’ businesses in LA, he had assigned Flynn to handle and manage them.

During this period of time, Flynn had been reporting to Lucas about his progress, during which he had mentioned the Parkers several times.

On the day the Brookes left LA, the Parkers had sent a junior of the family named Elliot over to try to create trouble for the Brookes. But Andrew had managed to trick him and fled.

Since then, the Parkers had been very active in LA as they tried to use various means and methods to seize the major businesses the Brookes left behind.

Although the Parkers failed to succeed because Stanley protected them and Flynn was quite competent too, it undoubtedly also brought a lot of trouble to Flynn and resulted in various disputes that almost got him killed.

If not for the fact that Lucas had instructed Stanley and Flynn not to get anyone killed, Charles and the Parkers would have probably perished.

So once Lucas heard that the man who kept pestering Lena was one of the Parkers, he couldn't help but be amazed by how small the world was.

He hadn't gone to LA to settle scores with the Parkers yet, but Tristan Parker had already provoked him.

Tristan thought that Lucas would definitely be scared out of his wits once he brought up his family and immediately kneel to beg for mercy. But he never expected that Lucas would remain standing with a peculiar expression and a mirthless smirk, making him really displeased.

"Punk, what's with that look on your face? Are you looking down on the Parkers?" Tristan snapped in pique.

Lucas smiled faintly. "It's just the Parkers. I really don't take you seriously."

It was not that Lucas was arrogant, but rather, he was competent enough to get rid of top families like the Brookes. Besides, his status and wealth were superior to the Brookes too.

In fact, if the Parkers hadn't repeatedly caused trouble in LA and coveted the remaining businesses of the Brookes while hindering Flynn from doing his work, Lucas wouldn't have even remembered who they were.

After hearing what Lucas said, Tristan was infuriated. He was born and raised in LA, and although the Parkers were not the top family in LA, they were considered one of the few higher-status ones. He had gotten used to hearing praises and receiving the deferential treatment of others.

This was the first time a young man dared to mock the Parkers.

"Damn it. How dare you look down on us, you fool? I must show you what we're made of! Hit him! Make him kneel down and beg me for mercy!" Tristan hollered furiously. The two bodyguards beside him immediately pounced toward Lucas.

“Tristan Parker, stop!” Lena shouted. But the bodyguards were Tristan’s subordinates, so they naturally only obeyed him. Lena’s yelling meant nothing to them.

Facing the two aggressive bodyguards, Lucas merely raised his leg when they were about to hit him without even looking at them.

Their vision blurred, and before the tall and burly bodyguards could even see Lucas’s actions or sense his strength, they were already sent flying by his kick!

Clang!

Whoosh!

One of the bodyguards crashed onto a potted plant near them, which then shattered into pieces and stabbed into his arm.

The other bodyguard was even more unlucky. He fell into the cold water of the fountain in the center of the restaurant lobby. Not only did he knock the stone fountain over, but he also turned pale in the freezing water and couldn’t get out for a long time.

Seemingly not hearing the shrieks, Lucas walked over toward Tristan in a casual and relaxed manner.

Tristan was merely an incompetent scion of a rich family. When he saw Lucas clearly harboring ill intentions and walking toward him after kicking his bodyguards away, he couldn’t help retreating repeatedly. But there was a wall behind him, and he would soon reach it.

Pangs of panic engulfed him as he yelled in horror, “What are you trying to do? Don’t come here! I’m warning you. If you dare to do anything to me, the Parkers won’t let you off!”

Lucas ignored him and walked forward to grab his neck.

“I didn’t want to bother with a nobody like you, but it seems you have a death wish.”

Lucas’s cold voice rang beside Tristan’s ears, making his heart ricochet while a wave of fear suddenly surged within him. He tried to move Lucas’s fingers away from his neck, but he couldn’t do it at all. He could only feel a massive force clamping down on his throat, making it difficult for him to breathe.

“If... if you dare to do anything to me, my grandfather won’t let you off! Hurry up and let go of me.” Tristan was flustered, but he still threatened him.

“Hah, I’ve already told you long ago that I don’t take the Parkers seriously at all. Why can’t you understand? Whenever something happens to you, all you do is bring up your family. What else do you have apart from your wealthy and powerful family?”

“Didn’t you ask me to kneel down in front of you several times? Since you like kneeling so much, do so yourself!”

Lucas shook his head regretfully. Then holding Tristan’s neck, he pushed him onto the ground, causing him to kneel.

“Ah!” Tristan hollered loudly when his knees landed on the ground.

The physical pain was a minor issue, but he would never stand being forced to kneel in front of everyone!

In the twenty-odd years of his life, he had already made many people kneel down and beg him for mercy, but he never knew how miserable it was to be forced to kneel. The sense of humiliation made him wish he could kill someone now!

“Bastard, how dare you do this to me? The Parkers will never spare you!” Tristan barked while kneeling on the ground and struggling to break free desperately. He felt extremely humiliated, and his eyes were bloodshot, seeming like he wanted to devour Lucas.

Chapter 255: Where Is Your Confidence?

Lucas ignored the resentment in Tristan’s gaze and stepped on his ankle. “You’re still so arrogant now, huh? It seems you haven’t learned your lesson yet.”

“Ah!” Tristan immediately shrieked in misery as a wave of fear surged in his heart. Lucas seemed to really have no fear of the Parkers and was also capable of doing anything. Now that his bodyguards were incapacitated, he would have to suffer no matter what.

Tristan was extremely furious, but he knew that he was now in a disadvantageous position and had no choice but to suppress his anger, not daring to glower at Lucas. But deep down, he wished he could kill Lucas!

At this moment, Tristan had naturally long forgotten that if he hadn’t come looking for trouble with Lucas, insulted him, and forced him to kneel, Lucas wouldn’t have done this to him.

"I've merely taught you a small lesson today. If you're feeling indignant, feel free to get Charles Parker to come look for me. Also, from now on, if I see you pestering Lena Sawyer again, it won't be as simple as making you kneel down!"

Lena stood at the side, feeling touched and shocked.

She was shocked that Lucas actually dared to attack Tristan. In her opinion, the Parkers were a top family in LA that held enormous power. Otherwise, her father, Ethan Sawyer, wouldn't have chosen to let her marry Tristan.

Since Lucas beat up Tristan and his bodyguards, he was clearly going against the Parkers. In that case, the Parkers definitely wouldn't let him off!

Lena's understanding of Lucas was limited to the fact that he was Cheyenne's live-in husband, who came from a poor family and practically struggled with poverty, so much so that he couldn't even pay for their wedding. This caused Cheyenne to become the laughingstock of everyone in Orange County, so Lena had always had a bad impression of Lucas before.

But since the incident in Little Atlantis City, where Lucas showed extraordinary composure and bravery when gambling against Tony Zander, and the time when Lucas rescued her from the speeding motorcycle outside the Sawyers' villa, Lena changed her mind about him. She also secretly harbored some designs on him.

Lena had deliberately planned for her and Lucas to have lunch alone together today.

But just because Lena admired Lucas, it didn't mean that she felt that he was invincible. She wasn't aware of how wealthy Lucas was, nor did she know about his background. She merely felt that since he was an ordinary person, he definitely wouldn't stand to gain against the Parkers, who were like a behemoth.

But Lucas beat up Tristan for her sake and even warned him not to pester her again...

Tears welled up in Lena's eyes as she looked at Lucas intently with a gentle gaze. *I mustn't let go of such an excellent man who's a hundred times better than a spoiled scion like Tristan Parker!*

"Miss Lena, are you alright?" At this moment, Jim Baker, the butler of the Sawyers, hurriedly arrived at the restaurant.

When he received Lena's call just now, he was almost frightened to death.

Just a short while ago, Lena had just encountered a premeditated assassination, so the Sawyers had been extremely protective of her lately.

But Lena said she had an appointment with a close friend this afternoon and ordered all the bodyguards not to accompany her. Jim wasn't aware of it at first. So when he received the phone call from her informing him that she didn't have any bodyguards to protect her, he was immediately stunned and afraid that she might have gotten into some mishap.

But the situation at the restaurant seemed rather bizarre now, as he hadn't seen any malicious thugs yet. On the contrary, Jim even saw two people whom he didn't expect to see.

One of them was naturally Lucas, who was standing beside Lena expressionlessly. Jim had seen the Huttons coming to invite Lucas back to their family before, as well as the time when Ethan sent gifts to the Carters to try and get closer to Lucas. He was very familiar with Lucas, this powerful figure.

The other person Jim was shocked to see was Tristan, Lena's fiancé!

Of course, it actually wasn't that surprising that Tristan was here. But to Jim's surprise, Tristan was kneeling on the ground in front of Lucas and Lena!

"This..." All of a sudden, Jim couldn't figure out what was going on between them, and he couldn't ask in too much detail since there were so many people around.

Seeing that Jim had already arrived and Tristan had also suffered a loss under Lucas, Lena didn't want to continue getting involved in a scuffle with him. "Tristan, I'll tell you one last time. The engagement between us doesn't count at all, and I won't marry you. You should go find another girl. Furthermore, if you have any objections, just come at me. Don't vent your anger on other people who have nothing to do with this!"

Then she stopped looking at Tristan and said to Lucas, "Let's go."

Lucas nodded. Soon, both of them left the restaurant together.

Jim glanced at Tristan without saying anything. He merely nodded slightly and left together with Lena.

Behind him, Tristan slowly raised his head and exclaimed with an intense and vicious gaze in his eyes, "I won't let you two off, you adulterers!"

Only after leaving the restaurant did Lena snap back to her senses and realize that she had been pretending to be drunk before this to get Lucas to send her home. But after Tristan interfered and foiled her plans, she could no longer continue pretending.

Lena simply stopped pretending, stood still, and apologized to Lucas, "I'm sorry. It's all my fault. If I hadn't called you out for lunch today, you wouldn't have gotten into a conflict with Tristan and even offended him."

Lucas shook his head. "It's nothing. I really don't care about the Parkers. If they've learned their lesson and don't provoke me again, I naturally won't make things hard for them, but if they refuse to give up and come looking for trouble, they'd better not blame me."

When Lena heard Lucas's tone, she felt that he really didn't take the Parkers seriously. She couldn't help wondering where he got his confidence from.

After thinking about it for a while, Lena nevertheless gave Lucas some instructions, "You're just the live-in son-in-law of the Carters. You were lucky to win some money from Tony Zander last time, but the Parkers are really not to be belittled. How about this? If they provoke you again, just let me know, and I'll ask my father to think of a solution."

Hearing this, Lucas couldn't help laughing. But thinking that Lena was just making this suggestion out of good intentions, he nodded casually.

Jim was aware of Lucas's background and knew that even Ethan had to think of ways to get close to him. In that case, why would Lucas need their help?

Fearing that Lena's words would upset Lucas, he hurriedly said, "Miss Lena, Mr. Sawyer is afraid that you have gotten into a mishap and is worried sick about you! You'd better go home quickly so that he will be at ease."

"Alright." Lena originally wanted to ask Lucas to take her home and invite him to her place for a chat. But when she heard that her father was waiting for her, she could only give up.

"Lucas, I owe you another favor for what happened today. I'll treat you to a meal again!" Then she got into the car and left grandly together with her bodyguards before Lucas could even say anything.

Chapter 256: The Current State of the Sawyers

When Lena returned home, she saw Ethan sitting on the couch with his brows furrowed in a frown. When he saw Lena enter, he didn't relax at all.

"Dad, aren't you busy today? Why are you home and waiting for me?" Lena asked, pretending to be relaxed. She sat down beside Ethan. "I'm fine. I just got involved in a troublesome matter, so I asked Jim to bring some people over to help me out."

With a furious expression, Ethan sneered. "Of course I know what happened. You just wanted our bodyguards to chase Tristan Parker away."

Only then did she realize that her father had learned of everything that had just happened at the restaurant.

She pursed her lips and leaned back on the couch. "Dad, since you already know, I won't beat around the bush with you. Tristan Parker is a good-for-nothing who sponges off his family. I won't marry such a person! Dad, just go to the Parkers and break off our engagement before it's too late!"

"Outrageous!" Ethan flew into a rage and rebuked, "You and Tristan Parker have been engaged for more than ten years, and we were all just waiting for you two to grow up and hold the wedding. Why are you still so insensible? We can't just break off the engagement like that."

Extremely adamant about it, Lena insisted, "Dad, Tristan is completely unacceptable! He suspected me of having an affair with a friend just because I had lunch with him. Just now, he even tried to hit me! If I marry him, I'd definitely face domestic violence! Dad, can you bear to watch me get bullied? Besides, I don't like him at all, and I don't want to marry him!"

"He suspects you and gets jealous because he cares about you! Arranged marriages are common among families like ours. It's all for the sake of carrying on the family bloodline and forming unions with other suitable families! Lena, you are now in your twenties and no longer a child. Why don't you understand this?"

Hearing the words 'arranged marriage', Lena felt particularly sour and upset. Feeling furious and disappointed, she snapped, "Not an arranged marriage again! Dad, must I marry a good-for-nothing? You're now the richest man in the county, and we have enough money and properties to last us a few lifetimes. Why must you make me marry someone of a so-called suitable background? Can't you just let me be like an ordinary girl and marry someone I truly love?"

There was a trace of misery and heartache in Ethan's eyes, but he soon forced himself to stay firm to his decision. "Looks like I've spoiled you rotten all these years and let you live too well abroad, so much so that you're completely clueless about the situation we're in now! Do you think we're that glorious and glamorous because we are the richest family in Orange County? Let me tell you, that's just a superficial title!

"The economy has been developing rapidly in recent years, and many small families have risen. We merely had a head start, but many of our businesses have been impacted by various startups and small businesses! If we don't work harder to strengthen our foundation and businesses, they will be taken over by others sooner or later! By then, do you think we will still be able to live in the lap of luxury with peace of mind?"

"Lena, I am your father. Which father doesn't want his daughter to be happy and enjoy life the way she wants? But we can't always enjoy the freedom of doing whatever we

want. I hope you can understand my reasons for making you marry Tristan! Although he's quite incompetent, there are no major problems with him. Besides, he has always been devoted to you, and he genuinely loves you. So, I hope you'll stop rejecting him and get along well with him after you two get married!"

Ethan clearly stated the pros and cons of the marriage and decided to be honest with Lena. But his words were also realistic and cruel.

Lena bit her lips tightly and hung her head low to ponder about it for a long time. Just when Ethan thought she had been convinced by him and was finally going to agree to marry Tristan, she suddenly raised her head and looked him straight in the eye with a determined gaze.

"Dad, now that I'm aware of the difficulties we're facing. Don't worry. I will stand by you. I've studied abroad for so many years after all, and my knowledge of business management and other aspects should come in handy at times like this. I'm willing to shoulder the burden and face these problems together with you! But I'll never sacrifice my own happiness and rely on an arranged marriage to secure our position and status!"

After saying these words decisively, Lena stood up and headed upstairs to go to her room.

Sitting on the couch and watching his daughter leave, Ethan sighed helplessly after a long time.

If possible, he would of course want his daughter to find her own happiness. But she had been living a sheltered life where she was so well-protected that she had no idea that things wouldn't always go her way in life.

Perhaps Lena would only understand the reasons for his decision today only after she had personally gotten a taste of the ruthlessness of society!

...

Meanwhile, Lucas headed straight to the Stardust Corporation after leaving the restaurant.

Charlotte was presiding over the Stardust Corporation and was managing everything well without any major problems.

Lucas was just here to check on the progress and read some reports regarding the development and other information on the recent situation of the company. He also had to formulate plans for the upcoming developments.

But as soon as his car was near the Stardust Corporation, he saw numerous people gathered outside the Stardust Corporation office building. Among them, there were many firefighters and police officers. The police had even cordoned off the entrance.

Lucas frowned. He could tell that something must have happened.

He stopped his car nearby and got out, only to see that many were craning their necks and pointing at the roof of the Stardust Corporation.

Lucas had always had sharp eyesight. Although the rooftop was high, he managed to get a clear glimpse of the two people standing at the edge.

One of them was wearing a body-hugging business suit and standing there with a furious expression. It was Charlotte.

Lucas had seen the other person with a gloomy and maniacal expression standing across from her before. It was Declan Adams, the scumbag Charlotte had a crush on back in college.

Lucas wouldn't suspect anything if only the both of them were standing there and talking, but the situation was clearly amiss. In particular, Declan was holding a cold and shiny dagger!

Lucas's pupils constricted as his face became cold and gloomy.

He pulled an employee of the Stardust Corporation, who was wearing a lanyard with the company's name tag, over and asked coldly, "What's happening up there?"

The employee answered anxiously, "I have no idea. I heard that that man is Miss Carter's ex-boyfriend who suddenly sneaked into the office today. They somehow got into a conflict, and then he forced Miss Carter to the rooftop of the building. He even wants them to die together!"

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Chapter 257: Crisis on the Rooftop

A cold glint flashed in Lucas's eyes!

Back in college, Declan had completely disregarded Charlotte's sincerity and devotion. Later on, he managed to marry Estelle Brooke, the daughter of a prestigious family in LA, just because of his good looks. When Lucas had lunch with Charlotte before, they happened to run into Estelle and Declan, and they had even deliberately mocked Charlotte.

Afterward, Declan had even gone to the Stardust Corporation to kick up a ruckus at the entrance, during which he kept pestering Charlotte. As a result, Lucas gave him a hard slap on his face without mercy. He even called Aston to come over and take Declan away to teach him a lesson.

He reckoned that the Brookes must have punished Declan later on.

But the Brookes no longer had a place in LA, and the members of the family had already fled. Mercenary people like Declan, who would suck up to the wealthy and powerful and undermine the weak, naturally wouldn't leave with the Brookes, who had lost power. He had probably abandoned Estelle long ago to suck up to someone else who was more powerful.

It was no secret that Charlotte had now become the deputy general manager of the Stardust Corporation and was in charge of handling the duties of the general manager.

He reckoned that Declan must have scurried over to pester her to try and get back together with her after hearing about it.

But Lucas also felt that there was something amiss.

If Declan merely wanted to continue pestering Charlotte, he should have countless methods to do so since he was an experienced freeloader. Why would he resort to such an extreme method of holding Charlotte hostage, forcing her to the rooftop, and threatening to kill her if she didn't compromise?

It didn't seem like something that Declan would do!

But now was not the time for him to stand here and figure out what was going on. Regardless of whether someone had instigated Declan or not, Charlotte was in an extremely dangerous situation now. She had a chance of falling off the roof or getting slit by the sharp dagger in his hand!

Even though the firefighters had laid inflatable cushions on the ground below, she would have a slim chance of survival after falling from a great height of more than 30 floors!

Lucas was so anxious that he pushed the crowd apart and dashed toward the entrance of the Stardust Corporation with no regard for the fact that the police had already cordoned off the area.

"Hey! There's an emergency situation here. You're not allowed to enter..." When a police officer saw Lucas rushing in, he hurriedly stopped Lucas. But before he could finish speaking, Lucas had already vanished.

"Uh... Someone barged in just now... right?" the police officer asked the colleague beside him with uncertainty.

“That seems to be the case... but I didn’t see him clearly...” said another police officer, who was just as dumbfounded and even doubted if his eyes were playing tricks on him.

At this moment, there was great tension on the rooftop of the Stardust Corporation.

Declan was holding a sharp dagger in his hand while gripping tightly onto Charlotte with the other. He looked psychotic and maniacal.

“Get lost! Stay farther away from me. If you come over again, I won’t be kind to her!” Declan waved the dagger in his hand and yelled at the few special ops police on the rooftop.

The police officers were afraid and worried that Declan would really do something in a moment of anger. So they had no choice but to retreat to the edge of the roof.

“Declan Adams, calm down. Don’t do anything irreparable! Let’s talk things over calmly. You’re standing at such a dangerous spot. If you accidentally slip, wouldn’t you have lived your life with regrets?” said a negotiator among the special ops police, trying to dissuade him.

But Declan refused to budge and simply sneered. “Hmph, don’t try that trick with me! I’ve decided to go all out today, and I’m prepared to die! Anyway, I’ll drag her down with me even if I die, so that won’t be a loss for me!”

At this moment, Charlotte’s heart was full of countless words that she wanted to curse out loud!

She had been sitting in her office and doing some work when the madman Declan suddenly barged in and placed a dagger on her neck without saying a word. He held her down and forced her to the roof, where he tried to make her jump down with him in the name of love.

In the name of love?

To hell with that!

I no longer had anything to do with this lunatic since a long time ago!

But she was being held hostage at the edge of the rooftop of the tall building, and the mere sight of the view below when she looked down was enough to put her on the verge of passing out. Furthermore, Declan was holding a dagger and threatening her.

“Declan Adams, what exactly are you trying to do? Let’s sit down to talk things over slowly, alright?” Charlotte tried her best to control her body and avoid looking down while desperately trying to calm Declan down. She wanted to persuade him to leave this dangerous place.

“Shut up!” Declan hollered furiously and waved the dagger in his hand, almost stabbing Charlotte. His action led to a series of terse shrieks of horror from the onlookers on the ground.

“When I came here to look for you to ask you to be my girlfriend last time, you turned me down without mercy and let that damn brother-in-law of yours get the Brookes to take me home. The Brookes beat me up and even seized all my property I managed to get from that woman Estelle Brooke! If it weren’t for you, I wouldn’t have become penniless again!

“The Brookes have now fled, and I’m the only one left because they abandoned me like garbage! All the efforts that I put in for so many years have been in vain! Who do you think I should blame? If not for you, how could I have been reduced to this plight?!

“So, shouldn’t I be holding you responsible?!”

Declan’s eyes were bloodshot, and his expression was menacing and terrifying.

Charlotte forced herself to suppress the horror and repulsion within her as she tried her best to sound as gentle as possible. “Okay, I can take responsibility for that, I’ll give you whatever you want as long as it’s within my means to do so. If you don’t have any money to spend now, I can transfer some to you. If you need a job, I can also recommend you to work directly in the Stardust Corporation. It’s up to you...”

“Hahahahaha!” Declan suddenly laughed hysterically before Charlotte could finish speaking.

As he laughed, his face suddenly turned dark again, and he glared daggers at Charlotte with a vicious gaze. “Hmph, bitch, are you taking pity on me and trying to give me a handout? Hah, why bother acting all noble and mighty in front of me? Don’t forget how you tried to please me desperately and beg me to notice you!

“Let me tell you. Even if you’re capable now, you are still just a bitch! Even if I pull you along with me and jump off this building, what can you do to me?”

As he spoke, Declan took a step closer to Charlotte and squeezed her hand tightly, as if he wanted to pull her along to jump down the building with him.

A strong sense of fear and humiliation surged in Charlotte’s heart. No matter how many years ago it was, anyone whose sincerity and devotion were disregarded, undermined, and trampled on by someone would definitely feel furious and upset.

Furthermore, Charlotte also discovered that there was no way she could communicate with Declan now because he was just like a lunatic!

Even if Charlotte was highly competent in work, she was only a young woman in her twenties. Being forced into this desperate situation by a lunatic like Declan made her feel helpless and hopeless.

“Declan Adams, stop!”

At this moment, an extremely familiar voice sounded near them. It was a tall and muscular man walking out of the small door on the rooftop. It was Lucas!

Chapter 258: Lucas Jumps Off the Building

As soon as Declan saw Lucas appear, intense hatred appeared in his maniacal gaze.

Although he had been lashing out at Charlotte and cursing at her, he was full of hatred toward Lucas!

If Lucas hadn't beaten him up and gotten Aston involved, he wouldn't have been brought back to the Brooke residence to suffer a brutal beating. The Brookes had even seized all his money and the properties he had secretly bought!

The Brookes later fell because of Lucas!

If Lucas was the reason Charlotte rejected him, he would be the cause of everything!

“Hah, Lucas Gray. I hadn't gone to look for you, but you came looking for me yourself!” Declan hollered through gritted teeth. Deep down, he felt extremely gloomy and resentful.

Charlotte was surprised and overjoyed the moment she saw Lucas. But she soon became worried and nervous after seeing the hatred in Declan's eyes when he glared at Lucas.

Declan was now close to losing his mind. And in this situation, he was capable of doing anything!

Lucas narrowed his eyes and sized up the environment around them. Declan was holding Charlotte close to the edge of the roof. They were indeed in a very dangerous spot. The reason the special ops police officers hadn't tried to shoot Declan was that they were worried he might jump off the building together with Charlotte, the hostage.

With a profound gaze in his eyes, Lucas squeezed the two coins in his pocket.

He was certain that he would be able to use the coins to kill Declan and still save Charlotte.

But there were numerous special police officers both on the roof and downstairs, onlookers, and many reporters paying attention to the progress. If Lucas used that method to save her, he would undoubtedly expose himself and get involved with the law.

After thinking about it, he gently waved his hand, shook off the special police officers wanting to hold him back from going forward, and then walked toward Declan and Charlotte.

“Declan, now that you have been abandoned, you must be feeling terrible. Is that why you’re behaving like a mad dog?” Lucas deliberately mocked him with a derisive smile.

Just as he expected, Declan immediately became enraged, and his expression became menacing. “Bastard! How dare you say that?! You’re the reason I ended up in this state today! It’s all your fault! You’re the one who deserves to die!”

Lucas raised his brows and kept walking over. “Yes, I’m the one who destroyed all the plans you’ve had all these years, but you don’t dare to do anything to me at all. All you dare to do is act mighty and formidable in front of a woman! Declan Adams, you’re really such a coward! I’m standing right in front of you now. What can you do to me?”

His ruthless mocking was like a sharp dagger stabbing deep into Declan’s chest, making him hysterical.

“Shut up! Shut up! Don’t talk anymore!” Declan hollered furiously at the top of his lungs with his dagger in hand.

“I’m standing right here. Do you dare to touch me? Even if I’m unarmed and you have a dagger in your hand, I bet you won’t even dare to take a step closer to me!” Lucas said with a smug and contemptuous expression while standing composedly three meters in front of Declan.

Charlotte could already tell what Lucas was trying to do. She knew that he was deliberately angering Declan and spiting him into letting go of her so that he could deal with him!

Although Charlotte had seen Lucas getting into fights with others several times before, and she also felt that Declan would be no match for him, she was still worried that he might get hurt easily by the sharp dagger in Declan’s hand!

Charlotte looked extremely nervous, and her heart was about to jump out of her chest.

“Who says I don’t dare?! Once I go over there, you’ll be the first one I kill!” Declan was indeed agitated by his words, and he hollered furiously. Holding the dagger, he was just about to charge toward Lucas!

But he suddenly stopped in his tracks.

A few seconds later, he seemed to have an epiphany and suddenly became cleared-headed. He burst into laughter and gibed, "Hahaha, Lucas Gray, you're just trying to provoke me so that I'll deal with you and let Charlotte go, right? Hehehe, I won't let you have your way!"

Lucas frowned slightly.

This dimwit Declan was just about to be fooled, but he suddenly calmed down and figured out the trick that Lucas was using. Someone had to be giving him some pointers!

Lucas couldn't help looking at Declan's ear.

"I know Charlotte Carter is your sister-in-law, so you definitely want to rescue her, don't you? In that case, your Achilles' heel is now in my hands!"

With a smug grin on his face, Declan dragged Charlotte over with one hand and put the dagger against her neck.

"Hmph, he's right. If I want to kill you, I don't have to walk over and attack you! If you want this woman to live, you'd better come over here obediently and jump off this building!" Declan threatened furiously with a menacing expression.

The Stardust Corporation office building had more than 30 floors, which was more than 100 meters high. If he jumped off from such a great height, he definitely wouldn't survive!

Charlotte's expression changed drastically, and she yelled in panic, "Lucas, don't listen to him! This nutcase just wants to force you to die... Mmph!"

"Shut up!" Declan pressed the dagger against Charlotte's throat in annoyance and forced her not to speak. When the sharp blade pressed against her delicate skin, a crimson line of blood immediately emerged.

"Are you going to jump or not? I'll kill her now if you don't jump!"

Lucas's pupils constricted as a terrifying cold glint appeared in his eyes!

But he didn't ignore the fact that Declan implied that someone had said something to him.

It wasn't the time to think about it now because this lunatic was still holding Charlotte hostage. Her life was in danger, and she could die at any moment.

Lucas looked into Declan's eyes and exclaimed coldly, "Fine. I'll jump, but you must let her go first!"

Declan laughed out loud hysterically. "Haha, do you take me for a fool? If I let this bitch off, will you still jump?"

"Well then, how am I supposed to believe that you will let her go after I jump?" Lucas had already walked to a spot near Declan and was still composed.

Declan barked arrogantly, "Hmph, you don't have a choice! If you die, I may let her go if I'm happy. But if you don't jump now, I'll kill her immediately!"

He once again waved the dagger in his hand and enjoyed the wonderful feeling of being in control of someone else's life.

Lucas looked deep into Charlotte's eyes and walked toward the edge of the roof. He said lightly, "I hope you'll keep to your word."

Then he jumped right off the roof!

Chapter 259: Interrogate Him Properly

Charlotte watched as Lucas vanished from the edge of the roof and screamed at the top of her lungs uncontrollably, "Lucas!"

Two streams of tears rolled down her cheeks, and she started bawling loudly, feeling as if her heart was being stabbed by daggers.

In contrast, Declan laughed out loud in great excitement. "Hahaha! What a dimwit. I managed to kill him so easily! I'm going to get rich again soon. Hahaha!"

The special police officers on the rooftop of the building couldn't stop Lucas in time and could only watch as he jumped off the building. They all shouted in horror and regret.

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At the same time, the crowd of onlookers on the ground also shrieked loudly in amazement.

When Declan heard the commotion at the bottom of the building, he guffawed hysterically with great smugness. Then he grabbed Charlotte by the collar and looked at the ground to admire the scene of Lucas's badly mangled flesh after he fell off the building.

Suddenly, there was a major change!

A pair of hands suddenly reached over from the edge of the roof and clamped down firmly on Declan's ankle!

Declan was standing on the edge of the parapet and was caught off guard when the pair of hands dragged him off the roof with great force!

He screamed in horror, and his face immediately turned pale. But the moment he fell off the building, he grabbed Charlotte and dragged her down with him!

"Ah!"

"Oh my god! Both of them fell off the building!"

"Ahhh, this is terrible!"

The reporters and onlookers below immediately shrieked and turned pale in horror. Countless eyes and cameras focused on the rooftop.

When Charlotte was dragged off the roof by Declan, she didn't feel any fear of death and was instead full of regret and misery.

I caused Lucas to die...

If he hadn't tried to save me, he wouldn't have had to jump to his death!

If she had known earlier, she would have dragged Declan and jumped off the building before Lucas did so that he wouldn't have had to sacrifice his life for nothing!

It's good that I'm dying now. At least Lucas won't be dying alone...

Charlotte shut her eyes tightly, and two teardrops trickled down her cheeks and into the air.

Just when Charlotte was ready to die, her weightless body was suddenly caught by a strong arm!

Charlotte opened her eyes abruptly, only to see a familiar, smiling face.

"Lucas..." Charlotte looked at his face in shock, and for a moment, she couldn't tell if she was hallucinating or not.

Lucas suddenly said, "Don't space out. Hurry and get up!"

Immediately afterward, Charlotte felt a force on her waist as the strong arm thrust her body upward and threw her into a window.

Only when her hands and feet touched the cold, solid marble floor did she finally realize that she was still alive! Lucas didn't die either! Moreover, he had once again saved her!

She raised her head to look at the window near her and saw that Lucas was hanging off the window with his knee bent and his calf inside. His body was still hanging outside the window!

"Waaa!" Charlotte yelled in terror. Lucas was in an extremely dangerous position, as he was leveraging only on his calf to remain hanging on the window. The slightest carelessness would cause him to slip and fall!

She hurriedly dashed over to pull him up from the window. But his calf moved slightly, and using the strength of his waist, his entire body flipped over from outside the window and then leaped in from the windowsill.

Seeing Lucas finally safe, Charlotte burst into tears of joy, and she suddenly hugged him while wailing.

"Lucas... You scared me! I really thought you were dead just now! Uwu! I'm so scared!"

At this moment, Charlotte was no longer the deputy general manager who often did a good job managing the company. Instead, she was sobbing and wailing like a child.

Lucas was caught between laughter and tears. He patted Charlotte's shoulder comfortingly and said softly, "It's alright. We're safe now. You don't have to be scared anymore."

As Lucas comforted her, Charlotte gradually felt more relieved. But at this moment, she finally realized that she was hugging Lucas tightly. She was so frightened that she hurriedly let go and looked up at Lucas with tears in her eyes.

Bang!

Someone suddenly slammed the door open from outside, and several special police officers hurriedly sprinted in. They immediately saw Lucas and Charlotte standing near the window and finally heaved a long sigh of relief. "Great! Both of you are fine!"

When they saw Lucas, Declan, and Charlotte falling off the roof just now, they were terrified!

Fortunately, the other special police officers waiting downstairs conveyed the news in time and informed them that Lucas didn't jump down but had instead hung off the

window of the floor below roof in an extremely dangerous position. He had even waited for the opportunity to pull Declan down and save Charlotte.

The leader of the special police officers looked at Lucas with self-reproach while feeling thankful that they had survived the ordeal. He said solemnly with excitement, "Sir, you mustn't do such a dangerous thing again in the future! What would have happened if something went wrong?"

Lucas smiled faintly and ignored him. Instead, he raised his hand that he had stretched out of the window. "I think you guys have to pay attention to this person."

He was grabbing tightly onto a fancy spotted tie coiled around Declan's neck!

Charlotte and the special police officers were dumbstruck.

It turned out that Lucas had not only grabbed Charlotte by the waist and threw her into the room but had also caught Declan while doing so!

But Declan had already turned pale with his eyes rolled back into his head because his weight was being suspended on the tie. He was about to suffocate to death.

Upon seeing this, the special police officers rushed forward, grabbed Declan over from Lucas's hand, and pulled off the necktie coiled tightly around his neck. Declan desperately gasped for air, and the paleness of his face gradually faded.

But he hadn't returned to his senses yet and was still in a daze.

"I think you have to interrogate this person properly," Lucas said coldly while looking expressionlessly at the rescued Declan.

Chapter 260: Unwind and Relax

In fact, Lucas could have chosen not to catch Declan and let him fall to his death just now, as he ought to reap what he sowed.

But the words Declan said earlier made Lucas suspect that someone was instigating him. So Lucas caught him and allowed him to stay alive to interrogate him and find out more from him.

But the matter of Declan taking Charlotte hostage and trying to jump off the building with her had alarmed almost all the police systems in Orange County. Many reporters had also hurried over with their cameras and equipment to get the firsthand news scoop.

In such a situation, Lucas naturally couldn't interrogate Declan personally. He simply handed Declan over to the special police officers for them to investigate.

The chief special police officer nodded and instructed his subordinates to send Declan to the hospital. After Declan came to, they would bring him in for interrogation immediately.

Of course, as the parties involved in the incident, Lucas and Charlotte had to make a mandatory trip to the police station.

"Sorry. Although you two are the victims, you need to cooperate and come with us to the police station to have your statements taken according to standard procedure."

Charlotte had just had a hair-raising experience consisting of a series of frights and falling off the building. After finally being safe, her calves were trembling slightly.

Lucas looked at her and was about to refuse when Charlotte held onto his hand and said firmly, "Alright, we'll go with you now."

Soon, the two of them were taken to the police station, where they were asked numerous questions, such as how they met the suspect, Declan Adams, whether there was any conflict between them, and so on.

There was nothing to hide regarding these things because they had already clearly explained everything.

But while the police officers were questioning Lucas, the chief special police officer was especially curious about how Lucas had the guts and the shocking reflexes to do what he did. Lucas merely said calmly, "I used to be in the military." He didn't say anything else afterward.

The chief officer admired Lucas greatly and wanted to take him under his wing, but the latter turned him down without hesitation.

The chief was so curious about Lucas that he waited until after Lucas left before searching the database to find Lucas's information and see how he had done in the military. But the result he got was that he didn't have permission to check Lucas's information at all!

Only then did the special police officer understand that Lucas's background was probably much more terrifying than he had imagined.

Of course, this was an afterword.

After Lucas and Charlotte had their statements taken and left the police station, Charlotte's face had already returned to normal, and she seemed to be the same as usual.

But he had accidentally touched her fingers, and only then did he realize that her fingers were terribly cold and clammy. Her pupils were full of fear and horror, but she suppressed it and deliberately pretended to be fine.

In fact, Charlotte was only a young girl in her mid-twenties. She had never experienced such a thing before, and it was quite a remarkable feat that she could remain calm.

Lucas sighed and suddenly said, "Don't go back to work later. Is there anywhere you want to go? I'll accompany you."

Charlotte raised her head in shock, and she forced a smile. "It's alright. I still have a lot of things to do at the office. I..."

Lucas didn't wait for her to finish before interrupting, "Regarding what happened earlier, there must be trouble in the office. Who knows how many reporters are waiting there? Just take it that I'm giving you half a day off to adjust your mood."

Charlotte was stunned, and her eyes were gradually full of joy. She smiled sincerely. "Okay! Since you've given me a day off, I'll definitely have to go and relax! To be honest, you've really given me a great shock. Having lived for so long, it's my first time encountering such a matter. It's really just... too crazy! It's unlucky enough to run into a lunatic like Declan Adams once. I hope I never encounter such an unlucky thing again!"

At this point, Charlotte finally returned to normal.

At this moment, Charlotte's phone started ringing. She took it out to look at the caller ID before sticking her tongue out. She smiled and said, "Oh dear, it's a call from Cheyenne. She must have already found out!"

When she answered the call, Cheyenne's worried and anxious voice immediately filled her ears. "Charlotte, are you alright? Are you hurt?"

Cheyenne had just seen on the news that the deputy general manager of the Stardust Corporation had been held hostage by her former boyfriend, and he had tried to force her off the building. She was so frightened that she almost fainted. After seeing the news that Charlotte had been rescued, she hurriedly called her to ask about her situation.

Charlotte quickly said, "Cheyenne, don't worry. I'm alright now. It's all thanks to Lucas coming to my rescue. That jerk has also been arrested by the police."

Only then did Cheyenne realize that Lucas was involved in this incident. After hearing that Lucas had once again saved Charlotte, she was so grateful that she didn't know how to put it into words.

"Thank you, Lucas! Thank you so much!" Cheyenne exclaimed. She meant these words from the bottom of her heart.

Lucas was standing right next to Charlotte, so he naturally heard what Cheyenne said from the other end. He chuckled and said gently, "There's no need to thank me."

Charlotte giggled. "Cheyenne, don't worry! You can cook us some delicious food tonight to help us recover from the shock! Oh, by the way, can I borrow Lucas for a stroll this afternoon?"

Charlotte decided to inform Cheyenne. Otherwise, she would feel a strange sense of guilt.

"Of course there's no problem! I'm too busy with work, so let Lucas accompany you on a stroll to relax!"

Cheyenne didn't hesitate to agree. Charlotte had just had such a traumatic experience. If it wasn't because she had long made an appointment with two extremely important guests and couldn't leave for the time being, she would have definitely accompanied Charlotte and comforted her.

After hearing that Lucas was going to accompany Charlotte, Cheyenne felt much more relieved.

After getting Cheyenne's approval, Charlotte no longer felt worried and said happily, "Lucas, let's go ride roller coasters at the amusement park. There's also the Viking ship, drop tower, pendulum ride, and bungee jumping! Let's go to them all!"

These were all thrill rides that would give an adrenaline boost. It seemed that Charlotte had been agitated by her near-death experience today and wanted to engage in heart-pounding activities to relieve some stress.

It was indeed an unusual way to relieve stress, but it was exactly like something Charlotte would do.

"Okay, you call the shots."

Lucas smiled calmly and then accompanied Charlotte for the thrill rides.

While they were riding them, Charlotte screamed nervously at the top of her lungs and laughed heartily. The horror within her gradually vanished in the sky above the amusement park.

They continued to play until the sun nearly set, and Charlotte finally left the amusement park in high spirits together with Lucas.

They were about to drive to kindergarten to pick Amelia up, but Lucas suddenly stopped in his tracks and looked at a bush near them.

“Wait for me in the car. I left something behind. I’ll be right back.”

Then Lucas walked toward the bush.

There was a young man squatting behind the bush and holding a camera. When he saw Lucas walking toward him, he hurriedly turned around to run away. *Crap, I’ve been discovered!*

Chapter 261: The Person Who Sneakily Took Photos

The young man, who seemed to be a famous paparazzi in the county, scurried away quickly. But after covering only a short distance, he discovered that a tall and phantom-like figure had appeared in front of him to block him from leaving.

“Still trying to run, huh?”

The young man was flabbergasted because the person in front of him was the same person he had been secretly snapping photos of!

A few seconds ago, this person was clearly more than ten meters behind him, yet he was standing in front of him in the blink of an eye. How did he do it?!

Having been discovered and even stopped by the person he was secretly snapping photos of, the young man got a little nervous and gritted his teeth. He then barked in a menacing voice, “Why are you stopping me? Get lost!”

Lucas sneered and pointed at the camera the young man was holding. He asked indifferently, “You’ve been tailing me all afternoon, so you must have taken a lot of pictures, right? Did you think no one could discover you when you’re so clumsy?”

Knowing that he had done something wrong, the young man gripped onto his camera tightly and argued, “What nonsense are you saying? Who tailed you and sneakily took pictures of you? I was just taking pictures of the scenery in the amusement park! There’s no rule against taking pictures here. You’re poking your nose too far into someone else’s business!”

“Is that so? Let me see your camera then.” Lucas reached out to grab the camera in the young man’s hand.

While trying to hide the camera behind him, the young man yelled loudly, "Damn it! Are you trying to rob me in broad daylight?"

Many tourists nearby, who were unaware of the truth, immediately looked over.

The young man was hoping to attract the attention of the passersby by yelling loudly and get them to come over so that Lucas wouldn't be able to snatch the camera from him.

But he didn't expect Lucas to ignore his yelling. Besides, as an ordinary person, he obviously couldn't stop Lucas, who had excellent reflexes.

The next second, Lucas had already gotten hold of the camera.

"Hurry up and give it back to me! Or else I'll call the police!" With a look of horror and panic, the young man whipped out his phone and threatened Lucas.

"Go ahead and call the police, as long as you're not afraid of being arrested yourself," Lucas was not scared at all, and his indifferent words immediately made the young man freeze on the spot.

The young man clearly knew what he had done. If the police got involved, he would be the one in trouble!

Soon, Lucas opened the man's camera and saw the pictures he had secretly snapped.

In almost every picture, Lucas and Charlotte were photographed on the various rides of the amusement park, with Charlotte looking up at Lucas gleefully most of the time. There were also many photos of them walking side by side.

There were at least 200 photos in the camera, all of which were taken soon after they entered the amusement park until they were about to leave just now.

Apart from some blurry and out-of-focus shots, the angles they were photographed from were just right. If an outsider didn't know how they were related and saw these photos, they would definitely think that he and Charlotte were a couple in love.

"That's mine. Quickly return it to me!" the young man hollered but lacked confidence.

The gaze in Lucas's eyes was icy cold, and a mere glance from him caused the young man to shudder in fear and not dare to continue speaking.

He had spent the entire afternoon secretly taking photos of Lucas, who had been kind and gentlemanly toward Charlotte. But after the brief eye contact made with Lucas, the young man was overwhelmed with immense fear as he felt as if he was facing a terrifying and menacing beast!

The young man realized that he had very likely provoked a big shot he couldn't afford to offend!

But since he had already done so, it was too late to regret it!

"Tell me who sent you to come take photos of us secretly?" Lucas asked indifferently while tossing the camera up and down in his hand twice.

"No one! I-I'm a photographer, and I was just taking some random photos of the amusement park! Quick, return the camera to me!" The young man refused to admit he had been taking photos of Lucas without permission.

Lucas sneered, pulled out the camera's memory card, and crushed it into pieces in front of the young man.

"Ah! My memory card!" The young man immediately shrieked and wailed. The memory card being destroyed meant that the hundreds of photos stored inside were all gone! The photos he had taken after painstakingly spending most of the day finding the best angles to shoot from while hiding in trees and bushes were all gone!

"Compensate me for it! Compensate me!" The young man flew into a rage and charged toward Lucas while waving his fists to try and punch him.

But an ordinary person like him, who had never trained in martial arts before, was just like a weak chicken in front of Lucas. Lucas turned around to dodge and kicked him at the bend of his legs. He barely applied any force, but he managed to send the young man flying far and falling hard onto the ground.

"You... you snatched my camera and even attacked me! I must call the police to arrest you!" Since the memory card had been ruined, and all the photographic evidence was destroyed, the young man had nothing to worry about anymore. While lying on the ground, he started cursing loudly.

Lucas sneered and walked over. Standing in front of the young man and looking down at him from above, he demanded, "Drop the pretense. Speak up. Who instigated you to take photos of us without permission? If you don't tell me, I'll make sure you can never be a photographer again!"

He raised a foot and stepped on the young man's right wrist. As long as he applied a little more force, his wrist would be crushed, and he would never be able to hold a camera again.

At first, the young man thought that Lucas was just boasting and trying to scare him, so he continued to curse while lying on the ground. Only when Lucas stepped harder on his wrist did he feel the sharp pain that made him feel overwhelmed with fear.

This person in front of him might really cripple his right hand!

At the thought of this, the young man broke out in cold sweat while his face turned pale. Without consideration for anything else, he frantically yelled, "I'll tell you! I'll tell you! Shortly after I had lunch, someone found the contact number of my photography studio and asked me to help take pictures of his wife and his wife's adulterous lover. He claimed that he wanted to collect evidence to sue you two for adultery! He gave me three thousand dollars and even promised to give me another fifteen thousand once he got the photos! That's all I know!"

Fearing that Lucas would really crush his wrist in a fit of anger, the young man spilled the beans and came clean about everything in a single breath.

When Lucas heard the words 'wife' and 'adultery', his face became even more gloomy. He continued to probe, "Who's the person who looked for you?"

On the brink of tears, the young man said, "I have no idea. He sent me a text message and was very quick to transfer the deposit of three thousand, so I trusted that he would fulfill his promise and came here to take photos of you two. As for the rest, I really have no idea!"

Afraid that Lucas wouldn't believe him, the young man hurriedly pulled out his phone and showed Lucas the chat history and transfer record.

"Look, I'm telling the truth. I'm not lying to you!" the young man exclaimed pitifully.

Lucas noted down the number of the person who had sent the young man the message and finally moved his foot away from the latter's wrist while dumping his camera onto the ground. "I'll let you off this time. But if you dare to do something like this again, the consequences will be heavier than this."

"I won't dare to! I won't dare to do it again! Thank you, sir!" The young man hurriedly picked up the camera and scrambled away in a panic as if he had received a pardon.

Meanwhile, Lucas took out his phone and called someone. After informing the person of the phone number, he said, "Find out who owns this number!"

Chapter 262: Another Scuffle

In fact, Lucas already had an idea about who the mastermind was, but he just needed some evidence to prove it.

Ever since he had returned to Orange County and took over the Stardust Corporation, there had secretly been a lot of unrest.

In particular, after Flynn had appointed Charlotte as the deputy general manager, Oliver Harvey, the director of the sales department at the time, stood out and vehemently opposed it. He even produced a large stack of digitally-doctored photos that implied an illicit affair between Charlotte and Flynn.

After the conspiracy was uncovered, Flynn fired Harvey from the company, and Harvey committed suicide by jumping off the building. A large number of media outlets quickly caught up to cover as much information as possible. They even misled the audience and caused the Stardust Corporation to face a major controversy and become the target of public criticism for a long time. Even until now, it still wasn't peaceful.

Lucas later found out that the person who secretly instigated or threatened Harvey into taking his own life was Dave Lewis, who worked for the Huttons. Shortly after Lucas found him, he died of a heart attack in his own home.

Although the trail of clues had been broken, Lucas was certain that the mastermind must be someone from the Huttons.

Later on, the Stardust Corporation became independent of the Huttons, and word about it gradually spread. Thus, many families in Orange County thought that the Stardust Corporation had been abandoned by the Huttons and was no longer as powerful as before. This resulted in plenty of trouble.

Coupled with today's incident of Declan going to the Stardust Corporation to hold Charlotte hostage and threatening to jump to his death, Lucas was sure that someone had instigated him. It was also very likely that the Huttons were the mastermind.

The matter of the paparazzi taking photos without permission could also be part of the plan.

They only had two agendas for doing so. One was to kill Lucas, and the other was to destroy the Stardust Corporation.

Lucas was well aware of this.

He didn't intend to go back to the Huttons, but some of the Huttons were extremely wary of him, and they tried all sorts of methods to suppress him and even get him killed.

Lucas didn't care, nor was he afraid of those who were trying to kill him, be it in private or public. But the Stardust Corporation was the only thing that his mother had left behind for him, so no matter what, he wouldn't tolerate them touching the Stardust Corporation!

With a sharp and cold gaze in his eyes, Lucas raised his head and looked distantly in the direction of the DC. "Hmph, I don't care who you really are. As long as you dare to reach your hand here, I don't mind chopping it off!"

When Lucas reached the amusement park entrance, he saw Charlotte waiting here for him worriedly.

“Lucas, what did you lose? Did you find it?” she asked curiously.

Lucas took out a bunch of keys from his pocket and said with a faint smile, “I accidentally lost my keys. Fortunately, I didn’t drop them too far away.”

Charlotte grinned and teased, “I thought that you were invincible. It turns out there are times when you’re careless and end up losing your keys too! Haha!”

Lucas didn’t bother to explain. He merely nodded and said, “Yeah, so you can’t be careless like me. Okay, it’s getting late. Let’s go pick up Amelia and go home!”

Charlotte nodded happily. Soon, the two of them got into Lucas’s Jaguar and sped off toward Amelia’s kindergarten.

...

At this moment, in a luxurious villa of the Huttons far away in DC...

A young man in his twenties was reclining on a soft leather sofa with a sullen expression.

There was a man in his thirties wearing a suit standing in front of him with his head hung low. The man was standing quietly with great respect, not even daring to raise his hand to wipe the cold sweat covering his forehead.

“So, your plans have failed?” the young man asked slowly without any emotion in his voice.

The man in the suit immediately got down on both knees and pleaded, “Mr. Leighton, I failed to get the task done well. I’m incompetent! We initially found a perfect candidate, and we told him to force Lucas to jump to his death. But to our surprise, he merely pretended to jump. He even caught the person we instigated. I didn’t want to risk having that person spout any nonsense about this, so I’ve sent someone to get rid of him. We definitely won’t be implicated!

“However, I’ve indeed failed to complete the task well. Please punish me, Mr. Leighton!” The man in the suit pressed his forehead against the carpet.

Edward Leighton glanced at him uninterestedly. “What’s the point of reprimanding you and punishing you at this point? You’d better think of another solution to get rid of that person.”

Seeing that Edward didn't hold it against him, the man in the suit breathed a long sigh of relief. He then raised his head from the ground and said, "Actually, it's not that difficult to get rid of Lucas Gray. I'll send a few of my elite assassins. I'm sure we'll be able to kill him without anyone realizing!"

Edward snorted coldly in disdain. "Dimwit! If it was that easy, why would I need you to think of a solution? Sending hitmen to assassinate him is too straightforward and crude. Grandpa will definitely find out. When he does, neither you nor I will be able to get away scot-free!

"Besides, it'd be too easy for him if we just let him die like that! Doesn't the Stardust Corporation mean the world to him because he thinks it's something precious his mother left behind for him? In that case, I'm going to destroy it bit by bit so that he can watch it get destroyed while being unable to do anything about it!"

There was a cold gaze of resentment and viciousness in Edward's eyes.

The man in the suit shuddered and hurriedly said with his head hung low, "Yes, Mr. Leighton, I understand! I will definitely adhere to your orders and think of a way to destroy the Stardust Corporation!"

Edward finally glanced at the man in the suit and said with a faint smile on his face, "That's what you said yourself. Within a month, I want the Stardust Corporation to be completely destroyed! Otherwise, there's no need for you to continue living in this world."

The man in the suit shivered violently. Kneeling on one knee, he answered loudly, "Yes!"

...

Orange County...

Soon after Lucas arrived at the kindergarten with Charlotte and picked Amelia up, he received a call from Jordan.

"Lucas, I've checked up on that phone number you gave me. It belongs to an unregistered SIM card that can be bought off the market. The identity bound to it doesn't serve any purpose. We've also tracked the positioning according to the network information, and it shows that the user threw the phone into a garbage bin. For the time being, there's no other useful information. It was clearly premeditated."

"Okay." In fact, the outcome was within Lucas's expectations. Since the other party was so conscientious that he had concealed his identity and even chose to contact the photography studio via text message, he definitely did so because he didn't want to leave any clues.

“One more thing. Declan Adams regained consciousness in the hospital, but he suddenly went berserk before the police could interrogate him. He then jumped out of the window of the hospital ward and has already... fallen to his death.

“After that, the police and forensic pathologists recovered a tiny metal monitoring device from his left ear canal. The police are still investigating to find out if he heard any instructions through that device before his death.”

Chapter 263: Please Come With Us

Lucas frowned.

He didn't expect Declan to die despite being in police custody.

But there were definitely potential loopholes everywhere. If it was really the doing of the force that Lucas guessed, the police would likely be defenseless and unable to guard against their actions.

But Declan's death was not in vain. At the very least, Lucas was now certain that the mastermind who instigated Declan was more likely than not one of the Huttons or someone under them.

Otherwise, Declan wouldn't have died so easily.

“Okay, I know.”

Lucas was about to hang up the phone when he noticed in the rearview mirror that there were several inconspicuous cars tailing his car. Their intentions were unclear, but he knew that they had to be up to no good.

He frowned. *They're really everywhere. How annoying!*

He wondered who sent these people to tail him.

They actually waited at his daughter's kindergarten and subsequently shadowed him. It was obviously a provocation!

With a trace of murderous intent in his eyes, Lucas hung up the phone and quickly made another call. “Come to Amelia's kindergarten immediately!”

Lucas parked his car by the roadside and acutely discovered that the few cars tailing behind also pulled over nearby. He sneered.

Shortly after, the tall and brawny Wade appeared in front of Lucas.

Charlotte, who was holding Amelia in her arms and chatting with her in the backseat, was stunned to see Wade.

As soon as Wade saw Lucas and Charlotte, he lowered his head and sincerely apologized, "Sorry, Mr. Gray. I failed to protect Miss Charlotte in the afternoon and ended up causing her to be frightened. Please punish me!"

Lucas had specially sent him to protect Charlotte. But in the end, Charlotte was held hostage by the deranged Declan, who even forcefully brought her to the roof of the Stardust Corporation office building, where she almost fell to her death. Wade was laden with guilt and self-reproach.

Lucas knew that although he had ordered Wade to protect Charlotte secretly, Wade would generally only protect her when she was at the office or at home. He naturally couldn't follow her and stay by her side 24 hours a day.

Lucas shook his head. "What happened today has nothing to do with you. But from now on, you must be more cautious and protect her as well as you can. Otherwise, there's no need for me to keep you around."

Lucas's words were not too stern or harsh, but they made Wade's heart skip a beat. It was obvious what Lucas meant—if Wade couldn't do his job well as a bodyguard, Lucas would no longer need him, and he would have no choice but to leave. That was something that Wade could never tolerate!

"Mr. Gray, I promise that I will do my best to protect Miss Charlotte as much as I can. What happened today will not occur again in the future!" Wade hurriedly guaranteed.

Lucas merely chided Wade a little and didn't intend to punish him. Seeing that he was much more conscientious now, he nodded. "I still have some things to take care of now. Take both of them home."

Since Lucas discovered that someone was following him, he planned to let Charlotte drive home together with Amelia. But he was worried that someone would harm them. Charlotte was a vulnerable girl while Amelia was a five-year-old child. In case something terrible really happened to them, Lucas would definitely regret it!

So he called Wade over and asked him to send them home.

This was how meticulous and cautious Lucas was.

Charlotte also sensed that something was amiss and asked worriedly, "Lucas, have you encountered trouble? Should we call the police?"

Amelia was also influenced by Charlotte's nervousness, and she stared at Lucas with worry in her large eyes. "Daddy..."

Lucas stroked Amelia's soft hair and smiled. "I'm alright. I just have a few things to take care of at the office. Be good and stay in the car with Aunt Charlotte. This muscular uncle will take you home."

He turned to say to Charlotte comfortingly, "It's alright. I just happen to have some things to handle. I'd feel more at ease with Wade sending you home."

Charlotte finally felt relieved. Holding Amelia in her arms, she said, "Okay, be careful and come home early!"

"Yeah, got it."

Lucas opened the car door and got out. After watching Wade get into the driver's seat and drive the black Jaguar far away, he finally looked away and walked toward the few small cars parked closely behind him.

The people in the cars seemed to be waiting for Lucas. When they saw him approaching, they immediately opened the car doors and got out to surround Lucas. There were more than ten of them, and they were rather burly.

They were obviously extraordinary bodyguards, especially since they were so large and muscular.

Lucas raised his eyebrows and asked nonchalantly, "Who sent you?"

The bald bodyguard, who was their leader, glanced at Lucas in surprise.

In his opinion, the vast majority of people would panic and look nervous when suddenly surrounded by more than ten burly men. Yey Lucas remained composed and didn't show the slightest trace of fear.

The bald bodyguard stopped being as contemptuous as he was when he first saw how lean Lucas was. "Mr. Gray, please come with us, and you will naturally find out who the person who sent us is."

He extended his arm and pointed at a Volkswagen Passat with a door opened, gesturing for Lucas to get inside.

After taking a glance at him, Lucas stepped foot into the Passat without saying a word or showing too much emotion. His actions were so natural that he was like their boss.

The bald bodyguard's cheeks twitched a little. He couldn't help but feel a sense of admiration for Lucas's ability to stay cool and collected.

About half an hour later, the car pulled over at a clubhouse called Snowflake Entertainment.

The bodyguards asked Lucas to get out and then surrounded him again before taking him to the entrance of one of the most luxurious private rooms on the top floor.

“Boss, Mr. Lucas Gray is here,” the bald bodyguard reported from the doorway.

“Let him in!” A familiar voice came from inside the private room.

Lucas raised his eyebrows. He could recognize the voice.

It belonged to Preston Taylor, the most successful descendant of the Taylors and the one most likely to succeed as the next helmsman of the family. He was also the former owner of the Ocean Bathhouse. Lucas had just met him this morning and extorted a compensation of three million dollars from him.

Lucas was waiting for the Taylors to come looking for him, but he didn't expect Preston to be so impatient as to resort to such a method to 'invite' him over.

Watching Lucas step into the private room, Preston, who was sitting on the innermost couch, snorted coldly with a fake smile. “Lucas Gray, I've finally invited you to my turf.”

Preston deliberately emphasized the word 'turf' because he wanted to clap back at Lucas for saying that the Ocean Bathhouse was his turf in the morning and forcing him to compensate him.

“In that case, are you trying to take revenge on me now, Mr. Taylor?” While speaking, Lucas didn't show the slightest bit of fear at all. He sat down on a random couch across from Preston.

Chapter 264: Return It to the Taylors

When Preston saw how bold and fearless Lucas was, his facial muscles twitched a little as he gritted his teeth with great resentment and viciousness in his eyes.

With a hypocritical grin, he said, “Hehe, why would I do that? Since I invited you here, I naturally have something to discuss with you.”

He thought he had hidden his intentions well. But being a sharp and shrewd person, Lucas had long seen through Preston.

“Mr. Taylor, don't beat around the bush with me. If you have anything to say, just say it.” Lucas couldn't be bothered to exchange hypocritical pleasantries with him. He simply leaned against the couch and got straight to the point.

Seeing Lucas taking the lead in the conversation, Preston was displeased, and his face immediately turned dark.

He waved his hand, and the few scantily clad beauties sitting beside him immediately walked out of the room.

Soon, only Lucas, Preston, and a burly man who followed Preston wherever he went were the only ones left in the large private room.

Lucas glanced at the burly man and found that his muscles were bulging from underneath his clothes. He was brawny, the skin above his joints was all covered in calluses, and his temples were also slightly bulging. He was obviously a powerful elite personal bodyguard of Preston's.

But he was powerful only in comparison to ordinary people. In Lucas's opinion, this bodyguard was mediocre and far inferior to Stanley Ray, so he quickly looked away uninterestedly.

"Lucas Gray, I asked you about your background in the Ocean Bathhouse this morning, but you refused to tell me. However, we're in a modern society now, and it's a piece of cake for me to find out who you are!

"Six years ago, you were just a poor college student who got embroiled in a scandal with Cheyenne Carter, and subsequently, you became a live-in son-in-law of the Carters. But you soon went missing to go join the military for six years. You were discharged only recently, and then you returned to Orange County, am I right?"

Preston stared at Lucas austerely as he spoke. At the same time, he was also closely observing Lucas's expression to try and find some traces of panic or nervousness.

But he was disappointed because Lucas merely remained sitting without even frowning, as if Preston was talking about an irrelevant person.

"Hmph, I also discovered that you're one of the Huttons, so you should have been named Lucas Hutton. Unfortunately, you and your mother were both kicked out, and you can't even keep your family name! I'm right about that, aren't I?" There was a gloating gaze in Preston's eyes.

Logically speaking, it was unlikely for the Taylors to have found out about the family affairs of the Huttons and the incident that happened more than two decades ago. But it could be that the Huttons also utterly detested Lucas and thus told the person who the Taylors sent to scout for information everything about Lucas.

Initially, Preston was astonished after hearing that Lucas was a descendant of the Huttons while also feeling a little scared. After all, the Huttons were one of the eight top families in DC, and they owned businesses in various industries all over the country.

They could really be considered a whale. If he confronted Hutton, Preston wouldn't be the only one in trouble, as he would implicate the rest of the Taylors too.

But Preston soon learned that Lucas, this so-called member of the Huttons, wasn't even considered one of them. He not only wouldn't be able to get any help from the Huttons, but he had even ended up offending many of them. He was really considered an abandoned member of the Huttons who had no support or backer!

If Preston could go against Lucas and suppress him, he might be able to win the favor of the Huttons, and it was even possible for him to build connections with the aloof Huttons!

When Preston thought of this, there was even more smugness on his face.

Lucas naturally knew that Preston must have had some help and encouragement from some people since he could find out so much about him. But Lucas wasn't afraid at all.

There was no need to let someone like Preston know about the truth and whether or not he had been abandoned. Lucas felt that he would just keep it to himself.

"Did you investigate my background and identity just to show off your subordinates' great potential for becoming paparazzi?" Lucas mocked indifferently.

Preston choked in exasperation and sneered. "Hmph, Lucas Gray, stop trying to play tricks by being a slick talker to me! Who are you to go against the Taylors? Listen up. I'm not a bumpkin like Joe who hasn't seen much of the world. I won't be intimidated by your scaremongering words!"

"Oh, is that so? What do you want then?" Lucas asked indifferently, seemingly not giving a hoot about Preston's threats.

Preston felt like his attempts to intimidate Lucas failed every single time, and he felt no sense of accomplishment at all. Instead, he ended up being furious.

Lucas Gray is atrocious!

He's just a punk who got kicked out of the Huttons when he was a child. Without no family backing him, how can he still be arrogant in front of the Taylors?

Preston slammed his hand hard on the coffee table while hollering viciously, "Hmph, Lucas Gray, since you don't know any better, I won't waste my breath on you. At the end of the day, the Ocean Bathhouse is a property of the Taylors. Calvin Pearce was just the owner-in-name. He doesn't have the right to sell the bathhouse at all! So if you're smart enough, give the Ocean Bathhouse back to me, and I can pretend that nothing has happened!"

As if to play along with Preston, the burly bodyguard took a step forward to approach Lucas while trying to appear as intimidating as possible.

Lucas smirked and stood up relaxedly. He then picked up a dice from the table, fiddled with it in his hand, and said with a faint smile, "In that case, are you thinking of snatching the Ocean Bathhouse away from me?"

"I'm not snatching it. I want you to return it to me!" Preston hollered smugly with great righteousness as he leaned against the couch.

The situation now was different from the morning. Lucas was now on the turf of Preston, who also had an extremely powerful bodyguard by his side. There were at least dozens of other henchmen outside, so Preston was confident that Lucas wouldn't turn him down!

"I see." Lucas smiled faintly and suddenly flicked the dice that he was fiddling with.

Whoosh!

The dice suddenly emitted a loud sound as it shuttled through the air. It then struck the spot on the wall beside Preston's head with a loud bang.

"Waah!" Preston was so frightened that he shuddered, shrieked in horror, and sprang up from the couch.

The bodyguard beside him also shielded him as if they were facing a great enemy.

The two of them stared at the spot in the wall, dumbfounded.

They saw that a huge hole had formed on the wall above the couch where Preston had sat, which was originally covered in beautiful wallpaper. There were also several cracks in the hard concrete wall around the hole, which spread all over the wall!

There was an extremely ordinary dice embedded in the center of that deep hole in the wall!

"Mr. Taylor, what did you just say? I didn't get to hear you clearly," Lucas said indifferently as he leaned back on the couch with a smile.

Preston's face was naturally extremely gloomy at this point.

Lucas was clearly trying to intimidate him!

It was just an ordinary dice, but the power that emerged from Lucas's hand when he threw it was not inferior to the power contained in a bullet shot from a gun!

Besides, the dice Lucas shot had landed near Preston's head. If Lucas had intended to kill Preston, he would have probably been shot in the head by now!

At the thought of this, Preston felt his entire body's hair stand on end, and cold sweat rapidly seeped out of his pores, making him chilly all over.

And Preston's elite bodyguard was also overwhelmed with shock.

As a bodyguard, he should protect his employer's safety in any emergency situation.

But the speed of the dice Lucas shot out just now was so quick that it wasn't visible to the naked eye. In fact, he only figured out what happened after hearing the terse and sharp sound of the dice shuttling through the air, followed by the loud bang.

He couldn't even react in time, let alone protect his employer, Preston, from the dice full of thunderous power that had traveled at lightning speed.

The elite bodyguard subconsciously touched the bulge on his waist, where there was clearly a hidden weapon. Lucas guessed that it was probably a pistol, and as soon as Preston gave the order, he would immediately pull it out and aim it at Lucas.

But a pistol was just like a toy to Lucas. It didn't scare or deter him at all.

So Lucas was still smiling calmly and sitting on the couch, as if he hadn't noticed the bodyguard's actions at all.

"Stand down!" Preston clenched his jaw and hollered loudly. Only then did his bodyguard put his hand down indignantly and retreated to stand behind Preston.

Seeing the calm expression on Lucas's face, Preston forced himself to smile, and his attitude changed drastically. "Mr. Gray, I forgot to mention something just now. I'm not asking you to return the Ocean Bathhouse to me for free. Since you spent eight million dollars to acquire it, I'll give you sixteen million now. I promise you won't suffer any losses. What do you say?"

Lucas shook his head. "Return to you? Mr. Taylor, you must have misunderstood! I bought the Ocean Bathhouse with cash, and all the legal procedures for the purchase have been completed. What do you mean 'return it to you'?"

Curbing his anger, Preston clenched his jaw. "I shall rephrase my words. I'll buy the bathhouse back from you at twice the original sale price!"

"No." Lucas shook his head without hesitation.

"Triple the price! I'll buy the bathhouse at three times what you paid!" Preston increased the offer. "Lucas Gray, you purchased the Ocean Bathhouse from Calvin Pearce at only

eight million, and within a day, you're going to earn sixteen million if you accept my offer. This isn't a deal that comes by all the time!"

In fact, Preston was anguished, as he felt the pinch of having to pay so much.

He was in charge of the Ocean Bathhouse in the first place, and the businesses run in the bathhouse, especially the one on the top floor, was indispensable for the Taylors. Yet Calvin had sold it to Lucas at a low price of eight million dollars!

The Ocean Bathhouse was extremely important for the Taylors, and even more so for Preston! If the old fogies of the family who had always been against him found out, they would definitely strip him of his position as the successor!

Therefore, Preston had to get the Ocean Bathhouse back before the rest of the Taylors found out!

At first, he wanted to force Lucas to hand over the Ocean Bathhouse, but he was intimidated by the scene when Lucas shot the dice. So if he wanted to get the bathhouse back now, he would have to be resolute and buy it back with cash!

As for the extra 16 million dollars, he would have to fork it out of his own pocket.

16 million dollars!

The thought of giving away such a large amount of money to Lucas for nothing made Preston feel extremely devastated!

But the 16 million dollars that made Preston extremely upset was nothing to Lucas.

Not to mention the immeasurable wealth that Lucas had, Tony Zander had recently given Lucas 24 million dollars for nothing. So Lucas really didn't care for this 16 million dollars.

"No. Even if you pay me five or ten times the price I paid, I won't sell it to you. I'm sure you know better than me the exact value of the Ocean Bathhouse." Lucas shook his head adamantly.

Preston played dumb and said, "It's just a bathhouse. How much value can it have? The only reason I want it back is because it's the place that built the Taylors' family fortune. Mr. Gray, if you're interested in such entertainment joints, how about I trade Snowflake Entertainment for the Ocean Bathhouse? This deal will definitely guarantee you a profit!"

Lucas sneered in derision. "Mr. Taylor, let's be open and aboveboard. The Ocean Bathhouse is different from other entertainment joints, and we both know it. Otherwise, why would you be so insistent on getting it back?"

When Preston heard this, his eyelids twitched.

Actually, many members of the county's upper class were aware of the business being run on the top floor of the Ocean Bathhouse. Otherwise, how did their clientele come about?

But Preston didn't expect that Lucas, a person he thought was of insignificant status, would find out about it and even harp on it insistently.

"Lucas Gray, since you're already aware of it, you should know how important it is to the Taylors. I will lay my cards on the table. What exactly do you want before you are willing to hand over the Ocean Bathhouse to me?" Preston glared at Lucas. If he wasn't afraid of Lucas's impressive feat, he would have long told his bodyguard to kill Lucas!

Lucas tilted his head and smiled. "Actually, I'm not trying to be greedy and rip you off. To be honest, I only have a small request. As long as you agree, I can return the Ocean Bathhouse to you for free."

"Do you mean it?" Preston was overjoyed, but he soon sensed that something was amiss. He reckoned that if it was a request that could make Lucas give up easily obtaining a profit of millions of dollars, it mustn't be a simple one.

"What is your request? If you raise something that I can't fulfill or is far beyond my means, wouldn't that be a waste of breath?" Preston asked conscientiously.

Lucas smiled faintly. "I have a simple request, and it's definitely something that you can fulfill. I'm very interested in the business that the Taylors are running on the top floor of the Ocean Bathhouse. As long as you help me recommend some business, I'll give the Ocean Bathhouse to you for free. How does that sound?"

"What?!" Preston never expected that to be Lucas's request!

Chapter 266: Gunshot

"No!" Preston refused resolutely. "This isn't a small business. We've monopolized it in Orange County! If I recommend some clients to you, won't I be giving the Taylors a competitor for no reason?"

Lucas shook his head. "I naturally won't run this business in Orange County and become your competitor."

After giving it some thought, Preston still didn't believe Lucas. "Your roots are all in Orange County. Why should I believe that you would leave this county and go elsewhere to run this business."

Lucas shrugged. "It's up to you to believe me or not. Mr. Taylor, please get your facts right. I'm doing you a favor by asking you to recommend clients to me. Besides, I don't want to fall out with the Taylors either. To put it bluntly, the Ocean Bathhouse is in my hands now, and so are those beautiful women. Even if I take over the business directly now, what can you do to me?"

Lucas's words made Preston's face turn gloomy again.

But this was really what the current situation was like. Since that bastard Calvin had presumptuously sold the Ocean Bathhouse, Lucas was the dominant party. Since Preston wanted the bathhouse back, he would have to be led by the nose by Lucas. This made Preston furious.

His face was unsightly and hostile.

Lucas stood up and said casually, "Think this over properly and give me a firm answer before ten tonight. Otherwise, I will change my mind tomorrow, and the Ocean Bathhouse will belong to me forever."

With that, he turned around and walked toward the door of the private room.

"Hold it!" Preston bellowed in exasperation. The bodyguard beside him immediately drew the pistol from his waist and aimed the muzzle at Lucas.

Lucas turned around, glanced at the bodyguard and the pistol he was holding, and then turned to look at Preston again. He sneered. "Mr. Taylor, what do you mean by this?"

"Lucas Gray, surely you don't really think that I invited you here to negotiate the terms and let you bargain with me, do you? Don't forget. The place where you are standing now is my turf!" Preston started behaving smugly as usual again and guffawed loudly. "As the future successor of the Taylors, what's going to become of my reputation if I get threatened by a punk like you? It would be a huge embarrassment and insult to the Taylors!

"Punk, I wanted to be kind and buy the Ocean Bathhouse back from you with cash in a fair and peaceful manner. But you're being too disrespectful to me! Who do you think you are? How dare you say you will give me a few hours to consider? Do you really think that I'm afraid of you?"

The resentment and anger that Preston had been curbing for a long time finally erupted, and he even felt that there was no need for him to be wary of Lucas and put up with his behavior previously. He decided to get his bodyguard to pull out his pistol and threaten Lucas to hand over the bathhouse. If Lucas refused to comply, he would just have Lucas killed! Anyway, it wasn't like Preston hadn't killed anyone before!

Lucas looked at Preston, who seemed to have gained confidence and was emboldened. "Do you really think you can threaten me with a tiny pistol?"

Preston narrowed his eyes and mocked contemptuously, "Yeah! I have a pistol, so you are destined to die! I've put up with you for a long time now. If you kneel down and apologize to me now, I will consider letting you leave this place in one piece. Otherwise, hmph, don't blame me for being ruthless!"

"Is that so?" As soon as Lucas said this, he suddenly vanished from the spot in front of Preston and his bodyguard!

"Where is he?" Preston blurted, and his eyes widened in astonishment.

The bodyguard was shocked too. He had already aimed his gun at Lucas, yet Lucas vanished right on the spot without a trace!

But the next instant, a massive force struck Preston's stomach!

"Argh!" Before Preston could even scream, he spat out a mouthful of bile!

Preston's abdomen and internal organs seemed to have been shattered. He was in so much pain that he convulsed incessantly and curled up into a ball while hugging his abdomen. It took him a long time to wail loudly, "Ahhh! It hurts!"

The elite bodyguard was horrified, and he hurriedly aimed the muzzle of his pistol at Lucas and shot without hesitation.

Bang!

The bullet pierced through Lucas's head and struck the wall near the door.

The bodyguard was just about to heave a sigh of relief when he found that Lucas, who should have collapsed after being shot by the bullet, suddenly appeared in front of him. Lucas raised his hand and swiftly snatched away the pistol with immense strength that the bodyguard couldn't resist.

Afterward, the bodyguard and Preston were horrified to find that the small but hard pistol looked just like a clay toy in Lucas's hands. He pinched the barrel and grip into a bizarre figure 8, and the entire pistol seemed to have become a ball of scrap metal!

Lucas actually managed to twist and distort the gun with his bare hands. This was simply beyond the imagination of Preston and his bodyguard!

The bodyguard was shocked, and a wave of dread surged in his heart!

I should have shot Lucas Gray in his head just now. How did he appear in front of me unscathed...

No!

He didn't manage to shoot Lucas at all. The bullet had merely pierced through Lucas's afterimage!

The young man is incredibly fast!

The bodyguard's eyes widened in horror, and he suddenly felt an astonishing chill in his heart.

Bang!

"Mr. Taylor, are you alright?"

The door of the private room suddenly opened violently from the outside, and more than ten burly bodyguards charged in. They were the same bodyguards who had brought Lucas here from the bathhouse.

They had been guarding outside the room and charged in when they heard the sudden gunshot. Although they were sure that the person who fired was definitely Preston or his personal bodyguard, they decided to rush in after a moment of hesitation.

The scene that appeared in front of them was very different from what they had imagined!

They initially thought that since the person who shot was one of the Taylors, the person wounded or even dead from the gunshot had to be the young man they had brought over.

But they never expected to see their employer, Preston, huddled up on the ground while clutching his stomach with cold sweat all over his forehead. He was in so much pain that he couldn't speak at all. Moreover, his personal bodyguard was standing still with a look of horror on his face, as if he had seen a ghost.

Yet the young man was standing unscathed in the room with a ball of scrap metal in his hands and staring smilingly at the bodyguards who just entered.