

Mr Conrad 611

Chapter 611-On the other side...

Archer had been staying in the laboratory for several days and he felt his body smelly. Therefore, after arranging his tasks, he went home to take a shower and wash his clothes.

However, he felt that someone was following him on the way home.

Archer took a glance through the rear-viewed mirror and drove the car at a steady speed.

After driving for a distance, he quickly found an interception and left the highway when they didn't pay attention to him.

When he arrived at the road under a bridge, Archer stopped the car by the roadside. When seeing that the car which had been following him disappear in his vision, Archer whistled triumphantly and went home after driving around half of the city.

After parking his car in the underground parking lot, Archer got out of the car slowly with the key in his hand.

However, he stopped after taking two steps.

Nathan, who stood at a place not far away from him, smiled at him.

Archer was rendered speechless.

He hurriedly turned around, wanting to get into the car, but only to find that there were many people behind him.

Archer swung his hair and clicked his tongue, "I didn't expect I would experience this one day. Who's your master? Have you investigated who I am? How dare you block my way here?"

Nathan replied, "Mr. James, we just want to ask you several questions."

"What are they? Are they so important that you have to bring many people here? I drove around half of the city. You should have told me earlier so that I will wait for you at home."

Nathan maintained his smile, "Oh, you misunderstood it. We followed you to ensure your safety and we didn't expect you would suddenly run away."

Archer crossed his arms in front of his chest. He was not nervous even though he was under such a circumstance, "Spill the beans. I will consider whether to answer your questions or not."

Nathan didn't reply and simply stepped aside.

At the next second, a tall man appeared in Archer's vision. The man stared at him indifferently.

Archer was lost for words.

He really wanted to run away at the moment.

Clarence said in a cold voice, "Do you want to talk here?"

Archer immediately straightened his back, "This way please."

In the lift, Archer stood near the door restrainedly with Nathan standing by his side. Clarence stood behind them and leaned his back against the wall of the lift.

The whole lift was overwhelmed by a cold aura.

Archer felt a bit regretful. He was a man, so what was the matter even though he smelled bad? Why did he suddenly decide to go home to take a shower and change his clothes?

He deserved what he faced now as he was caught by Clarence.

Archer felt bitter, yet he couldn't say it out.

The deadly silence spread in the lift and when the air became thinner and thinner...

The doors of the lift were opened with a crisp sound.

But Archer didn't move.

Clarence walked out of the lift in strides.

Archer couldn't help but think to himself, 'Come on, does this man even know about my room number?'

Several seconds later, Clarence stopped in front of a door.

As expected...

Archer coughed, walked over and pressed on the fingerprint lock to open the door.

After the door was opened, he directly walked into the house, "Have a seat and don't be courteous."

However, when he was about to reach the hidden cabinet in which there was an alarming apparatus to contact Darnell, Nathan showed up beside him with a smile, "Mr. James, please have a seat."

Archer gave up on struggling.

He sat opposite Clarence restlessly.

Clarence crossed his long legs and looked up at him, exuding an oppressing aura.

Archer changed a posture, “Spill the beans. What do you want to ask me? I will tell you everything I know.”

Nathan was rendered speechless.

What did he say just now?

Clarence said slowly in a flat tone, “The baby’s condition.”

“As for this matter... I’ve reported to Ms. Radomil in detail. Didn’t she tell you about that?”

“I want you to tell me personally.”

As Archer couldn’t win him physically, he could only surrender. He repeated the words he had said to Stella in the past two days to Clarence.

Leaning against the sofa, Clarence showed no change in his expression.

After finishing the words, Archer continued, “We’re working for a treatment plan. His condition is relatively complicated, plus that the outsiders are not allowed to enter the laboratory, so you can’t come to see the child. But I sent the baby’s photos to Ms. Radomil every day. I... I guess she has told you about this, right?”

Clarence didn’t reply and simply asked, “How long will the treatment take?”

Archer replied, "I'm not sure about this. We haven't decided on the treatment plan yet."

"Are two years enough?"

Archer shook his head, "His condition is much more serious than the child who had the same symptoms before. This is the reason why we didn't choose the same treatment plan. I can't promise you on other matters, but I can tell you that he can't be cured in two years. Maybe it will cost five years, ten years, or longer. It's normal."

Clarence slightly pressed his lips together and his expression turned colder.

Archer hurriedly said, "Oh, but this is a problem of possibility. We haven't found the breakthrough point yet. If we manage to find it, maybe there will be a miracle."

Clarence looked at him, "You said his condition is more serious. What did you mean?"

Archer's expression became serious when he heard the question. He slightly frowned, "Someone has modified the nutrition needle, which caused his condition to deteriorate after the injection,"

"Only the members of your laboratory have access to the data."

"This is true. But all the data and relevant documents have been ruined two years ago. There're many members in the laboratory and each of them has a certain reputation in the medical community. It's inappropriate to doubt them without any evidence."

Clarence remained silent and looked at him expressionlessly.

Feeling guilty under his gaze, Archer shifted his gaze away.

After a long while, Clarence broke the silence, "The second thing, I want to know the exact time of the James' family gathering."

“Is it appropriate to tell you about that?”

Clarence replied, “As for some other matters, you don’t have the guts to tell me even if I ask you.”

Archer said, “But you can get into the venue even if I tell you the exact time.”

“You can enter the venue, right?”

Archer was bewildered.

Clarence continued, “The third thing, take us into the gathering.”

Archer stood up and refused it righteously, “It’s gone too far. I would rather you kill me.”

“Really?”

Clarence took a glance at Nathan. Nathan nodded his head and waved his hand, and several security guards immediately walked over.

Archer quickly sat down and said in a serious tone, “I think over it and think this matter negotiable. Let’s discuss the detailed plan.”

Clarence curved his thin lips upwards and looked at him as if he was looking at a fool.

Archer closed his eyes, preparing for all the possible consequences, “Next weekend. In the James’ Mansion.”

“Who will take part in the party?”

“All the James. But it’s boring to have such a gathering. The seniors act highly and the youngers feel restless.”

Clarence tapped the arm of the sofa with his fingers and asked blandly, “Will Darnell come?”

Archer nodded his head, “He’s now the patriarch of the James family. Therefore, even if he doesn’t want to come, the doyens would still force him to come.”

Clarence asked, “What’s the theme of the gathering?”

Chapter 612-The James would hold a family gathering every half a year and it was to gather all the James together to go through a set of procedures in nature.

Ancestor worship was its main theme as well as an indispensable part.

The youngers didn’t like these unnecessary and overelaborate formalities, but the seniors were still adhering to the traditions passed down from their ancestors and treated every detail seriously and carefully.

Therefore, the family gathering of the James family had never been a form of entertainment and no outsider was allowed to attend it.

After Clarence’s leaving, Archer wiped away the sweats on his forehead and hurriedly dialled Darnell.

He reported, “Clarence came to me.”

Darnell replied in a flat tone, “What did he ask you?”

Archer coughed, “He... He asked about the child’s condition and some insignificant matters.”

“What else?”

“He required me to take him into the James’ Mansion next Sunday.”

Darnell at the other end of the phone remained silent. Archer could only hear his even breath.

Archer said tentatively, “Should I go out to evade him? He will not be able to do anything as long as I’m not in Riverside.”

Darnell replied, “No need. He can find a way to enter the James’ Mansion even without your help.”

“That makes sense. Who will deal with this troublesome thing if I leave?”

“I will arrange it and you can directly take him into the James’ Mansion later.”

Archer asked after a short while of silence, “Do you plan to tell him about the truth?”

Darnell replied, “I’m just doing it according to the rules. As for other matters, they have nothing to do with me.”

Archer was rendered speechless.

How awesome! He’s really good at shifting blames.

Even Bancroft James, the former patriarch, would praise it if he was still alive.

There came Darnell’s voice soon, “Someone has got the news that you’d once left Riverside. Don’t create any troubles in these few days, stay in the laboratory and don’t go out. Wait until the day to worship the ancestors.”

“I see. I will come back now.”

After ending the call, Darnell took a quick shower and then came back to the laboratory.

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In the hotel...

Stella gave Channing a call and told him that Little Noah was sick and she and Clarence took him to see a doctor.

But she didn't tell him about the details and told him she wasn't sure when she would be back.

Knowing that Stella didn't want to talk too much about this, Channing didn't probe into it.

Stella put down her phone, looked out of the window and heaved a sigh.

The doorbell rang at this moment.

Stella thought it was the staff of the hotel that came to send her the dinner.

She stood up and opened the door, yet only to see several strange men standing at the door.

The leader said, "Please go with us."

Stella stepped backwards, holding the door handle, "Who are you?"

The man replied, "You don't need to know this."

When they prepared to walk over, Stella took out her phone, "I will call the police if you step forwards."

“Calling the police will not do any good to you.”

“Seems like it’s not a pleasant thing for you either.”

When they prepared to resort to force, the manager of the hotel, who received the news, hurriedly walked over, “Excuse me, what’s the problem? You can tell us if you have any problems.”

The man replied, “Our master wants to invite this lady to visit his home.”

Stella replied expressionlessly, “I don’t know you. Nor do I know your master. Why do I have to come?”

The manager recognized the man and hurriedly said, trying to alleviate the embarrassment, “Misunderstand. It’s a misunderstanding...”

The man interrupted him and looked at Stella, “Mr. Conrad took away our lady several days ago, causing her not to come back the whole night. Was this a misunderstanding?”

Stella was stunned when she heard the question. Several days ago? When?

The man continued, “Don’t worry. Our master just wants to ask you several questions and we will send you back right after that.”

Stella pulled herself together, “I will repeat it. I don’t know your master, so I won’t go. Moreover, it was Clarence who took away your lady and you shall come to Clarence. Why do you come to me? Do you think I’m the one who can be trifled with so that you want to shift the blame on me?”

The man didn’t expect these words from Stella and frowned.

The manager chimed in, “Yep... Or you can wait until Mr. Conrad comes back. Maybe there’s really a misunderstanding, right?”

The man glanced over him and the manager immediately shut up.

Franklin James was also a prestigious person in the James family. Different from Darnell, he always showed up in the media reports, and this was the reason why Elaine invited many media practitioners to her birthday party.

Therefore, every businessman in Riverside had seen Franklin's trusted subordinates.

When the two parties were in a deadlock, Clarence came back.

He walked to Stella and asked in a cold voice, "What happened?"

The manager hurriedly explained, "Maybe it's related to Ms. James."

Clarence looked towards the leader of those men, "Tell your master that I will visit him in person several days later. No matter it's because he wants to know about the reason why I came to Riverside or it's because he wants to cross me, I won't evade it."

The man hesitated and didn't move.

Clarence asked, "You don't want to leave? Are you waiting for me to send you off?"

Those men quickly left when they heard the words.

Seeing this, the manager heaved a sigh of relief. He slightly nodded at them and then left.

Stella withdrew her hand from the door handle and came back to the living room.

Clarence took off his suit jacket, tossed it onto the sofa, unbuttoned his shirt with one hand while asked in a low voice, "Have you had dinner?"

"Yes."

"What did you eat?"

"Some anger."

Clarence was rendered speechless.

He sat down on the sofa and put his long legs on the tea table casually, looking at the woman in front of him, "Don't take the James to your heart."

Stella replied blandly, "I ignored them."

Clarence raised his brows, "Then why do you look so unhappy?"

Stella took a deep breath after a long while of silence, "I have been bewildered by a question."

"What's that?"

"Why it's me to suffer every time after you attract the other woman outside? Is it reasonable?"

Clarence was confused.

Stella didn't want to talk with him. She took out her phone and prepared to order some take-out food, like barbecue.

Clarence snatched her phone and explained, "I have no relationship with Ms. James they mentioned. It was just that I bumped into her when I came to find Darnell last time and she insisted on following me. Plus that you were with Darnell at that time, so I allowed her to follow me."

Stella groaned a simple answer and said, "Oh, she insisted on following you? Mr. Conrad, sounds like you're still charming and girls would still be captivated by you no matter where you go."

Clarence chuckled and asked, "You only realize this now?"

Stella was rendered speechless.

Fuck off, you wretched man.

She snatched her phone back and continued to select skewers.

Seeing this, Clarence asked, "Don't you want to order other food?"

Stella ignored him.

Clarence continued, "You like spicy and sour noodles, right? Order one and don't add vinegar."

He added after a pause, "It's because you're having it."???

Chapter 613-On the other side...

Franklin snorted when he heard his subordinate's report, "They're now in Riverside, not in City N. He's way too arrogant."

His subordinate remained silent.

Franklin asked a moment later, "Have you found out why he come to Riverside?"

"Not yet. But he has been investing the Master of Riverside and I guess it's related to him."

"Darnell James always creates troubles."

After the death of Bancroft, Darnell became the new patriarch of the James family. Although the family looked calm on the surface, it was turbulent in fact.

Most of the James thought Darnell was still young and he couldn't take such a big responsibility, therefore, they created many troubles for him behind his back.

Although it couldn't damage Darnell's foundation, the existence of these people had been a risk. Therefore, Darnell's mother proposed the marriage between Elaine and Darnell in an attempt to consolidate the relationship of the two families so that other people would not gossip about it.

As Franklin served Bancroft before, moreover, once Elaine married Darnell, the child she gave birth to later would be the next patriarch of the James family.

After careful consideration, he agreed to the proposal.

But he didn't expect that Clarence would suddenly come to Riverside.

He was afraid that there would be an accident.

Franklin said in a deep voice, "Send dome people to City N and investigate whether there's anything special in the Conrad Group or the Conrad family."

His subordinate nodded his head and immediately carried out the task.

Franklin received a piece of news in half an hour – Dempsey’s wife committed suicide and Dempsey was paralyzed. He could only lie on the bed, not being able to move or talk.

And Dempsey’s eldest son took him to Canada to see doctors several days ago.

No one in City N could hinder Clarence now.

Franklin knitted his brows tightly, “It’s such important information. But you only find it now?”

His subordinate replied, “They blocked the news deliberately before. Now since Clarence has come to Riverside, the security in City N weakens, so...”

Franklin pondered for a while and then stood up, “No, Clarence came to Riverside right after the accident in the Conrad family. This matter must not be so simple. I have to go out. Keep an eye on Elaine and don’t let her run away.”

His subordinate replied, “Okay.”

Franklin left in a hurry.

...

In the next few days, Stella still didn’t want to talk to Clarence. But that wretched man kept pestering her, which annoyed her a lot.

But because of this, the depression which was caused by the baby’s sickness and hovered around her was shifted.

Sherry was a doer. She sent the design drawings sent by Stella to the factory and immediately contacted the models to shoot photos for publicity when the products were produced.

Daniel originally intended to find a photographer, but Sherry insisted on doing it herself.

Ever since her pregnancy, she felt herself almost like a good-for-nothing as she didn't have to take care of anything and seldom came to the studio.

If she was still idle, she would feel very uncomfortable.

When the photos for publicity were prepared, their studio officially debuted on various e-commerce platforms.

And it was branded as 'Starry Sky'.

It was Sherry who decided on the brand's name. It was Stella who worked hard to develop this brand and she seldom helped and would do odd jobs at most, therefore, she thought they'd better brand it with the designer's name.

Moreover, Sherry was quite satisfied with the brand's name – 'Starry Sky'.

However, Stella thought the establishment of the studio and the brand was not simply about her own work, so she tried to change the brand's name. But Sherry persuaded her.

As for the debut of the brand on many e-commerce platforms, they didn't publicize it except for releasing a post to announce it on their official account.

Even so, many users managed to find it.

The new arrivals all have satisfying sales volumes.

Lying on the sofa and looking at the jewellery on the models on the publicizing photos, Stella felt a surge of weird emotions.

When she was in university, designing was just one of her hobbies and she never expected she would become a designer one day.

If not for Horace's help and encouragement, she would have given up on the aspiration to become a designer.

Seeing that Stella was at a loss with her eyes fixed on the tablet computer, Clarence curled his finger and flipped her forehead, "What are you thinking?"

Stella rubbed her forehead and replied blandly, "Horace."

Clarence was lost for words.

Seeing that it was late, Stella put down her tablet computer and prepared to take a shower and go to bed.

Unexpected, Clarence followed her into the bathroom.

Stella turned around to look at him, "What do you want to do?"

"I think I'm somehow responsible for it as you think of Horace at this point."

Stella was confused.

This wretched man is really good at finding excuses for himself.

Clarence closed the door of the bathroom, walked over, grabbed her wrist and pressed her against the slippery wall. He pinched her chin and gently rubbed her lips with one finger, "I have to accept this grievance and help you walk out of that unrequited love."

Stella immediately understood what he wanted to do when looking into his eyes with a burning desire in them.

Over the past days in the hotel, although this wretched man would paw her and do something more intimate than it, he had never really had sex with her.

Stella was clear that it was because he cared about her feelings. Since the child was still in the laboratory, it was inappropriate for his parents to indulge in sexual pleasure.

However, judging from Clarence's gaze, it seemed like he really planned to have sex with her tonight.

Stella twisted the wrist grabbed by Clarence, "No, you can't do that. Our baby is still in the laboratory, and I..."

"Please be reasonable. His condition has been improved and a group of doctors are taking care of him. What else are you worried about?"

"But..."

Clarence said slowly, "Stella, no matter what has happened, you have to go on with your wife. No matter how terrible the situation is, you should work hard to confront it instead of evading it. You can't confine yourself in a narrow space, not willing to go out and not allowing others to walk into that private space. You have to walk out of it yourself, and then you will find that although what has happened cannot be changed, everything is progressing towards a positive direction."

Stella was stunned by his philosophical words.

Of course, if he didn't utter these words in such a scene, Stella would have been convinced by him.

Stella said seriously, "I think what you said is right."

Clarence curled his lips into a smile. When he was about to kiss her, Stella continued, "But I'm in my period."

Clarence was lost for words.

He remembered that Stella's period was supposed to come in these few days.

So he guessed she was not lying.

Stella struggled out of his confinement, pushed him out of the bathroom and locked the door. Then she began to take a shower at ease.

Standing at the door, Clarence put one hand on his hip and gritted his teeth as if he was so angry.

Right at this moment, his phone which was placed on the sofa rang.

Clarence walked over and answered the call.

Nathan reported, "Mr. Conrad, everything is prepared."

Chapter 614-On Sunday, dark clouds massed in the sky and the air felt very dry and stuffy as if heavy rain was promising.

Archer had been waiting for them at the door of the laboratory and after a long while, a black Maybach finally drove towards him.

When the car stopped, Stella landed her gaze on the laboratory not far away.

Then there came Clarence's voice, "He will send us there."

Stella pulled herself back to reality, groaned a simple answer and pushed open the door.

Archer waved at them when seeing them, seeming as if he was not forced.

Seeing that Stella had been fixing her eyes on the laboratory, he comforted her, "Rest assured. I arranged for everything before leaving.

Stella lightly nodded her head and didn't reply.

She knew deep down that even though she was at the door of the laboratory, she still couldn't get in.

On the way to the James' Mansion, when driving the car, Archer studied Stella and Clarence from the rear-view mirror from time to time. It seemed like he wanted to say something.

Clarence said blandly, "Spill the beans."

Archer coughed and looked at the front, "It's not an important issue. It's just that the James family has strict rules, so stay around me and don't walk around after entering the house. Don't talk when the worship begins. Otherwise, you will receive serious punishment if those fuddy-duddies hear it."

"For example."

"Probably you will kneel in the ancestral hall for ten days or half a month. Except for this, you will have to eat green vegetables or bitter melon for every meal, namely to let you learn this lesson."

Tsk, that experience was so terrible.

Clarence replied, "I see."

Archer turned around with surprise as he didn't expect that Clarence would be so obedient now.

Noticing the confusion in his eyes, Clarence said calmly, "Based on that conclusion, it seems like you've experienced it numerous times. I don't have to seek troubles for myself."

Archer was rendered speechless.

If he had expected this, he would not tell him about that.

Archer broke the silence after a short while, "Moreover, no matter what you want to ask, wait until the worship ceremony is over. Darnell is not as wicked as you've imagined and you can talk to him personally if you have any questions. Don't make a fuss in front of the James."

Clarence shot a glance at him expressionlessly. Archer immediately shut up and concentrated his attention on driving.

To be honest, if it was not because Darnell had been evading meeting with Clarence, Clarence would not decide to go to the James Mansion to find him. It was his kid reminder as he was afraid that both of them would be punished to kneel in the ancestral hall.

Stella had been looking at window on the way and didn't pay attention to their conversation.

After a long while, she felt someone softly clasping her wrist.

Stella turned her head and looked at him in confusion.

Clarence said in a low voice, "I don't know what will happen after we get into the mansion. Stay by my side and don't step away from me."

Stella pressed her lips together and then nodded her head.

Channing looked out of the window, "We arrive."

They could vaguely see the outline of the James' Mansion when looking out of the window.

The car drove through a gate with carved patterns on the door at each side. Several minutes later, a mansion of ancient style appeared in their visions.

There were two words on the plaque above the door – "James' Mansion".

Many cars were parked at the door.

It seemed like many people had arrived before Archer's arrival.

The moment Archer got out of the car, there came a man's voice, "Why do you come back so late?"

Archer turned around with a smile, "Uncle, there's still time left. Moreover, you just arrived too."

Apparently, the middle-aged man felt displeased when he heard the words. He put on airs, "It's because I have to deal with some business. What about you?"

"Naturally I can't compare with you, uncle."

Right at this moment, the middle-aged man spotted Clarence and knitted his brows.

When he saw Stella who stood beside Clarence, the furrow of his brows became tighter.

With his hand clasped behind his back, he put on airs again and asked, "Archer, who are they?"

"Oh, I forget to introduce them. They're my friends."

The man's voice turned gloomy, "Friend? When are you allowed to take your friends home? Do you know what day it is today? You..."

Archer justified for himself, "I've asked my cousin and he agreed."

The connotation was that he could come to Darnell if he had any questions.

The middle-aged man snorted with dissatisfaction written all over his face, ignored Archer and directly walked into the mansion.

When his figure completely disappeared in Archer's vision, Archer walked to Clarence and Stella, "Sorry for letting you witness such a joke. This person... He's one of the rotten apples that spoil the barrel in the James family."

He paused and then added, "Let's go."

Actually from the short conversation with Darnell last time, Stella could tell that although the James family had enormous fortunes and powers, because of this, it had a more complicated and entangled relationship than those of the Conrad family.

There were some good men in the family but at the same time some evil ones.

According to Darnell's words, he didn't involve in the matters in City N, but apparently, someone from Riverside had been involved in those matters. However, they hadn't found out any clues so far.

Probably it was related to those evil men in the James family.

With that thought, Stella subconsciously clenched her hands that were placed at each side.

After walking through the front gate, they came to a broader courtyard.

It was much magnificent than that of the Conrads' Mansion.

Most of the James had arrived at the ancestral hall.

The seniors were sitting in the hall while their next generations stood beside them.

As there were many people, the younger generations like Archer could only stand beside the wall outside of the ancestral hall.

He said in a low voice, "The worship ceremony hasn't begun and some of the James haven't arrived. We can just stand here. They will chant nonsense for several hours when it begins. They won't notice us even if we doze here"

Both Clarence and Stella were rendered speechless.

Archer looked at them and stroked his head, "What... What's the matter?"

This was how they went through the ceremony every year.

Everyone would feel sleepy when hearing those fuddy-dudfies chanting in a classical language.

Clarence withdrew his gaze expressionlessly and looked into the ancestral hall.

The old man who seemed to be a leader had grey hair and was wearing a traditional costume.

This should be Elaine's grand-grandfather.

He was the eldest man in the James family.

Even Darnell, the patriarch of the family, should respect him.

After a short while, the rest of the James arrived one by one.

As Archer felt so boring, he began to introduce the James to them.

Looking at the man who was walking towards the ancestral hall, Archer yawned and introduced, "That's Franklin James, Hilbert James' grandson. He's also a powerful man. The girl following behind him is his daughter, Elaine James. She's also..."

Archer suddenly paused as he suddenly recalled a rumour he heard several days ago. He turned his head to look at Clarence gloatingly.

This would be interesting.

Clarence, however, showed no expressional change. He asked expressionlessly, "Are you muted?"

"Oh, then I will go on. Elaine James is just twenty years ago. She will probably become Darnell's wife, but now I'm not sure of it."

Chapter 615-Right at this moment, Stella turned to look at him in confusion, "Why aren't you sure of it?"

"It's because she chased after a man at her birthday party several days ago regardless of the presence of many people. When today's worship ceremony is over, I guess they will criticize her emphatically."

When the doyens of the James family began to educate a person, it would last for several hours.

The younger generations in the James family, no matter how naughty and unruly they were in usual times, would be obedient in the two months before the ritual gathering as they were afraid that they would be criticized in the ancestral hall if they created any trouble. The worst thing was that they couldn't refute it and could only listen to their criticisms obediently.

If they tried to refute or showed any weird expression, the denouncement, which was supposed to come to an end in several hours, would last for longer.

Stella groaned a simple answer and slowly withdrew her gaze.

When Archer was talking excitedly, he spotted the coldness in Clarence's eyes.

He immediately adjusted his expressions and stood there with his back straightened.

Maybe Elaine had heard his words, she subconsciously turned around. Her eyes lit up when she saw Clarence, but when she prepared to run towards them, her arm was grabbed by her father Franklin.

Franklin criticized her in a low voice, "Do you know what day it is today and where you are?"

Elaine then turned around reluctantly.

Franklin looked toward Clarence and Stella, knitted his brows and pulled a long face.

Stella had seen such an expression numerous times, but she could understand it. After all, when a father saw the man who abducted his daughter, it was normal for him to become angry.

Archer said in a whisper, "Almost all the James are here and the worship ceremony will begin five minutes later."

Stella asked, "But Darnell hasn't arrived."

Just as she finished the words, a tall man walked into the door.

It was Darnell.

The ancestral hall, which was prevailed by discussions, immediately became silent because of his arrival.

After a short while, a sound from the crowd broke the silence, "You've gone too far. Worshipping ancestors is such an important matter, yet you only arrived when it almost begins."

Stella looked over following the sound and found it was from Archer's second uncle who criticized Archer at the door just now.

When they heard the words, some men chimed in low voices.

Darnell ignored it, walked into the ancestral hall and slightly bowed at the doyens to show his respect.

Elaine's grand-grandfather, Hilbert James, stood up shivering with the support of his crutch, "Now that everyone has arrived, the ceremony will begin. There're many matters for this year and we will not waste time."

Darnell said, "Hold on. A person hasn't arrived."

Hilbert pushed the glasses on his nose bridge upwards, "Oh? Which naughty child is late?"

Everyone was waiting for Darnell's explanation.

"It's not my son."

"It's not my daughter either."

"..."

Franklin looked around and said to Darnell, "I think everyone is here. Whom did you mention?"

Darnell's mother stood beside him with a serious expression.

Darnell turned around, looked towards the door of the ancestral hall and said slowly, "She arrives."

Everyone looked over the door simultaneously.

When they were pondering who the person was, a woman appeared in their visions.

When seeing the person, Stella's pupils amplified. And she could clearly feel that the person beside her also stiffened.

She slightly pressed her lips together and held his hand.

Under their shocked, confused gazes, Dolores walked into the ancestral hall step by step.

She knelt in front of Hilbert, and behind Hilbert were the memorial tablets of the ancestors of the James family.

Dolores said slowly, "Dolores James is back."

Hilbert studied her for a long time while holding his crutch and finally recognized her.

Seeing that Hilbert almost couldn't maintain his balance, Franklin stepped forward to support him and let him sit back into the chair.

Hilbert narrowed his eyes, "Are you Dolores James?"

In a simple costume, Dolores knelt on the ground with a straight back and replied, "Uncle, it's me."

There was a commotion from the crowd.

The younger generations might not know about the inside story, but those who were around Dolores' age remembered it clearly. It was just that Dolores' name became a tattoo in the family ever since she left Riverside and no one dared to mention her.

The James family's doctrine was that every member of the family could not leave Riverside.

The one who dared to leave Riverside would never be able to come back.

Back then, Dolores fell in love with a man from City N and their love story spread widely in just several months. Many people felt jealous of it at that time.

Later, Dolores insisted on leaving Riverside with that man even though her name would have to be erased from the family tree.

Dolores didn't belong to the James family after her leaving.

Of course, some gossiping people once tried to probe into how her life was like after eloping with that man to City N.

But they couldn't find her.

It had been thirty years. Who would expect that she would come back to the James' Mansion one day?

There were more and more questions from the crowd.

Even Hilbert's expression had turned gloomy.

Darnell said, "It was me who invited aunt back. She's born as a member of the James family, so why can't she go home?"

Hilbert broke the silence after a long while, "Darnell, do you forget the rules of your family?"

"I never forget it." Darnell continued, "It was just that my grandfather told me before he died that his last wish was that Aunt Dolores could come back to the family. He has died and I'm just completing his last wish."

The crowd became silent.

When Bancroft was still alive, he never mentioned his daughter and everyone thought he didn't mind her at all.

Even so, even if Bancroft was still alive, he could not violate the ancestors' rules and let Dolores come back to the family.

But now since Bancroft had died, and Darnell took his last wish as an excuse, even Hilbert felt it inappropriate to probe into this matter.

After a short while, Hilbert said, "Alas, let's talk about this later. Start the worship ceremony first."

Dolores had been keeling on the ground with her back straightened during the whole process. Even though Darnell's mother once stepped forwards, trying to prop her up from the ground, she declined it and refused to get up.

A person among the crowd asked in a low voice, "Guess why Darnell took her back."

"Is it because of Clarence?"

"It's just one of the reasons. Now Darnell's position as the patriarch is not that stable. Although he claimed that taking Dolores back to the family was Bancroft's last wish, he has officially broken the rules of the James family."

"Then should we just watch without doing anything?"

“Darnell’s main concern after becoming the patriarch of the James family has been breaking the rules of the James family. It’s because of this that those seniors don’t like him, thinking that he thinks too highly of himself. Even though he managed to let Dolores come back to the James family today, they would only have more grudges against him.”

“Then it will provide convenience for our later plan.”

Chapter 616-When the worship ceremony was over, many members of the family, who didn’t want to be involved in the trouble, left one by one.

Those who stayed here were people who wanted to watch the show.

As most of the James had left, Clarence and Stella, the two strangers to the family, became conspicuous.

If Dolores didn’t show up, probably none of them would think of the possibility.

But the reality was that Dolores was present, and there was a man who looked similar to Darnell and at the same time around his age.

Therefore, they began to guess it and discussed it in whispers.

Hilbert also heard their voices. With the help of his presbyopia glasses, he took a glance at Clarence, but people didn’t know whether he had seen Clarence clearly or not.

Holding his crutch, he coughed several times and then said, “The worship ceremony has come to an end. Except for me, several doyens, Franklin, Darnell and his mother, other people shall come to the front hall.”

Hearing Hilbert’s words, those people didn’t dare to watch the show and left one by one as Hilbert was quite prestigious in the family.

Seeing this scene, Elaine also prepared to leave secretly.

But Hilbert stopped her, "Elaine, stay here."

Elaine, who just lifted one of her feet, put it down and obediently walked to her father.

When all of those irrelevant people had left, Hilbert picked up the cup of tea on the near table, blew the tea leaf floating on the tea and said slowly, "We're not in a hurry. Let's solve it one by one."

He then looked towards Elaine, "Let's start from you."

Elaine tried to muddle through it by playing cute, "Grand-grandpa..."

Hilbert took a sip of the tea and appeared to be not moved. He looked up again, "Don't stand there. Please come in."

Clarence slightly pressed his thin lips together and took Stella into the ancestral hall.

Seeing this scene, Archer looked around awkwardly.

He didn't know whether he should follow them into the hall, or leave.

Archer scratched his head and thought to himself: Never mind. I will go in too. There have been many people after all.

Elaine immediately thought of a countermeasure when seeing Clarence walking into the hall. She reached out to hug his arm, but Clarence dodged her touch effortlessly.

Elaine was somehow scared when spotting the coldness in his eyes.

However, she had no choice because she didn't want to marry Darnell.

Franklin let out a heavy cough, reminding Elaine to behave herself and not to go too far.

Elaine withdrew her hands, not feeling embarrassed at all, and then said in a righteous voice, "Grand-grandpa, I've been fascinated by the other man and I don't want to marry uncle Darnell."

Franklin knitted his brows. He was the first to condemn Elaine, "What nonsense are you talking about? How can he be your uncle? Mind your words."

Elaine retorted, "Am I wrong? You asked me to call him uncle when I was young. And he will always be my uncle."

Hilbert said in a deep voice, "Hilbert, I and Darnell's grandfather are cousins and you two are distant relatives at most. We asked you to call him uncle to close your relationship. It's just an address and it doesn't matter."

When Elaine prepared to retort, the other doyens who sat beside Hilbert began to cough.

Franklin also warned her with his gaze, gesturing not to refute anymore.

Right at this moment, Darnell's bland voice sounded. "I don't agree wither."

Darnell's mother wanted to say something, but she simply moved her lips and didn't say anything in the end.

Darnell continued, "I don't plan to marry any woman and form a family for now. Elaine is still young and we're not suitable."

One of the doyens said, "You can engage with her first, and we will arrange for other matters when Elaine grew older."

Elaine couldn't help but retort when she heard the words, "I told you that I've been captivated by the other man. Dear doyens, do you know what era we are in now? We're in a new era! And arranged marriage has been a past! I won't accept this! I want to pursue my happiness. You're so bigoted. I..."

Slap!

Before Elaine could finish the words, she felt the burning pain in her cheek.

Elaine stiffened and looked at her father.

Franklin said in a stern voice, "Kneel."

Tears welled up in her eyes as she choked with sobs. Elaine wanted to justify herself, but she thought she would cry if she opened her mouth. Therefore, she bit her lower lip tightly and knelt behind Dolores, making a loud sound.

Seeing this scene, Archer subconsciously took a step backwards, feeling his knees aching even though it wasn't he to kneel.

Darnell furrowed his brows and looked towards Elaine, but he didn't say anything.

Franklin withdrew his hand and took a deep breath, "Elaine is still young. I will educate her more after coming back."

When hearing his words, the gloominess on those doyens' faces was alleviated.

As Elaine was his grand-granddaughter, Hilbert didn't want to see her continue to be embarrassed and decided to put aside this matter temporarily and move to the next matter.

He said, "The second thing, I heard some rumours recently that some members of the James family went to City N and some other negative rumours. Darnell, have you heard of them?"

Darnell replied blandly, "They're rumours and I will deal with them."

"If someone left Riverside and went to City N, it should be a big deal."

They could easily perceive that Hilbert was still dissatisfied with Dolores' return to the James family and he was taking this opportunity to express his discontent and to pave the way for the next matter.

Darnell replied, "I also learned about this matter before and it was me who asked Archer to go to City N."

Archer was astonished.

Hilbert and the other doyens simultaneously raised their eyes and looked towards Archer who thought these matters had nothing to do with him before and watched the show casually.

Archer immediately became nervous. Recalling the slap on Elaine's face just now, he suddenly felt his right cheek hurting although he was not slapped. Archer knelt down without hesitation, "I..."

Darnell said, "There were some accidents in City N and someone is targeting at the James family. If I just wait for their attack, we will lose the initiative and can just wait for their frame."

Hilbert just held his crutch and remained silent.

He sat in the chair with his eyes closed. And Stella couldn't distinguish whether he was sleeping or meditating.

She turned her head to look at the man who seemed to be pondering something and slightly pressed her lips together.

Right at this moment, a doyen broke the silence, "Even though what you said is true, you should have negotiated with us and decided on it together. You can't make such a decision yourself. No matter what, we can't forget the rules stipulated by our ancestors."

Darnell said without any expressional change, "My grandpa told me when I became the patriarch of the James family that I have the right to decide on everything."

That doyen became so angry, "You..."

Darnell continued, "If you think I didn't handle this matter appropriately, I can give the position to the other person at any time."

They immediately became silent when they heard the words.

Although these doyens all had their plans, none of them could take the position justifiably even if Darnell gave way to one of them.

"Enough."

Hilbert broke the silence, "What Darnell said makes sense. He's the patriarch of the James family and he can decide on any matters himself. He doesn't have to inform any other people. All right, this matter is over. But no matter what, since you've gone to City N, we can't let go of you easily. Just kneel there."

Archer was shocked again.???

Chapter 617-It was because the last matter was much more important than the previous ones.

Moreover, in those doyen's eyes, they had shown some respect to Darnell since they made concessions in the previous two matters.

As for the last matter, they wouldn't make any concessions.

Hilbert said, "As for the matter that you mentioned before, about allowing Dolores to come back to the family, it's an important matter and we can't decide on it by just several sentences. We don't have full considerations in many aspects."

One of the doyens immediately chimed in, "That's true. These rules are set by our ancestors. How can they be easily changed simply because of a person?"

Another doyen echoed, "Moreover, as for Archer's visit to City N, it's essentially different from Dolores' leaving. She admitted to being erased from the family tree back then and insisted on leaving with that man, and we tried to stop her, but failed. Isn't it ridiculous for her to come back now?"

After their censure, Hilbert slightly raised his hand to stop them.

He took a glance at Dolores who had been kneeling on the ground with her head lowered, "Do you remember what you said before leaving the James family?"

"I wish to be erased from the James family and I won't step into Riverside again."

"It's good that you still remember it." Hilbert then asked, "So why do you come back now?"

Dolores replied, "I didn't fulfil my duty as a daughter when my father was alive. He passed away not long ago and I want to pray for him for three years."

Before the others could express their opinions, Dolores continued, "I won't ask you to add me into the family tree. I just wish I can pray for him in the ancestral hall."

Darnell said, "Now that aunt has said that and this was grandpa's last wish, I think you guys won't have any objections, right?"

Those doyens, who wanted to oppose it just now, all swallowed their objections and looked towards Hilbert.

They knew deep down that since Hilbert planned to let Elaine marry Darnell, probably he wouldn't offend Darnell thoroughly.

Hilbert said, "Well, but you have to sleep on it. Once we agree on this, you should kneel here every day in these three years. It's not simply to show your filial piety, but also to reflect the mistakes you made."

Clarence slightly frowned and took a step forward, but Stella clasped his hand tightly.

Although she didn't know what was going on, since Ms. Anderson hadn't taken a glance at Clarence and Hilbert didn't call Clarence's name, she could tell that they didn't want to expose Clarence's identity to those doyens.

Dolores replied, "I've made up my mind."

Hilbert stood up, trembling, "All right. Those who have to kneel in front of our ancestors should continue to kneel here. As for other people, you shall go on with your own business."

Franklin stepped forward and supported him out of the hall.

Seeing this, other doyens all stepped out of the hall one by one.

Darnell turned around to take a glance at Clarence and Stella and said blandly, "Follow me."

Archer looked up at them with a grievance.

Darnell ignored it and continued to step forward.

Looking at Dolores' back, Stella moved her lips trying to say something, yet still swallowed the words in the end.

There would be an answer soon.

Stella withdrew her gaze and found Clarence was also looking at Dolores.

She tugged the sleeve of his suit jacket. Clarence then withdrew his gaze and took her out of the hall, his face icy-cold.

When the footsteps gradually disappeared, Archer finally heaved a sigh of relief, feeling that he came to life again. He slumped down the ground and murmured, "How ungrateful."

He then looked at Elaine and poked at her shoulder, "Why are you still kneeling? They've left."

Elaine was still angry. She shrugged down his hand, giving no reply.

Archer beat his knees gently, "I have to ask why you're so bold recently. How dare you offend those old..."

Before he could utter the word "stuff", he spotted that Dolores was looking over and bit the tip of his tongue.

Dolores said blandly, "Disaster emanates from a careless talk."

Archer immediately covered his mouth and nodded at Dolores to show his appreciation.

Dolores withdrew her gaze, looked at the ancestors' memorial tablets in front of her and closed her eyes.

After a short while, Archer teased Elaine again as he felt boring, "Isn't Darnell a good choice? They simply asked you to marry him, but you acted as if they wanted to kill you."

Elaine was cheered up when mentioning this and said angrily, "He's ten years older than me! Ten years! He's so scary. If I marry him, maybe he will kill me and even eat me if I offend him one day."

Archer was rendered speechless.

When Elaine calmed down a bit, she added, "Oh, he doesn't like cooked food and prefers a raw one. But I don't want any slice of my flesh to be eaten after dipping sauce. It's so dirty!"

Archer was speechless again.

He said as if it was so hard for him to understand her logic, "What nonsense are you talking about?"

"Anyway, I won't marry him. I've been captivated by the other man."

Archer said casually, "The man you like is also ten years older than you."

Elaine retorted, "Love is the subject regardless of age."

"But it should concern morality. He has married."

"I've investigated him. He has divorced."

"But now they're reconciled. Didn't you see it?"

Elaine took a deep breath, "I can wait until they break up."

Archer said lazily, "Don't wait for it. It's impossible."

"They got married before, but then divorced. Although they're in a relationship now, why is it impossible for them to break up later?"

Archer said, "Your father will give you another slap if he hears these words."

Elaine, who was angered by the slap before, craned her neck forward when she heard the words, "Then just come. He's better to kill me. It's better than marrying Darnell and being eaten by him."

Archer was amused, "Who told you that Darnell would eat people?"

"Anyway... He's like that. You follow him every day and you're not a good man too. Don't talk to me!"

Archer was rendered speechless.

He was so innocent.

The ancestral hall became silent again.

Franklin pulled a long face outside. Apparently, he had heard Elaine's words.

It seemed like it was a wise choice to let her kneel here. It would help to polish her temperament.

This girl had been more and more unruly.

Right at this moment, his subordinate walked over.

Franklin withdrew his gaze and walked away. When they were far away from the ancestral hall, he asked, "What's the condition?"

"Darnell took Clarence to a side hall and his men guarded outside. We couldn't hear their conversation."

Franklin said, "I've been thinking that Clarence came here for the things that happened in City N. But I never expected that Darnell would take Dolores home. What the heck does he want to do?"

“Master, actually, I heard that when Bancroft was alive, he had been planning to reform the James family. It was just that he had to give up because all the doyens objected to it. I guess Darnell did those things according to his instructions, and taking Dolores home is just the first step of his plan.”

Franklin said in a deep voice, “The James family has been developing for many years and has accumulated many problems. It has many collateral branches. It’s just that the fathers of the younger generations are recorded in the family tree so we could only add their names into the family tree according to the rules. They got benefits from this and even did many evil things in the name of the James family.”

“The most important thing is that if he wants to reform the James family, those doyens’ forces would be eliminated in the end.”

“This is the reason why they object it.”

Chapter 618-Only Clarence, Stella and Darnell were sitting in the side hall.

Sitting on a sofa with a cold face, Clarence looked at Darnell coldly, exuding a cold aura all over.

However, Darnell had been maintaining his indifference and composure, showing no change in his expression.

The two invisible and strong auras met, filling the whole house with oppression.

Stella, who sat beside Clarence, put her hands on her knees and took a deep breath.

After a long while, Darnell said slowly, “I guess you’ve known what you want to know. What else do you want to ask me?”

Clarence asked in a cold voice, “What do you want to do?”

"I didn't involve in the things that happened in City N. If what you want to ask is the thing that happened just now, I have to say that it has nothing to do with me because it's your mother's choice."

"Or I should ask you about what you said to her before."

Dolores left Riverside without hesitation even if she had to be erased from the family tree and lived in City N alone for many years. Although she had suffered a lot, she never stepped into Riverside again or turned to the James family for help. It could be seen from this that she was arrogant and unyielding in nature.

She would not choose to come back to Riverside and return to the James family at this point.

Darnell replied casually, "Didn't aunt say the reason. I guess she regretted not taking care of grandpa when he was alive."

Clarence looked at him expressionlessly, "It was you who asked Vincent to take him back, right?"

"I just told her that I can help her come back to the James family. As for whether to come back or not, it's up to her."

Clarence repeated the question, "What do you want to do?"

Darnell became a bit serious. He crossed his long legs and tapped the arm of the sofa with his fingers, not giving a reply.

Stella felt a bit breathless. Why did they have to talk like this? Couldn't they make it clear in one go?"

She broke the silence after a short while of silence, "Based on her personality, since she had decided to leave the James family back then, she won't come back again."

Stella then looked towards Darnell, "I guess you have threatened her, or it was because she had to come back because of some reasons."

Darnell replied, "Maybe both of them are possible."

"You mentioned the things that happened in City N twenty years ago. Maybe it has..."

"I've told you to investigate it yourself. You can believe in your investigation."

Stella pressed her lips together, feeling his matter had become more complicated.

But the only thing she could make sure of now was that the things that happened in City N recently had nothing to do with Darnell.

But they must be related to the James family.

It could be told from today's worship ceremony. But there were many people in the James family and it was hard for them to start the investigation.

When Stella was in confusion, Clarence stood up, held up her hand and took her out of the hall.

He walked so quickly that Stella had to trot to follow his paces. She turned around to look at Darnell, moved her lips trying to say something, yet didn't utter a word in the end.

Nobody stopped them.

They walked out of the side hall and stopped in a garden. Stella asked in a low voice, "Didn't you plan to ask him some questions? Why didn't you ask just now?"

"I've learned about those things I can know today. As for the other matters, he won't tell me."

Stella also had perceived that Darnell was beating around the bush today. Except for learning that Dolores was from the James family, they didn't get any clues for other matters.

"Then..."

"Let's go. I will send you out."

Stella finally realized what he said after taking several steps. He meant to send her out only.

Stella looked at him, "What about you?"

Stella couldn't read through Clarence's expression. He said, "I have to stay here to deal with some matters."

Stella recalled that Dolores was still kneeling in the ancestral hall.

She nodded her head and replied, "Okay."

Clarence drove Archer's car and sent her to the gate of the James' Mansion.

Nathan was waiting for her outside.

Before getting out of the car, Stella said, "Don't be impulsive and try to negotiate it if there's any problem. Don't throw your tempers at your mother."

Clarence curled his lips into a light smile when he heard the words. He raised his hand and tugged her hair behind her ear, "I know. I'm not a child."

"The James family is also in a mess. I feel that they're not that submissive to Darnell. Be careful."

Clarence fixed his black eyes on her. Several seconds later, his hand which was placed behind her ear pushed her head forward, and at the next moment, Clarence tilted his head and landed a kiss on her lips. He rudely opened her mouth, deepening the kiss.

Stella could feel the emotions, which were suppressed by him before, surging in his chest.

She slowly closed her eyes and kissed him passionately, trying to console him.

Stella had been indifferent to him for a long time, and Clarence clasped the back of his head and deepened the kiss when feeling her passion.

When the kiss was over, Clarence said in a low, husky voice, "I have to go."

"Okay."

Stella stood on the spot after getting out of the car.

She watched Clarence coming back to the James Mansion. Only when the black car disappeared in her sights did she retreat her gaze.

In the ancestral hall...

Sitting on the Archer was not enough to satisfy Archer and he even began to eat the fruits and pastries on the desk.

When he was full, there were finally footsteps from the door.

Archer hurriedly wiped clean his mouth and knelt with a straightened back.

When spotting the person walking into the ancestral hall was Darnell, his posture immediately collapsed. "Oh, it's you. I thought it was someone else," said Archer.

Darnell shot a glance at him, "Are you full?"

"I'm..."

Archer suddenly paused when he spotted the residues of the pastries on the ground.

He said pitifully, "Almost. It will be better if there's some meat."

"Clean it and go out."

Since Darnell had allowed him to go out, Archer immediately stood up and came to find a broom in a good mood.

Darnell took a glance at Dolores in front of him and then looked towards Elaine, who had been lowering her head as if she had suffered great grievance.

He slowly called her name, "Elaine James."

Elaine's back stiffened when she heard his voice, but she still resisted against him stubbornly and silently.

She would not marry him even if she had to kneel here the whole day or even her father would beat her up!

Darnell's voice turned cold, "You're twenty years old and you're not a kid. Don't throw temper tantrums. When will this end? Do you plan to kneel here for the rest of your life?"

Elaine finally looked up at him. With tears all over her face, she choked with sobs, "I'm willing to kneel here for the rest of my life as long as I don't have to marry you."

“Did I ever say I want to marry you?”

“But...”

“No one can make this decision for me without my permission.”

Elaine choked again, “But... But what if... What if you suddenly want to marry me one day... Isn't it like forcing me to jump into a living hell?”

Darnell's temples thumped. He suppressed his impatience, “This won't happen.”

Elaine groaned a simple answer.

She immediately stood up and wiped away the tears on her face, “You've promised me.”

She then looked at Dolores, “This lady also heard the words and I got a witness. You can't go back on your words.”

Chapter 619-Darnell didn't want to correct her address and simply said, “Go back if you're enough of the fuss.”

Elaine immediately ran away.

The ancestral hall was immediately prevailed by silence.

Darnell looked towards Dolores and addressed in a low voice, “Aunt.”

Dolores, who had been closing her eyes, slowly opened her eyes. Her voice was a bit shaky as she said, “Is what you instructed Vincent to tell me true.”

“They’re all true.”

Dolores said after a while of silence, “I just have one condition: don’t tell Clarence about the truth.”

“He will find it even though I don’t tell now. Moreover, the reason why those people led Clarence to Riverside is to let him find the truth.”

“We should postpone it. The later, the better.”

Darnell said, “Vincent has come back to City N to investigate this matter. I guess we will get some news in several days.”

Dolores sighed emotionally, “What can we do even if we find out who the persons behind this are. It indeed has happened and we can’t change it.”

“Aunt, please rest assured. I will keep an eye on him and I will stop him if he wants to take any dangerous actions.”

“The troubles in City N and Riverside are all caused by the pushiness and the choice I made before. I’m sorry to the James family. And...”

“Aunt, you don’t have to blame yourself. Things would not have progressed to what they are today if he didn’t covet the powers of the James family and deceive you.”

Clarence father, Dempsey Conrad, went to Riverside for business negotiations thirty years ago and got to know Dolores accidentally. Then he pursued Dolores with various means. At that time, Dolores surnamed James. She had been living in the James family and had never left Riverside because of those unwritten rules. Therefore, she developed a keen interest in the handsome man from City N.

As time passed, many of the James gradually felt that inexplicable rule unacceptable and wanted to go out of Riverside to have a look at other places.

After getting to know Dempsey, who told her the world outside was so wonderful, Dolores gradually yearned for leaving Riverside as she had been constrained in the city for too long.

At that time, Dempsey indeed did many touching things to please her.

Being moved, Dolores gradually consolidated her belief in leaving Riverside and following him to City N.

It was not only for freedom but also for love.

But she didn't expect that Dempsey had a wife and a son in City N. When she followed him to City N with excitement, Dempsey tried all means to let her persuade her father to expand his businesses in Riverside to City N, which would help to improve his forces and interpersonal relationships at the same time.

Having no choice, Dolores could only tell him that she had cut the relationship with the James family when she left Riverside.

And that the James family would not recognize her as a member of the family and would not expand its businesses to City N.

Only until then did Dempsey realize that the James family didn't allow its members to leave Riverside. His expression immediately turned hideous and he didn't visit Dolores for several days consecutively.

Dolores couldn't figure it out. When she learned she was pregnant, she wished so much she could immediately tell him about this good news and went to the Conrad Group to find him after leaving the hospital.

In the company, she saw Joanna and Justin who was only several years old at that time.

Dolores felt as if being struck by lightning and froze on the spot with a pregnancy examination report in her hand.

Associating with Dempsey's indifference in recent days, she immediately figured out what was going on.

Dempsey's ambition was not satisfied although he was quite successful in City N. Even though the Perez family was quite powerful, it was still insignificant comparing to the James family.

Dempsey had made a plan when he first approached Dolores. He thought he could let Dolores follow him to City N first, and since Dolores was the only daughter in the family and her father spoiled her a lot, his father would not let her live in City N alone.

In that case, as long as the James expanded its business to City N, everything would be under his control.

He just needed to infiltrate into the family's forces slowly and one day even the Riverside would be under his control.

As long as his plan came to success, he would get rid of the Perez family at any time.

Never had he expected that the James family would have that rule.

His efforts in the past months were all in vain.

He bore some hatred towards Dolores at that time, complaining why she didn't tell him in advance.

After figuring everything out, Dolores didn't ask him for any explanations. She returned to the house, packed her things and left.

Even though she knew it was a fraud, she couldn't go back.

She hesitated for a long while and finally decided to deliver the child in her belly.

She could by no means return to the James family and the child was the only belief that encouraged her to live.

Dolores James changed her surname and went to a place where she thought no one would be able to find her.

Dolores, a rich lady who had never worried about money and livelihood, immediately became a single mother who lost all supports from her family and could only make a living by herself. She gritted her teeth to go through a long, hard time.

Although life was bitter, the child grew up day by day.

They lived in that place for several days.

Until one day Dempsey appeared in that broken alley in a business suit...

It had been many years and Dempsey still showed no regret on that matter. It was just that he seemed to have grown old as some of his hair was white.

He told Dolores that his son's legs were broken in a car accident and he was paralyzed and could only sit in a wheelchair for the rest of his life. Therefore, Justin couldn't shoulder the responsibility of taking charge of the Conrad Group.

He persuaded with a carrot-and-stick approach, saying that he would cultivate the child to be the heir of the Conrad Group after taking him back to the family. If Dolores refused it, he would have another illegitimate child. However, in case that other Conrads would find the child and make use of his identity, he would kill the child himself.

Dolores was sleepless for several nights. Looking at the shabby house, she covered her face and burst into crying.

She didn't know why things would progress to what they were now. Her child was supposed to grow up as an apple of many people's eyes; however, he suffered a lot as he had to live with her in this place.

Dolores agreed to Dempsey's proposal and sent Clarence back to the Conrad family. Then she left City N without hesitation, just like how she left Riverside before.

Dempsey did cultivate the child as the future heir of the Conrad family as he had promised Dolores. However, he was afraid of the forces in Riverside at the same time, feeling that the James family would recognize the child one day.

This was the reason why he constantly wanted to control Clarence and why he had some scruples about him.

But in the end, he got nothing. Instead, he was paralyzed all over.

Dolores pulled herself out of her memory and looked at the ancestors' tablets in front of her.

Right at this moment, there came some footsteps from the door.

Darnell said, "Aunt, I have to go."

Darnell walked to the door of the ancestral hall and looked at the person, but he didn't say anything in the end and left in strides.

Standing at the door of the ancestral hall, Clarence fixed his eyes on Dolores' back and only walked into the hall several minutes later. He then kneeled behind Dolores.

Hearing the sounds, Dolores turned around and said in a low voice, "You don't have to kneel."

Clarence said blandly without any expressional change, "I'm not kneeling before them."

He added, "Since you're kneeling before them, I can't just stand here." [?][?][?][?]

Chapter 620-Dolores sighed, "It's my choice to kneel here. Come back. Stella comes with you, right?"

“Nathan has sent her back. I come here to ask you a question.”

“I know what you want to ask. I’ve heard of some things on the way here. I don’t know what Joanna had done when she was alive, but the one backing her up is not the James family. And the baby’s sickness has nothing to do with the James.”

Clarence asked, “Then what about you?”

Dolores replied after a while of silence, “Clare, ever since I left the James family, I’m no longer a member of the family. This is the reason why I haven’t told you about this.”

“Now that you’ve left, why do you come back again?”

“Because I regret it. I regret that impulsive choice. I don’t want to regret it for the rest of my life, so I come back to do something that I can do.”

“I have many questions before I came to the James family, like your relationship with the James family, what drives Vincent to stay by my side for many years, what happened twenty years ago and what the James family’s roles in those things were.”

“Clare...”

Clarence continued indifferently, “But these puzzles were solved when I found you here.”

Dolores slightly knitted her brows and moved her lips trying to say something.

Clarence said in a calm voice, “You’re Darnell’s aunt, the only and beloved daughter of the previous patriarch. Although he was angry that you insisted on leaving Riverside because of a man and therefore cut off the relationship with you, he was still worried about you a lot.”

“Especially when he learned that the man who deceived you to City N had a wife and a son and didn’t give a shit about your life, he wanted to seek revenge for you and pave the way for your son, so he bribed the driver of the Conrad family and created a car accident. Justin...”

“Clare!” Dolores interrupted him, “It’s not like this. Your grandfather didn’t do that. He...”

It was hard to read Clarence’s expression as he continued, “I haven’t finished the story.”

Dolores suddenly felt weak.

Clarence continued in a flat tone after a short while, “When that man’s son was paralyzed by the car accident, he finally recalled that he had an illegitimate son who didn’t live with him. Then he took the illegitimate son back to the Conrad family regardless of other people’s objections. Things progressed according to the previous patriarch’s plan. But he also knew that Dempsey was not trustworthy.”

“Therefore, he sent a man from the James family to stay by that illegitimate son’s side and help him. At the same time, that man could send messages to the James family, which would help him take charge of the Conrad Group’s forces step by step and deprive of Dempsey’s control of the company.”

Clarence paused before adding, “This is the story that happened twenty years ago, right?”

Dolores shook her head lightly, “It’s not like that...”

“Then do you have another version?”

Dolores moved her lips trying to explain it, yet she couldn’t.”

Although Justin’s car accident was not plotted by her father, they were the cause of this accident.

Clarence continued, “I’ve doubted Vincent ever since I learned about the existence of the James family, but I couldn’t figure it out. Nor can I accept this. We’ve known each other for nearly twenty years. What

are the reasons for him to frame me? Only now do I learn that he deliberately approached me several years ago.”

“Mentioning this, I have to appreciate his favours so that I could get rid of Dempsey’s spies so quickly.”

“Clare, your grandfather and Vincent didn’t have any evil intentions towards you. They just hoped you could have a better life.”

“That’s true.” Clarence stared at the memorial tablets in front of him, “I’m doing well. I was once an illegitimate son who grew up in a broken alley, but step by step, I became the CEO of the Conrad Group and snatched everything that Justin once possessed.”

Dolores closed her eyes. She was afraid that Clarence would think so, so she didn’t allow Darnell to tell him about the truth.

Clarence continued, “Joanna had said numerous times that it was me who snatched Justin’s things, and I once felt angry and aggrieved. For me, that car accident is simply an accident and it is the two drivers to be blamed. I thought it had nothing to do with me and I didn’t have to feel guilty for it.”

“But it turns out that Joanna’s accusation was right. It was me who caused Justin’s sufferings. If not because of me, the car accident would not have happened and Justin would still be the only son of the Conrad family. He should take charge of the Conrad family and the Conrad Group.”

Dolores choked with sobs, “Clare, you didn’t do anything wrong. I’m the one to be blamed.”

“Nope. I was wrong that I had lived without any guilty for many years and I was wrong that I hadn’t known about this earlier.” Clarence continued, “It’s your choice to come back to the James family to show your filial piety and I’m not qualified to oppose it. Just let it be. Darnell is the patriarch of the James family and you won’t have any dangers.”

After finishing the words, Clarence stood up and left in strides.

Dolores turned around, “Clare... Clare...”

Clarence didn't stop and his figure disappeared in the ancestral hall son.

Dolores worried that he would do something silly.

Two men who sat in a car outside of the James' Mansion smiled when they saw Clarence walking out of the James family. One of them said, "Looks like Clarence has learned about the truth."

"Although Dolores and Darnell want to keep it a secret from Clarence, since we've taken many actions, our efforts will be in vain if he still can't find any clue. Those people in City N will be disappointed then."

"Tell Jon that our plan is successful and he can't carry out the next plan."

...

After leaving the James' mansion, Clarence drove the car to a riverside, got out of the car and looked at the distance expressionlessly on the bridge.

He stood there for two hours.

Archer, who was in a black car not far away from Clarence, swallowed saliva when he saw this scene, "He looks so upset. Will he jump into the river?"

Darnell closed his eyes and said blandly, "He would have jumped into the river if he has such an idea."

"That's true. But the truth is totally different, why don't you make it clear with him?"

Darnell slowly opened his eyes, "Grandpa was so angry at that time and it was true that he once had the idea. It was just that Justin was only a child at that time. Even if he wanted to seek troubles for the Conrad family, he would not hurt a child who didn't know anything."

“So your grandpa dropped the idea after calming down?”

Darnell groaned a simple answer and added after a short while of silence, “No matter what, the James family is the cause of all these matters and it’s not important to Clarence no matter whether it was done my grandpa or not.”

Archer sighed emotionally, “I heard from Vincent that Clarence’s elder brother is good to him. It’s reasonable for him to be guilty.”

Darnell let out a light mocking, “A disgusting place like the Conrad family actually raised a gentle and kind-hearted man like Justin. I don’t know whether it’s luck or misfortune.”