

## Chapter 653 - The Plan of Saving Nora Novel Free

Matthew was surprised. "Do you really have a solution?"

Iris sighed. "I recently met a young friend who is very skilled at treating orchids, I will go and ask her for advice. You can give the orchids to Lauren after if my friend can't cure them!"

Matthew knew about the dispute between Iris and Lauren. Hearing this, he kept quiet for only a second before he said, "Okay! Mdm. Iris, we have been taking care of orchids for so long, so I trust you and am willing to give you a chance. If it weren't for the Ghost Orchids, I wouldn't have broken our agreement. But if you still can't solve the issue by tomorrow, then you can't hold that against me anymore."

Iris nodded. "I understand."

People who truly loved orchids regarded the flowers as their life. Matthew was one of the best gardeners in the industry, and the Ghost Orchids were his very life itself, so she could understand why he did what he did.

After hanging up the phone, Matthew told her the orchids' symptoms. He was very detailed in the description-after all, he had become very experienced after cultivating flowers for so long. He included details about what he had done to the flowers in the past, the soil he planted the flowers in, and so on.

Iris stared at the description for a while before she raised her head and looked at Mrs. Landis. "That pot of Ghost Orchids has indeed encountered quite a difficult issue. I'm afraid that even Orchidance would find that pot of flowers rather difficult to save. In that case, let's take a gamble!"

Mrs. Landis was a little taken aback. "What gamble?"

Iris took a deep breath. "A gamble on my destiny. If Nora can save this pot of flowers, then that pot of Jade Orchids will be mine. What's meant to be mine will definitely be mine."

Mrs. Landis didn't understand what she was hinting at. She nodded and said, "Of course!"

She didn't know that Iris had made a decision at this instant.

If Nora could save that pot of orchids, then she would have pretty much made a miracle.

If so, then she would tell them the truth about what had happened back then.

She didn't want to give the younger generation trouble, but her blood ties with her son were right there. There was one thing that Lauren had been right about—Cherry liked her grandmother.

She could cruelly push Justin away when she was young, but now that she had gotten on in her years, she was no longer as bold and resolute as she had been when she was young.

She also craved the heartwarming and gentle moments of being with Cherry and the others.

With that in mind, Iris took out her cell phone and sent a text message to Nora. First, she sent Nora the symptoms of Matthew's orchids, and then she sent another sentence: 'Can you take a look and see if you can save this pot of flowers for me?'

Nora was currently at the Andersons' and looking for something in her mother's room.

Despite the unexpected incident at Iris', and Herman's return, Nora had not forgotten what she was the most anxious about right now.

Her mother had left her information about the V16's whereabouts, yet she wasn't capable enough to find it. When she thought of how Xander was still sick, she was filled with impatience and irritability.

Mrs. Anderson was standing at the door. As she watched her turn the study upside down, she asked, "Nora, what are you looking for?"

Nora asked, "Grandma, did my mom leave anything important behind?"

Mrs. Anderson nodded. "Yes, of course!"

Nora suddenly looked up. "What did she leave behind? Show me!"

As soon as she said that, Mrs. Anderson smiled gently and kindly at her, all the wrinkles on her face squeezing together. She said, "She left you! You are the best gift she left the world."

Nora: "..."

The corners of her lips spasmed and she sighed silently. "Okay, Grandma, I'll look for it myself!"

She was about to take out the dust-covered things under the bed and flip through them when her cell phone suddenly beeped.

She picked it up and saw the messages Iris had sent to her:

'Can you take a look and see if you can save this pot of flowers for me?'

'If you can, I will tell you a story.'

Tell her a story?

Was Iris finally going to reveal her troubles? A touch of joy flashed across Nora's eyes and she immediately replied: "I'll come to you right away."

When Nora came to the villa, Iris was sitting in the greenhouse with a tea bar in front of her. She was sipping on a cup of tea, but her eyes were fixed on the greenhouse.

At the sound of footsteps, she turned and looked over. When she saw Nora, she gestured to the seat opposite her and asked absentmindedly, "Can you save them?"

"I can try." Nora had never been one to make absolute promises.

After all, Ghost Orchids were awfully delicate. A little carelessness could easily lead to problems.

Iris took a sip of tea and sighed silently. She looked at Nora. "Do you really want to hear that story?"

Nora nodded.

Iris fell silent for a while. Then, she asked, "Even if it really brings you guys a lot of trouble?"

Nora nodded again.

Even so, Iris was still worried. She pressed on and asked, "Have you asked Justin about it? Is this also what he wants?"

Before Nora could speak, Justin's voice came from the door: "Yes, it is."

Seeing that he was also here, Iris was stunned.

She stared at her son.

Justin had already grown to a height of a little over 6'2", and was a full head taller than her. Her small and thin son from twenty years ago had already grown into a man with an indomitable spirit.

Iris clenched her fists.

She suddenly asked, "Don't you hate me? No matter what my reasons are, I have ultimately been absent in your life for so many years."

Justin's jaw was strained, and the beauty mark at the corner of his eye was shimmering in the light. After a short silence, he answered, "I did when I was a kid, but not anymore."

Iris was taken aback.

Justin turned his head to the side and looked away. Apart from being able to say some mushy things to Nora, he was actually a little uncomfortable saying such things to others.

The man stood up straight. As though he was talking about work matters, he said to Iris, "When I was a child, everyone had a mother except me. When I got into arguments with Roger, his mother would stand in front of him unreasonably and push me, but I didn't have anyone like that. Not only did I not have a mother, but even my father was gone. At that time, I did indeed hate you for being so cruel.

"But now, it doesn't matter anymore, because all of that has passed. I know you have your own difficulties and reasons for doing so."

Justin's voice was actually very calm and dispassionate. There wasn't any emotion in it at all.

It was as if he was just narrating something that had happened in the past.

But his words painted a very lucid picture in both Iris and Nora's minds.

The little Justin had been bullied. His father had been kicked out of the family. His mother was clearly still in New York, yet she did not come home. He obviously had a father and a mother, yet he became an orphan in the Hunts.

Perhaps the little boy had cried in private. Perhaps on many nights, he had run to this very villa and looked up at the person inside, hoping that Iris would open the door and give him a hug.

But she hadn't.

Just like that, he had grown into an adult...

Nora took Justin's hand and held it quietly.

Iris felt as if her heart was being wrung tightly. However, she was already accustomed to the pain-because every night he came over, she knew he was there.

What he didn't know was that she had also been looking at him from upstairs. It was just that she couldn't go down.

The most intimate relationship in the world was the one between a mother and her child.

Children's love for their mothers was purer than their mothers' love for their children.

Because in the world of children, their mother was the only thing that mattered.

But in their mothers' world, there would always be things to weigh and evaluate, as well as worries and reservations.

Iris's eyes reddened. She lowered her head and said, "Justin, I will give you another chance. You now have children and a wife. If I tell you those reasons, your days in the future may not be peaceful anymore. But if I don't... there are only so many days I have left in my life. Isn't it good the way we are now?"

That was how Iris had always seen the situation.

Wasn't it good for them to stay the way they currently were, where mother and son didn't meet, and each kept to themselves peacefully?

When Justin heard her mention that he now had a wife and children, he looked at Nora.

Nora held his hand tightly, the look in her eyes firm and determined.

Justin could sense her encouragement towards him. He nodded to Iris and said, "We have made our decision."

Iris' jaw tensed up.

After a while, she finally sighed and said, "Alright, in that case, then let's take a gamble. If Nora really can save that pot of Ghost Orchids, then I will tell you two the truth!"

Orchidiance's way of curing orchids was actually very miraculous. Additionally, because they were giving medical treatment to orchids, the dosage was even harder to control.

Not every alternative medicine practitioner could do that.

Even Orchidiance would probably find it rather difficult, let alone Nora.

It would be nothing short of a miracle if Nora could cure the Ghost Orchids.

Iris didn't want to lead such a dull life either. She didn't want to pretend to be all calm and unaffected here. She could harden her heart towards Justin because he had already grown up, but she also wanted to have fun with Cherry.

Thinking of this, she looked at Nora with light in her eyes.

This was the mentality of a gambler.

When Justin saw her reaction, he knew that Iris had already relented somewhat. To be honest, if he gave her another push at this point, she would tell him the truth.

But he didn't want to use such schemes against his mother.

Thus, he looked at Nora.

Nora felt great pressure from both of them looking over. The corners of her lips spasmed and she looked at Iris. She said, "Iris, you can start thinking about how to word the story."

She took out a piece of paper and handed it to Iris. "This is the prescription."

On the way here, Nora had already looked at the photos and the description of the symptoms that Iris had forwarded to her and silently computed the formula.

The prescription contained very low drug dosages, so they shouldn't pose any danger to the flowers.

Nora had always been very confident in her knowledge of her specializations. After all, when she was in California, no one would come to her for medical consultations. In order to improve her medical skills, she had instead treated the flora and fauna at home!

That was why she was so knowledgeable about orchids.

Of course, this was really difficult to achieve.

Because flowers were undoubtedly different from humans. If it weren't because Nora had experimented with flowers and plants for so long, she probably would not have mastered such fine control of drug dosages. Iris was a little dumbfounded when she saw the piece of paper she was offering to her.

She immediately took a photo of the prescription and sent it to Matthew.

It was only after she sent it that she raised her head and said, "Nora, you wrote that prescription so quickly."

She had settled on a prescription without even speaking with Matthew.

Nora slowly replied, "I have treated that disease in other flowers before, so I kinda understand it."

Iris: "..."

As the corners of her lips spasmed, she received a call from Matthew. He said, "Mdm. Iris, this prescription that you sent me...?"

Iris glanced at Nora and said, “My daughter-in-law came up with it. You can give it a go! I can at least guarantee that nothing will go wrong with it.”

Matthew sighed. “It’s not that I don’t trust you, it’s just that... you gave it to me a little too late!”

Iris was taken aback. “What?”

Matthew said, “Lauren has just borrowed that pot of Ghost Orchids from me, saying that while she cures them for me, she would also like to hold an orchid exhibition so that the people who like orchids in New York could admire them.”

What Matthew didn’t say was that Lauren hadn’t just approached him, but also people from various wealthy and aristocratic families in New York. After all, precious and expensive flowers like orchids weren’t things that ordinary people could afford.

Lauren had assembled a group of people with the euphemistic excuse of letting everyone visit an exhibition featuring famous flower species. This way, everyone could learn something new and widen their horizons. Therefore, people shouldn’t hide and keep all the good things to themselves...

The meaning between the lines was that Iris was too petty.

Matthew didn’t want to sow discord between them, so he had left that part out.

Iris frowned. “She has cured your Ghost Orchids?”

“Pretty much.” Matthew sighed. “Actually, when I called you, I’d already used the prescription she gave me. I didn’t expect the Ghost Orchids to really become much more alive just half an hour later.”

Iris sighed silently.

She hadn’t expected things to develop this way! What an unfortunate turn of events!

She said quietly, “Congratulations.”

“What is there to congratulate me about?” Matthew smiled wryly and said, “She will be holding an exhibition tomorrow. Even if it’s just for the sake of my flowers, I’ll have to attend. Not only do I have to contribute my flowers, but I also have to contribute my presence. That woman is just so... Mdm. Iris,



orchid lovers like us are usually people at peace with the world. We just take care of the orchids for our own joy, but look at her, isn't what she's doing no different from forcing me to..."

Iris didn't like talking about people behind their backs, let alone when it was about Lauren. Thus, she said, "It's for the best that the flowers are cured."

"Yeah."

Matthew then said, "Your daughter-in-law is very talented, though! Her prescription is only one herb off from Lauren's! Using alternative medicine to cure orchids is Orchidance's specialty. Many alternative medicine practitioners also wanted to give it a try. As a result, so many orchids have died from their attempts over the past few years. Lauren is the only one who has finally mastered the technique after studying it for a long time..."

At this point, Matthew sighed heavily. Unable to stop himself anymore, he said, "Mdm. Iris, you have to be careful. Lauren is bent on beating you in orchids this time. I heard that after she caught wind of the fact that you like orchids, she has been imitating Orchidance's methods in treating orchids for the last five years. Who knows how many orchids she has destroyed before she finally became as experienced as she is today..."

Matthew, who sounded like he found the orchids somewhat a pity, added, "Who knows how many precious orchid varieties she has destroyed just to vent her frustrations, sigh!"

Matthew looked down on Lauren's actions very much.

They were taking care of orchids because they truly loved orchids, but Lauren was just using the orchids as a springboard to edge out Iris.

It was just a pity that no matter how much one was into their hobby, they would still have to bow down in the face of reality.

Iris didn't pay any attention to those things. However, she still found it somewhat a pity.

She had already lost the gamble before it even started.

She looked at Nora and said quietly, "Alright, I'm hanging up!"

Unfortunately, the next moment, Nora grabbed the phone.

Nora stared at the phone and asked, "Which other herb did she add to the prescription?"

Matthew seemed surprised by her voice. In the end, he named a herb.

The corners of Nora's lips curled into a smile. After Iris hung up the phone, she said, "Let's go to the orchid exhibition tomorrow."

As soon as Nora said that, Mrs. Landis, who was next to her, said, "But we don't have an invitation!"

Nora and Iris looked at each other. The two spoke at the same time, "We will have one very soon."

Mrs. Landis: "?"

A puzzled Mrs. Landis looked at Justin. "Are you going to ask Mr. Hunt to ask for two tickets?"

"No, it's fine."

As soon as Iris said that, someone knocked at the door. Then, the mailman appeared and said, "Mdm. Iris, mail for you."

Iris and Nora looked at each other again.

A look of realization flashed across Nora's eyes, and she said to Mrs. Landis, "See, isn't that the invitation?"

Mrs. Landis: "?"

Mrs. Landis took the mail from the mailman. When she opened it, she found that it was indeed an invitation for the orchid exhibition. She was astounded. "Ms. Smith, Ma'am, aren't the two of you too amazing?"

Iris scoffed. "By holding the orchid exhibition right after she returned to New York, she's clearly coming right at me. Since she wants to slap me in the face, how could she possibly not invite me?"

Mrs. Landis couldn't help but smack her own forehead. "Look at me, because I've been living here all this time and haven't come into contact with people much, I've even forgotten about such basic household infighting!"

Both Nora and Iris were amused by Mrs. Landis's use of the words "household infighting":

Iris patted her and asked, "Where did you learn all these words from?"

Mrs. Landis replied with a smile, "Oh, you know how I watch all those TV dramas when I have nothing to do! I learned it from them!"

Iris suddenly gave her a fierce look and said, "Mrs. Landis, how dare you slack off while I wasn't paying attention! You sneaky treacherous woman! I'm going to deduct your

pay!"

Mrs. Landis pretended to be scared. "Ma'am, other people work only nine to six, whereas I wait on you twenty-four hours a day! Aren't you even going to allow me to watch a bit of TV for entertainment?"

Iris smiled. "Your salary is for twenty-four hours of work each day! You should already be thankful that I'm letting you sleep!"

Mrs. Landis protested, "You capitalist!"

"In that case, I'll pay you for sixteen hours instead?"

"... Ma'am, if you exploit your staff any further, I might secretly add poison into your favorite food."

The two of them bickered and started to joke with each other.

There was finally a smile on Iris's face that was calm and serene all year round.

Mrs. Landis looked at her, very glad and relieved.

The two of them were just joking around, of course. Iris had given Mrs. Landis much more than her salary all these years. Both of Mrs. Landis' children were already married, and they both had their own properties in New York and were living lives of luxury. This was all thanks to Iris.

After twenty years of her company, Mrs. Landis was more like family to Iris now.

Justin stood at the side and watched them bicker and joke with each other.

To be honest, for so many years, his mother's appearance had long become vague and blurry in his mind-because every time he came over, all he would see was Iris's frosty face.

The woman's lively appearance faintly reminded him of how she had hugged, kissed him, and teased him when he was a child.

At that time, she had also laughed and talked happily like what she was currently doing.

Originally, because he hadn't had much contact with Iris for more than two decades, Justin had felt some estrangement towards his mother. However, that sense of estrangement had lessened considerably at this instant.

It was as though the mother in his memories, who loved to talk, laugh, play, and joke around, had returned. For him, the word "mother" was no longer just an identity but had once again become vivid and animated.

The feeling made the corners of his lips curl upward imperceptibly. He cast his eyes down and hid the complex emotions in his eyes. Mrs. Landis was a huge mischief-maker. She had also wanted Iris and Justin to reconcile for very long. Seeing that the atmosphere today was great, she said, "Mr. Hunt, you really loved the ravioli I made when you were a child. Why don't you stay for dinner tonight?"

Justin subconsciously looked at Nora.

When she saw him looking over, Nora nodded and said, "Alright."

Mrs. Landis became excited at once. She rolled up her sleeves and walked into the kitchen as she said, "Since you guys are staying for dinner tonight, I will have to show off my culinary skills! Ma'am eats too little, so she doesn't give me a chance to show off my skills at all."

After Mrs. Landis entered the kitchen, the atmosphere among the trio standing outside immediately became a little awkward.

Iris looked at Nora and then at Justin. At last, she said, "I'll go and give Mrs. Landis a hand. Given her age, she'll be too slow!"

After speaking, she also went into the kitchen.

Nora and Justin were the only ones left outside. The two of them looked around the greenhouse. Justin pointed at the orchids and said, "I heard that people who raise orchids have high moral character. Now it seems like that's not always the case."

He was referring to Lauren.

Nora, however, laughed and said, "I don't know about others, but I know why my god-sister likes taking care of orchids."

Nora deliberately emphasized the words "god-sister".

Justin: "??!"

He raised his eyebrows, knowing that Nora was being cheeky and asking to be taught a lesson again.

As soon as the thought formed, he looked at Nora's lips, wishing he could take a few nips to vent his "anger".

As for Nora, she said, "Do you want to know why? If you do, then call me God-aunt Nora. I'll tell you if you do."

Tsk.

She was starting to take advantage of him now.

Justin stroked his chin and suddenly leaned forward. He lowered his voice and asked, "Ms. Smith, are you sure you want to be my god-aunt?"

Nora: "?"

She decided not to tease him anymore, lest it backfired on herself. She coughed and said, "Iris... I mean, Aunt Iris and I already knew each other before she even knew who I was. She told me at that time that she was raising all these flowers because her son had given her a pot of orchids once."

Justin was stunned.

He looked at the orchids, his jaw tensing up.

He remembered now. When he was ten years old, he had indeed given her a pot of orchids on her birthday. The woman had accepted his gift. At the same time, she had also told him that she had only accepted the gift because she liked orchids.

Since then, the floodgates opened and she started to buy a lot of orchids.

Justin had always thought that it was because she liked orchids. But as it turned out, it was just an excuse for her to accept her son's gift.

He turned to look at Iris in the kitchen.

Mrs. Landis had prepared some ingredients, and she was picking and choosing from among them. However, everything that she picked out just so happened to be his favorite...

Justin lowered his head.

In truth, his mother had never really left him all these years, and he'd always had his mother's love with him by his side, right?

In this instant, he suddenly reconciled with his mother—or rather, with the part of himself that had been uncomfortable because his mother hadn't taken care of him.

He also suddenly became open-minded and let go of some things in this instant.

He let out a silent sigh. Right at this moment, his cell phone rang.

When he answered, Herman's voice came from the other side.

"Justin, didn't you want to know why your mother has been avoiding you? I will tell you now."

Upon hearing his voice, Justin narrowed his eyes. He wanted to say he didn't need it—he wanted to hear it from Iris instead—but he suddenly paused.

Iris would never tell him about her grievances. He would only be able to hear about her grievances from others.

For example, Iris would probably never tell him why she liked orchids because she had never been a woman who knew how to express her feelings.

Justin thought about it and said, “Okay, speak.”

In a villa in the outskirts of New York.

Herman and Lauren sat on the sofa.

Lauren was looking at Herman, who said, “You probably only know that I cheated on your mother with Lauren back then, so all this time, you must have thought that all the problems with our marriage lie with me, right?”

Herman’s words gave voice to the mentality that most women held—that every man who cheated was a scumbag.

Justin lowered his eyes, but he sneered, “You are wrong.”

Herman was taken aback.

Justin said, “You are not a good husband, and at the same time, you are not a good father either.”

Many people thought that once a man cheated, he would no longer be a good father.

But that wasn’t necessarily true.

Some men might cheat on their wives a lot, but they wouldn’t hold back on their love for their children. Perhaps the cheating itself might affect the children, but even so, they would still try to make up for it later.

Besides, some married couples were indeed not suitable to stay together. Even if they had children, those who needed to divorce would still divorce each other. However, the divorce did not affect their love for their children.

But this wasn’t true in Herman’s case.

Not only had he cheated and hurt Iris, but he had also left Justin to fend for himself afterward. It was as if he’d never had a son like him.

He hadn’t just let Iris down, but also Justin.

Herman was stunned for a while. Then, he tried to explain himself. “Justin, it’s not that I didn’t care about you, or that I did not love you...”

“At your age, you shouldn’t keep going on and on about things like love and romance.”

Justin dissed him mercilessly again.

Herman: “...”

Justin said concisely, “Just tell me the reason.”

Herman spent a while organizing his thoughts. Finally, he sighed and said, “Justin, I know I’ve neglected you, but you have to understand. I did all that because your mother cheated on me first! I am a man, how could I let someone cuckold me? That’s why I went to Lauren! Don’t be fooled by how Iris looks as if she’s at peace with the world! She is not as indifferent to fame and fortune as she makes herself out to be!”

Iris had cheated on Herman?

Stunned, Justin suddenly looked at the woman in the kitchen.

Herman took a deep breath. “She had found another man outside. I couldn’t condone her behavior, so I filed for a divorce. When your grandpa wanted to keep you in the family, I couldn’t just let her sit back and enjoy the rewards of her success, and even hog my family’s business on top of that. Besides, all she could think of was that man, so I made a request—that she would leave you alone. You were still young at that time, and I was afraid that she would usurp your power and become the real master of the Hunts. Justin, I schemed and did all this for your own good!”

Justin frowned.

Herman’s argument might sound seamless and completely logical at first hearing but in truth?

If what he said was true, why did Iris spend all these years in agony in the suburban villa instead of going to her adulterous lover and keeping him company? He sneered, “Do you think I will believe that?”

Herman also panicked. “I have evidence!”



Justin asked, "What evidence?"

He was already biased towards Iris at the moment and was highly disapproving of Herman's statement. If that was really the reason, then Iris's decision to ignore him would really be too absurd.

While he was feeling uncomfortable about the whole thing, Herman said, "Those orchids! Those orchids are the evidence! She didn't like orchids at all in the past. You should remember that there were barely any orchids at home when you were young, but look at how she started to take care of so many orchids after she moved to the suburbs! It's exactly because her lover loves orchids! Ha, because I trapped her in New York, she couldn't meet her lover anymore, so she could only pour all her yearning and pining into the orchids instead!"

Justin: !!

What smooth logic!

If Nora hadn't told him just now why Iris was keeping so many orchids, he'd probably really have become suspicious.

But now...

Justin scoffed. "Is that so?"

Herman said, "Yes, everything I said is true. Justin, Dad has actually been very worried about you and has done a lot for you, so don't be so distant towards me. I know I have never shown you any fatherly love, but I can give that to you in the future..."

"I don't need it."

Justin straight-up rejected him. "Is there anything else?"

Herman said, "I want to visit your grandmother tomorrow, she's my mother after all. Tell the people at home to let me in!"

Justin scoffed. "Nice try. You can forget about ever entering the Hunt Manor for the rest of your life."

He wanted to hang up after saying that, but Herman shouted, "Justin, Justin! You can't do that to me! I did all that for you! You refuse to let me in, yet you

allow Iris to enter! Tell me, did Iris bewitch you? Has she been badmouthing me all these years? No matter what, I am still your father... toot... toot... toot..."

Justin hung up on him.

Herman had called him just to sow discord between him and his mother, so as to make his way into the Hunts little by little.

In the villa.

Herman stared at his mobile phone with a frown after Justin hung up on him. He couldn't help but curse, "That brat! Why is he so stubborn?!"

Lauren looked at him: "Is the reason you said just now true?"

Herman scoffed and said, "Half of it is, I suppose."

Lauren rolled her eyes at once. "Aren't you afraid that Iris will tell him the truth? It will become even more difficult for you to repair your relationship with him then!"

Herman said confidently, "She won't."

Lauren was taken aback.

A self-mocking Herman said, "Because if she does, it would bring great trouble to her son. That's why she will never say it."

It was only after Iris and Mrs. Landis made a total of six dishes that the three of them finally sat down.

Iris wanted Mrs. Landis to eat with them, but the latter took her food and went into the kitchen instead of eating at the same table with them.

After the three of them sat down, Justin stared at Iris. Suddenly, her cell phone rang.

She was taken aback for a moment, seemingly never expecting anyone to call her.

But when she looked down at the phone, it turned out to be an unfamiliar number...

Iris's hand started shaking and she rejected the call immediately.

However, the other party persisted and kept calling

Iris became obviously nervous. She stared hard at the phone, as though the caller hailed from the depths of hell itself.

Iris was very nervous. Despite her trying to make herself appear calm and collected, her tightly-clenched fingers, as well as her dilated pupils, had exposed her emotions. Justin's gaze landed on the unfamiliar number and he said, "Your phone is ringing."

"Huh? Oh, it's probably just a sales call."

Iris said as she rejected the call again. Then, as if she was afraid that they would call again, she switched off her cell phone. She even tried to gloss over the topic and said with a smile, "They are so annoying. There are simply so many such sales calls these days. It wasn't easy for us to have a meal together."

Seeing her like this, Justin merely nodded.

Nora and Justin exchanged a look, neither of them exposing her lie.

Afterwards, even though Iris tried her best to pretend she was very excited and happy about the meal, the two of them could still tell that she was a little distracted.

After all, Nora and Justin were more insightful than most ordinary people and had astounding observation skills.

After the meal, the two bade goodbye to Iris.

Before leaving, Nora looked at Iris again and asked tentatively, "See you at the orchid exhibition tomorrow?"

Iris seemed a little hesitant. It must have been because of those phone calls.

However, she only stayed quiet for a second before she raised her head. "Yeah."

Her voice was firm.

This showed that she would not be changing her mind again.

She was really taking a gamble. If Nora managed to cure the pot of Ghost Orchids, then she would tell them the truth. If she failed, then she would take the truth with her to the grave, and never cause the children any trouble.

Seeing her like this, Nora and Justin looked at each other again and left.

Nora and Justin were in the same car. Justin was driving. After they turned the corner ahead, he stopped the car.

By then, Nora had already set her cell phone number as an unknown caller. Then, she keyed in the string of numbers that had been displayed on Iris's cell phone just now.

She had a photographic memory, so she had memorized the phone number with just a single glance.

Nora then handed her cell phone to Justin.

Justin dialed the number without hesitation.

The other party quickly picked up. A man's voice came through the phone: "Hello?"

A prompt and decisive Justin asked, "Who are you?"

The other party was silent for a while. Then, he let out a low chuckle and hung up without saying anything else.

Justin: !!

Inexplicably, what Herman had said about Iris cheating on him flashed past his mind.

He frowned.

Nora also frowned. "He kept the call time within fifteen seconds, I can't trace his location."

Justin took a deep breath. "Don't bother anymore."

Nora looked at him.

Justin said, "I won't ask anymore. I'll wait for her to tell me everything herself."

He didn't want to investigate anymore.

He had suddenly realized something because there were always people trying to sabotage his investigations, it would inevitably lead to unnecessary misunderstandings.

Nora knew what he was thinking. She gave him a thumbs-up right away and said, "Yup, that's the way. You're family, so you shouldn't harbor suspicions about each other. Besides, from what I saw just now, Iris... I mean, your mother didn't change her mind just because of that call."

Justin nodded.

Iris wasn't a weakling or a pushover.

She had taught Justin to be strong and aggressive since he was a child. This was also why Justin hadn't believed Herman's nonsense.

How could Iris possibly be someone who easily accepted fate?

If she really had a lover, then she would definitely have tried to think of ways to spend the rest of her life with him instead of wasting her youth away here.

The next day.

Nora drove to the suburban villa early in the morning.

Iris had dressed up for the occasion and was wearing an elegant and beautiful white fitted dress. She got into the car after she left the house.

The woman didn't look at all like she was nearly fifty years old. After dressing up, she was dazzling and graceful. Her figure was curvy, and coupled with her fair skin, it was only when one looked closely that one would see any wrinkles on her face. With the way she looked as she stood there, some people might believe it if one said that she was only twenty years old. Nora raised her eyebrows and formed a heart with her hands at Iris.

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Iris got into the car, and the two headed straight to the orchid exhibition.

Lauren's orchid exhibition was held at a hotel in central New York. The orchids she borrowed from various families had all been placed on shelves.

At a glance, there were all kinds of orchids that one could ever think of.

In the most eye-catching position was Matthew's Ghost Orchid.

The Ghost Orchids were very rare, so they had occupied the central position of the orchid exhibition.

After Nora and Iris got out of the car and entered the hall with the invitation, they immediately noticed the pot of Ghost Orchids.

When Iris saw the orchids, she exclaimed, "Lauren has really cured that pot of Ghost Orchids. They look so full of vigor."

Only then did Nora reveal something: "There is a problem with her prescription."

Iris, who was a little taken aback, looked at Nora.

Nora whispered, "Her prescription has one more ingredient than mine. That herb is too powerful. It can quickly allow orchids to look energetic and filled with vigor, but over time, even bigger problems will appear. It's just like how humans suddenly become very energetic before they pass away. Going by how much time has passed since the medicine was given to the Ghost Orchids yesterday, the Ghost Orchids will wither after another half an hour. In the first place, there are a lot of restrictions when it comes to using drugs on plants. Those who are not proficient in it really shouldn't do it."

Iris was dumbfounded. She couldn't help but say, "Orchidance has also said that before, and told everyone not to imitate them. Aren't you also imitating Orchidance, though?"

Nora raised her eyebrows. Suddenly, her lips curled into a smile and she replied, "Who says I'm imitating Orchidance?"

Iris: "???"

Then, as though she had realized something, she looked at Nora in astonishment.

Could it be... that Nora was none other than Orchidance?!

Just as she was about to speak, Lauren entered the hall and said with a smile, "Iris, you're here! Did you bring any orchids with you today?"

Iris immediately reined in the complicated look she was giving Nora. She looked at Lauren and replied, "No."

"You didn't?"

Lauren was shocked. "It is written on my invitation that everyone who comes to the orchid exhibition should bring a pot of flowers, so that everyone can appreciate and admire each other's flowers."

After she spoke, Lauren sighed silently and said, "Iris, surely it's not because you can't bear to show us your flowers, right? I have heard that you have gathered a lot of rare orchids in your private collection over the years! I am holding this orchid exhibition precisely because I hope that orchid lovers can gather and share their joy with each other. In fact, an orchid exhibition like this should have been held long ago. What's the point of hiding and keeping all the good things to ourselves? Everyone here is an orchid lover, it's not like they'll spoil the flowers, right? Iris, you are being overly cautious."

Although she said that she was being too cautious, she was instead implying that Iris was too stingy and petty, just so she could highlight how generous and capable she, Lauren, was instead.

A group of people from wealthy families gradually gathered around them. Everyone looked at Iris.

Iris, however, scoffed.

Was she trying to compete with her in terms of eloquence?

She wasn't someone who would take sh\*t from others!

Lauren had organized the orchid exhibition to suppress Iris' arrogance.

Back then, even though she had succeeded in changing her status from a homewrecker to the man's lawful wife, to be honest, she knew that there weren't many in the circle of wealthy ladies who approved of her. Everyone approved of Iris instead.

In that case, Lauren would outdo Iris in the latter's forte! This way, she could also show off in front of everyone else!

She said, "Iris, why are you keeping quiet? Are you upset? Well, that's true. There's no one in New York who doesn't know that you love orchids the most. By right, you should have been the one organizing the orchid exhibition instead, but because you didn't take any action, I found someone to do it instead... What a shame. I heard that you also have a pot of Ghost Orchids, so I even wanted to let everyone admire them!"

As soon as she said that, Iris looked at the people around her. She smiled and said, "The things you say are so ridiculous. Must I hold an orchid exhibition just because I like orchids? In that case, since Mrs. Lange likes diamonds, must she also hold a diamond exhibition? Since Mr. Sullivan likes antique paintings, should he open a museum then? These are just personal hobbies. On the other hand, why haven't I heard anything about you liking orchids before?"

Her few simple words had immediately suppressed Lauren.

How would the wealthy and the noble possibly take out whatever they liked and show them off to everyone? If they did that, then they wouldn't be showing off their wealth instead!

Lauren had made a mistake at a fundamental level, making her seem petty and cheap, and also making all the ladies look down on her. They had only attended the exhibition because of Matthew's Ghost Orchids.

After all, Matthew's Ghost Orchids really were a rare sight.

Iris's words had suppressed Lauren's momentum, causing everyone around them to laugh. They echoed Iris and said, "She's right, we are not frivolous people."

Showing off one's wealth for no reason would only arouse aversion and disgust from other people.

Moreover, even though Lauren wasn't an orchid lover, she had held an orchid exhibition. Iris had pointed out her objective.



Lauren clenched her fists in anger. She'd finally invited so many ladies to the exhibition today after much difficulty. Originally, she'd wanted to improve her position among the ladies, but little did she expect Iris to be so sharp-tongued!

Lauren lowered her head and smiled. "I certainly don't have any love for orchids, but don't forget that I am an alternative medicine practitioner. It's only because Matthew asked me to cure his flowers that I decided to hold the orchid exhibition. I found his Ghost Orchids such a rare sight and wanted everyone to see it! This way, everyone can also share their experience on growing orchids with one another along the way."

Her few simple words immediately made the rich ladies around them not dare to laugh at her anymore.

Everyone at the exhibition was a true flower lover. Was there anyone among them whose flowers would never have any problems? Should something go wrong, it would be great to have someone like Lauren help.

She could even cure Matthew's Ghost Orchids. Lauren was simply too skilled at curing orchids.

Someone immediately said, "Mrs. Hunt, you are so capable. You have even cured such a delicate flower that's so difficult to treat! It's amazing! By the way, my flowers have also met with a small problem. I wonder if I can ask you for some advice?"

Lauren smiled gently and replied, "Sure. In the first place, this orchid exhibition isn't meant for showing off; rather, it's to facilitate communication!"

With a few simple sentences, she had saved the scene again.

Some of the others walked over to Iris and said, "Mdm. Iris, come to think of it, that woman is actually quite capable. Her methods of curing the flowers' illnesses are very similar to Orchidance's. Everyone's privately speculating that Lauren may be Orchidance! Sometimes, for the sake of the orchids, we should bow down to others!"

"Yeah, she actually cured Matthew's Ghost Orchids. She's really very impressive."

Matthew's Ghost Orchids had been withering day by day for about half a month. He had been to many orchid masters to cure it, but it had barely seen any effect.

News of it had already spread in New York.

Through his Ghost Orchids, Lauren had made a name for herself.

At the mention of Orchidance, Iris subconsciously glanced at Nora. Then, she scoffed and said, "She's no Orchidance. Compared with Orchidance, she is far inferior!"

The contempt in her words made the ladies look at one another. In the end, none of them dared to say anything. They could only smile awkwardly.

Lauren also heard her. At once, she narrowed her eyes and said, "Mdm. Iris, now that's rather meaningless. Matthew had certainly wanted to approach Orchidance, but the problem is that Orchidance is so mysterious. No one knows who she is, let alone where to find her. I heard that she's not even in the country, so it's impossible for anyone to find her. I admit that my treatment methods are indeed imitating Orchidance's, but am I wrong to diagnose and cure Matthew's Ghost Orchids for him?"

The place was silent.

No one there dared to offend Iris-after all, she was Justin's mother. Although they weren't on good terms with each other, it was said that Justin would still specially visit the suburban villa every month.

Besides, no matter how bad their relationship was, Justin would never sit by and watch other people bully his mother.

Therefore, no one defended Lauren. However, Lauren could cure orchids' illnesses. Everyone there was an orchid lover, so none of them dared to offend Lauren either.

For a while, no one said anything.

Iris' lip corners, however, curled into a smile. Although she hadn't asked Nora just now if she was really Orchidance, it had given her confidence.

She looked at Lauren and said, “What’s the big deal about being able to cure orchids? My daughter-in-law can also do it!”

She looked at Nora with a proud look on her face.

When Lauren heard this, she looked at Nora.

A moment later...

“Pft.”

She let out a soft laugh.

After she laughed, Lauren said, “Sorry, I really couldn’t help it. Mdm. Iris, what you said is really funny. I know Ms. Smith is the great Dr. Zabe’s disciple, and I also know that she is Anti the famous surgeon, but neither of those titles is related to orchids. Mdm. Iris, surely you don’t think that every alternative medicine practitioner can cure orchids, right? Flowers are different from humans!”

Iris also smiled when she heard her. “Of course I know that. It’s just that my daughter-in-law happens to have studied orchids a little before. In fact, she is...”

Before she could say “Orchidiance”, Lauren interrupted her. “Is that so? Then why don’t you come over and have a look at Matthew’s Ghost Orchids, Ms. Smith? You should know that pot of Ghost Orchid’s prior condition, right? Can you cure it?”

Nora glanced at it and said calmly, “Yes.”

As soon as Lauren wanted to reply, Iris took out a piece of paper. “This is the prescription that my daughter-in-law wrote for that pot of Ghost Orchids. You can take a look at it!”

“Does Ms. Smith really know how to cure orchids?”

“If you think about it, there’s a chance that she does. Ms. Smith is the best alternative medicine practitioner after all!”

Once Lauren lost the advantage of being able to cure orchids’ illnesses, the people around them immediately dared to speak up for Iris.

When Lauren heard them, she immediately took the prescription from Iris. After she glanced at it, she said, "Iris, Matthew must have told you about this prescription, right? This is exactly the same as mine! It's just a pity that even if you've made a copy, you left out one ingredient!"

"She didn't leave it out." Nora said unhurriedly, "It's because the prescription doesn't need that ingredient. Orchids are delicate flowers. The ingredient you added will hurt it."

"It'll hurt it? No way." Lauren said confidently, "That ingredient is supposed to revive a plant's shine and glow, so how could it possibly be harmful? What's more, that pot of Ghost Orchids is being displayed so vividly and vibrantly in front of everyone right now. Everyone can see for themselves the flowers' current condition. In just a day, it has regained its vitality. Ms. Smith, you are being too dogmatic!"

Nora looked at the pot of flowers. "Affliction of diseases makes one collapse like a mountain, and the treatment of diseased areas is akin to trying to extract strands of silk from one another. The usage of such strong medication will only keep the orchid alive for a while but make it wilt even faster. As an alternative medicine practitioner, surely you don't need me to teach you something like that, right?"

Lauren: "?"

Her understatement-like way of talking made Lauren angry. She said, "Ms. Smith, I know that you are Justin's wife. There's nothing wrong with protecting and defending your mother-in-law, but even so, you can't just speak so carelessly like that. This ingredient is certainly a little strong, but I've already tested it on other orchids before. There won't be any problems in the future! Facts speak louder than words. I know that you are an alternative medicine practitioner, but alternative medicine requires many years of practice to accumulate experience. From what I see, you don't give medical consultations very often, so you're probably not very experienced when it comes to the practical aspect, right? Besides, humans are different from flowers. I have treated a lot of flowers and gone through a lot before I gained experience. What about you?"

When Nora heard this, she said calmly, "Then let's make a bet."

"What do you want to bet on?" Lauren asked.

Nora looked at the pot of Ghost Orchids and answered, "That problems will definitely occur with this pot of flowers within an hour."

Lauren scoffed. "Ms. Smith, stop joking. How can that be? I've already cured that pot of flowers! How can anything go wrong with it when it's so filled with vitality? But since you've said so, then okay, I accept the bet, Ms. Smith. If nothing goes wrong with the flowers, then I hope Mr. Hunt can allow Herman and I to return to the Hunt Manor and stay there."

Nora's lips curled into a smile. "Okay. If something goes wrong with the flowers, then I want you to apologize for wrecking someone else's marriage back then!"

Lauren's pupils shrank.

The biggest humiliation of her life was when she involved herself with Herman's marriage and became the third party persecuted by everyone. Whenever people talked about her these days, they always called her the homewrecker who had successfully become the lawful wife.

Yet Nora had brought it up in public in front of everyone. It was simply infuriating.

There was anger all over Lauren's face. She demanded, "What's the meaning of this, Ms. Smith?"

"You don't dare to make the bet with me?"

Nora raised her brows.

Pushed into a corner, the angry and anxious Lauren could only say, "Fine."

She clenched her fists tightly.

In order to return to the Hunt Manor, as well as to return to the pinnacle of status in New York, she was really holding nothing back. When she thought about it carefully, though, nothing could go wrong with that pot of flowers anyway. Nora was at a complete disadvantage when she made the bet with her.

To be honest, the moment Nora said that the ingredient was too strong, Lauren had already felt a little guilty. She'd actually had some takeaways from her time studying medicine abroad over the years.

However, she strongly believed that even if something were to really go wrong, it would only happen at a later stage.

It was impossible for that to happen within an hour.

She was sure to win the bet.

When she thought about it this way, Lauren didn't feel so unhappy anymore because the bet was clearly to Nora's disadvantage.

After the two parties made the bet, Lauren summoned some people and instructed, "Keep a close watch on this pot of Ghost Orchids. If anything goes wrong, you must notify me immediately!"

No matter how rare the Ghost Orchids were, they were nothing more than a pot of flowers for Lauren. What she cared about was not the flowers but winning the bet.

She spoke very loudly, everyone heard her. Lauren explained with a smile, "We've already made the bet, after all. I'm just afraid someone would deliberately spoil the flowers within the hour because they are sore losers. It would be terrible if people refuse to pay up when that happens."

Iris, however, ignored her. Instead, she pulled Nora to the side, lowered her voice, and asked, "Tell me the truth, are you Orchidance?"

Nora's lips curled into a smile and she nodded.

Iris: "..."

She stared at Nora with a dazed look on her face. "Orchidance is the only person capable of curing Matthew's flowers, why didn't I think of that? No, it's because you are too young. I didn't expect Orchidance to be so young, I always thought that she would be as old as me, or perhaps even older."

Nora looked at her.

After speaking, Iris's immediate thought was not that she now had someone to treat the flowers in her greenhouse, if anything ever happened to them.

On the contrary, she heaved a huge sigh.

She said, "I originally thought that there are only so few people in this world who can cure Matthew's Ghost Orchids because those flowers are really very difficult to treat. When you said that you can cure them, I thought that you were just taking a gamble. But I didn't expect that what was just a one in ten thousand probability for me, would instead be a 100% sure-win probability for you." Nora replied, "Therefore, you have to tell your story now."

Iris was taken aback for a moment. In the end, she waved and said, "Ah well, never mind, this is all meant to be!"

She had also thought things through herself. By taking a gambler's mentality with this, she was also just trying to give herself a ray of hope in the future.

She didn't want to age and die in that suburban villa and be separated from Justin for the rest of her life, either.

All of this had been predestined a long time ago, that was all.

She said, "I hope the two of you won't hate me after you hear my story."

Back then, she had shielded Justin from everything. Now that her son had grown up, it was ultimately time that he paid his debt.

Iris sighed.

Nora patted her shoulder. "We're not afraid."

When one was young, their mother was an almighty figure that shielded them from everything. Now that they had grown up, they were willing to be that almighty figure for their mother.

The two chatted for nearly an hour. When the hour passed after they made the bet, Lauren glanced at the orchid. When she saw that it was still blooming beautifully, she heaved a sigh of relief at once.

She then went up to Iris and Nora. "Ms. Smith, you've lost."

Nora looked at her. "There are still two minutes to an hour."

Lauren smiled and said, "There are only two minutes left, but that pot of flowers is now blooming even more beautifully than before. There is no risk of it wilting at all, so you two are losing for sure."

"That's not necessarily true."

Nora stood up and looked down at the time on her cell phone.

Lauren curled her lips disdainfully and said, "Ms. Smith, to be honest, we are all family. How can there be any grudges among family? Why do we have to draw such a clear line between us? Why don't we just forget about the bet? Lest it reflects poorly on us. I'm not someone who would hold grudges against my young ones either. The old madam is getting on in years, though. Herman has always wanted to be filial to his mother and be by her side, so let's not have the Hunts stop him anymore..."

As soon as she said that, a security guard rushed over in a panic and said, "Mrs. Hunt, this is terrible!"

Lauren was taken aback. She turned around and saw that the security guard was actually the one whom she had instructed to keep a close watch over the Ghost Orchids just now!

Lauren frowned. "What are you doing? This is outrageous, why are you in such a panic?!"

The next moment, the security guard said, "The Ghost Orchids are dead!"

## **Chapter 654 - The Plan of Saving Nora Novel Free**

But his words painted a very lucid picture in both Iris and Nora's minds.

The little Justin had been bullied. His father had been kicked out of the family. His mother was clearly still in New York, yet she did not come home. He obviously had a father and a mother, yet he became an orphan in the Hunts.

Perhaps the little boy had cried in private. Perhaps on many nights, he had run to this very villa and looked up at the person inside, hoping that Iris would open the door and give him a hug.

But she hadn't.



Just like that, he had grown into an adult...

Nora took Justin's hand and held it quietly.

Iris felt as if her heart was being wrung tightly. However, she was already accustomed to the pain-because every night he came over, she knew he was there.

What he didn't know was that she had also been looking at him from upstairs. It was just that she couldn't go down.

The most intimate relationship in the world was the one between a mother and her child.

Children's love for their mothers was purer than their mothers' love for their children.

Because in the world of children, their mother was the only thing that mattered.

But in their mothers' world, there would always be things to weigh and evaluate, as well as worries and reservations.

Iris's eyes reddened. She lowered her head and said, "Justin, I will give you another chance. You now have children and a wife. If I tell you those reasons, your days in the future may not be peaceful anymore. But if I don't... there are only so many days I have left in my life. Isn't it good the way we are now?"

That was how Iris had always seen the situation.

Wasn't it good for them to stay the way they currently were, where mother and son didn't meet, and each kept to themselves peacefully?

When Justin heard her mention that he now had a wife and children, he looked at Nora.

Nora held his hand tightly, the look in her eyes firm and determined.

Justin could sense her encouragement towards him. He nodded to Iris and said, "We have made our decision."

Iris' jaw tensed up.

After a while, she finally sighed and said, "Alright, in that case, then let's take a gamble. If Nora really can save that pot of Ghost Orchids, then I will tell you two the truth!"

Orchidiance's way of curing orchids was actually very miraculous. Additionally, because they were giving medical treatment to orchids, the dosage was even harder to control.

Not every alternative medicine practitioner could do that.

Even Orchidiance would probably find it rather difficult, let alone Nora.

It would be nothing short of a miracle if Nora could cure the Ghost Orchids.

Iris didn't want to lead such a dull life either. She didn't want to pretend to be all calm and unaffected here. She could harden her heart towards Justin because he had already grown up, but she also wanted to have fun with Cherry.

Thinking of this, she looked at Nora with light in her eyes.

This was the mentality of a gambler.

When Justin saw her reaction, he knew that Iris had already relented somewhat. To be honest, if he gave her another push at this point, she would tell him the truth.

But he didn't want to use such schemes against his mother.

Thus, he looked at Nora.

Nora felt great pressure from both of them looking over. The corners of her lips spasmed and she looked at Iris. She said, "Iris, you can start thinking about how to word the story."

She took out a piece of paper and handed it to Iris. "This is the prescription."

On the way here, Nora had already looked at the photos and the description of the symptoms that Iris had forwarded to her and silently computed the formula.

The prescription contained very low drug dosages, so they shouldn't pose any danger to the flowers.

Nora had always been very confident in her knowledge of her specializations. After all, when she was in California, no one would come to her for medical consultations. In order to improve her medical skills, she had instead treated the flora and fauna at home!

That was why she was so knowledgeable about orchids.

Of course, this was really difficult to achieve.

Because flowers were undoubtedly different from humans. If it weren't because Nora had experimented with flowers and plants for so long, she probably would not have mastered such fine control of drug dosages. Iris was a little dumbfounded when she saw the piece of paper she was offering to her.

She immediately took a photo of the prescription and sent it to Matthew.

It was only after she sent it that she raised her head and said, "Nora, you wrote that prescription so quickly."

She had settled on a prescription without even speaking with Matthew.

Nora slowly replied, "I have treated that disease in other flowers before, so I kinda understand it."

Iris: "..."

As the corners of her lips spasmed, she received a call from Matthew. He said, "Mdm. Iris, this prescription that you sent me...?"

Iris glanced at Nora and said, "My daughter-in-law came up with it. You can give it a go! I can at least guarantee that nothing will go wrong with it."

Matthew sighed. "It's not that I don't trust you, it's just that... you gave it to me a little too late!"

Iris was taken aback. "What?"

Matthew said, "Lauren has just borrowed that pot of Ghost Orchids from me, saying that while she cures them for me, she would also like to hold an orchid exhibition so that the people who like orchids in New York could admire them."

What Matthew didn't say was that Lauren hadn't just approached him, but also people from various wealthy and aristocratic families in New York. After all,

precious and expensive flowers like orchids weren't things that ordinary people could afford.

Lauren had assembled a group of people with the euphemistic excuse of letting everyone visit an exhibition featuring famous flower species. This way, everyone could learn something new and widen their horizons. Therefore, people shouldn't hide and keep all the good things to themselves...

The meaning between the lines was that Iris was too petty.

Matthew didn't want to sow discord between them, so he had left that part out.

Iris frowned. "She has cured your Ghost Orchids?"

"Pretty much." Matthew sighed. "Actually, when I called you, I'd already used the prescription she gave me. I didn't expect the Ghost Orchids to really become much more alive just half an hour later."

Iris sighed silently.

She hadn't expected things to develop this way! What an unfortunate turn of events!

She said quietly, "Congratulations."

"What is there to congratulate me about?" Matthew smiled wryly and said, "She will be holding an exhibition tomorrow. Even if it's just for the sake of my flowers, I'll have to attend. Not only do I have to contribute my flowers, but I also have to contribute my presence. That woman is just so... Mdm. Iris, orchid lovers like us are usually people at peace with the world. We just take care of the orchids for our own joy, but look at her, isn't what she's doing no different from forcing me to..."

Iris didn't like talking about people behind their backs, let alone when it was about Lauren. Thus, she said, "It's for the best that the flowers are cured."

"Yeah."

Matthew then said, "Your daughter-in-law is very talented, though! Her prescription is only one herb off from Lauren's! Using alternative medicine to cure orchids is Orchidance's specialty. Many alternative medicine practitioners also wanted to give it a try. As a result, so many orchids have

died from their attempts over the past few years. Lauren is the only one who has finally mastered the technique after studying it for a long time...”

At this point, Matthew sighed heavily. Unable to stop himself anymore, he said, “Mdm. Iris, you have to be careful. Lauren is bent on beating you in orchids this time. I heard that after she caught wind of the fact that you like orchids, she has been imitating Orchidiance’s methods in treating orchids for the last five years. Who knows how many orchids she has destroyed before she finally became as experienced as she is today...”

Matthew, who sounded like he found the orchids somewhat a pity, added, “Who knows how many precious orchid varieties she has destroyed just to vent her frustrations, sigh!”

Matthew looked down on Lauren’s actions very much.

They were taking care of orchids because they truly loved orchids, but Lauren was just using the orchids as a springboard to edge out Iris.

It was just a pity that no matter how much one was into their hobby, they would still have to bow down in the face of reality.

Iris didn’t pay any attention to those things. However, she still found it somewhat a pity.

She had already lost the gamble before it even started.

She looked at Nora and said quietly, “Alright, I’m hanging up!”

Unfortunately, the next moment, Nora grabbed the phone.

Nora stared at the phone and asked, “Which other herb did she add to the prescription?”

Matthew seemed surprised by her voice. In the end, he named a herb.

The corners of Nora’s lips curled into a smile. After Iris hung up the phone, she said, “Let’s go to the orchid exhibition tomorrow.”

As soon as Nora said that, Mrs. Landis, who was next to her, said, “But we don’t have an invitation!”

Nora and Iris looked at each other. The two spoke at the same time, "We will have one very soon."

Mrs. Landis: "?"

A puzzled Mrs. Landis looked at Justin. "Are you going to ask Mr. Hunt to ask for two tickets?"

"No, it's fine."

As soon as Iris said that, someone knocked at the door. Then, the mailman appeared and said, "Mdm. Iris, mail for you."

Iris and Nora looked at each other again.

A look of realization flashed across Nora's eyes, and she said to Mrs. Landis, "See, isn't that the invitation?"

Mrs. Landis: "?"

Mrs. Landis took the mail from the mailman. When she opened it, she found that it was indeed an invitation for the orchid exhibition. She was astounded. "Ms. Smith, Ma'am, aren't the two of you too amazing?"

Iris scoffed. "By holding the orchid exhibition right after she returned to New York, she's clearly coming right at me. Since she wants to slap me in the face, how could she possibly not invite me?"

Mrs. Landis couldn't help but smack her own forehead. "Look at me, because I've been living here all this time and haven't come into contact with people much, I've even forgotten about such basic household infighting!"

Both Nora and Iris were amused by Mrs. Landis's use of the words "household infighting":

Iris patted her and asked, "Where did you learn all these words from?"

Mrs. Landis replied with a smile, "Oh, you know how I watch all those TV dramas when I have nothing to do! I learned it from them!"

Iris suddenly gave her a fierce look and said, "Mrs. Landis, how dare you slack off while I wasn't paying attention! You sneaky treacherous woman! I'm going to deduct your

pay!”

Mrs. Landis pretended to be scared. “Ma’am, other people work only nine to six, whereas I wait on you twenty-four hours a day! Aren’t you even going to allow me to watch a bit of TV for entertainment?”

Iris smiled. “Your salary is for twenty-four hours of work each day! You should already be thankful that I’m letting you sleep!”

Mrs. Landis protested, “You capitalist!”

“In that case, I’ll pay you for sixteen hours instead?”

“... Ma’am, if you exploit your staff any further, I might secretly add poison into your favorite food.”

The two of them bickered and started to joke with each other.

There was finally a smile on Iris’s face that was calm and serene all year round.

Mrs. Landis looked at her, very glad and relieved.

The two of them were just joking around, of course. Iris had given Mrs. Landis much more than her salary all these years. Both of Mrs. Landis’ children were already married, and they both had their own properties in New York and were living lives of luxury. This was all thanks to Iris.

After twenty years of her company, Mrs. Landis was more like family to Iris now.

Justin stood at the side and watched them bicker and joke with each other.

To be honest, for so many years, his mother’s appearance had long become vague and blurry in his mind-because every time he came over, all he would see was Iris’s frosty face.

The woman’s lively appearance faintly reminded him of how she had hugged, kissed him, and teased him when he was a child.

At that time, she had also laughed and talked happily like what she was currently doing.

Originally, because he hadn't had much contact with Iris for more than two decades, Justin had felt some estrangement towards his mother. However, that sense of estrangement had lessened considerably at this instant.

It was as though the mother in his memories, who loved to talk, laugh, play, and joke around, had returned. For him, the word "mother" was no longer just an identity but had once again become vivid and animated.

The feeling made the corners of his lips curl upward imperceptibly. He cast his eyes down and hid the complex emotions in his eyes. Mrs. Landis was a huge mischief-maker. She had also wanted Iris and Justin to reconcile for very long. Seeing that the atmosphere today was great, she said, "Mr. Hunt, you really loved the ravioli I made when you were a child. Why don't you stay for dinner tonight?"

Justin subconsciously looked at Nora.

When she saw him looking over, Nora nodded and said, "Alright."

Mrs. Landis became excited at once. She rolled up her sleeves and walked into the kitchen as she said, "Since you guys are staying for dinner tonight, I will have to show off my culinary skills! Ma'am eats too little, so she doesn't give me a chance to show off my skills at all."

After Mrs. Landis entered the kitchen, the atmosphere among the trio standing outside immediately became a little awkward.

Iris looked at Nora and then at Justin. At last, she said, "I'll go and give Mrs. Landis a hand. Given her age, she'll be too slow!"

After speaking, she also went into the kitchen.

Nora and Justin were the only ones left outside. The two of them looked around the greenhouse. Justin pointed at the orchids and said, "I heard that people who raise orchids have high moral character. Now it seems like that's not always the case."

He was referring to Lauren.

Nora, however, laughed and said, "I don't know about others, but I know why my god-sister likes taking care of orchids."



Nora deliberately emphasized the words “god-sister”.

Justin: “??!”

He raised his eyebrows, knowing that Nora was being cheeky and asking to be taught a lesson again.

As soon as the thought formed, he looked at Nora’s lips, wishing he could take a few nips to vent his “anger”.

As for Nora, she said, “Do you want to know why? If you do, then call me God-aunt Nora. I’ll tell you if you do.”

Tsk.

She was starting to take advantage of him now.

Justin stroked his chin and suddenly leaned forward. He lowered his voice and asked, “Ms. Smith, are you sure you want to be my god-aunt?”

Nora: “?”

She decided not to tease him anymore, lest it backfired on herself. She coughed and said, “Iris... I mean, Aunt Iris and I already knew each other before she even knew who I was. She told me at that time that she was raising all these flowers because her son had given her a pot of orchids once.”

Justin was stunned.

He looked at the orchids, his jaw tensing up.

He remembered now. When he was ten years old, he had indeed given her a pot of orchids on her birthday. The woman had accepted his gift. At the same time, she had also told him that she had only accepted the gift because she liked orchids.

Since then, the floodgates opened and she started to buy a lot of orchids.

Justin had always thought that it was because she liked orchids. But as it turned out, it was just an excuse for her to accept her son’s gift.

He turned to look at Iris in the kitchen.

Mrs. Landis had prepared some ingredients, and she was picking and choosing from among them. However, everything that she picked out just so happened to be his favorite...

Justin lowered his head.

In truth, his mother had never really left him all these years, and he'd always had his mother's love with him by his side, right?

In this instant, he suddenly reconciled with his mother—or rather, with the part of himself that had been uncomfortable because his mother hadn't taken care of him.

He also suddenly became open-minded and let go of some things in this instant.

He let out a silent sigh. Right at this moment, his cell phone rang.

When he answered, Herman's voice came from the other side.

"Justin, didn't you want to know why your mother has been avoiding you? I will tell you now."

Upon hearing his voice, Justin narrowed his eyes. He wanted to say he didn't need it—he wanted to hear it from Iris instead—but he suddenly paused.

Iris would never tell him about her grievances. He would only be able to hear about her grievances from others.

For example, Iris would probably never tell him why she liked orchids because she had never been a woman who knew how to express her feelings.

Justin thought about it and said, "Okay, speak."

In a villa in the outskirts of New York.

Herman and Lauren sat on the sofa.

Lauren was looking at Herman, who said, "You probably only know that I cheated on your mother with Lauren back then, so all this time, you must have thought that all the problems with our marriage lie with me, right?"

Herman's words gave voice to the mentality that most women held—that every man who cheated was a scumbag.

Justin lowered his eyes, but he sneered, "You are wrong."

Herman was taken aback.

Justin said, "You are not a good husband, and at the same time, you are not a good father either."

Many people thought that once a man cheated, he would no longer be a good father.

But that wasn't necessarily true.

Some men might cheat on their wives a lot, but they wouldn't hold back on their love for their children. Perhaps the cheating itself might affect the children, but even so, they would still try to make up for it later.

Besides, some married couples were indeed not suitable to stay together. Even if they had children, those who needed to divorce would still divorce each other. However, the divorce did not affect their love for their children.

But this wasn't true in Herman's case.

Not only had he cheated and hurt Iris, but he had also left Justin to fend for himself afterward. It was as if he'd never had a son like him.

He hadn't just let Iris down, but also Justin.

Herman was stunned for a while. Then, he tried to explain himself. "Justin, it's not that I didn't care about you, or that I did not love you..."

"At your age, you shouldn't keep going on and on about things like love and romance."

Justin dissed him mercilessly again.

Herman: "..."

Justin said concisely, "Just tell me the reason."

Herman spent a while organizing his thoughts. Finally, he sighed and said, “Justin, I know I’ve neglected you, but you have to understand. I did all that because your mother cheated on me first! I am a man, how could I let someone cuckold me? That’s why I went to Lauren! Don’t be fooled by how Iris looks as if she’s at peace with the world! She is not as indifferent to fame and fortune as she makes herself out to be!”

Iris had cheated on Herman?

Stunned, Justin suddenly looked at the woman in the kitchen.

Herman took a deep breath. “She had found another man outside. I couldn’t condone her behavior, so I filed for a divorce. When your grandpa wanted to keep you in the family, I couldn’t just let her sit back and enjoy the rewards of her success, and even hog my family’s business on top of that. Besides, all she could think of was that man, so I made a request—that she would leave you alone. You were still young at that time, and I was afraid that she would usurp your power and become the real master of the Hunts. Justin, I schemed and did all this for your own good!”

Justin frowned.

Herman’s argument might sound seamless and completely logical at first hearing but in truth?

If what he said was true, why did Iris spend all these years in agony in the suburban villa instead of going to her adulterous lover and keeping him company? He sneered, “Do you think I will believe that?”

Herman also panicked. “I have evidence!”

Justin asked, “What evidence?”

He was already biased towards Iris at the moment and was highly disapproving of Herman’s statement. If that was really the reason, then Iris’s decision to ignore him would really be too absurd.

While he was feeling uncomfortable about the whole thing, Herman said, “Those orchids! Those orchids are the evidence! She didn’t like orchids at all in the past. You should remember that there were barely any orchids at home when you were young, but look at how she started to take care of so many orchids after she moved to the suburbs! It’s exactly because her lover loves

orchids! Ha, because I trapped her in New York, she couldn't meet her lover anymore, so she could only pour all her yearning and pining into the orchids instead!"

Justin: !!

What smooth logic!

If Nora hadn't told him just now why Iris was keeping so many orchids, he'd probably really have become suspicious.

But now...

Justin scoffed. "Is that so?"

Herman said, "Yes, everything I said is true. Justin, Dad has actually been very worried about you and has done a lot for you, so don't be so distant towards me. I know I have never shown you any fatherly love, but I can give that to you in the future..."

"I don't need it."

Justin straight-up rejected him. "Is there anything else?"

Herman said, "I want to visit your grandmother tomorrow, she's my mother after all. Tell the people at home to let me in!"

Justin scoffed. "Nice try. You can forget about ever entering the Hunt Manor for the rest of your life."

He wanted to hang up after saying that, but Herman shouted, "Justin, Justin! You can't do that to me! I did all that for you! You refuse to let me in, yet you allow Iris to enter! Tell me, did Iris bewitch you? Has she been badmouthing me all these years? No matter what, I am still your father... toot... toot... toot..."

Justin hung up on him.

Herman had called him just to sow discord between him and his mother, so as to make his way into the Hunts little by little.

In the villa.

Herman stared at his mobile phone with a frown after Justin hung up on him. He couldn't help but curse, "That brat! Why is he so stubborn?!"

Lauren looked at him: "Is the reason you said just now true?"

Herman scoffed and said, "Half of it is, I suppose."

Lauren rolled her eyes at once. "Aren't you afraid that Iris will tell him the truth? It will become even more difficult for you to repair your relationship with him then!"

Herman said confidently, "She won't."

Lauren was taken aback.

A self-mocking Herman said, "Because if she does, it would bring great trouble to her son. That's why she will never say it."

It was only after Iris and Mrs. Landis made a total of six dishes that the three of them finally sat down.

Iris wanted Mrs. Landis to eat with them, but the latter took her food and went into the kitchen instead of eating at the same table with them.

After the three of them sat down, Justin stared at Iris. Suddenly, her cell phone rang.

She was taken aback for a moment, seemingly never expecting anyone to call her.

But when she looked down at the phone, it turned out to be an unfamiliar number...

Iris's hand started shaking and she rejected the call immediately.

However, the other party persisted and kept calling

Iris became obviously nervous. She stared hard at the phone, as though the caller hailed from the depths of hell itself.

Iris was very nervous. Despite her trying to make herself appear calm and collected, her tightly-clenched fingers, as well as her dilated pupils, had

exposed her emotions. Justin's gaze landed on the unfamiliar number and he said, "Your phone is ringing."

"Huh? Oh, it's probably just a sales call."

Iris said as she rejected the call again. Then, as if she was afraid that they would call again, she switched off her cell phone. She even tried to gloss over the topic and said with a smile, "They are so annoying. There are simply so many such sales calls these days. It wasn't easy for us to have a meal together."

Seeing her like this, Justin merely nodded.

Nora and Justin exchanged a look, neither of them exposing her lie.

Afterwards, even though Iris tried her best to pretend she was very excited and happy about the meal, the two of them could still tell that she was a little distracted.

After all, Nora and Justin were more insightful than most ordinary people and had astounding observation skills.

After the meal, the two bade goodbye to Iris.

Before leaving, Nora looked at Iris again and asked tentatively, "See you at the orchid exhibition tomorrow?"

Iris seemed a little hesitant. It must have been because of those phone calls.

However, she only stayed quiet for a second before she raised her head. "Yeah."

Her voice was firm.

This showed that she would not be changing her mind again.

She was really taking a gamble. If Nora managed to cure the pot of Ghost Orchids, then she would tell them the truth. If she failed, then she would take the truth with her to the grave, and never cause the children any trouble.

Seeing her like this, Nora and Justin looked at each other again and left.

Nora and Justin were in the same car. Justin was driving. After they turned the corner ahead, he stopped the car.

By then, Nora had already set her cell phone number as an unknown caller. Then, she keyed in the string of numbers that had been displayed on Iris's cell phone just now.

She had a photographic memory, so she had memorized the phone number with just a single glance.

Nora then handed her cell phone to Justin.

Justin dialed the number without hesitation.

The other party quickly picked up. A man's voice came through the phone: "Hello?"

A prompt and decisive Justin asked, "Who are you?"

The other party was silent for a while. Then, he let out a low chuckle and hung up without saying anything else.

Justin: !!

Inexplicably, what Herman had said about Iris cheating on him flashed past his mind.

He frowned.

Nora also frowned. "He kept the call time within fifteen seconds, I can't trace his location."

Justin took a deep breath. "Don't bother anymore."

Nora looked at him.

Justin said, "I won't ask anymore. I'll wait for her to tell me everything herself."

He didn't want to investigate anymore.



He had suddenly realized something because there were always people trying to sabotage his investigations, it would inevitably lead to unnecessary misunderstandings.

Nora knew what he was thinking. She gave him a thumbs-up right away and said, "Yup, that's the way. You're family, so you shouldn't harbor suspicions about each other. Besides, from what I saw just now, Iris... I mean, your mother didn't change her mind just because of that call."

Justin nodded.

Iris wasn't a weakling or a pushover.

She had taught Justin to be strong and aggressive since he was a child. This was also why Justin hadn't believed Herman's nonsense.

How could Iris possibly be someone who easily accepted fate?

If she really had a lover, then she would definitely have tried to think of ways to spend the rest of her life with him instead of wasting her youth away here.

The next day.

Nora drove to the suburban villa early in the morning.

Iris had dressed up for the occasion and was wearing an elegant and beautiful white fitted dress. She got into the car after she left the house.

The woman didn't look at all like she was nearly fifty years old. After dressing up, she was dazzling and graceful. Her figure was curvy, and coupled with her fair skin, it was only when one looked closely that one would see any wrinkles on her face. With the way she looked as she stood there, some people might believe it if one said that she was only twenty years old. Nora raised her eyebrows and formed a heart with her hands at Iris.

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Iris got into the car, and the two headed straight to the orchid exhibition.

Lauren's orchid exhibition was held at a hotel in central New York. The orchids she borrowed from various families had all been placed on shelves.

At a glance, there were all kinds of orchids that one could ever think of.

In the most eye-catching position was Matthew's Ghost Orchid.

The Ghost Orchids were very rare, so they had occupied the central position of the orchid exhibition.

After Nora and Iris got out of the car and entered the hall with the invitation, they immediately noticed the pot of Ghost Orchids.

When Iris saw the orchids, she exclaimed, "Lauren has really cured that pot of Ghost Orchids. They look so full of vigor."

Only then did Nora reveal something: "There is a problem with her prescription."

Iris, who was a little taken aback, looked at Nora.

Nora whispered, "Her prescription has one more ingredient than mine. That herb is too powerful. It can quickly allow orchids to look energetic and filled with vigor, but over time, even bigger problems will appear. It's just like how humans suddenly become very energetic before they pass away. Going by how much time has passed since the medicine was given to the Ghost Orchids yesterday, the Ghost Orchids will wither after another half an hour. In the first place, there are a lot of restrictions when it comes to using drugs on plants. Those who are not proficient in it really shouldn't do it."

Iris was dumbfounded. She couldn't help but say, "Orchidance has also said that before, and told everyone not to imitate them. Aren't you also imitating Orchidance, though?"

Nora raised her eyebrows. Suddenly, her lips curled into a smile and she replied, "Who says I'm imitating Orchidance?"

Iris: "???"

Then, as though she had realized something, she looked at Nora in astonishment.

Could it be... that Nora was none other than Orchidance?!

Just as she was about to speak, Lauren entered the hall and said with a smile, "Iris, you're here! Did you bring any orchids with you today?"

Iris immediately reined in the complicated look she was giving Nora. She looked at Lauren and replied, "No."

"You didn't?"

Lauren was shocked. "It is written on my invitation that everyone who comes to the orchid exhibition should bring a pot of flowers, so that everyone can appreciate and admire each other's flowers."

After she spoke, Lauren sighed silently and said, "Iris, surely it's not because you can't bear to show us your flowers, right? I have heard that you have gathered a lot of rare orchids in your private collection over the years! I am holding this orchid exhibition precisely because I hope that orchid lovers can gather and share their joy with each other. In fact, an orchid exhibition like this should have been held long ago. What's the point of hiding and keeping all the good things to ourselves? Everyone here is an orchid lover, it's not like they'll spoil the flowers, right? Iris, you are being overly cautious."

Although she said that she was being too cautious, she was instead implying that Iris was too stingy and petty, just so she could highlight how generous and capable she, Lauren, was instead.

A group of people from wealthy families gradually gathered around them. Everyone looked at Iris.

Iris, however, scoffed.

Was she trying to compete with her in terms of eloquence?

She wasn't someone who would take sh\*t from others!

Lauren had organized the orchid exhibition to suppress Iris' arrogance.

Back then, even though she had succeeded in changing her status from a homewrecker to the man's lawful wife, to be honest, she knew that there weren't many in the circle of wealthy ladies who approved of her. Everyone approved of Iris instead.

In that case, Lauren would outdo Iris in the latter's forte! This way, she could also show off in front of everyone else!

She said, "Iris, why are you keeping quiet? Are you upset? Well, that's true. There's no one in New York who doesn't know that you love orchids the most. By right, you should have been the one organizing the orchid exhibition instead, but because you didn't take any action, I found someone to do it instead... What a shame. I heard that you also have a pot of Ghost Orchids, so I even wanted to let everyone admire them!"

As soon as she said that, Iris looked at the people around her. She smiled and said, "The things you say are so ridiculous. Must I hold an orchid exhibition just because I like orchids? In that case, since Mrs. Lange likes diamonds, must she also hold a diamond exhibition? Since Mr. Sullivan likes antique paintings, should he open a museum then? These are just personal hobbies. On the other hand, why haven't I heard anything about you liking orchids before?"

Her few simple words had immediately suppressed Lauren.

How would the wealthy and the noble possibly take out whatever they liked and show them off to everyone? If they did that, then they wouldn't be showing off their wealth instead!

Lauren had made a mistake at a fundamental level, making her seem petty and cheap, and also making all the ladies look down on her. They had only attended the exhibition because of Matthew's Ghost Orchids.

After all, Matthew's Ghost Orchids really were a rare sight.

Iris's words had suppressed Lauren's momentum, causing everyone around them to laugh. They echoed Iris and said, "She's right, we are not frivolous people."

Showing off one's wealth for no reason would only arouse aversion and disgust from other people.

Moreover, even though Lauren wasn't an orchid lover, she had held an orchid exhibition. Iris had pointed out her objective.

Lauren clenched her fists in anger. She'd finally invited so many ladies to the exhibition today after much difficulty. Originally, she'd wanted to improve her position among the ladies, but little did she expect Iris to be so sharp-tongued!

Lauren lowered her head and smiled. "I certainly don't have any love for orchids, but don't forget that I am an alternative medicine practitioner. It's only because Matthew asked me to cure his flowers that I decided to hold the orchid exhibition. I found his Ghost Orchids such a rare sight and wanted everyone to see it! This way, everyone can also share their experience on growing orchids with one another along the way."

Her few simple words immediately made the rich ladies around them not dare to laugh at her anymore.

Everyone at the exhibition was a true flower lover. Was there anyone among them whose flowers would never have any problems? Should something go wrong, it would be great to have someone like Lauren help.

She could even cure Matthew's Ghost Orchids. Lauren was simply too skilled at curing orchids.

Someone immediately said, "Mrs. Hunt, you are so capable. You have even cured such a delicate flower that's so difficult to treat! It's amazing! By the way, my flowers have also met with a small problem. I wonder if I can ask you for some advice?"

Lauren smiled gently and replied, "Sure. In the first place, this orchid exhibition isn't meant for showing off; rather, it's to facilitate communication!"

With a few simple sentences, she had saved the scene again.

Some of the others walked over to Iris and said, "Mdm. Iris, come to think of it, that woman is actually quite capable. Her methods of curing the flowers' illnesses are very similar to Orchidance's. Everyone's privately speculating that Lauren may be Orchidance! Sometimes, for the sake of the orchids, we should bow down to others!"

"Yeah, she actually cured Matthew's Ghost Orchids. She's really very impressive."

Matthew's Ghost Orchids had been withering day by day for about half a month. He had been to many orchid masters to cure it, but it had barely seen any effect.

News of it had already spread in New York.

Through his Ghost Orchids, Lauren had made a name for herself.

At the mention of Orchidance, Iris subconsciously glanced at Nora. Then, she scoffed and said, “She’s no Orchidance. Compared with Orchidance, she is far inferior!”

The contempt in her words made the ladies look at one another. In the end, none of them dared to say anything. They could only smile awkwardly.

Lauren also heard her. At once, she narrowed her eyes and said, “Mdm. Iris, now that’s rather meaningless. Matthew had certainly wanted to approach Orchidance, but the problem is that Orchidance is so mysterious. No one knows who she is, let alone where to find her. I heard that she’s not even in the country, so it’s impossible for anyone to find her. I admit that my treatment methods are indeed imitating Orchidance’s, but am I wrong to diagnose and cure Matthew’s Ghost Orchids for him?”

The place was silent.

No one there dared to offend Iris-after all, she was Justin’s mother. Although they weren’t on good terms with each other, it was said that Justin would still specially visit the suburban villa every month.

Besides, no matter how bad their relationship was, Justin would never sit by and watch other people bully his mother.

Therefore, no one defended Lauren. However, Lauren could cure orchids’ illnesses. Everyone there was an orchid lover, so none of them dared to offend Lauren either.

For a while, no one said anything.

Iris’ lip corners, however, curled into a smile. Although she hadn’t asked Nora just now if she was really Orchidance, it had given her confidence.

She looked at Lauren and said, “What’s the big deal about being able to cure orchids? My daughter-in-law can also do it!”

She looked at Nora with a proud look on her face.

When Lauren heard this, she looked at Nora.

A moment later...

“Pft.”

She let out a soft laugh.

After she laughed, Lauren said, “Sorry, I really couldn’t help it. Mdm. Iris, what you said is really funny. I know Ms. Smith is the great Dr. Zabe’s disciple, and I also know that she is Anti the famous surgeon, but neither of those titles is related to orchids. Mdm. Iris, surely you don’t think that every alternative medicine practitioner can cure orchids, right? Flowers are different from humans!”

Iris also smiled when she heard her. “Of course I know that. It’s just that my daughter-in-law happens to have studied orchids a little before. In fact, she is…”

Before she could say “Orchidiance”, Lauren interrupted her. “Is that so? Then why don’t you come over and have a look at Matthew’s Ghost Orchids, Ms. Smith? You should know that pot of Ghost Orchid’s prior condition, right? Can you cure it?”

Nora glanced at it and said calmly, “Yes.”

As soon as Lauren wanted to reply, Iris took out a piece of paper. “This is the prescription that my daughter-in-law wrote for that pot of Ghost Orchids. You can take a look at it!”

“Does Ms. Smith really know how to cure orchids?”

“If you think about it, there’s a chance that she does. Ms. Smith is the best alternative medicine practitioner after all!”

Once Lauren lost the advantage of being able to cure orchids’ illnesses, the people around them immediately dared to speak up for Iris.

When Lauren heard them, she immediately took the prescription from Iris. After she glanced at it, she said, “Iris, Matthew must have told you about this prescription, right? This is exactly the same as mine! It’s just a pity that even if you’ve made a copy, you left out one ingredient!”

“She didn’t leave it out.” Nora said unhurriedly, “It’s because the prescription doesn’t need that ingredient. Orchids are delicate flowers. The ingredient you added will hurt it.”

“It’ll hurt it? No way.” Lauren said confidently, “That ingredient is supposed to revive a plant’s shine and glow, so how could it possibly be harmful? What’s more, that pot of Ghost Orchids is being displayed so vividly and vibrantly in front of everyone right now. Everyone can see for themselves the flowers’ current condition. In just a day, it has regained its vitality. Ms. Smith, you are being too dogmatic!”

Nora looked at the pot of flowers. “Affliction of diseases makes one collapse like a mountain, and the treatment of diseased areas is akin to trying to extract strands of silk from one another. The usage of such strong medication will only keep the orchid alive for a while but make it wilt even faster. As an alternative medicine practitioner, surely you don’t need me to teach you something like that, right?”

Lauren: “?”

Her understatement-like way of talking made Lauren angry. She said, “Ms. Smith, I know that you are Justin’s wife. There’s nothing wrong with protecting and defending your mother-in-law, but even so, you can’t just speak so carelessly like that. This ingredient is certainly a little strong, but I’ve already tested it on other orchids before. There won’t be any problems in the future! Facts speak louder than words. I know that you are an alternative medicine practitioner, but alternative medicine requires many years of practice to accumulate experience. From what I see, you don’t give medical consultations very often, so you’re probably not very experienced when it comes to the practical aspect, right? Besides, humans are different from flowers. I have treated a lot of flowers and gone through a lot before I gained experience. What about you?”

When Nora heard this, she said calmly, “Then let’s make a bet.”

“What do you want to bet on?” Lauren asked.

Nora looked at the pot of Ghost Orchids and answered, “That problems will definitely occur with this pot of flowers within an hour.”

Lauren scoffed. “Ms. Smith, stop joking. How can that be? I’ve already cured that pot of flowers! How can anything go wrong with it when it’s so filled with vitality? But since you’ve said so, then okay, I accept the bet, Ms. Smith. If nothing goes wrong with the flowers, then I hope Mr. Hunt can allow Herman and I to return to the Hunt Manor and stay there.”



Nora's lips curled into a smile. "Okay. If something goes wrong with the flowers, then I want you to apologize for wrecking someone else's marriage back then!"

Lauren's pupils shrank.

The biggest humiliation of her life was when she involved herself with Herman's marriage and became the third party persecuted by everyone. Whenever people talked about her these days, they always called her the homewrecker who had successfully become the lawful wife.

Yet Nora had brought it up in public in front of everyone. It was simply infuriating.

There was anger all over Lauren's face. She demanded, "What's the meaning of this, Ms. Smith?"

"You don't dare to make the bet with me?"

Nora raised her brows.

Pushed into a corner, the angry and anxious Lauren could only say, "Fine."

She clenched her fists tightly.

In order to return to the Hunt Manor, as well as to return to the pinnacle of status in New York, she was really holding nothing back. When she thought about it carefully, though, nothing could go wrong with that pot of flowers anyway. Nora was at a complete disadvantage when she made the bet with her.

To be honest, the moment Nora said that the ingredient was too strong, Lauren had already felt a little guilty. She'd actually had some takeaways from her time studying medicine abroad over the years.

However, she strongly believed that even if something were to really go wrong, it would only happen at a later stage.

It was impossible for that to happen within an hour.

She was sure to win the bet.

When she thought about it this way, Lauren didn't feel so unhappy anymore because the bet was clearly to Nora's disadvantage.

After the two parties made the bet, Lauren summoned some people and instructed, "Keep a close watch on this pot of Ghost Orchids. If anything goes wrong, you must notify me immediately!"

No matter how rare the Ghost Orchids were, they were nothing more than a pot of flowers for Lauren. What she cared about was not the flowers but winning the bet.

She spoke very loudly, everyone heard her. Lauren explained with a smile, "We've already made the bet, after all. I'm just afraid someone would deliberately spoil the flowers within the hour because they are sore losers. It would be terrible if people refuse to pay up when that happens."

Iris, however, ignored her. Instead, she pulled Nora to the side, lowered her voice, and asked, "Tell me the truth, are you Orchidance?"

Nora's lips curled into a smile and she nodded.

Iris: "..."

She stared at Nora with a dazed look on her face. "Orchidance is the only person capable of curing Matthew's flowers, why didn't I think of that? No, it's because you are too young. I didn't expect Orchidance to be so young, I always thought that she would be as old as me, or perhaps even older."

Nora looked at her.

After speaking, Iris's immediate thought was not that she now had someone to treat the flowers in her greenhouse, if anything ever happened to them.

On the contrary, she heaved a huge sigh.

She said, "I originally thought that there are only so few people in this world who can cure Matthew's Ghost Orchids because those flowers are really very difficult to treat. When you said that you can cure them, I thought that you were just taking a gamble. But I didn't expect that what was just a one in ten thousand probability for me, would instead be a 100% sure-win probability for you." Nora replied, "Therefore, you have to tell your story now."

Iris was taken aback for a moment. In the end, she waved and said, “Ah well, never mind, this is all meant to be!”

She had also thought things through herself. By taking a gambler’s mentality with this, she was also just trying to give herself a ray of hope in the future.

She didn’t want to age and die in that suburban villa and be separated from Justin for the rest of her life, either.

All of this had been predestined a long time ago, that was all.

She said, “I hope the two of you won’t hate me after you hear my story.”

Back then, she had shielded Justin from everything. Now that her son had grown up, it was ultimately time that he paid his debt.

Iris sighed.

Nora patted her shoulder. “We’re not afraid.”

When one was young, their mother was an almighty figure that shielded them from everything. Now that they had grown up, they were willing to be that almighty figure for their mother.

The two chatted for nearly an hour. When the hour passed after they made the bet, Lauren glanced at the orchid. When she saw that it was still blooming beautifully, she heaved a sigh of relief at once.

She then went up to Iris and Nora. “Ms. Smith, you’ve lost.”

Nora looked at her. “There are still two minutes to an hour.”

Lauren smiled and said, “There are only two minutes left, but that pot of flowers is now blooming even more beautifully than before. There is no risk of it wilting at all, so you two are losing for sure.”

“That’s not necessarily true.”

Nora stood up and looked down at the time on her cell phone.

Lauren curled her lips disdainfully and said, “Ms. Smith, to be honest, we are all family. How can there be any grudges among family? Why do we have to draw such a clear line between us? Why don’t we just forget about the bet?”

Lest it reflects poorly on us. I'm not someone who would hold grudges against my young ones either. The old madam is getting on in years, though. Herman has always wanted to be filial to his mother and be by her side, so let's not have the Hunts stop him anymore..."

As soon as she said that, a security guard rushed over in a panic and said, "Mrs. Hunt, this is terrible!"

Lauren was taken aback. She turned around and saw that the security guard was actually the one whom she had instructed to keep a close watch over the Ghost Orchids just now!

Lauren frowned. "What are you doing? This is outrageous, why are you in such a panic?!"

The next moment, the security guard said, "The Ghost Orchids are dead!"

## **Chapter 655 - The Plan of Saving Nora Novel Free**

She hadn't expected things to develop this way! What an unfortunate turn of events!

She said quietly, "Congratulations."

"What is there to congratulate me about?" Matthew smiled wryly and said, "She will be holding an exhibition tomorrow. Even if it's just for the sake of my flowers, I'll have to attend. Not only do I have to contribute my flowers, but I also have to contribute my presence. That woman is just so... Mdm. Iris, orchid lovers like us are usually people at peace with the world. We just take care of the orchids for our own joy, but look at her, isn't what she's doing no different from forcing me to..."

Iris didn't like talking about people behind their backs, let alone when it was about Lauren. Thus, she said, "It's for the best that the flowers are cured."

"Yeah."

Matthew then said, "Your daughter-in-law is very talented, though! Her prescription is only one herb off from Lauren's! Using alternative medicine to cure orchids is Orchidance's specialty. Many alternative medicine practitioners also wanted to give it a try. As a result, so many orchids have

died from their attempts over the past few years. Lauren is the only one who has finally mastered the technique after studying it for a long time...”

At this point, Matthew sighed heavily. Unable to stop himself anymore, he said, “Mdm. Iris, you have to be careful. Lauren is bent on beating you in orchids this time. I heard that after she caught wind of the fact that you like orchids, she has been imitating Orchidiance’s methods in treating orchids for the last five years. Who knows how many orchids she has destroyed before she finally became as experienced as she is today...”

Matthew, who sounded like he found the orchids somewhat a pity, added, “Who knows how many precious orchid varieties she has destroyed just to vent her frustrations, sigh!”

Matthew looked down on Lauren’s actions very much.

They were taking care of orchids because they truly loved orchids, but Lauren was just using the orchids as a springboard to edge out Iris.

It was just a pity that no matter how much one was into their hobby, they would still have to bow down in the face of reality.

Iris didn’t pay any attention to those things. However, she still found it somewhat a pity.

She had already lost the gamble before it even started.

She looked at Nora and said quietly, “Alright, I’m hanging up!”

Unfortunately, the next moment, Nora grabbed the phone.

Nora stared at the phone and asked, “Which other herb did she add to the prescription?”

Matthew seemed surprised by her voice. In the end, he named a herb.

The corners of Nora’s lips curled into a smile. After Iris hung up the phone, she said, “Let’s go to the orchid exhibition tomorrow.”

As soon as Nora said that, Mrs. Landis, who was next to her, said, “But we don’t have an invitation!”

Nora and Iris looked at each other. The two spoke at the same time, "We will have one very soon."

Mrs. Landis: "?"

A puzzled Mrs. Landis looked at Justin. "Are you going to ask Mr. Hunt to ask for two tickets?"

"No, it's fine."

As soon as Iris said that, someone knocked at the door. Then, the mailman appeared and said, "Mdm. Iris, mail for you."

Iris and Nora looked at each other again.

A look of realization flashed across Nora's eyes, and she said to Mrs. Landis, "See, isn't that the invitation?"

Mrs. Landis: "?"

Mrs. Landis took the mail from the mailman. When she opened it, she found that it was indeed an invitation for the orchid exhibition. She was astounded. "Ms. Smith, Ma'am, aren't the two of you too amazing?"

Iris scoffed. "By holding the orchid exhibition right after she returned to New York, she's clearly coming right at me. Since she wants to slap me in the face, how could she possibly not invite me?"

Mrs. Landis couldn't help but smack her own forehead. "Look at me, because I've been living here all this time and haven't come into contact with people much, I've even forgotten about such basic household infighting!"

Both Nora and Iris were amused by Mrs. Landis's use of the words "household infighting":

Iris patted her and asked, "Where did you learn all these words from?"

Mrs. Landis replied with a smile, "Oh, you know how I watch all those TV dramas when I have nothing to do! I learned it from them!"

Iris suddenly gave her a fierce look and said, "Mrs. Landis, how dare you slack off while I wasn't paying attention! You sneaky treacherous woman! I'm going to deduct your

pay!”

Mrs. Landis pretended to be scared. “Ma’am, other people work only nine to six, whereas I wait on you twenty-four hours a day! Aren’t you even going to allow me to watch a bit of TV for entertainment?”

Iris smiled. “Your salary is for twenty-four hours of work each day! You should already be thankful that I’m letting you sleep!”

Mrs. Landis protested, “You capitalist!”

“In that case, I’ll pay you for sixteen hours instead?”

“... Ma’am, if you exploit your staff any further, I might secretly add poison into your favorite food.”

The two of them bickered and started to joke with each other.

There was finally a smile on Iris’s face that was calm and serene all year round.

Mrs. Landis looked at her, very glad and relieved.

The two of them were just joking around, of course. Iris had given Mrs. Landis much more than her salary all these years. Both of Mrs. Landis’ children were already married, and they both had their own properties in New York and were living lives of luxury. This was all thanks to Iris.

After twenty years of her company, Mrs. Landis was more like family to Iris now.

Justin stood at the side and watched them bicker and joke with each other.

To be honest, for so many years, his mother’s appearance had long become vague and blurry in his mind-because every time he came over, all he would see was Iris’s frosty face.

The woman’s lively appearance faintly reminded him of how she had hugged, kissed him, and teased him when he was a child.

At that time, she had also laughed and talked happily like what she was currently doing.

Originally, because he hadn't had much contact with Iris for more than two decades, Justin had felt some estrangement towards his mother. However, that sense of estrangement had lessened considerably at this instant.

It was as though the mother in his memories, who loved to talk, laugh, play, and joke around, had returned. For him, the word "mother" was no longer just an identity but had once again become vivid and animated.

The feeling made the corners of his lips curl upward imperceptibly. He cast his eyes down and hid the complex emotions in his eyes. Mrs. Landis was a huge mischief-maker. She had also wanted Iris and Justin to reconcile for very long. Seeing that the atmosphere today was great, she said, "Mr. Hunt, you really loved the ravioli I made when you were a child. Why don't you stay for dinner tonight?"

Justin subconsciously looked at Nora.

When she saw him looking over, Nora nodded and said, "Alright."

Mrs. Landis became excited at once. She rolled up her sleeves and walked into the kitchen as she said, "Since you guys are staying for dinner tonight, I will have to show off my culinary skills! Ma'am eats too little, so she doesn't give me a chance to show off my skills at all."

After Mrs. Landis entered the kitchen, the atmosphere among the trio standing outside immediately became a little awkward.

Iris looked at Nora and then at Justin. At last, she said, "I'll go and give Mrs. Landis a hand. Given her age, she'll be too slow!"

After speaking, she also went into the kitchen.

Nora and Justin were the only ones left outside. The two of them looked around the greenhouse. Justin pointed at the orchids and said, "I heard that people who raise orchids have high moral character. Now it seems like that's not always the case."

He was referring to Lauren.

Nora, however, laughed and said, "I don't know about others, but I know why my god-sister likes taking care of orchids."



Nora deliberately emphasized the words “god-sister”.

Justin: “??!”

He raised his eyebrows, knowing that Nora was being cheeky and asking to be taught a lesson again.

As soon as the thought formed, he looked at Nora’s lips, wishing he could take a few nips to vent his “anger”.

As for Nora, she said, “Do you want to know why? If you do, then call me God-aunt Nora. I’ll tell you if you do.”

Tsk.

She was starting to take advantage of him now.

Justin stroked his chin and suddenly leaned forward. He lowered his voice and asked, “Ms. Smith, are you sure you want to be my god-aunt?”

Nora: “?”

She decided not to tease him anymore, lest it backfired on herself. She coughed and said, “Iris... I mean, Aunt Iris and I already knew each other before she even knew who I was. She told me at that time that she was raising all these flowers because her son had given her a pot of orchids once.”

Justin was stunned.

He looked at the orchids, his jaw tensing up.

He remembered now. When he was ten years old, he had indeed given her a pot of orchids on her birthday. The woman had accepted his gift. At the same time, she had also told him that she had only accepted the gift because she liked orchids.

Since then, the floodgates opened and she started to buy a lot of orchids.

Justin had always thought that it was because she liked orchids. But as it turned out, it was just an excuse for her to accept her son’s gift.

He turned to look at Iris in the kitchen.

Mrs. Landis had prepared some ingredients, and she was picking and choosing from among them. However, everything that she picked out just so happened to be his favorite...

Justin lowered his head.

In truth, his mother had never really left him all these years, and he'd always had his mother's love with him by his side, right?

In this instant, he suddenly reconciled with his mother—or rather, with the part of himself that had been uncomfortable because his mother hadn't taken care of him.

He also suddenly became open-minded and let go of some things in this instant.

He let out a silent sigh. Right at this moment, his cell phone rang.

When he answered, Herman's voice came from the other side.

"Justin, didn't you want to know why your mother has been avoiding you? I will tell you now."

Upon hearing his voice, Justin narrowed his eyes. He wanted to say he didn't need it—he wanted to hear it from Iris instead—but he suddenly paused.

Iris would never tell him about her grievances. He would only be able to hear about her grievances from others.

For example, Iris would probably never tell him why she liked orchids because she had never been a woman who knew how to express her feelings.

Justin thought about it and said, "Okay, speak."

In a villa in the outskirts of New York.

Herman and Lauren sat on the sofa.

Lauren was looking at Herman, who said, "You probably only know that I cheated on your mother with Lauren back then, so all this time, you must have thought that all the problems with our marriage lie with me, right?"

Herman's words gave voice to the mentality that most women held—that every man who cheated was a scumbag.

Justin lowered his eyes, but he sneered, "You are wrong."

Herman was taken aback.

Justin said, "You are not a good husband, and at the same time, you are not a good father either."

Many people thought that once a man cheated, he would no longer be a good father.

But that wasn't necessarily true.

Some men might cheat on their wives a lot, but they wouldn't hold back on their love for their children. Perhaps the cheating itself might affect the children, but even so, they would still try to make up for it later.

Besides, some married couples were indeed not suitable to stay together. Even if they had children, those who needed to divorce would still divorce each other. However, the divorce did not affect their love for their children.

But this wasn't true in Herman's case.

Not only had he cheated and hurt Iris, but he had also left Justin to fend for himself afterward. It was as if he'd never had a son like him.

He hadn't just let Iris down, but also Justin.

Herman was stunned for a while. Then, he tried to explain himself. "Justin, it's not that I didn't care about you, or that I did not love you..."

"At your age, you shouldn't keep going on and on about things like love and romance."

Justin dissed him mercilessly again.

Herman: "..."

Justin said concisely, "Just tell me the reason."

Herman spent a while organizing his thoughts. Finally, he sighed and said, “Justin, I know I’ve neglected you, but you have to understand. I did all that because your mother cheated on me first! I am a man, how could I let someone cuckold me? That’s why I went to Lauren! Don’t be fooled by how Iris looks as if she’s at peace with the world! She is not as indifferent to fame and fortune as she makes herself out to be!”

Iris had cheated on Herman?

Stunned, Justin suddenly looked at the woman in the kitchen.

Herman took a deep breath. “She had found another man outside. I couldn’t condone her behavior, so I filed for a divorce. When your grandpa wanted to keep you in the family, I couldn’t just let her sit back and enjoy the rewards of her success, and even hog my family’s business on top of that. Besides, all she could think of was that man, so I made a request—that she would leave you alone. You were still young at that time, and I was afraid that she would usurp your power and become the real master of the Hunts. Justin, I schemed and did all this for your own good!”

Justin frowned.

Herman’s argument might sound seamless and completely logical at first hearing but in truth?

If what he said was true, why did Iris spend all these years in agony in the suburban villa instead of going to her adulterous lover and keeping him company? He sneered, “Do you think I will believe that?”

Herman also panicked. “I have evidence!”

Justin asked, “What evidence?”

He was already biased towards Iris at the moment and was highly disapproving of Herman’s statement. If that was really the reason, then Iris’s decision to ignore him would really be too absurd.

While he was feeling uncomfortable about the whole thing, Herman said, “Those orchids! Those orchids are the evidence! She didn’t like orchids at all in the past. You should remember that there were barely any orchids at home when you were young, but look at how she started to take care of so many orchids after she moved to the suburbs! It’s exactly because her lover loves

orchids! Ha, because I trapped her in New York, she couldn't meet her lover anymore, so she could only pour all her yearning and pining into the orchids instead!"

Justin: !!

What smooth logic!

If Nora hadn't told him just now why Iris was keeping so many orchids, he'd probably really have become suspicious.

But now...

Justin scoffed. "Is that so?"

Herman said, "Yes, everything I said is true. Justin, Dad has actually been very worried about you and has done a lot for you, so don't be so distant towards me. I know I have never shown you any fatherly love, but I can give that to you in the future..."

"I don't need it."

Justin straight-up rejected him. "Is there anything else?"

Herman said, "I want to visit your grandmother tomorrow, she's my mother after all. Tell the people at home to let me in!"

Justin scoffed. "Nice try. You can forget about ever entering the Hunt Manor for the rest of your life."

He wanted to hang up after saying that, but Herman shouted, "Justin, Justin! You can't do that to me! I did all that for you! You refuse to let me in, yet you allow Iris to enter! Tell me, did Iris bewitch you? Has she been badmouthing me all these years? No matter what, I am still your father... toot... toot... toot..."

Justin hung up on him.

Herman had called him just to sow discord between him and his mother, so as to make his way into the Hunts little by little.

In the villa.

Herman stared at his mobile phone with a frown after Justin hung up on him. He couldn't help but curse, "That brat! Why is he so stubborn?!"

Lauren looked at him: "Is the reason you said just now true?"

Herman scoffed and said, "Half of it is, I suppose."

Lauren rolled her eyes at once. "Aren't you afraid that Iris will tell him the truth? It will become even more difficult for you to repair your relationship with him then!"

Herman said confidently, "She won't."

Lauren was taken aback.

A self-mocking Herman said, "Because if she does, it would bring great trouble to her son. That's why she will never say it."

It was only after Iris and Mrs. Landis made a total of six dishes that the three of them finally sat down.

Iris wanted Mrs. Landis to eat with them, but the latter took her food and went into the kitchen instead of eating at the same table with them.

After the three of them sat down, Justin stared at Iris. Suddenly, her cell phone rang.

She was taken aback for a moment, seemingly never expecting anyone to call her.

But when she looked down at the phone, it turned out to be an unfamiliar number...

Iris's hand started shaking and she rejected the call immediately.

However, the other party persisted and kept calling

Iris became obviously nervous. She stared hard at the phone, as though the caller hailed from the depths of hell itself.

Iris was very nervous. Despite her trying to make herself appear calm and collected, her tightly-clenched fingers, as well as her dilated pupils, had

exposed her emotions. Justin's gaze landed on the unfamiliar number and he said, "Your phone is ringing."

"Huh? Oh, it's probably just a sales call."

Iris said as she rejected the call again. Then, as if she was afraid that they would call again, she switched off her cell phone. She even tried to gloss over the topic and said with a smile, "They are so annoying. There are simply so many such sales calls these days. It wasn't easy for us to have a meal together."

Seeing her like this, Justin merely nodded.

Nora and Justin exchanged a look, neither of them exposing her lie.

Afterwards, even though Iris tried her best to pretend she was very excited and happy about the meal, the two of them could still tell that she was a little distracted.

After all, Nora and Justin were more insightful than most ordinary people and had astounding observation skills.

After the meal, the two bade goodbye to Iris.

Before leaving, Nora looked at Iris again and asked tentatively, "See you at the orchid exhibition tomorrow?"

Iris seemed a little hesitant. It must have been because of those phone calls.

However, she only stayed quiet for a second before she raised her head. "Yeah."

Her voice was firm.

This showed that she would not be changing her mind again.

She was really taking a gamble. If Nora managed to cure the pot of Ghost Orchids, then she would tell them the truth. If she failed, then she would take the truth with her to the grave, and never cause the children any trouble.

Seeing her like this, Nora and Justin looked at each other again and left.

Nora and Justin were in the same car. Justin was driving. After they turned the corner ahead, he stopped the car.

By then, Nora had already set her cell phone number as an unknown caller. Then, she keyed in the string of numbers that had been displayed on Iris's cell phone just now.

She had a photographic memory, so she had memorized the phone number with just a single glance.

Nora then handed her cell phone to Justin.

Justin dialed the number without hesitation.

The other party quickly picked up. A man's voice came through the phone: "Hello?"

A prompt and decisive Justin asked, "Who are you?"

The other party was silent for a while. Then, he let out a low chuckle and hung up without saying anything else.

Justin: !!

Inexplicably, what Herman had said about Iris cheating on him flashed past his mind.

He frowned.

Nora also frowned. "He kept the call time within fifteen seconds, I can't trace his location."

Justin took a deep breath. "Don't bother anymore."

Nora looked at him.

Justin said, "I won't ask anymore. I'll wait for her to tell me everything herself."

He didn't want to investigate anymore.



He had suddenly realized something because there were always people trying to sabotage his investigations, it would inevitably lead to unnecessary misunderstandings.

Nora knew what he was thinking. She gave him a thumbs-up right away and said, "Yup, that's the way. You're family, so you shouldn't harbor suspicions about each other. Besides, from what I saw just now, Iris... I mean, your mother didn't change her mind just because of that call."

Justin nodded.

Iris wasn't a weakling or a pushover.

She had taught Justin to be strong and aggressive since he was a child. This was also why Justin hadn't believed Herman's nonsense.

How could Iris possibly be someone who easily accepted fate?

If she really had a lover, then she would definitely have tried to think of ways to spend the rest of her life with him instead of wasting her youth away here.

The next day.

Nora drove to the suburban villa early in the morning.

Iris had dressed up for the occasion and was wearing an elegant and beautiful white fitted dress. She got into the car after she left the house.

The woman didn't look at all like she was nearly fifty years old. After dressing up, she was dazzling and graceful. Her figure was curvy, and coupled with her fair skin, it was only when one looked closely that one would see any wrinkles on her face. With the way she looked as she stood there, some people might believe it if one said that she was only twenty years old. Nora raised her eyebrows and formed a heart with her hands at Iris.

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Iris got into the car, and the two headed straight to the orchid exhibition.

Lauren's orchid exhibition was held at a hotel in central New York. The orchids she borrowed from various families had all been placed on shelves.

At a glance, there were all kinds of orchids that one could ever think of.

In the most eye-catching position was Matthew's Ghost Orchid.

The Ghost Orchids were very rare, so they had occupied the central position of the orchid exhibition.

After Nora and Iris got out of the car and entered the hall with the invitation, they immediately noticed the pot of Ghost Orchids.

When Iris saw the orchids, she exclaimed, "Lauren has really cured that pot of Ghost Orchids. They look so full of vigor."

Only then did Nora reveal something: "There is a problem with her prescription."

Iris, who was a little taken aback, looked at Nora.

Nora whispered, "Her prescription has one more ingredient than mine. That herb is too powerful. It can quickly allow orchids to look energetic and filled with vigor, but over time, even bigger problems will appear. It's just like how humans suddenly become very energetic before they pass away. Going by how much time has passed since the medicine was given to the Ghost Orchids yesterday, the Ghost Orchids will wither after another half an hour. In the first place, there are a lot of restrictions when it comes to using drugs on plants. Those who are not proficient in it really shouldn't do it."

Iris was dumbfounded. She couldn't help but say, "Orchidance has also said that before, and told everyone not to imitate them. Aren't you also imitating Orchidance, though?"

Nora raised her eyebrows. Suddenly, her lips curled into a smile and she replied, "Who says I'm imitating Orchidance?"

Iris: "???"

Then, as though she had realized something, she looked at Nora in astonishment.

Could it be... that Nora was none other than Orchidance?!

Just as she was about to speak, Lauren entered the hall and said with a smile, "Iris, you're here! Did you bring any orchids with you today?"

Iris immediately reined in the complicated look she was giving Nora. She looked at Lauren and replied, "No."

"You didn't?"

Lauren was shocked. "It is written on my invitation that everyone who comes to the orchid exhibition should bring a pot of flowers, so that everyone can appreciate and admire each other's flowers."

After she spoke, Lauren sighed silently and said, "Iris, surely it's not because you can't bear to show us your flowers, right? I have heard that you have gathered a lot of rare orchids in your private collection over the years! I am holding this orchid exhibition precisely because I hope that orchid lovers can gather and share their joy with each other. In fact, an orchid exhibition like this should have been held long ago. What's the point of hiding and keeping all the good things to ourselves? Everyone here is an orchid lover, it's not like they'll spoil the flowers, right? Iris, you are being overly cautious."

Although she said that she was being too cautious, she was instead implying that Iris was too stingy and petty, just so she could highlight how generous and capable she, Lauren, was instead.

A group of people from wealthy families gradually gathered around them. Everyone looked at Iris.

Iris, however, scoffed.

Was she trying to compete with her in terms of eloquence?

She wasn't someone who would take sh\*t from others!

Lauren had organized the orchid exhibition to suppress Iris' arrogance.

Back then, even though she had succeeded in changing her status from a homewrecker to the man's lawful wife, to be honest, she knew that there weren't many in the circle of wealthy ladies who approved of her. Everyone approved of Iris instead.

In that case, Lauren would outdo Iris in the latter's forte! This way, she could also show off in front of everyone else!

She said, "Iris, why are you keeping quiet? Are you upset? Well, that's true. There's no one in New York who doesn't know that you love orchids the most. By right, you should have been the one organizing the orchid exhibition instead, but because you didn't take any action, I found someone to do it instead... What a shame. I heard that you also have a pot of Ghost Orchids, so I even wanted to let everyone admire them!"

As soon as she said that, Iris looked at the people around her. She smiled and said, "The things you say are so ridiculous. Must I hold an orchid exhibition just because I like orchids? In that case, since Mrs. Lange likes diamonds, must she also hold a diamond exhibition? Since Mr. Sullivan likes antique paintings, should he open a museum then? These are just personal hobbies. On the other hand, why haven't I heard anything about you liking orchids before?"

Her few simple words had immediately suppressed Lauren.

How would the wealthy and the noble possibly take out whatever they liked and show them off to everyone? If they did that, then they wouldn't be showing off their wealth instead!

Lauren had made a mistake at a fundamental level, making her seem petty and cheap, and also making all the ladies look down on her. They had only attended the exhibition because of Matthew's Ghost Orchids.

After all, Matthew's Ghost Orchids really were a rare sight.

Iris's words had suppressed Lauren's momentum, causing everyone around them to laugh. They echoed Iris and said, "She's right, we are not frivolous people."

Showing off one's wealth for no reason would only arouse aversion and disgust from other people.

Moreover, even though Lauren wasn't an orchid lover, she had held an orchid exhibition. Iris had pointed out her objective.

Lauren clenched her fists in anger. She'd finally invited so many ladies to the exhibition today after much difficulty. Originally, she'd wanted to improve her position among the ladies, but little did she expect Iris to be so sharp-tongued!

Lauren lowered her head and smiled. "I certainly don't have any love for orchids, but don't forget that I am an alternative medicine practitioner. It's only because Matthew asked me to cure his flowers that I decided to hold the orchid exhibition. I found his Ghost Orchids such a rare sight and wanted everyone to see it! This way, everyone can also share their experience on growing orchids with one another along the way."

Her few simple words immediately made the rich ladies around them not dare to laugh at her anymore.

Everyone at the exhibition was a true flower lover. Was there anyone among them whose flowers would never have any problems? Should something go wrong, it would be great to have someone like Lauren help.

She could even cure Matthew's Ghost Orchids. Lauren was simply too skilled at curing orchids.

Someone immediately said, "Mrs. Hunt, you are so capable. You have even cured such a delicate flower that's so difficult to treat! It's amazing! By the way, my flowers have also met with a small problem. I wonder if I can ask you for some advice?"

Lauren smiled gently and replied, "Sure. In the first place, this orchid exhibition isn't meant for showing off; rather, it's to facilitate communication!"

With a few simple sentences, she had saved the scene again.

Some of the others walked over to Iris and said, "Mdm. Iris, come to think of it, that woman is actually quite capable. Her methods of curing the flowers' illnesses are very similar to Orchidance's. Everyone's privately speculating that Lauren may be Orchidance! Sometimes, for the sake of the orchids, we should bow down to others!"

"Yeah, she actually cured Matthew's Ghost Orchids. She's really very impressive."

Matthew's Ghost Orchids had been withering day by day for about half a month. He had been to many orchid masters to cure it, but it had barely seen any effect.

News of it had already spread in New York.

Through his Ghost Orchids, Lauren had made a name for herself.

At the mention of Orchidance, Iris subconsciously glanced at Nora. Then, she scoffed and said, “She’s no Orchidance. Compared with Orchidance, she is far inferior!”

The contempt in her words made the ladies look at one another. In the end, none of them dared to say anything. They could only smile awkwardly.

Lauren also heard her. At once, she narrowed her eyes and said, “Mdm. Iris, now that’s rather meaningless. Matthew had certainly wanted to approach Orchidance, but the problem is that Orchidance is so mysterious. No one knows who she is, let alone where to find her. I heard that she’s not even in the country, so it’s impossible for anyone to find her. I admit that my treatment methods are indeed imitating Orchidance’s, but am I wrong to diagnose and cure Matthew’s Ghost Orchids for him?”

The place was silent.

No one there dared to offend Iris-after all, she was Justin’s mother. Although they weren’t on good terms with each other, it was said that Justin would still specially visit the suburban villa every month.

Besides, no matter how bad their relationship was, Justin would never sit by and watch other people bully his mother.

Therefore, no one defended Lauren. However, Lauren could cure orchids’ illnesses. Everyone there was an orchid lover, so none of them dared to offend Lauren either.

For a while, no one said anything.

Iris’ lip corners, however, curled into a smile. Although she hadn’t asked Nora just now if she was really Orchidance, it had given her confidence.

She looked at Lauren and said, “What’s the big deal about being able to cure orchids? My daughter-in-law can also do it!”

She looked at Nora with a proud look on her face.

When Lauren heard this, she looked at Nora.

A moment later...

“Pft.”

She let out a soft laugh.

After she laughed, Lauren said, “Sorry, I really couldn’t help it. Mdm. Iris, what you said is really funny. I know Ms. Smith is the great Dr. Zabe’s disciple, and I also know that she is Anti the famous surgeon, but neither of those titles is related to orchids. Mdm. Iris, surely you don’t think that every alternative medicine practitioner can cure orchids, right? Flowers are different from humans!”

Iris also smiled when she heard her. “Of course I know that. It’s just that my daughter-in-law happens to have studied orchids a little before. In fact, she is…”

Before she could say “Orchidiance”, Lauren interrupted her. “Is that so? Then why don’t you come over and have a look at Matthew’s Ghost Orchids, Ms. Smith? You should know that pot of Ghost Orchid’s prior condition, right? Can you cure it?”

Nora glanced at it and said calmly, “Yes.”

As soon as Lauren wanted to reply, Iris took out a piece of paper. “This is the prescription that my daughter-in-law wrote for that pot of Ghost Orchids. You can take a look at it!”

“Does Ms. Smith really know how to cure orchids?”

“If you think about it, there’s a chance that she does. Ms. Smith is the best alternative medicine practitioner after all!”

Once Lauren lost the advantage of being able to cure orchids’ illnesses, the people around them immediately dared to speak up for Iris.

When Lauren heard them, she immediately took the prescription from Iris. After she glanced at it, she said, “Iris, Matthew must have told you about this prescription, right? This is exactly the same as mine! It’s just a pity that even if you’ve made a copy, you left out one ingredient!”

“She didn’t leave it out.” Nora said unhurriedly, “It’s because the prescription doesn’t need that ingredient. Orchids are delicate flowers. The ingredient you added will hurt it.”

“It’ll hurt it? No way.” Lauren said confidently, “That ingredient is supposed to revive a plant’s shine and glow, so how could it possibly be harmful? What’s more, that pot of Ghost Orchids is being displayed so vividly and vibrantly in front of everyone right now. Everyone can see for themselves the flowers’ current condition. In just a day, it has regained its vitality. Ms. Smith, you are being too dogmatic!”

Nora looked at the pot of flowers. “Affliction of diseases makes one collapse like a mountain, and the treatment of diseased areas is akin to trying to extract strands of silk from one another. The usage of such strong medication will only keep the orchid alive for a while but make it wilt even faster. As an alternative medicine practitioner, surely you don’t need me to teach you something like that, right?”

Lauren: “?”

Her understatement-like way of talking made Lauren angry. She said, “Ms. Smith, I know that you are Justin’s wife. There’s nothing wrong with protecting and defending your mother-in-law, but even so, you can’t just speak so carelessly like that. This ingredient is certainly a little strong, but I’ve already tested it on other orchids before. There won’t be any problems in the future! Facts speak louder than words. I know that you are an alternative medicine practitioner, but alternative medicine requires many years of practice to accumulate experience. From what I see, you don’t give medical consultations very often, so you’re probably not very experienced when it comes to the practical aspect, right? Besides, humans are different from flowers. I have treated a lot of flowers and gone through a lot before I gained experience. What about you?”

When Nora heard this, she said calmly, “Then let’s make a bet.”

“What do you want to bet on?” Lauren asked.

Nora looked at the pot of Ghost Orchids and answered, “That problems will definitely occur with this pot of flowers within an hour.”

Lauren scoffed. “Ms. Smith, stop joking. How can that be? I’ve already cured that pot of flowers! How can anything go wrong with it when it’s so filled with vitality? But since you’ve said so, then okay, I accept the bet, Ms. Smith. If nothing goes wrong with the flowers, then I hope Mr. Hunt can allow Herman and I to return to the Hunt Manor and stay there.”



Nora's lips curled into a smile. "Okay. If something goes wrong with the flowers, then I want you to apologize for wrecking someone else's marriage back then!"

Lauren's pupils shrank.

The biggest humiliation of her life was when she involved herself with Herman's marriage and became the third party persecuted by everyone. Whenever people talked about her these days, they always called her the homewrecker who had successfully become the lawful wife.

Yet Nora had brought it up in public in front of everyone. It was simply infuriating.

There was anger all over Lauren's face. She demanded, "What's the meaning of this, Ms. Smith?"

"You don't dare to make the bet with me?"

Nora raised her brows.

Pushed into a corner, the angry and anxious Lauren could only say, "Fine."

She clenched her fists tightly.

In order to return to the Hunt Manor, as well as to return to the pinnacle of status in New York, she was really holding nothing back. When she thought about it carefully, though, nothing could go wrong with that pot of flowers anyway. Nora was at a complete disadvantage when she made the bet with her.

To be honest, the moment Nora said that the ingredient was too strong, Lauren had already felt a little guilty. She'd actually had some takeaways from her time studying medicine abroad over the years.

However, she strongly believed that even if something were to really go wrong, it would only happen at a later stage.

It was impossible for that to happen within an hour.

She was sure to win the bet.

When she thought about it this way, Lauren didn't feel so unhappy anymore because the bet was clearly to Nora's disadvantage.

After the two parties made the bet, Lauren summoned some people and instructed, "Keep a close watch on this pot of Ghost Orchids. If anything goes wrong, you must notify me immediately!"

No matter how rare the Ghost Orchids were, they were nothing more than a pot of flowers for Lauren. What she cared about was not the flowers but winning the bet.

She spoke very loudly, everyone heard her. Lauren explained with a smile, "We've already made the bet, after all. I'm just afraid someone would deliberately spoil the flowers within the hour because they are sore losers. It would be terrible if people refuse to pay up when that happens."

Iris, however, ignored her. Instead, she pulled Nora to the side, lowered her voice, and asked, "Tell me the truth, are you Orchidance?"

Nora's lips curled into a smile and she nodded.

Iris: "..."

She stared at Nora with a dazed look on her face. "Orchidance is the only person capable of curing Matthew's flowers, why didn't I think of that? No, it's because you are too young. I didn't expect Orchidance to be so young, I always thought that she would be as old as me, or perhaps even older."

Nora looked at her.

After speaking, Iris's immediate thought was not that she now had someone to treat the flowers in her greenhouse, if anything ever happened to them.

On the contrary, she heaved a huge sigh.

She said, "I originally thought that there are only so few people in this world who can cure Matthew's Ghost Orchids because those flowers are really very difficult to treat. When you said that you can cure them, I thought that you were just taking a gamble. But I didn't expect that what was just a one in ten thousand probability for me, would instead be a 100% sure-win probability for you." Nora replied, "Therefore, you have to tell your story now."

Iris was taken aback for a moment. In the end, she waved and said, "Ah well, never mind, this is all meant to be!"

She had also thought things through herself. By taking a gambler's mentality with this, she was also just trying to give herself a ray of hope in the future.

She didn't want to age and die in that suburban villa and be separated from Justin for the rest of her life, either.

All of this had been predestined a long time ago, that was all.

She said, "I hope the two of you won't hate me after you hear my story."

Back then, she had shielded Justin from everything. Now that her son had grown up, it was ultimately time that he paid his debt.

Iris sighed.

Nora patted her shoulder. "We're not afraid."

When one was young, their mother was an almighty figure that shielded them from everything. Now that they had grown up, they were willing to be that almighty figure for their mother.

The two chatted for nearly an hour. When the hour passed after they made the bet, Lauren glanced at the orchid. When she saw that it was still blooming beautifully, she heaved a sigh of relief at once.

She then went up to Iris and Nora. "Ms. Smith, you've lost."

Nora looked at her. "There are still two minutes to an hour."

Lauren smiled and said, "There are only two minutes left, but that pot of flowers is now blooming even more beautifully than before. There is no risk of it wilting at all, so you two are losing for sure."

"That's not necessarily true."

Nora stood up and looked down at the time on her cell phone.

Lauren curled her lips disdainfully and said, "Ms. Smith, to be honest, we are all family. How can there be any grudges among family? Why do we have to draw such a clear line between us? Why don't we just forget about the bet?"

Lest it reflects poorly on us. I'm not someone who would hold grudges against my young ones either. The old madam is getting on in years, though. Herman has always wanted to be filial to his mother and be by her side, so let's not have the Hunts stop him anymore..."

As soon as she said that, a security guard rushed over in a panic and said, "Mrs. Hunt, this is terrible!"

Lauren was taken aback. She turned around and saw that the security guard was actually the one whom she had instructed to keep a close watch over the Ghost Orchids just now!

Lauren frowned. "What are you doing? This is outrageous, why are you in such a panic?!"

The next moment, the security guard said, "The Ghost Orchids are dead!"

## **Chapter 656 - The Plan of Saving Nora Novel Free**

After Mrs. Landis entered the kitchen, the atmosphere among the trio standing outside immediately became a little awkward.

Iris looked at Nora and then at Justin. At last, she said, "I'll go and give Mrs. Landis a hand. Given her age, she'll be too slow!"

After speaking, she also went into the kitchen.

Nora and Justin were the only ones left outside. The two of them looked around the greenhouse. Justin pointed at the orchids and said, "I heard that people who raise orchids have high moral character. Now it seems like that's not always the case."

He was referring to Lauren.

Nora, however, laughed and said, "I don't know about others, but I know why my god-sister likes taking care of orchids."

Nora deliberately emphasized the words "god-sister".

Justin: "??!"

He raised his eyebrows, knowing that Nora was being cheeky and asking to be taught a lesson again.

As soon as the thought formed, he looked at Nora's lips, wishing he could take a few nips to vent his "anger".

As for Nora, she said, "Do you want to know why? If you do, then call me God-aunt Nora. I'll tell you if you do."

Tsk.

She was starting to take advantage of him now.

Justin stroked his chin and suddenly leaned forward. He lowered his voice and asked, "Ms. Smith, are you sure you want to be my god-aunt?"

Nora: "?"

She decided not to tease him anymore, lest it backfired on herself. She coughed and said, "Iris... I mean, Aunt Iris and I already knew each other before she even knew who I was. She told me at that time that she was raising all these flowers because her son had given her a pot of orchids once."

Justin was stunned.

He looked at the orchids, his jaw tensing up.

He remembered now. When he was ten years old, he had indeed given her a pot of orchids on her birthday. The woman had accepted his gift. At the same time, she had also told him that she had only accepted the gift because she liked orchids.

Since then, the floodgates opened and she started to buy a lot of orchids.

Justin had always thought that it was because she liked orchids. But as it turned out, it was just an excuse for her to accept her son's gift.

He turned to look at Iris in the kitchen.

Mrs. Landis had prepared some ingredients, and she was picking and choosing from among them. However, everything that she picked out just so happened to be his favorite...

Justin lowered his head.

In truth, his mother had never really left him all these years, and he'd always had his mother's love with him by his side, right?

In this instant, he suddenly reconciled with his mother—or rather, with the part of himself that had been uncomfortable because his mother hadn't taken care of him.

He also suddenly became open-minded and let go of some things in this instant.

He let out a silent sigh. Right at this moment, his cell phone rang.

When he answered, Herman's voice came from the other side.

"Justin, didn't you want to know why your mother has been avoiding you? I will tell you now."

Upon hearing his voice, Justin narrowed his eyes. He wanted to say he didn't need it—he wanted to hear it from Iris instead—but he suddenly paused.

Iris would never tell him about her grievances. He would only be able to hear about her grievances from others.

For example, Iris would probably never tell him why she liked orchids because she had never been a woman who knew how to express her feelings.

Justin thought about it and said, "Okay, speak."

In a villa in the outskirts of New York.

Herman and Lauren sat on the sofa.

Lauren was looking at Herman, who said, "You probably only know that I cheated on your mother with Lauren back then, so all this time, you must have thought that all the problems with our marriage lie with me, right?"

Herman's words gave voice to the mentality that most women held—that every man who cheated was a scumbag.

Justin lowered his eyes, but he sneered, "You are wrong."

Herman was taken aback.

Justin said, "You are not a good husband, and at the same time, you are not a good father either."

Many people thought that once a man cheated, he would no longer be a good father.

But that wasn't necessarily true.

Some men might cheat on their wives a lot, but they wouldn't hold back on their love for their children. Perhaps the cheating itself might affect the children, but even so, they would still try to make up for it later.

Besides, some married couples were indeed not suitable to stay together. Even if they had children, those who needed to divorce would still divorce each other. However, the divorce did not affect their love for their children.

But this wasn't true in Herman's case.

Not only had he cheated and hurt Iris, but he had also left Justin to fend for himself afterward. It was as if he'd never had a son like him.

He hadn't just let Iris down, but also Justin.

Herman was stunned for a while. Then, he tried to explain himself. "Justin, it's not that I didn't care about you, or that I did not love you..."

"At your age, you shouldn't keep going on and on about things like love and romance."

Justin dissed him mercilessly again.

Herman: "..."

Justin said concisely, "Just tell me the reason."

Herman spent a while organizing his thoughts. Finally, he sighed and said, "Justin, I know I've neglected you, but you have to understand. I did all that because your mother cheated on me first! I am a man, how could I let someone cuckold me? That's why I went to Lauren! Don't be fooled by how Iris looks as if she's at peace with the world! She is not as indifferent to fame and fortune as she makes herself out to be!"

Iris had cheated on Herman?

Stunned, Justin suddenly looked at the woman in the kitchen.

Herman took a deep breath. “She had found another man outside. I couldn’t condone her behavior, so I filed for a divorce. When your grandpa wanted to keep you in the family, I couldn’t just let her sit back and enjoy the rewards of her success, and even hog my family’s business on top of that. Besides, all she could think of was that man, so I made a request—that she would leave you alone. You were still young at that time, and I was afraid that she would usurp your power and become the real master of the Hunts. Justin, I schemed and did all this for your own good!”

Justin frowned.

Herman’s argument might sound seamless and completely logical at first hearing but in truth?

If what he said was true, why did Iris spend all these years in agony in the suburban villa instead of going to her adulterous lover and keeping him company? He sneered, “Do you think I will believe that?”

Herman also panicked. “I have evidence!”

Justin asked, “What evidence?”

He was already biased towards Iris at the moment and was highly disapproving of Herman’s statement. If that was really the reason, then Iris’s decision to ignore him would really be too absurd.

While he was feeling uncomfortable about the whole thing, Herman said, “Those orchids! Those orchids are the evidence! She didn’t like orchids at all in the past. You should remember that there were barely any orchids at home when you were young, but look at how she started to take care of so many orchids after she moved to the suburbs! It’s exactly because her lover loves orchids! Ha, because I trapped her in New York, she couldn’t meet her lover anymore, so she could only pour all her yearning and pining into the orchids instead!”

Justin: !!

What smooth logic!



If Nora hadn't told him just now why Iris was keeping so many orchids, he'd probably really have become suspicious.

But now...

Justin scoffed. "Is that so?"

Herman said, "Yes, everything I said is true. Justin, Dad has actually been very worried about you and has done a lot for you, so don't be so distant towards me. I know I have never shown you any fatherly love, but I can give that to you in the future..."

"I don't need it."

Justin straight-up rejected him. "Is there anything else?"

Herman said, "I want to visit your grandmother tomorrow, she's my mother after all. Tell the people at home to let me in!"

Justin scoffed. "Nice try. You can forget about ever entering the Hunt Manor for the rest of your life."

He wanted to hang up after saying that, but Herman shouted, "Justin, Justin! You can't do that to me! I did all that for you! You refuse to let me in, yet you allow Iris to enter! Tell me, did Iris bewitch you? Has she been badmouthing me all these years? No matter what, I am still your father... toot... toot... toot..."

Justin hung up on him.

Herman had called him just to sow discord between him and his mother, so as to make his way into the Hunts little by little.

In the villa.

Herman stared at his mobile phone with a frown after Justin hung up on him. He couldn't help but curse, "That brat! Why is he so stubborn?!"

Lauren looked at him: "Is the reason you said just now true?"

Herman scoffed and said, "Half of it is, I suppose."

Lauren rolled her eyes at once. "Aren't you afraid that Iris will tell him the truth? It will become even more difficult for you to repair your relationship with him then!"

Herman said confidently, "She won't."

Lauren was taken aback.

A self-mocking Herman said, "Because if she does, it would bring great trouble to her son. That's why she will never say it."

It was only after Iris and Mrs. Landis made a total of six dishes that the three of them finally sat down.

Iris wanted Mrs. Landis to eat with them, but the latter took her food and went into the kitchen instead of eating at the same table with them.

After the three of them sat down, Justin stared at Iris. Suddenly, her cell phone rang.

She was taken aback for a moment, seemingly never expecting anyone to call her.

But when she looked down at the phone, it turned out to be an unfamiliar number...

Iris's hand started shaking and she rejected the call immediately.

However, the other party persisted and kept calling

Iris became obviously nervous. She stared hard at the phone, as though the caller hailed from the depths of hell itself.

Iris was very nervous. Despite her trying to make herself appear calm and collected, her tightly-clenched fingers, as well as her dilated pupils, had exposed her emotions. Justin's gaze landed on the unfamiliar number and he said, "Your phone is ringing."

"Huh? Oh, it's probably just a sales call."

Iris said as she rejected the call again. Then, as if she was afraid that they would call again, she switched off her cell phone. She even tried to gloss over the topic and said with a smile, "They are so annoying. There are simply so

many such sales calls these days. It wasn't easy for us to have a meal together."

Seeing her like this, Justin merely nodded.

Nora and Justin exchanged a look, neither of them exposing her lie.

Afterwards, even though Iris tried her best to pretend she was very excited and happy about the meal, the two of them could still tell that she was a little distracted.

After all, Nora and Justin were more insightful than most ordinary people and had astounding observation skills.

After the meal, the two bade goodbye to Iris.

Before leaving, Nora looked at Iris again and asked tentatively, "See you at the orchid exhibition tomorrow?"

Iris seemed a little hesitant. It must have been because of those phone calls.

However, she only stayed quiet for a second before she raised her head. "Yeah."

Her voice was firm.

This showed that she would not be changing her mind again.

She was really taking a gamble. If Nora managed to cure the pot of Ghost Orchids, then she would tell them the truth. If she failed, then she would take the truth with her to the grave, and never cause the children any trouble.

Seeing her like this, Nora and Justin looked at each other again and left.

Nora and Justin were in the same car. Justin was driving. After they turned the corner ahead, he stopped the car.

By then, Nora had already set her cell phone number as an unknown caller. Then, she keyed in the string of numbers that had been displayed on Iris's cell phone just now.

She had a photographic memory, so she had memorized the phone number with just a single glance.

Nora then handed her cell phone to Justin.

Justin dialed the number without hesitation.

The other party quickly picked up. A man's voice came through the phone: "Hello?"

A prompt and decisive Justin asked, "Who are you?"

The other party was silent for a while. Then, he let out a low chuckle and hung up without saying anything else.

Justin: !!

Inexplicably, what Herman had said about Iris cheating on him flashed past his mind.

He frowned.

Nora also frowned. "He kept the call time within fifteen seconds, I can't trace his location."

Justin took a deep breath. "Don't bother anymore."

Nora looked at him.

Justin said, "I won't ask anymore. I'll wait for her to tell me everything herself."

He didn't want to investigate anymore.

He had suddenly realized something because there were always people trying to sabotage his investigations, it would inevitably lead to unnecessary misunderstandings.

Nora knew what he was thinking. She gave him a thumbs-up right away and said, "Yup, that's the way. You're family, so you shouldn't harbor suspicions about each other. Besides, from what I saw just now, Iris... I mean, your mother didn't change her mind just because of that call."

Justin nodded.

Iris wasn't a weakling or a pushover.

She had taught Justin to be strong and aggressive since he was a child. This was also why Justin hadn't believed Herman's nonsense.

How could Iris possibly be someone who easily accepted fate?

If she really had a lover, then she would definitely have tried to think of ways to spend the rest of her life with him instead of wasting her youth away here.

The next day.

Nora drove to the suburban villa early in the morning.

Iris had dressed up for the occasion and was wearing an elegant and beautiful white fitted dress. She got into the car after she left the house.

The woman didn't look at all like she was nearly fifty years old. After dressing up, she was dazzling and graceful. Her figure was curvy, and coupled with her fair skin, it was only when one looked closely that one would see any wrinkles on her face. With the way she looked as she stood there, some people might believe it if one said that she was only twenty years old. Nora raised her eyebrows and formed a heart with her hands at Iris.

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Iris got into the car, and the two headed straight to the orchid exhibition.

Lauren's orchid exhibition was held at a hotel in central New York. The orchids she borrowed from various families had all been placed on shelves.

At a glance, there were all kinds of orchids that one could ever think of.

In the most eye-catching position was Matthew's Ghost Orchid.

The Ghost Orchids were very rare, so they had occupied the central position of the orchid exhibition.

After Nora and Iris got out of the car and entered the hall with the invitation, they immediately noticed the pot of Ghost Orchids.

When Iris saw the orchids, she exclaimed, "Lauren has really cured that pot of Ghost Orchids. They look so full of vigor."

Only then did Nora reveal something: “There is a problem with her prescription.”

Iris, who was a little taken aback, looked at Nora.

Nora whispered, “Her prescription has one more ingredient than mine. That herb is too powerful. It can quickly allow orchids to look energetic and filled with vigor, but over time, even bigger problems will appear. It’s just like how humans suddenly become very energetic before they pass away. Going by how much time has passed since the medicine was given to the Ghost Orchids yesterday, the Ghost Orchids will wither after another half an hour. In the first place, there are a lot of restrictions when it comes to using drugs on plants. Those who are not proficient in it really shouldn’t do it.”

Iris was dumbfounded. She couldn’t help but say, “Orchidiance has also said that before, and told everyone not to imitate them. Aren’t you also imitating Orchidiance, though?”

Nora raised her eyebrows. Suddenly, her lips curled into a smile and she replied, “Who says I’m imitating Orchidiance?”

Iris: “???”

Then, as though she had realized something, she looked at Nora in astonishment.

Could it be... that Nora was none other than Orchidiance?!

Just as she was about to speak, Lauren entered the hall and said with a smile, “Iris, you’re here! Did you bring any orchids with you today?”

Iris immediately reined in the complicated look she was giving Nora. She looked at Lauren and replied, “No.”

“You didn’t?”

Lauren was shocked. “It is written on my invitation that everyone who comes to the orchid exhibition should bring a pot of flowers, so that everyone can appreciate and admire each other’s flowers.”

After she spoke, Lauren sighed silently and said, “Iris, surely it’s not because you can’t bear to show us your flowers, right? I have heard that you have

gathered a lot of rare orchids in your private collection over the years! I am holding this orchid exhibition precisely because I hope that orchid lovers can gather and share their joy with each other. In fact, an orchid exhibition like this should have been held long ago. What's the point of hiding and keeping all the good things to ourselves? Everyone here is an orchid lover, it's not like they'll spoil the flowers, right? Iris, you are being overly cautious."

Although she said that she was being too cautious, she was instead implying that Iris was too stingy and petty, just so she could highlight how generous and capable she, Lauren, was instead.

A group of people from wealthy families gradually gathered around them. Everyone looked at Iris.

Iris, however, scoffed.

Was she trying to compete with her in terms of eloquence?

She wasn't someone who would take sh\*t from others!

Lauren had organized the orchid exhibition to suppress Iris' arrogance.

Back then, even though she had succeeded in changing her status from a homewrecker to the man's lawful wife, to be honest, she knew that there weren't many in the circle of wealthy ladies who approved of her. Everyone approved of Iris instead.

In that case, Lauren would outdo Iris in the latter's forte! This way, she could also show off in front of everyone else!

She said, "Iris, why are you keeping quiet? Are you upset? Well, that's true. There's no one in New York who doesn't know that you love orchids the most. By right, you should have been the one organizing the orchid exhibition instead, but because you didn't take any action, I found someone to do it instead... What a shame. I heard that you also have a pot of Ghost Orchids, so I even wanted to let everyone admire them!"

As soon as she said that, Iris looked at the people around her. She smiled and said, "The things you say are so ridiculous. Must I hold an orchid exhibition just because I like orchids? In that case, since Mrs. Lange likes diamonds, must she also hold a diamond exhibition? Since Mr. Sullivan likes antique paintings, should he open a museum then? These are just personal hobbies.

On the other hand, why haven't I heard anything about you liking orchids before?"

Her few simple words had immediately suppressed Lauren.

How would the wealthy and the noble possibly take out whatever they liked and show them off to everyone? If they did that, then they wouldn't be showing off their wealth instead!

Lauren had made a mistake at a fundamental level, making her seem petty and cheap, and also making all the ladies look down on her. They had only attended the exhibition because of Matthew's Ghost Orchids.

After all, Matthew's Ghost Orchids really were a rare sight.

Iris's words had suppressed Lauren's momentum, causing everyone around them to laugh. They echoed Iris and said, "She's right, we are not frivolous people."

Showing off one's wealth for no reason would only arouse aversion and disgust from other people.

Moreover, even though Lauren wasn't an orchid lover, she had held an orchid exhibition. Iris had pointed out her objective.

Lauren clenched her fists in anger. She'd finally invited so many ladies to the exhibition today after much difficulty. Originally, she'd wanted to improve her position among the ladies, but little did she expect Iris to be so sharp-tongued!

Lauren lowered her head and smiled. "I certainly don't have any love for orchids, but don't forget that I am an alternative medicine practitioner. It's only because Matthew asked me to cure his flowers that I decided to hold the orchid exhibition. I found his Ghost Orchids such a rare sight and wanted everyone to see it! This way, everyone can also share their experience on growing orchids with one another along the way."

Her few simple words immediately made the rich ladies around them not dare to laugh at her anymore.

Everyone at the exhibition was a true flower lover. Was there anyone among them whose flowers would never have any problems? Should something go wrong, it would be great to have someone like Lauren help.



She could even cure Matthew's Ghost Orchids. Lauren was simply too skilled at curing orchids.

Someone immediately said, "Mrs. Hunt, you are so capable. You have even cured such a delicate flower that's so difficult to treat! It's amazing! By the way, my flowers have also met with a small problem. I wonder if I can ask you for some advice?"

Lauren smiled gently and replied, "Sure. In the first place, this orchid exhibition isn't meant for showing off; rather, it's to facilitate communication!"

With a few simple sentences, she had saved the scene again.

Some of the others walked over to Iris and said, "Mdm. Iris, come to think of it, that woman is actually quite capable. Her methods of curing the flowers' illnesses are very similar to Orchidance's. Everyone's privately speculating that Lauren may be Orchidance! Sometimes, for the sake of the orchids, we should bow down to others!"

"Yeah, she actually cured Matthew's Ghost Orchids. She's really very impressive."

Matthew's Ghost Orchids had been withering day by day for about half a month. He had been to many orchid masters to cure it, but it had barely seen any effect.

News of it had already spread in New York.

Through his Ghost Orchids, Lauren had made a name for herself.

At the mention of Orchidance, Iris subconsciously glanced at Nora. Then, she scoffed and said, "She's no Orchidance. Compared with Orchidance, she is far inferior!"

The contempt in her words made the ladies look at one another. In the end, none of them dared to say anything. They could only smile awkwardly.

Lauren also heard her. At once, she narrowed her eyes and said, "Mdm. Iris, now that's rather meaningless. Matthew had certainly wanted to approach Orchidance, but the problem is that Orchidance is so mysterious. No one knows who she is, let alone where to find her. I heard that she's not even in the country, so it's impossible for anyone to find her. I admit that my treatment

methods are indeed imitating Orchidance's, but am I wrong to diagnose and cure Matthew's Ghost Orchids for him?"

The place was silent.

No one there dared to offend Iris-after all, she was Justin's mother. Although they weren't on good terms with each other, it was said that Justin would still specially visit the suburban villa every month.

Besides, no matter how bad their relationship was, Justin would never sit by and watch other people bully his mother.

Therefore, no one defended Lauren. However, Lauren could cure orchids' illnesses. Everyone there was an orchid lover, so none of them dared to offend Lauren either.

For a while, no one said anything.

Iris' lip corners, however, curled into a smile. Although she hadn't asked Nora just now if she was really Orchidance, it had given her confidence.

She looked at Lauren and said, "What's the big deal about being able to cure orchids? My daughter-in-law can also do it!"

She looked at Nora with a proud look on her face.

When Lauren heard this, she looked at Nora.

A moment later...

"Pft."

She let out a soft laugh.

After she laughed, Lauren said, "Sorry, I really couldn't help it. Mdm. Iris, what you said is really funny. I know Ms. Smith is the great Dr. Zabe's disciple, and I also know that she is Anti the famous surgeon, but neither of those titles is related to orchids. Mdm. Iris, surely you don't think that every alternative medicine practitioner can cure orchids, right? Flowers are different from humans!"

Iris also smiled when she heard her. “Of course I know that. It’s just that my daughter-in-law happens to have studied orchids a little before. In fact, she is...”

Before she could say “Orchidance”, Lauren interrupted her. “Is that so? Then why don’t you come over and have a look at Matthew’s Ghost Orchids, Ms. Smith? You should know that pot of Ghost Orchid’s prior condition, right? Can you cure it?”

Nora glanced at it and said calmly, “Yes.”

As soon as Lauren wanted to reply, Iris took out a piece of paper. “This is the prescription that my daughter-in-law wrote for that pot of Ghost Orchids. You can take a look at it!”

“Does Ms. Smith really know how to cure orchids?”

“If you think about it, there’s a chance that she does. Ms. Smith is the best alternative medicine practitioner after all!”

Once Lauren lost the advantage of being able to cure orchids’ illnesses, the people around them immediately dared to speak up for Iris.

When Lauren heard them, she immediately took the prescription from Iris. After she glanced at it, she said, “Iris, Matthew must have told you about this prescription, right? This is exactly the same as mine! It’s just a pity that even if you’ve made a copy, you left out one ingredient!”

“She didn’t leave it out.” Nora said unhurriedly, “It’s because the prescription doesn’t need that ingredient. Orchids are delicate flowers. The ingredient you added will hurt it.”

“It’ll hurt it? No way.” Lauren said confidently, “That ingredient is supposed to revive a plant’s shine and glow, so how could it possibly be harmful? What’s more, that pot of Ghost Orchids is being displayed so vividly and vibrantly in front of everyone right now. Everyone can see for themselves the flowers’ current condition. In just a day, it has regained its vitality. Ms. Smith, you are being too dogmatic!”

Nora looked at the pot of flowers. “Affliction of diseases makes one collapse like a mountain, and the treatment of diseased areas is akin to trying to extract strands of silk from one another. The usage of such strong medication will

only keep the orchid alive for a while but make it wilt even faster. As an alternative medicine practitioner, surely you don't need me to teach you something like that, right?"

Lauren: "?"

Her understatement-like way of talking made Lauren angry. She said, "Ms. Smith, I know that you are Justin's wife. There's nothing wrong with protecting and defending your mother-in-law, but even so, you can't just speak so carelessly like that. This ingredient is certainly a little strong, but I've already tested it on other orchids before. There won't be any problems in the future! Facts speak louder than words. I know that you are an alternative medicine practitioner, but alternative medicine requires many years of practice to accumulate experience. From what I see, you don't give medical consultations very often, so you're probably not very experienced when it comes to the practical aspect, right? Besides, humans are different from flowers. I have treated a lot of flowers and gone through a lot before I gained experience. What about you?"

When Nora heard this, she said calmly, "Then let's make a bet."

"What do you want to bet on?" Lauren asked.

Nora looked at the pot of Ghost Orchids and answered, "That problems will definitely occur with this pot of flowers within an hour."

Lauren scoffed. "Ms. Smith, stop joking. How can that be? I've already cured that pot of flowers! How can anything go wrong with it when it's so filled with vitality? But since you've said so, then okay, I accept the bet, Ms. Smith. If nothing goes wrong with the flowers, then I hope Mr. Hunt can allow Herman and I to return to the Hunt Manor and stay there."

Nora's lips curled into a smile. "Okay. If something goes wrong with the flowers, then I want you to apologize for wrecking someone else's marriage back then!"

Lauren's pupils shrank.

The biggest humiliation of her life was when she involved herself with Herman's marriage and became the third party persecuted by everyone. Whenever people talked about her these days, they always called her the homewrecker who had successfully become the lawful wife.

Yet Nora had brought it up in public in front of everyone. It was simply infuriating.

There was anger all over Lauren's face. She demanded, "What's the meaning of this, Ms. Smith?"

"You don't dare to make the bet with me?"

Nora raised her brows.

Pushed into a corner, the angry and anxious Lauren could only say, "Fine."

She clenched her fists tightly.

In order to return to the Hunt Manor, as well as to return to the pinnacle of status in New York, she was really holding nothing back. When she thought about it carefully, though, nothing could go wrong with that pot of flowers anyway. Nora was at a complete disadvantage when she made the bet with her.

To be honest, the moment Nora said that the ingredient was too strong, Lauren had already felt a little guilty. She'd actually had some takeaways from her time studying medicine abroad over the years.

However, she strongly believed that even if something were to really go wrong, it would only happen at a later stage.

It was impossible for that to happen within an hour.

She was sure to win the bet.

When she thought about it this way, Lauren didn't feel so unhappy anymore because the bet was clearly to Nora's disadvantage.

After the two parties made the bet, Lauren summoned some people and instructed, "Keep a close watch on this pot of Ghost Orchids. If anything goes wrong, you must notify me immediately!"

No matter how rare the Ghost Orchids were, they were nothing more than a pot of flowers for Lauren. What she cared about was not the flowers but winning the bet.

She spoke very loudly, everyone heard her. Lauren explained with a smile, "We've already made the bet, after all. I'm just afraid someone would deliberately spoil the flowers within the hour because they are sore losers. It would be terrible if people refuse to pay up when that happens."

Iris, however, ignored her. Instead, she pulled Nora to the side, lowered her voice, and asked, "Tell me the truth, are you Orchidance?"

Nora's lips curled into a smile and she nodded.

Iris: "..."

She stared at Nora with a dazed look on her face. "Orchidance is the only person capable of curing Matthew's flowers, why didn't I think of that? No, it's because you are too young. I didn't expect Orchidance to be so young, I always thought that she would be as old as me, or perhaps even older."

Nora looked at her.

After speaking, Iris's immediate thought was not that she now had someone to treat the flowers in her greenhouse, if anything ever happened to them.

On the contrary, she heaved a huge sigh.

She said, "I originally thought that there are only so few people in this world who can cure Matthew's Ghost Orchids because those flowers are really very difficult to treat. When you said that you can cure them, I thought that you were just taking a gamble. But I didn't expect that what was just a one in ten thousand probability for me, would instead be a 100% sure-win probability for you." Nora replied, "Therefore, you have to tell your story now."

Iris was taken aback for a moment. In the end, she waved and said, "Ah well, never mind, this is all meant to be!"

She had also thought things through herself. By taking a gambler's mentality with this, she was also just trying to give herself a ray of hope in the future.

She didn't want to age and die in that suburban villa and be separated from Justin for the rest of her life, either.

All of this had been predestined a long time ago, that was all.

She said, "I hope the two of you won't hate me after you hear my story."

Back then, she had shielded Justin from everything. Now that her son had grown up, it was ultimately time that he paid his debt.

Iris sighed.

Nora patted her shoulder. "We're not afraid."

When one was young, their mother was an almighty figure that shielded them from everything. Now that they had grown up, they were willing to be that almighty figure for their mother.

The two chatted for nearly an hour. When the hour passed after they made the bet, Lauren glanced at the orchid. When she saw that it was still blooming beautifully, she heaved a sigh of relief at once.

She then went up to Iris and Nora. "Ms. Smith, you've lost."

Nora looked at her. "There are still two minutes to an hour."

Lauren smiled and said, "There are only two minutes left, but that pot of flowers is now blooming even more beautifully than before. There is no risk of it wilting at all, so you two are losing for sure."

"That's not necessarily true."

Nora stood up and looked down at the time on her cell phone.

Lauren curled her lips disdainfully and said, "Ms. Smith, to be honest, we are all family. How can there be any grudges among family? Why do we have to draw such a clear line between us? Why don't we just forget about the bet? Lest it reflects poorly on us. I'm not someone who would hold grudges against my young ones either. The old madam is getting on in years, though. Herman has always wanted to be filial to his mother and be by her side, so let's not have the Hunts stop him anymore..."

As soon as she said that, a security guard rushed over in a panic and said, "Mrs. Hunt, this is terrible!"

Lauren was taken aback. She turned around and saw that the security guard was actually the one whom she had instructed to keep a close watch over the Ghost Orchids just now!

Lauren frowned. “What are you doing? This is outrageous, why are you in such a panic?!”

The next moment, the security guard said, “The Ghost Orchids are dead!”

## **Chapter 657 - The Plan of Saving Nora Novel Free**

Iris had cheated on Herman?

Stunned, Justin suddenly looked at the woman in the kitchen.

Herman took a deep breath. “She had found another man outside. I couldn’t condone her behavior, so I filed for a divorce. When your grandpa wanted to keep you in the family, I couldn’t just let her sit back and enjoy the rewards of her success, and even hog my family’s business on top of that. Besides, all she could think of was that man, so I made a request—that she would leave you alone. You were still young at that time, and I was afraid that she would usurp your power and become the real master of the Hunts. Justin, I schemed and did all this for your own good!”

Justin frowned.

Herman’s argument might sound seamless and completely logical at first hearing but in truth?

If what he said was true, why did Iris spend all these years in agony in the suburban villa instead of going to her adulterous lover and keeping him company? He sneered, “Do you think I will believe that?”

Herman also panicked. “I have evidence!”

Justin asked, “What evidence?”

He was already biased towards Iris at the moment and was highly disapproving of Herman’s statement. If that was really the reason, then Iris’s decision to ignore him would really be too absurd.

While he was feeling uncomfortable about the whole thing, Herman said, “Those orchids! Those orchids are the evidence! She didn’t like orchids at all in the past. You should remember that there were barely any orchids at home when you were young, but look at how she started to take care of so many orchids after she moved to the suburbs! It’s exactly because her lover loves



orchids! Ha, because I trapped her in New York, she couldn't meet her lover anymore, so she could only pour all her yearning and pining into the orchids instead!"

Justin: !!

What smooth logic!

If Nora hadn't told him just now why Iris was keeping so many orchids, he'd probably really have become suspicious.

But now...

Justin scoffed. "Is that so?"

Herman said, "Yes, everything I said is true. Justin, Dad has actually been very worried about you and has done a lot for you, so don't be so distant towards me. I know I have never shown you any fatherly love, but I can give that to you in the future..."

"I don't need it."

Justin straight-up rejected him. "Is there anything else?"

Herman said, "I want to visit your grandmother tomorrow, she's my mother after all. Tell the people at home to let me in!"

Justin scoffed. "Nice try. You can forget about ever entering the Hunt Manor for the rest of your life."

He wanted to hang up after saying that, but Herman shouted, "Justin, Justin! You can't do that to me! I did all that for you! You refuse to let me in, yet you allow Iris to enter! Tell me, did Iris bewitch you? Has she been badmouthing me all these years? No matter what, I am still your father... toot... toot... toot..."

Justin hung up on him.

Herman had called him just to sow discord between him and his mother, so as to make his way into the Hunts little by little.

In the villa.

Herman stared at his mobile phone with a frown after Justin hung up on him. He couldn't help but curse, "That brat! Why is he so stubborn?!"

Lauren looked at him: "Is the reason you said just now true?"

Herman scoffed and said, "Half of it is, I suppose."

Lauren rolled her eyes at once. "Aren't you afraid that Iris will tell him the truth? It will become even more difficult for you to repair your relationship with him then!"

Herman said confidently, "She won't."

Lauren was taken aback.

A self-mocking Herman said, "Because if she does, it would bring great trouble to her son. That's why she will never say it."

It was only after Iris and Mrs. Landis made a total of six dishes that the three of them finally sat down.

Iris wanted Mrs. Landis to eat with them, but the latter took her food and went into the kitchen instead of eating at the same table with them.

After the three of them sat down, Justin stared at Iris. Suddenly, her cell phone rang.

She was taken aback for a moment, seemingly never expecting anyone to call her.

But when she looked down at the phone, it turned out to be an unfamiliar number...

Iris's hand started shaking and she rejected the call immediately.

However, the other party persisted and kept calling

Iris became obviously nervous. She stared hard at the phone, as though the caller hailed from the depths of hell itself.

Iris was very nervous. Despite her trying to make herself appear calm and collected, her tightly-clenched fingers, as well as her dilated pupils, had

exposed her emotions. Justin's gaze landed on the unfamiliar number and he said, "Your phone is ringing."

"Huh? Oh, it's probably just a sales call."

Iris said as she rejected the call again. Then, as if she was afraid that they would call again, she switched off her cell phone. She even tried to gloss over the topic and said with a smile, "They are so annoying. There are simply so many such sales calls these days. It wasn't easy for us to have a meal together."

Seeing her like this, Justin merely nodded.

Nora and Justin exchanged a look, neither of them exposing her lie.

Afterwards, even though Iris tried her best to pretend she was very excited and happy about the meal, the two of them could still tell that she was a little distracted.

After all, Nora and Justin were more insightful than most ordinary people and had astounding observation skills.

After the meal, the two bade goodbye to Iris.

Before leaving, Nora looked at Iris again and asked tentatively, "See you at the orchid exhibition tomorrow?"

Iris seemed a little hesitant. It must have been because of those phone calls.

However, she only stayed quiet for a second before she raised her head. "Yeah."

Her voice was firm.

This showed that she would not be changing her mind again.

She was really taking a gamble. If Nora managed to cure the pot of Ghost Orchids, then she would tell them the truth. If she failed, then she would take the truth with her to the grave, and never cause the children any trouble.

Seeing her like this, Nora and Justin looked at each other again and left.

Nora and Justin were in the same car. Justin was driving. After they turned the corner ahead, he stopped the car.

By then, Nora had already set her cell phone number as an unknown caller. Then, she keyed in the string of numbers that had been displayed on Iris's cell phone just now.

She had a photographic memory, so she had memorized the phone number with just a single glance.

Nora then handed her cell phone to Justin.

Justin dialed the number without hesitation.

The other party quickly picked up. A man's voice came through the phone: "Hello?"

A prompt and decisive Justin asked, "Who are you?"

The other party was silent for a while. Then, he let out a low chuckle and hung up without saying anything else.

Justin: !!

Inexplicably, what Herman had said about Iris cheating on him flashed past his mind.

He frowned.

Nora also frowned. "He kept the call time within fifteen seconds, I can't trace his location."

Justin took a deep breath. "Don't bother anymore."

Nora looked at him.

Justin said, "I won't ask anymore. I'll wait for her to tell me everything herself."

He didn't want to investigate anymore.

He had suddenly realized something because there were always people trying to sabotage his investigations, it would inevitably lead to unnecessary misunderstandings.

Nora knew what he was thinking. She gave him a thumbs-up right away and said, "Yup, that's the way. You're family, so you shouldn't harbor suspicions about each other. Besides, from what I saw just now, Iris... I mean, your mother didn't change her mind just because of that call."

Justin nodded.

Iris wasn't a weakling or a pushover.

She had taught Justin to be strong and aggressive since he was a child. This was also why Justin hadn't believed Herman's nonsense.

How could Iris possibly be someone who easily accepted fate?

If she really had a lover, then she would definitely have tried to think of ways to spend the rest of her life with him instead of wasting her youth away here.

The next day.

Nora drove to the suburban villa early in the morning.

Iris had dressed up for the occasion and was wearing an elegant and beautiful white fitted dress. She got into the car after she left the house.

The woman didn't look at all like she was nearly fifty years old. After dressing up, she was dazzling and graceful. Her figure was curvy, and coupled with her fair skin, it was only when one looked closely that one would see any wrinkles on her face. With the way she looked as she stood there, some people might believe it if one said that she was only twenty years old. Nora raised her eyebrows and formed a heart with her hands at Iris.

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Iris got into the car, and the two headed straight to the orchid exhibition.

Lauren's orchid exhibition was held at a hotel in central New York. The orchids she borrowed from various families had all been placed on shelves.

At a glance, there were all kinds of orchids that one could ever think of.

In the most eye-catching position was Matthew's Ghost Orchid.

The Ghost Orchids were very rare, so they had occupied the central position of the orchid exhibition.

After Nora and Iris got out of the car and entered the hall with the invitation, they immediately noticed the pot of Ghost Orchids.

When Iris saw the orchids, she exclaimed, "Lauren has really cured that pot of Ghost Orchids. They look so full of vigor."

Only then did Nora reveal something: "There is a problem with her prescription."

Iris, who was a little taken aback, looked at Nora.

Nora whispered, "Her prescription has one more ingredient than mine. That herb is too powerful. It can quickly allow orchids to look energetic and filled with vigor, but over time, even bigger problems will appear. It's just like how humans suddenly become very energetic before they pass away. Going by how much time has passed since the medicine was given to the Ghost Orchids yesterday, the Ghost Orchids will wither after another half an hour. In the first place, there are a lot of restrictions when it comes to using drugs on plants. Those who are not proficient in it really shouldn't do it."

Iris was dumbfounded. She couldn't help but say, "Orchidance has also said that before, and told everyone not to imitate them. Aren't you also imitating Orchidance, though?"

Nora raised her eyebrows. Suddenly, her lips curled into a smile and she replied, "Who says I'm imitating Orchidance?"

Iris: "???"

Then, as though she had realized something, she looked at Nora in astonishment.

Could it be... that Nora was none other than Orchidance?!

Just as she was about to speak, Lauren entered the hall and said with a smile, "Iris, you're here! Did you bring any orchids with you today?"

Iris immediately reined in the complicated look she was giving Nora. She looked at Lauren and replied, "No."

"You didn't?"

Lauren was shocked. "It is written on my invitation that everyone who comes to the orchid exhibition should bring a pot of flowers, so that everyone can appreciate and admire each other's flowers."

After she spoke, Lauren sighed silently and said, "Iris, surely it's not because you can't bear to show us your flowers, right? I have heard that you have gathered a lot of rare orchids in your private collection over the years! I am holding this orchid exhibition precisely because I hope that orchid lovers can gather and share their joy with each other. In fact, an orchid exhibition like this should have been held long ago. What's the point of hiding and keeping all the good things to ourselves? Everyone here is an orchid lover, it's not like they'll spoil the flowers, right? Iris, you are being overly cautious."

Although she said that she was being too cautious, she was instead implying that Iris was too stingy and petty, just so she could highlight how generous and capable she, Lauren, was instead.

A group of people from wealthy families gradually gathered around them. Everyone looked at Iris.

Iris, however, scoffed.

Was she trying to compete with her in terms of eloquence?

She wasn't someone who would take sh\*t from others!

Lauren had organized the orchid exhibition to suppress Iris' arrogance.

Back then, even though she had succeeded in changing her status from a homewrecker to the man's lawful wife, to be honest, she knew that there weren't many in the circle of wealthy ladies who approved of her. Everyone approved of Iris instead.

In that case, Lauren would outdo Iris in the latter's forte! This way, she could also show off in front of everyone else!

She said, "Iris, why are you keeping quiet? Are you upset? Well, that's true. There's no one in New York who doesn't know that you love orchids the most. By right, you should have been the one organizing the orchid exhibition instead, but because you didn't take any action, I found someone to do it instead... What a shame. I heard that you also have a pot of Ghost Orchids, so I even wanted to let everyone admire them!"

As soon as she said that, Iris looked at the people around her. She smiled and said, "The things you say are so ridiculous. Must I hold an orchid exhibition just because I like orchids? In that case, since Mrs. Lange likes diamonds, must she also hold a diamond exhibition? Since Mr. Sullivan likes antique paintings, should he open a museum then? These are just personal hobbies. On the other hand, why haven't I heard anything about you liking orchids before?"

Her few simple words had immediately suppressed Lauren.

How would the wealthy and the noble possibly take out whatever they liked and show them off to everyone? If they did that, then they wouldn't be showing off their wealth instead!

Lauren had made a mistake at a fundamental level, making her seem petty and cheap, and also making all the ladies look down on her. They had only attended the exhibition because of Matthew's Ghost Orchids.

After all, Matthew's Ghost Orchids really were a rare sight.

Iris's words had suppressed Lauren's momentum, causing everyone around them to laugh. They echoed Iris and said, "She's right, we are not frivolous people."

Showing off one's wealth for no reason would only arouse aversion and disgust from other people.

Moreover, even though Lauren wasn't an orchid lover, she had held an orchid exhibition. Iris had pointed out her objective.

Lauren clenched her fists in anger. She'd finally invited so many ladies to the exhibition today after much difficulty. Originally, she'd wanted to improve her position among the ladies, but little did she expect Iris to be so sharp-tongued!



Lauren lowered her head and smiled. "I certainly don't have any love for orchids, but don't forget that I am an alternative medicine practitioner. It's only because Matthew asked me to cure his flowers that I decided to hold the orchid exhibition. I found his Ghost Orchids such a rare sight and wanted everyone to see it! This way, everyone can also share their experience on growing orchids with one another along the way."

Her few simple words immediately made the rich ladies around them not dare to laugh at her anymore.

Everyone at the exhibition was a true flower lover. Was there anyone among them whose flowers would never have any problems? Should something go wrong, it would be great to have someone like Lauren help.

She could even cure Matthew's Ghost Orchids. Lauren was simply too skilled at curing orchids.

Someone immediately said, "Mrs. Hunt, you are so capable. You have even cured such a delicate flower that's so difficult to treat! It's amazing! By the way, my flowers have also met with a small problem. I wonder if I can ask you for some advice?"

Lauren smiled gently and replied, "Sure. In the first place, this orchid exhibition isn't meant for showing off; rather, it's to facilitate communication!"

With a few simple sentences, she had saved the scene again.

Some of the others walked over to Iris and said, "Mdm. Iris, come to think of it, that woman is actually quite capable. Her methods of curing the flowers' illnesses are very similar to Orchidance's. Everyone's privately speculating that Lauren may be Orchidance! Sometimes, for the sake of the orchids, we should bow down to others!"

"Yeah, she actually cured Matthew's Ghost Orchids. She's really very impressive."

Matthew's Ghost Orchids had been withering day by day for about half a month. He had been to many orchid masters to cure it, but it had barely seen any effect.

News of it had already spread in New York.

Through his Ghost Orchids, Lauren had made a name for herself.

At the mention of Orchidance, Iris subconsciously glanced at Nora. Then, she scoffed and said, “She’s no Orchidance. Compared with Orchidance, she is far inferior!”

The contempt in her words made the ladies look at one another. In the end, none of them dared to say anything. They could only smile awkwardly.

Lauren also heard her. At once, she narrowed her eyes and said, “Mdm. Iris, now that’s rather meaningless. Matthew had certainly wanted to approach Orchidance, but the problem is that Orchidance is so mysterious. No one knows who she is, let alone where to find her. I heard that she’s not even in the country, so it’s impossible for anyone to find her. I admit that my treatment methods are indeed imitating Orchidance’s, but am I wrong to diagnose and cure Matthew’s Ghost Orchids for him?”

The place was silent.

No one there dared to offend Iris-after all, she was Justin’s mother. Although they weren’t on good terms with each other, it was said that Justin would still specially visit the suburban villa every month.

Besides, no matter how bad their relationship was, Justin would never sit by and watch other people bully his mother.

Therefore, no one defended Lauren. However, Lauren could cure orchids’ illnesses. Everyone there was an orchid lover, so none of them dared to offend Lauren either.

For a while, no one said anything.

Iris’ lip corners, however, curled into a smile. Although she hadn’t asked Nora just now if she was really Orchidance, it had given her confidence.

She looked at Lauren and said, “What’s the big deal about being able to cure orchids? My daughter-in-law can also do it!”

She looked at Nora with a proud look on her face.

When Lauren heard this, she looked at Nora.

A moment later...

“Pft.”

She let out a soft laugh.

After she laughed, Lauren said, “Sorry, I really couldn’t help it. Mdm. Iris, what you said is really funny. I know Ms. Smith is the great Dr. Zabe’s disciple, and I also know that she is Anti the famous surgeon, but neither of those titles is related to orchids. Mdm. Iris, surely you don’t think that every alternative medicine practitioner can cure orchids, right? Flowers are different from humans!”

Iris also smiled when she heard her. “Of course I know that. It’s just that my daughter-in-law happens to have studied orchids a little before. In fact, she is…”

Before she could say “Orchidiance”, Lauren interrupted her. “Is that so? Then why don’t you come over and have a look at Matthew’s Ghost Orchids, Ms. Smith? You should know that pot of Ghost Orchid’s prior condition, right? Can you cure it?”

Nora glanced at it and said calmly, “Yes.”

As soon as Lauren wanted to reply, Iris took out a piece of paper. “This is the prescription that my daughter-in-law wrote for that pot of Ghost Orchids. You can take a look at it!”

“Does Ms. Smith really know how to cure orchids?”

“If you think about it, there’s a chance that she does. Ms. Smith is the best alternative medicine practitioner after all!”

Once Lauren lost the advantage of being able to cure orchids’ illnesses, the people around them immediately dared to speak up for Iris.

When Lauren heard them, she immediately took the prescription from Iris. After she glanced at it, she said, “Iris, Matthew must have told you about this prescription, right? This is exactly the same as mine! It’s just a pity that even if you’ve made a copy, you left out one ingredient!”

“She didn’t leave it out.” Nora said unhurriedly, “It’s because the prescription doesn’t need that ingredient. Orchids are delicate flowers. The ingredient you added will hurt it.”

“It’ll hurt it? No way.” Lauren said confidently, “That ingredient is supposed to revive a plant’s shine and glow, so how could it possibly be harmful? What’s more, that pot of Ghost Orchids is being displayed so vividly and vibrantly in front of everyone right now. Everyone can see for themselves the flowers’ current condition. In just a day, it has regained its vitality. Ms. Smith, you are being too dogmatic!”

Nora looked at the pot of flowers. “Affliction of diseases makes one collapse like a mountain, and the treatment of diseased areas is akin to trying to extract strands of silk from one another. The usage of such strong medication will only keep the orchid alive for a while but make it wilt even faster. As an alternative medicine practitioner, surely you don’t need me to teach you something like that, right?”

Lauren: “?”

Her understatement-like way of talking made Lauren angry. She said, “Ms. Smith, I know that you are Justin’s wife. There’s nothing wrong with protecting and defending your mother-in-law, but even so, you can’t just speak so carelessly like that. This ingredient is certainly a little strong, but I’ve already tested it on other orchids before. There won’t be any problems in the future! Facts speak louder than words. I know that you are an alternative medicine practitioner, but alternative medicine requires many years of practice to accumulate experience. From what I see, you don’t give medical consultations very often, so you’re probably not very experienced when it comes to the practical aspect, right? Besides, humans are different from flowers. I have treated a lot of flowers and gone through a lot before I gained experience. What about you?”

When Nora heard this, she said calmly, “Then let’s make a bet.”

“What do you want to bet on?” Lauren asked.

Nora looked at the pot of Ghost Orchids and answered, “That problems will definitely occur with this pot of flowers within an hour.”

Lauren scoffed. “Ms. Smith, stop joking. How can that be? I’ve already cured that pot of flowers! How can anything go wrong with it when it’s so filled with vitality? But since you’ve said so, then okay, I accept the bet, Ms. Smith. If nothing goes wrong with the flowers, then I hope Mr. Hunt can allow Herman and I to return to the Hunt Manor and stay there.”

Nora's lips curled into a smile. "Okay. If something goes wrong with the flowers, then I want you to apologize for wrecking someone else's marriage back then!"

Lauren's pupils shrank.

The biggest humiliation of her life was when she involved herself with Herman's marriage and became the third party persecuted by everyone. Whenever people talked about her these days, they always called her the homewrecker who had successfully become the lawful wife.

Yet Nora had brought it up in public in front of everyone. It was simply infuriating.

There was anger all over Lauren's face. She demanded, "What's the meaning of this, Ms. Smith?"

"You don't dare to make the bet with me?"

Nora raised her brows.

Pushed into a corner, the angry and anxious Lauren could only say, "Fine."

She clenched her fists tightly.

In order to return to the Hunt Manor, as well as to return to the pinnacle of status in New York, she was really holding nothing back. When she thought about it carefully, though, nothing could go wrong with that pot of flowers anyway. Nora was at a complete disadvantage when she made the bet with her.

To be honest, the moment Nora said that the ingredient was too strong, Lauren had already felt a little guilty. She'd actually had some takeaways from her time studying medicine abroad over the years.

However, she strongly believed that even if something were to really go wrong, it would only happen at a later stage.

It was impossible for that to happen within an hour.

She was sure to win the bet.

When she thought about it this way, Lauren didn't feel so unhappy anymore because the bet was clearly to Nora's disadvantage.

After the two parties made the bet, Lauren summoned some people and instructed, "Keep a close watch on this pot of Ghost Orchids. If anything goes wrong, you must notify me immediately!"

No matter how rare the Ghost Orchids were, they were nothing more than a pot of flowers for Lauren. What she cared about was not the flowers but winning the bet.

She spoke very loudly, everyone heard her. Lauren explained with a smile, "We've already made the bet, after all. I'm just afraid someone would deliberately spoil the flowers within the hour because they are sore losers. It would be terrible if people refuse to pay up when that happens."

Iris, however, ignored her. Instead, she pulled Nora to the side, lowered her voice, and asked, "Tell me the truth, are you Orchidance?"

Nora's lips curled into a smile and she nodded.

Iris: "..."

She stared at Nora with a dazed look on her face. "Orchidance is the only person capable of curing Matthew's flowers, why didn't I think of that? No, it's because you are too young. I didn't expect Orchidance to be so young, I always thought that she would be as old as me, or perhaps even older."

Nora looked at her.

After speaking, Iris's immediate thought was not that she now had someone to treat the flowers in her greenhouse, if anything ever happened to them.

On the contrary, she heaved a huge sigh.

She said, "I originally thought that there are only so few people in this world who can cure Matthew's Ghost Orchids because those flowers are really very difficult to treat. When you said that you can cure them, I thought that you were just taking a gamble. But I didn't expect that what was just a one in ten thousand probability for me, would instead be a 100% sure-win probability for you." Nora replied, "Therefore, you have to tell your story now."

Iris was taken aback for a moment. In the end, she waved and said, “Ah well, never mind, this is all meant to be!”

She had also thought things through herself. By taking a gambler’s mentality with this, she was also just trying to give herself a ray of hope in the future.

She didn’t want to age and die in that suburban villa and be separated from Justin for the rest of her life, either.

All of this had been predestined a long time ago, that was all.

She said, “I hope the two of you won’t hate me after you hear my story.”

Back then, she had shielded Justin from everything. Now that her son had grown up, it was ultimately time that he paid his debt.

Iris sighed.

Nora patted her shoulder. “We’re not afraid.”

When one was young, their mother was an almighty figure that shielded them from everything. Now that they had grown up, they were willing to be that almighty figure for their mother.

The two chatted for nearly an hour. When the hour passed after they made the bet, Lauren glanced at the orchid. When she saw that it was still blooming beautifully, she heaved a sigh of relief at once.

She then went up to Iris and Nora. “Ms. Smith, you’ve lost.”

Nora looked at her. “There are still two minutes to an hour.”

Lauren smiled and said, “There are only two minutes left, but that pot of flowers is now blooming even more beautifully than before. There is no risk of it wilting at all, so you two are losing for sure.”

“That’s not necessarily true.”

Nora stood up and looked down at the time on her cell phone.

Lauren curled her lips disdainfully and said, “Ms. Smith, to be honest, we are all family. How can there be any grudges among family? Why do we have to draw such a clear line between us? Why don’t we just forget about the bet?”

Lest it reflects poorly on us. I'm not someone who would hold grudges against my young ones either. The old madam is getting on in years, though. Herman has always wanted to be filial to his mother and be by her side, so let's not have the Hunts stop him anymore..."

As soon as she said that, a security guard rushed over in a panic and said, "Mrs. Hunt, this is terrible!"

Lauren was taken aback. She turned around and saw that the security guard was actually the one whom she had instructed to keep a close watch over the Ghost Orchids just now!

Lauren frowned. "What are you doing? This is outrageous, why are you in such a panic?!"

The next moment, the security guard said, "The Ghost Orchids are dead!"

## **Chapter 658 - The Plan of Saving Nora Novel Free**

By then, Nora had already set her cell phone number as an unknown caller. Then, she keyed in the string of numbers that had been displayed on Iris's cell phone just now.

She had a photographic memory, so she had memorized the phone number with just a single glance.

Nora then handed her cell phone to Justin.

Justin dialed the number without hesitation.

The other party quickly picked up. A man's voice came through the phone: "Hello?"

A prompt and decisive Justin asked, "Who are you?"

The other party was silent for a while. Then, he let out a low chuckle and hung up without saying anything else.

Justin: !!



Inexplicably, what Herman had said about Iris cheating on him flashed past his mind.

He frowned.

Nora also frowned. "He kept the call time within fifteen seconds, I can't trace his location."

Justin took a deep breath. "Don't bother anymore."

Nora looked at him.

Justin said, "I won't ask anymore. I'll wait for her to tell me everything herself."

He didn't want to investigate anymore.

He had suddenly realized something because there were always people trying to sabotage his investigations, it would inevitably lead to unnecessary misunderstandings.

Nora knew what he was thinking. She gave him a thumbs-up right away and said, "Yup, that's the way. You're family, so you shouldn't harbor suspicions about each other. Besides, from what I saw just now, Iris... I mean, your mother didn't change her mind just because of that call."

Justin nodded.

Iris wasn't a weakling or a pushover.

She had taught Justin to be strong and aggressive since he was a child. This was also why Justin hadn't believed Herman's nonsense.

How could Iris possibly be someone who easily accepted fate?

If she really had a lover, then she would definitely have tried to think of ways to spend the rest of her life with him instead of wasting her youth away here.

The next day.

Nora drove to the suburban villa early in the morning.

Iris had dressed up for the occasion and was wearing an elegant and beautiful white fitted dress. She got into the car after she left the house.

The woman didn't look at all like she was nearly fifty years old. After dressing up, she was dazzling and graceful. Her figure was curvy, and coupled with her fair skin, it was only when one looked closely that one would see any wrinkles on her face. With the way she looked as she stood there, some people might believe it if one said that she was only twenty years old. Nora raised her eyebrows and formed a heart with her hands at Iris.

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Iris got into the car, and the two headed straight to the orchid exhibition.

Lauren's orchid exhibition was held at a hotel in central New York. The orchids she borrowed from various families had all been placed on shelves.

At a glance, there were all kinds of orchids that one could ever think of.

In the most eye-catching position was Matthew's Ghost Orchid.

The Ghost Orchids were very rare, so they had occupied the central position of the orchid exhibition.

After Nora and Iris got out of the car and entered the hall with the invitation, they immediately noticed the pot of Ghost Orchids.

When Iris saw the orchids, she exclaimed, "Lauren has really cured that pot of Ghost Orchids. They look so full of vigor."

Only then did Nora reveal something: "There is a problem with her prescription."

Iris, who was a little taken aback, looked at Nora.

Nora whispered, "Her prescription has one more ingredient than mine. That herb is too powerful. It can quickly allow orchids to look energetic and filled with vigor, but over time, even bigger problems will appear. It's just like how humans suddenly become very energetic before they pass away. Going by how much time has passed since the medicine was given to the Ghost Orchids yesterday, the Ghost Orchids will wither after another half an hour. In the first place, there are a lot of restrictions when it comes to using drugs on plants. Those who are not proficient in it really shouldn't do it."

Iris was dumbfounded. She couldn't help but say, "Orchidance has also said that before, and told everyone not to imitate them. Aren't you also imitating Orchidance, though?"

Nora raised her eyebrows. Suddenly, her lips curled into a smile and she replied, "Who says I'm imitating Orchidance?"

Iris: "???"

Then, as though she had realized something, she looked at Nora in astonishment.

Could it be... that Nora was none other than Orchidance?!

Just as she was about to speak, Lauren entered the hall and said with a smile, "Iris, you're here! Did you bring any orchids with you today?"

Iris immediately reined in the complicated look she was giving Nora. She looked at Lauren and replied, "No."

"You didn't?"

Lauren was shocked. "It is written on my invitation that everyone who comes to the orchid exhibition should bring a pot of flowers, so that everyone can appreciate and admire each other's flowers."

After she spoke, Lauren sighed silently and said, "Iris, surely it's not because you can't bear to show us your flowers, right? I have heard that you have gathered a lot of rare orchids in your private collection over the years! I am holding this orchid exhibition precisely because I hope that orchid lovers can gather and share their joy with each other. In fact, an orchid exhibition like this should have been held long ago. What's the point of hiding and keeping all the good things to ourselves? Everyone here is an orchid lover, it's not like they'll spoil the flowers, right? Iris, you are being overly cautious."

Although she said that she was being too cautious, she was instead implying that Iris was too stingy and petty, just so she could highlight how generous and capable she, Lauren, was instead.

A group of people from wealthy families gradually gathered around them. Everyone looked at Iris.

Iris, however, scoffed.

Was she trying to compete with her in terms of eloquence?

She wasn't someone who would take sh\*t from others!

Lauren had organized the orchid exhibition to suppress Iris' arrogance.

Back then, even though she had succeeded in changing her status from a homewrecker to the man's lawful wife, to be honest, she knew that there weren't many in the circle of wealthy ladies who approved of her. Everyone approved of Iris instead.

In that case, Lauren would outdo Iris in the latter's forte! This way, she could also show off in front of everyone else!

She said, "Iris, why are you keeping quiet? Are you upset? Well, that's true. There's no one in New York who doesn't know that you love orchids the most. By right, you should have been the one organizing the orchid exhibition instead, but because you didn't take any action, I found someone to do it instead... What a shame. I heard that you also have a pot of Ghost Orchids, so I even wanted to let everyone admire them!"

As soon as she said that, Iris looked at the people around her. She smiled and said, "The things you say are so ridiculous. Must I hold an orchid exhibition just because I like orchids? In that case, since Mrs. Lange likes diamonds, must she also hold a diamond exhibition? Since Mr. Sullivan likes antique paintings, should he open a museum then? These are just personal hobbies. On the other hand, why haven't I heard anything about you liking orchids before?"

Her few simple words had immediately suppressed Lauren.

How would the wealthy and the noble possibly take out whatever they liked and show them off to everyone? If they did that, then they wouldn't be showing off their wealth instead!

Lauren had made a mistake at a fundamental level, making her seem petty and cheap, and also making all the ladies look down on her. They had only attended the exhibition because of Matthew's Ghost Orchids.

After all, Matthew's Ghost Orchids really were a rare sight.

Iris's words had suppressed Lauren's momentum, causing everyone around them to laugh. They echoed Iris and said, "She's right, we are not frivolous people."

Showing off one's wealth for no reason would only arouse aversion and disgust from other people.

Moreover, even though Lauren wasn't an orchid lover, she had held an orchid exhibition. Iris had pointed out her objective.

Lauren clenched her fists in anger. She'd finally invited so many ladies to the exhibition today after much difficulty. Originally, she'd wanted to improve her position among the ladies, but little did she expect Iris to be so sharp-tongued!

Lauren lowered her head and smiled. "I certainly don't have any love for orchids, but don't forget that I am an alternative medicine practitioner. It's only because Matthew asked me to cure his flowers that I decided to hold the orchid exhibition. I found his Ghost Orchids such a rare sight and wanted everyone to see it! This way, everyone can also share their experience on growing orchids with one another along the way."

Her few simple words immediately made the rich ladies around them not dare to laugh at her anymore.

Everyone at the exhibition was a true flower lover. Was there anyone among them whose flowers would never have any problems? Should something go wrong, it would be great to have someone like Lauren help.

She could even cure Matthew's Ghost Orchids. Lauren was simply too skilled at curing orchids.

Someone immediately said, "Mrs. Hunt, you are so capable. You have even cured such a delicate flower that's so difficult to treat! It's amazing! By the way, my flowers have also met with a small problem. I wonder if I can ask you for some advice?"

Lauren smiled gently and replied, "Sure. In the first place, this orchid exhibition isn't meant for showing off; rather, it's to facilitate communication!"

With a few simple sentences, she had saved the scene again.

Some of the others walked over to Iris and said, "Mdm. Iris, come to think of it, that woman is actually quite capable. Her methods of curing the flowers' illnesses are very similar to Orchidance's. Everyone's privately speculating that Lauren may be Orchidance! Sometimes, for the sake of the orchids, we should bow down to others!"

"Yeah, she actually cured Matthew's Ghost Orchids. She's really very impressive."

Matthew's Ghost Orchids had been withering day by day for about half a month. He had been to many orchid masters to cure it, but it had barely seen any effect.

News of it had already spread in New York.

Through his Ghost Orchids, Lauren had made a name for herself.

At the mention of Orchidance, Iris subconsciously glanced at Nora. Then, she scoffed and said, "She's no Orchidance. Compared with Orchidance, she is far inferior!"

The contempt in her words made the ladies look at one another. In the end, none of them dared to say anything. They could only smile awkwardly.

Lauren also heard her. At once, she narrowed her eyes and said, "Mdm. Iris, now that's rather meaningless. Matthew had certainly wanted to approach Orchidance, but the problem is that Orchidance is so mysterious. No one knows who she is, let alone where to find her. I heard that she's not even in the country, so it's impossible for anyone to find her. I admit that my treatment methods are indeed imitating Orchidance's, but am I wrong to diagnose and cure Matthew's Ghost Orchids for him?"

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No one there dared to offend Iris-after all, she was Justin's mother. Although they weren't on good terms with each other, it was said that Justin would still specially visit the suburban villa every month.

Besides, no matter how bad their relationship was, Justin would never sit by and watch other people bully his mother.

Therefore, no one defended Lauren. However, Lauren could cure orchids' illnesses. Everyone there was an orchid lover, so none of them dared to offend Lauren either.

For a while, no one said anything.

Iris' lip corners, however, curled into a smile. Although she hadn't asked Nora just now if she was really Orchidance, it had given her confidence.

She looked at Lauren and said, "What's the big deal about being able to cure orchids? My daughter-in-law can also do it!"

She looked at Nora with a proud look on her face.

When Lauren heard this, she looked at Nora.

A moment later...

"Pft."

She let out a soft laugh.

After she laughed, Lauren said, "Sorry, I really couldn't help it. Mdm. Iris, what you said is really funny. I know Ms. Smith is the great Dr. Zabe's disciple, and I also know that she is Anti the famous surgeon, but neither of those titles is related to orchids. Mdm. Iris, surely you don't think that every alternative medicine practitioner can cure orchids, right? Flowers are different from humans!"

Iris also smiled when she heard her. "Of course I know that. It's just that my daughter-in-law happens to have studied orchids a little before. In fact, she is..."

Before she could say "Orchidance", Lauren interrupted her. "Is that so? Then why don't you come over and have a look at Matthew's Ghost Orchids, Ms. Smith? You should know that pot of Ghost Orchid's prior condition, right? Can you cure it?"

Nora glanced at it and said calmly, "Yes."

As soon as Lauren wanted to reply, Iris took out a piece of paper. "This is the prescription that my daughter-in-law wrote for that pot of Ghost Orchids. You can take a look at it!"

“Does Ms. Smith really know how to cure orchids?”

“If you think about it, there’s a chance that she does. Ms. Smith is the best alternative medicine practitioner after all!”

Once Lauren lost the advantage of being able to cure orchids’ illnesses, the people around them immediately dared to speak up for Iris.

When Lauren heard them, she immediately took the prescription from Iris. After she glanced at it, she said, “Iris, Matthew must have told you about this prescription, right? This is exactly the same as mine! It’s just a pity that even if you’ve made a copy, you left out one ingredient!”

“She didn’t leave it out.” Nora said unhurriedly, “It’s because the prescription doesn’t need that ingredient. Orchids are delicate flowers. The ingredient you added will hurt it.”

“It’ll hurt it? No way.” Lauren said confidently, “That ingredient is supposed to revive a plant’s shine and glow, so how could it possibly be harmful? What’s more, that pot of Ghost Orchids is being displayed so vividly and vibrantly in front of everyone right now. Everyone can see for themselves the flowers’ current condition. In just a day, it has regained its vitality. Ms. Smith, you are being too dogmatic!”

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Lauren: “?”

Her understatement-like way of talking made Lauren angry. She said, “Ms. Smith, I know that you are Justin’s wife. There’s nothing wrong with protecting and defending your mother-in-law, but even so, you can’t just speak so carelessly like that. This ingredient is certainly a little strong, but I’ve already tested it on other orchids before. There won’t be any problems in the future! Facts speak louder than words. I know that you are an alternative medicine practitioner, but alternative medicine requires many years of practice to accumulate experience. From what I see, you don’t give medical consultations very often, so you’re probably not very experienced when it comes to the



practical aspect, right? Besides, humans are different from flowers. I have treated a lot of flowers and gone through a lot before I gained experience. What about you?"

When Nora heard this, she said calmly, "Then let's make a bet."

"What do you want to bet on?" Lauren asked.

Nora looked at the pot of Ghost Orchids and answered, "That problems will definitely occur with this pot of flowers within an hour."

Lauren scoffed. "Ms. Smith, stop joking. How can that be? I've already cured that pot of flowers! How can anything go wrong with it when it's so filled with vitality? But since you've said so, then okay, I accept the bet, Ms. Smith. If nothing goes wrong with the flowers, then I hope Mr. Hunt can allow Herman and I to return to the Hunt Manor and stay there."

Nora's lips curled into a smile. "Okay. If something goes wrong with the flowers, then I want you to apologize for wrecking someone else's marriage back then!"

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The biggest humiliation of her life was when she involved herself with Herman's marriage and became the third party persecuted by everyone. Whenever people talked about her these days, they always called her the homewrecker who had successfully become the lawful wife.

Yet Nora had brought it up in public in front of everyone. It was simply infuriating.

There was anger all over Lauren's face. She demanded, "What's the meaning of this, Ms. Smith?"

"You don't dare to make the bet with me?"

Nora raised her brows.

Pushed into a corner, the angry and anxious Lauren could only say, "Fine."

She clenched her fists tightly.

In order to return to the Hunt Manor, as well as to return to the pinnacle of status in New York, she was really holding nothing back. When she thought about it carefully, though, nothing could go wrong with that pot of flowers anyway. Nora was at a complete disadvantage when she made the bet with her.

To be honest, the moment Nora said that the ingredient was too strong, Lauren had already felt a little guilty. She'd actually had some takeaways from her time studying medicine abroad over the years.

However, she strongly believed that even if something were to really go wrong, it would only happen at a later stage.

It was impossible for that to happen within an hour.

She was sure to win the bet.

When she thought about it this way, Lauren didn't feel so unhappy anymore because the bet was clearly to Nora's disadvantage.

After the two parties made the bet, Lauren summoned some people and instructed, "Keep a close watch on this pot of Ghost Orchids. If anything goes wrong, you must notify me immediately!"

No matter how rare the Ghost Orchids were, they were nothing more than a pot of flowers for Lauren. What she cared about was not the flowers but winning the bet.

She spoke very loudly, everyone heard her. Lauren explained with a smile, "We've already made the bet, after all. I'm just afraid someone would deliberately spoil the flowers within the hour because they are sore losers. It would be terrible if people refuse to pay up when that happens."

Iris, however, ignored her. Instead, she pulled Nora to the side, lowered her voice, and asked, "Tell me the truth, are you Orchidance?"

Nora's lips curled into a smile and she nodded.

Iris: "..."

She stared at Nora with a dazed look on her face. "Orchidance is the only person capable of curing Matthew's flowers, why didn't I think of that? No, it's

because you are too young. I didn't expect Orchidance to be so young, I always thought that she would be as old as me, or perhaps even older."

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She had also thought things through herself. By taking a gambler's mentality with this, she was also just trying to give herself a ray of hope in the future.

She didn't want to age and die in that suburban villa and be separated from Justin for the rest of her life, either.

All of this had been predestined a long time ago, that was all.

She said, "I hope the two of you won't hate me after you hear my story."

Back then, she had shielded Justin from everything. Now that her son had grown up, it was ultimately time that he paid his debt.

Iris sighed.

Nora patted her shoulder. "We're not afraid."

When one was young, their mother was an almighty figure that shielded them from everything. Now that they had grown up, they were willing to be that almighty figure for their mother.

The two chatted for nearly an hour. When the hour passed after they made the bet, Lauren glanced at the orchid. When she saw that it was still blooming beautifully, she heaved a sigh of relief at once.

She then went up to Iris and Nora. “Ms. Smith, you’ve lost.”

Nora looked at her. “There are still two minutes to an hour.”

Lauren smiled and said, “There are only two minutes left, but that pot of flowers is now blooming even more beautifully than before. There is no risk of it wilting at all, so you two are losing for sure.”

“That’s not necessarily true.”

Nora stood up and looked down at the time on her cell phone.

Lauren curled her lips disdainfully and said, “Ms. Smith, to be honest, we are all family. How can there be any grudges among family? Why do we have to draw such a clear line between us? Why don’t we just forget about the bet? Lest it reflects poorly on us. I’m not someone who would hold grudges against my young ones either. The old madam is getting on in years, though. Herman has always wanted to be filial to his mother and be by her side, so let’s not have the Hunts stop him anymore...”

As soon as she said that, a security guard rushed over in a panic and said, “Mrs. Hunt, this is terrible!”

Lauren was taken aback. She turned around and saw that the security guard was actually the one whom she had instructed to keep a close watch over the Ghost Orchids just now!

Lauren frowned. “What are you doing? This is outrageous, why are you in such a panic?!”

The next moment, the security guard said, “The Ghost Orchids are dead!”

## **Chapter 659 - The Plan of Saving Nora Novel Free**

Lauren had organized the orchid exhibition to suppress Iris’ arrogance.

Back then, even though she had succeeded in changing her status from a homewrecker to the man’s lawful wife, to be honest, she knew that there

weren't many in the circle of wealthy ladies who approved of her. Everyone approved of Iris instead.

In that case, Lauren would outdo Iris in the latter's forte! This way, she could also show off in front of everyone else!

She said, "Iris, why are you keeping quiet? Are you upset? Well, that's true. There's no one in New York who doesn't know that you love orchids the most. By right, you should have been the one organizing the orchid exhibition instead, but because you didn't take any action, I found someone to do it instead... What a shame. I heard that you also have a pot of Ghost Orchids, so I even wanted to let everyone admire them!"

As soon as she said that, Iris looked at the people around her. She smiled and said, "The things you say are so ridiculous. Must I hold an orchid exhibition just because I like orchids? In that case, since Mrs. Lange likes diamonds, must she also hold a diamond exhibition? Since Mr. Sullivan likes antique paintings, should he open a museum then? These are just personal hobbies. On the other hand, why haven't I heard anything about you liking orchids before?"

Her few simple words had immediately suppressed Lauren.

How would the wealthy and the noble possibly take out whatever they liked and show them off to everyone? If they did that, then they wouldn't be showing off their wealth instead!

Lauren had made a mistake at a fundamental level, making her seem petty and cheap, and also making all the ladies look down on her. They had only attended the exhibition because of Matthew's Ghost Orchids.

After all, Matthew's Ghost Orchids really were a rare sight.

Iris's words had suppressed Lauren's momentum, causing everyone around them to laugh. They echoed Iris and said, "She's right, we are not frivolous people."

Showing off one's wealth for no reason would only arouse aversion and disgust from other people.

Moreover, even though Lauren wasn't an orchid lover, she had held an orchid exhibition. Iris had pointed out her objective.

Lauren clenched her fists in anger. She'd finally invited so many ladies to the exhibition today after much difficulty. Originally, she'd wanted to improve her position among the ladies, but little did she expect Iris to be so sharp-tongued!

Lauren lowered her head and smiled. "I certainly don't have any love for orchids, but don't forget that I am an alternative medicine practitioner. It's only because Matthew asked me to cure his flowers that I decided to hold the orchid exhibition. I found his Ghost Orchids such a rare sight and wanted everyone to see it! This way, everyone can also share their experience on growing orchids with one another along the way."

Her few simple words immediately made the rich ladies around them not dare to laugh at her anymore.

Everyone at the exhibition was a true flower lover. Was there anyone among them whose flowers would never have any problems? Should something go wrong, it would be great to have someone like Lauren help.

She could even cure Matthew's Ghost Orchids. Lauren was simply too skilled at curing orchids.

Someone immediately said, "Mrs. Hunt, you are so capable. You have even cured such a delicate flower that's so difficult to treat! It's amazing! By the way, my flowers have also met with a small problem. I wonder if I can ask you for some advice?"

Lauren smiled gently and replied, "Sure. In the first place, this orchid exhibition isn't meant for showing off; rather, it's to facilitate communication!"

With a few simple sentences, she had saved the scene again.

Some of the others walked over to Iris and said, "Mdm. Iris, come to think of it, that woman is actually quite capable. Her methods of curing the flowers' illnesses are very similar to Orchidance's. Everyone's privately speculating that Lauren may be Orchidance! Sometimes, for the sake of the orchids, we should bow down to others!"

"Yeah, she actually cured Matthew's Ghost Orchids. She's really very impressive."

Matthew's Ghost Orchids had been withering day by day for about half a month. He had been to many orchid masters to cure it, but it had barely seen any effect.

News of it had already spread in New York.

Through his Ghost Orchids, Lauren had made a name for herself.

At the mention of Orchidance, Iris subconsciously glanced at Nora. Then, she scoffed and said, "She's no Orchidance. Compared with Orchidance, she is far inferior!"

The contempt in her words made the ladies look at one another. In the end, none of them dared to say anything. They could only smile awkwardly.

Lauren also heard her. At once, she narrowed her eyes and said, "Mdm. Iris, now that's rather meaningless. Matthew had certainly wanted to approach Orchidance, but the problem is that Orchidance is so mysterious. No one knows who she is, let alone where to find her. I heard that she's not even in the country, so it's impossible for anyone to find her. I admit that my treatment methods are indeed imitating Orchidance's, but am I wrong to diagnose and cure Matthew's Ghost Orchids for him?"

The place was silent.

No one there dared to offend Iris-after all, she was Justin's mother. Although they weren't on good terms with each other, it was said that Justin would still specially visit the suburban villa every month.

Besides, no matter how bad their relationship was, Justin would never sit by and watch other people bully his mother.

Therefore, no one defended Lauren. However, Lauren could cure orchids' illnesses. Everyone there was an orchid lover, so none of them dared to offend Lauren either.

For a while, no one said anything.

Iris' lip corners, however, curled into a smile. Although she hadn't asked Nora just now if she was really Orchidance, it had given her confidence.

She looked at Lauren and said, “What’s the big deal about being able to cure orchids? My daughter-in-law can also do it!”

She looked at Nora with a proud look on her face.

When Lauren heard this, she looked at Nora.

A moment later...

“Pft.”

She let out a soft laugh.

After she laughed, Lauren said, “Sorry, I really couldn’t help it. Mdm. Iris, what you said is really funny. I know Ms. Smith is the great Dr. Zabe’s disciple, and I also know that she is Anti the famous surgeon, but neither of those titles is related to orchids. Mdm. Iris, surely you don’t think that every alternative medicine practitioner can cure orchids, right? Flowers are different from humans!”

Iris also smiled when she heard her. “Of course I know that. It’s just that my daughter-in-law happens to have studied orchids a little before. In fact, she is...”

Before she could say “Orchidiance”, Lauren interrupted her. “Is that so? Then why don’t you come over and have a look at Matthew’s Ghost Orchids, Ms. Smith? You should know that pot of Ghost Orchid’s prior condition, right? Can you cure it?”

Nora glanced at it and said calmly, “Yes.”

As soon as Lauren wanted to reply, Iris took out a piece of paper. “This is the prescription that my daughter-in-law wrote for that pot of Ghost Orchids. You can take a look at it!”

“Does Ms. Smith really know how to cure orchids?”

“If you think about it, there’s a chance that she does. Ms. Smith is the best alternative medicine practitioner after all!”

Once Lauren lost the advantage of being able to cure orchids’ illnesses, the people around them immediately dared to speak up for Iris.



When Lauren heard them, she immediately took the prescription from Iris. After she glanced at it, she said, "Iris, Matthew must have told you about this prescription, right? This is exactly the same as mine! It's just a pity that even if you've made a copy, you left out one ingredient!"

"She didn't leave it out." Nora said unhurriedly, "It's because the prescription doesn't need that ingredient. Orchids are delicate flowers. The ingredient you added will hurt it."

"It'll hurt it? No way." Lauren said confidently, "That ingredient is supposed to revive a plant's shine and glow, so how could it possibly be harmful? What's more, that pot of Ghost Orchids is being displayed so vividly and vibrantly in front of everyone right now. Everyone can see for themselves the flowers' current condition. In just a day, it has regained its vitality. Ms. Smith, you are being too dogmatic!"

Nora looked at the pot of flowers. "Affliction of diseases makes one collapse like a mountain, and the treatment of diseased areas is akin to trying to extract strands of silk from one another. The usage of such strong medication will only keep the orchid alive for a while but make it wilt even faster. As an alternative medicine practitioner, surely you don't need me to teach you something like that, right?"

Lauren: "?"

Her understatement-like way of talking made Lauren angry. She said, "Ms. Smith, I know that you are Justin's wife. There's nothing wrong with protecting and defending your mother-in-law, but even so, you can't just speak so carelessly like that. This ingredient is certainly a little strong, but I've already tested it on other orchids before. There won't be any problems in the future! Facts speak louder than words. I know that you are an alternative medicine practitioner, but alternative medicine requires many years of practice to accumulate experience. From what I see, you don't give medical consultations very often, so you're probably not very experienced when it comes to the practical aspect, right? Besides, humans are different from flowers. I have treated a lot of flowers and gone through a lot before I gained experience. What about you?"

When Nora heard this, she said calmly, "Then let's make a bet."

"What do you want to bet on?" Lauren asked.

Nora looked at the pot of Ghost Orchids and answered, "That problems will definitely occur with this pot of flowers within an hour."

Lauren scoffed. "Ms. Smith, stop joking. How can that be? I've already cured that pot of flowers! How can anything go wrong with it when it's so filled with vitality? But since you've said so, then okay, I accept the bet, Ms. Smith. If nothing goes wrong with the flowers, then I hope Mr. Hunt can allow Herman and I to return to the Hunt Manor and stay there."

Nora's lips curled into a smile. "Okay. If something goes wrong with the flowers, then I want you to apologize for wrecking someone else's marriage back then!"

Lauren's pupils shrank.

The biggest humiliation of her life was when she involved herself with Herman's marriage and became the third party persecuted by everyone. Whenever people talked about her these days, they always called her the homewrecker who had successfully become the lawful wife.

Yet Nora had brought it up in public in front of everyone. It was simply infuriating.

There was anger all over Lauren's face. She demanded, "What's the meaning of this, Ms. Smith?"

"You don't dare to make the bet with me?"

Nora raised her brows.

Pushed into a corner, the angry and anxious Lauren could only say, "Fine."

She clenched her fists tightly.

In order to return to the Hunt Manor, as well as to return to the pinnacle of status in New York, she was really holding nothing back. When she thought about it carefully, though, nothing could go wrong with that pot of flowers anyway. Nora was at a complete disadvantage when she made the bet with her.

To be honest, the moment Nora said that the ingredient was too strong, Lauren had already felt a little guilty. She'd actually had some takeaways from her time studying medicine abroad over the years.

However, she strongly believed that even if something were to really go wrong, it would only happen at a later stage.

It was impossible for that to happen within an hour.

She was sure to win the bet.

When she thought about it this way, Lauren didn't feel so unhappy anymore because the bet was clearly to Nora's disadvantage.

After the two parties made the bet, Lauren summoned some people and instructed, "Keep a close watch on this pot of Ghost Orchids. If anything goes wrong, you must notify me immediately!"

No matter how rare the Ghost Orchids were, they were nothing more than a pot of flowers for Lauren. What she cared about was not the flowers but winning the bet.

She spoke very loudly, everyone heard her. Lauren explained with a smile, "We've already made the bet, after all. I'm just afraid someone would deliberately spoil the flowers within the hour because they are sore losers. It would be terrible if people refuse to pay up when that happens."

Iris, however, ignored her. Instead, she pulled Nora to the side, lowered her voice, and asked, "Tell me the truth, are you Orchidance?"

Nora's lips curled into a smile and she nodded.

Iris: "..."

She stared at Nora with a dazed look on her face. "Orchidance is the only person capable of curing Matthew's flowers, why didn't I think of that? No, it's because you are too young. I didn't expect Orchidance to be so young, I always thought that she would be as old as me, or perhaps even older."

Nora looked at her.

After speaking, Iris's immediate thought was not that she now had someone to treat the flowers in her greenhouse, if anything ever happened to them.

On the contrary, she heaved a huge sigh.

She said, "I originally thought that there are only so few people in this world who can cure Matthew's Ghost Orchids because those flowers are really very difficult to treat. When you said that you can cure them, I thought that you were just taking a gamble. But I didn't expect that what was just a one in ten thousand probability for me, would instead be a 100% sure-win probability for you." Nora replied, "Therefore, you have to tell your story now."

Iris was taken aback for a moment. In the end, she waved and said, "Ah well, never mind, this is all meant to be!"

She had also thought things through herself. By taking a gambler's mentality with this, she was also just trying to give herself a ray of hope in the future.

She didn't want to age and die in that suburban villa and be separated from Justin for the rest of her life, either.

All of this had been predestined a long time ago, that was all.

She said, "I hope the two of you won't hate me after you hear my story."

Back then, she had shielded Justin from everything. Now that her son had grown up, it was ultimately time that he paid his debt.

Iris sighed.

Nora patted her shoulder. "We're not afraid."

When one was young, their mother was an almighty figure that shielded them from everything. Now that they had grown up, they were willing to be that almighty figure for their mother.

The two chatted for nearly an hour. When the hour passed after they made the bet, Lauren glanced at the orchid. When she saw that it was still blooming beautifully, she heaved a sigh of relief at once.

She then went up to Iris and Nora. "Ms. Smith, you've lost."

Nora looked at her. "There are still two minutes to an hour."

Lauren smiled and said, “There are only two minutes left, but that pot of flowers is now blooming even more beautifully than before. There is no risk of it wilting at all, so you two are losing for sure.”

“That’s not necessarily true.”

Nora stood up and looked down at the time on her cell phone.

Lauren curled her lips disdainfully and said, “Ms. Smith, to be honest, we are all family. How can there be any grudges among family? Why do we have to draw such a clear line between us? Why don’t we just forget about the bet? Lest it reflects poorly on us. I’m not someone who would hold grudges against my young ones either. The old madam is getting on in years, though. Herman has always wanted to be filial to his mother and be by her side, so let’s not have the Hunts stop him anymore...”

As soon as she said that, a security guard rushed over in a panic and said, “Mrs. Hunt, this is terrible!”

Lauren was taken aback. She turned around and saw that the security guard was actually the one whom she had instructed to keep a close watch over the Ghost Orchids just now!

Lauren frowned. “What are you doing? This is outrageous, why are you in such a panic?!”

The next moment, the security guard said, “The Ghost Orchids are dead!”

## **Chapter 660 - The Plan of Saving Nora Novel Free**

Lauren: “?”

Her understatement-like way of talking made Lauren angry. She said, “Ms. Smith, I know that you are Justin’s wife. There’s nothing wrong with protecting and defending your mother-in-law, but even so, you can’t just speak so carelessly like that. This ingredient is certainly a little strong, but I’ve already tested it on other orchids before. There won’t be any problems in the future! Facts speak louder than words. I know that you are an alternative medicine practitioner, but alternative medicine requires many years of practice to accumulate experience. From what I see, you don’t give medical consultations very often, so you’re probably not very experienced when it comes to the practical aspect, right? Besides, humans are different from flowers. I have

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Lauren frowned. “What are you doing? This is outrageous, why are you in such a panic?!”

The next moment, the security guard said, “The Ghost Orchids are dead!”

## **Chapter 661 - The Plan of Saving Nora Novel Free**

Lauren was stunned. She frowned and said, “That’s impossible!”

The security guard pointed to where the Ghost Orchids were and swallowed hard. “I-it’s

true!”

Lauren strode towards the Ghost Orchids.

Iris and Nora looked at each other. They smiled at each other and followed after her.

As soon as she walked over, she saw that the pot of Ghost Orchids, which had originally been beautiful and charming, had wilted. As though it lacked water, the flowers were slowly drooping

Additionally, it was also visibly withering.

Lauren stared at the Ghost Orchids in shock. At this time, Nora looked down and glanced at the time. She said, "59 minutes and 20 seconds. Mdm. Lauren, you've lost."

Calling her Mdm. Lauren and not Mrs. Hunt, this was no different from slapping Lauren in the face.

Lauren couldn't be bothered to care about something like her name at the moment, though. She stared at the Ghost Orchids and muttered to herself, "That's impossible... Absolutely impossible... I have tried that prescription on so many orchids before, and nothing like this has ever happened!"

Those orchids had all survived. Even the one in the poorest condition had survived for half a month.

More and more people were gathering around them.

Seeing that everyone had come over, Lauren felt even more embarrassed. Suddenly, she turned to Iris. "What did you do to the orchids?"

Iris: "?"

She raised her eyebrows, a smile forming on her lips. "That's really interesting. From the moment we made the bet, we have been sitting in the corner. There are so many people here who can testify to that! Besides, isn't the security guard keeping watch over the flowers someone you had found? Are you saying that your security guard didn't keep a good watch on the flowers?"

The security guard panicked when he heard her. He hurriedly defended himself and said, "Yes, I did. I was staring at this pot of flowers the whole time. How would I dare to leave its side when it's worth more than a million dollars? I didn't even dare to blink the whole time, for fear that something would go

wrong. I can guarantee that everyone had stayed far, far away from the flowers and did not come close at all during this period of time.”

Everyone at the flower exhibition was from wealthy families, and all of them were very smart and shrewd. Lauren had already made it clear that she was using the pot of flowers to fight with Iris. No one would be blind enough to go forward and mess with the flowers.

Lauren panicked. “Why would something go wrong with the flowers when no one went near it? It must be because you didn’t watch over it properly!”

The security guard panicked even further. He pointed to the surveillance camera at the side and said, “There is surveillance camera footage as proof!”

At last, Lauren couldn’t find anything else to blame it on, so she could only look at the orchid again.

At this point, Nora said, “I told you, that ingredient you added can indeed speed up the Ghost Orchids’ recovery, but it’s just like how a person would suddenly be in very good spirits before their death. You have made the Ghost Orchids spend all of its future vitality in just one day, so it withered faster than before!”

Lauren shouted, “But my prescription has been verified to be useful! All the other orchids were fine!”

Nora said coldly, “It’s not that they are fine, it’s just that nothing has happened to them yet! Ghost Orchids are more delicate than other orchid breeds, and there are only a few pitiful varieties of them. Different orchids are like different people, so the dosages they are given would definitely have to be different. All the orchids you used the prescription on should have withered within half a month to a month’s time.”

Before returning to America, Lauren had already known that Matthew was looking everywhere for someone to treat his pot of Ghost Orchids. Thus, when she was still abroad, she had already figured out the prescription and tested it on numerous pots of orchids.

She had only returned after she verified the prescription.

But little did she think that her plans would actually fail because of the Ghost Orchids?

While she was thinking, her cell phone rang. When she answered, her domestic helper from abroad said, “Ma’am, two of the orchids that you cured have withered in the greenhouse!”

Those words were just like a slap in her face, making Lauren finally realize that there was indeed a problem with her prescription.

At this point, Matthew had also heard the commotion. With the help of someone, he walked over unsteadily.

Matthew was already here a long time ago. He wanted to watch over his Ghost Orchids, but because he was already so old, after he came and put the pot of Ghost Orchids down, he had gone to the VIP lounge upstairs immediately.

When he saw the Ghost Orchids’ condition, he panicked at once. He looked straight at Lauren and demanded, “What’s going on? You’d best give me an explanation for this!”

Lauren swallowed and clenched her fists. She could only grit her teeth and deny it. She said, “Matthew, your flowers were incurable from the start. My prescription had at least allowed it to recover for a day. Besides, when you passed me the flowers, I was already just making a Hail Mary effort. I also feel very guilty that they didn’t recover, but there is really no other way around it.”

She sighed quietly and added, “I’m sure you have also already exhausted all the solutions you could think of during the last few months, that’s why you could only give Orchidance’s method a try in the end. I have also really tried my best, Matthew. You won’t blame me for it, right?”

Lauren was slinging accusations when she was the villain herself. However, her words indeed shut Matthew up.

He had indeed tried all sorts of ways to cure the Ghost Orchids, but they had all failed. In the end, he could only try treating them with Orchidance’s method.

But how many people really knew how to do that?

When he chose to give Lauren’s method a try, he had been taking a gamble.

In all honesty, though, if Lauren hadn't looked so confident at the time, how could he have allowed her to try treating his orchids so easily?

Come to think of it, although Lauren had been very confident that she could cure the flowers, the things she said had been very watertight. It was true that she had never promised that she could cure the orchids.

When he thought of this, Matthew was so angry that his chest felt all tight as though he couldn't breathe. He looked at the pot of Ghost Orchids in distress and said, "Why can't it be cured? Why can't it be cured?!"

Lauren tried to counsel him. "Matthew, I'm afraid that there's really no cure for that pot of flowers anymore. Even if Orchidance were here, she probably wouldn't be able to do anything, either."

Would Orchidance also be unable to do anything about it if she were here?

Lauren sighed. "I have already thoroughly mastered Orchidance's method, so I am sure that I was indeed using Orchidance's method to treat the flowers. I'm really sorry for your loss!"

Matthew hung his head in frustration.

At this time, Nora suddenly said, "It's not completely impossible to treat it."

Her one-liner made everyone present raise their heads and look at her.

Matthew also looked up hopefully. Nora stepped forward and stared at the pot of Ghost Orchids. "I do have a solution here."

Matthew asked excitedly, "What kind of solution is it?"

Nora was about to speak when Lauren said, "Ms. Smith, I'd advise you to be careful when you speak. I told you just now, people good at alternative medicine may not necessarily be able to cure flowers. After all, there is still a very huge difference between flowers and humans. Not everyone can imitate the essence of Orchidance's skill!"

The moment she said that, Nora's lips curled into a smile and she slowly said, "You are right, it is certainly true that not everyone can imitate the essence of my skill."

The place suddenly fell silent.

Someone beside them, who didn't understand what Nora meant, kindly explained, "Ms. Smith, Mrs. Hunt is saying that no one can imitate the essence of Orchidance's skill, not yours..."

She paused abruptly at this point. Only then did she finally realize something and she exclaimed, "Y-you are Orchidance?"

Nora glanced at her and said nothing.

Iris lifted her chin and looked at her proudly. "That's right, my daughter-in-law is Orchidance."

In an instant, it raised a huge furor in the entire exhibition. Everyone looked at Nora in astoundment. "Not only is she Dr. Zabe's disciple, but also Anti the surgeon. I'm actually not surprised at all to hear that she's also Orchidance... Ms. Smith's medical skills are truly amazing!"

"Oh my god, as it turns out, Orchidance has always been right by our side. Isn't she supposed to be staying abroad?"

"I heard that Ms. Smith only came back from overseas a few months ago..."

"Yes, now that you mention it, all the facts line up."

Amid everyone's speculations, Lauren bit her lip tightly. She still couldn't believe it, but she also knew that there was no need for someone like Nora to impersonate someone else.

After all, even if she was not Orchidance, she was already popular enough in New York.

Nevertheless, she felt that she couldn't admit defeat just like that, so she said, "Ms. Smith, since you are Orchidance, then you should have known that the prescription given to the orchid was wrong from the moment you entered the exhibition. Why didn't you bring it up and save the orchid then? Instead, you had to wait until it started withering to show off your medical skills? How much do you think the Ghost Orchids have suffered as a result?"

Nora: "?"

Iris sneered and stepped right in front of Nora. She said sharply, "Lauren, you're being unreasonable. Didn't my daughter-in-law already say so just

now? What can we do when you refuse to admit that your prescription is wrong? Besides, my daughter-in-law has said that the flowers can still be saved!”

Lauren bit her lip. “But I didn’t know that Ms. Smith is Orchidance. If I had known, I definitely would have agreed to it. I get it now, the two of you just wanted to use that to make a bet with me... so that I would admit my mistake. But why bother doing something like that? Wouldn’t you ruin Matthew’s Ghost Orchids by doing that? Iris, if you hate me, then you can just come at me. You are also an orchid lover, how can you treat a pot of Ghost Orchids like this?”

Her fallacious and heretic arguments surprisingly sounded like they made sense at first.

If Nora had revealed her identity the moment she entered the hall, would they have stopped her from treating the orchids? Did she have to wait until the orchids became like this to highlight her abilities?

They were clearly using that pot of orchids to slap Lauren in the face, and also to make the bet with her!

Everyone looked at Iris and Nora.

Even Matthew, who clearly knew that he couldn’t blame the two of them-after all, he still had to rely on Orchidance for help if he wanted to save the Ghost Orchids-couldn’t help but feel uncomfortable about the situation.

He didn’t like Lauren, because not only did she use the Ghost Orchids to threaten him into selling the Jade Orchids to her, but she even forced him to put his pot of Ghost Orchids on display in the exhibition.

He’d initially thought that Iris was different from her, but he didn’t expect her to actually turn out to be the same type of person in the end.

Matthew sighed. Even the way he looked at Iris had changed a little. An orchid lover beside him couldn’t help but say, “Mrs. Hunt... Everyone here is a flower lover, is there a need to do something like that?”

“Yeah, how can you make that pot of Ghost Orchids suffer such calamity just to vent your anger on someone? Even if it’s cured, it probably won’t be able to return to its former glory, right?”

“Lauren is not an orchid lover anyway, and was just using them to show off. We all despise her in our hearts, but Mdm. Iris, you are not supposed to be someone like that!”

Everyone was reproaching her softly, and their voices were so low that one couldn't tell who was the one speaking. After all, no one dared to openly offend Iris.

There was, however, a straightforward person who stepped forward. She pointed at Iris and sighed. “Mdm. Iris, you have always been a fairy-like person all these years, and your love for orchids is also a role model among our peers. All these years, how many potted flowers have you saved from the hands of people who have no love for flowers? Why have you lowered yourself so much that you would fight with someone like her?! And for the sake of fighting, you even used a pot of Ghost Orchids to vent your anger! Sigh!”

Lauren's countenance alternated between being pale and being sullen as she listened to the remarks.

She'd originally thought that everyone would see her in a different light after she came to the orchid exhibition, but little did she expect that they had never thought highly of her before!

They must have been polite to her only because they were afraid that if they offended her, they wouldn't have anyone to ask for help when their orchids fell sick, right?

So, now that they knew that Nora was Orchidance, and knew that her medical skills were not as good as hers, they were starting to voice their real thoughts?

When Lauren saw everyone attacking Iris, she secretly felt very happy.

What kind of person was Iris?

One must know that Iris had been a beauty who was equally famous as Yvette in New York back then.

Yvette owed part of her fame to her looks and the other part to her talent. After all, her amazing talent and brilliance had indeed shocked and astounded many.



But Iris was different.

When one spoke of her, everyone would only marvel at and admire her for her beauty and her ethereal character. She was just like a celestial maiden. Anyone who had seen her wouldn't be able to describe her negatively.

She was lively and cheerful.

Her voice was as beautiful and pleasant as a bird's.

Her nimble movements made her look even more like a celestial maiden from the heavens.

Therefore, when Herman and Iris divorced, out of everyone in New York, half of the men had insulted Herman and called him blind while the other half was secretly happy that their goddess was single once more.

In addition, Iris wasn't fond of disputes. Unlike Yvette, who had made enemies everywhere and become the women's imaginary enemy, she had a good personality. Moreover, she was simply so beautiful and on top of that, her beauty was not the aggressive kind. Even women were amazed by her beauty. No one would be jealous of her beauty; instead, they would only want to defend and protect her beauty.

But hadn't she brought Iris down from her exalted position all the same?

In order to fight Iris, she had ended up being criticized by others. When she thought of it that way, Lauren felt a sense of accomplishment again.

She could work with this, too!

At the very least, not everyone would be biased towards Iris anymore whenever the two of them were mentioned.

While she was thinking about it, Nora said, "You've misunderstood Aunt Iris."

She took a step forward and spoke to Matthew. She said, "When I told Aunt Iris yesterday that there was a problem with the prescription, she had wanted to contact you right away. I was the one who stopped her."

Lauren said, "Ms. Smith, there's no need for you to shoulder all the responsibility just to protect Mdm. Iris' reputation."

Nora looked at her. "I'm not trying to shoulder anything. It's because it has to be done that way."

Lauren was taken aback.

The people around them also all looked at her.

Nora lowered her head and said dispassionately, "Matthew said yesterday that the prescription had already been used on the Ghost Orchids, so it was already too late to stop him at that time. Therefore, it was necessary that we wait for the medicine to take effect before further treatment can be carried out. Otherwise, if I use any more medicine on it, the Ghost Orchids won't be able to handle it, and will end up dying."

Everyone was taken aback.

Nora looked at Lauren. "Therefore, there is no need for you to slander Aunt Iris here. It is only on Aunt Iris' account that I'm even here to treat that pot of Ghost Orchids."

With that, everyone looked at Iris.

Iris stood where she was, her back straight.

In spite of how she was nearly fifty years old, one couldn't see any signs of age on her at all. She was slim and graceful, as though she had always been that youthful celestial maiden from back then all this time.

Matthew was very ashamed of himself. He hung his head at once and said, "To think I've misunderstood you, Mdm. Iris. I am so despicable! All these years, you are the only one who has shown true love for orchids!"

The others also apologized.

Iris was a distant and unemotional person, and she didn't feel much for relationships in the first place. She usually didn't interact much with them, either, so she merely said dispassionately, "It's fine."

In any case, she wouldn't be taking it to heart at all.

At this point, Nora, who didn't care about what the others were saying, had taken out a bottle that she had prepared in advance and handed it to Matthew. She said, "This is the medicine that Aunt Iris brewed last night using my

prescription. Rub the leaves gently with the solution and water it with 0.1 ounces a day. The flowers will recover in half a month.”

A very grateful-looking Matthew took the solution from her with both hands.

At this time, someone looked at Nora and said, “Orchidance... Ms. Smith, there is a small problem with my orchid. Can you...”

Nora cut the other party off. “Sorry, but if you want a medical consultation with me, then you’ll have to follow my rules.”

The man was taken aback.

Nora said, “I only accept two patients a month. You can contact my assistant to get an appointment and queue up.”

Everyone: “??”

Everyone knew that it was hard to book a medical consultation with Nora. The dates were already full for as long as five to six years in the future. Humans could still afford to wait, but how could flowers afford that?

When they were about to speak, Nora looked at Iris and said, “Alternatively, I visit Aunt Iris on the 15th of every month to check on her flowers for her. You can try then.”

Everyone looked at Iris again as if they had found a savior.

Iris: “...”

Nora was completely pushing her out as a shield.

However, Iris also understood that Nora had blown her own cover in order to intimidate Lauren for her. Additionally, she was also probably making them visit her in order to alleviate her loneliness.

At this moment, Nora looked at Lauren, who was about to walk aside, and stopped her. “Mdm. Lauren, have you forgotten our bet?”

Lauren paused and turned around.

Nora pointed to Iris. “Please apologize for wrecking someone else’s family back then!”

Lauren: “!!!”

She bit her lip hard and looked at Iris, her expression extremely awful. But in front of so many people, she had to take responsibility for her actions.

Thus, she took a deep breath and bowed to Iris. She said, “Iris, Herman and I couldn’t help ourselves from falling in love back then and ended up betraying you. We are truly in love with each other, and we also know very well that we have let you down; that was why Herman had left the family without taking a single cent. If you feel that we still owe you something, then I solemnly apologize: I’m sorry!”

By putting a hidden message in her words and mentioning that Herman had left the family without taking any money from them, she wanted to tell everyone that she and Herman had already paid the price for their actions.

Still, no matter what, she had admitted to wrecking someone else’s family!

As a result, she had thoroughly embarrassed herself in front of everyone.

She clenched her fists and took a deep breath. Then, she forced a small smile and said, “Alright, it’s okay even if you resent me or dislike me, but since I’ve gathered everyone here, then why don’t you guys enjoy and admire the orchids? I suddenly remembered that I have something to do, so I will leave first. You can direct all matters about the orchid exhibition today to the manager.”

After saying that, Lauren turned and left.

Nora narrowed her eyes as she looked at her from the back.

Lauren’s final move had been very graceful, and she also spoke elegantly. Her words really didn’t seem like something a vicious side character pretending to be a pure and innocent woman would say.

For her to be able to snatch Herman away from the top beauty Iris back then, it seemed that she did indeed have a trick or two up her sleeve.

She lowered her eyes.

For some reason, she couldn’t help but feel that Herman and Lauren’s sudden return to America was a little fishy.

Nora strolled around the orchid exhibition with Iris. The people there were simply too enthusiastic towards the two of them. Unable to bear it, they found an excuse and slipped away.

On the way back to the villa after leaving the orchid exhibition, Iris looked at Nora again and again. However, she didn't say anything at all. After thinking about it, she refrained from making conversation.

Soon, the two returned to the suburban villa.

As soon as they entered the gates, Iris spotted Justin's black Maybach parked outside the door. She took a deep breath and entered the house.

Justin stood up. As he stood there and looked at her, Iris asked, "Did you know that Nora is Orchidiance?"

Justin shook his head.

He didn't know who Orchidiance was-after all, he wasn't knowledgeable about orchids.

However...

The corners of Justin's lips curled into a smile and he said, "I believe in Nora's capabilities, so I waited here to listen to your story.

Iris looked at Nora and then at Justin. Nora had only said that she would attend the orchid exhibition, she hadn't revealed anything else to Justin at all. Even when they were on the way to the orchid exhibition, she had only said that she could save the Ghost Orchids. She hadn't revealed that she was Orchidiance.

Therefore, Iris had always been skeptical about whether Nora could cure the Ghost Orchids or not.

But Justin had trusted her very much.

Was that how it felt to be mutually trusting towards each other? When she thought about it carefully, she actually didn't have a single person she could trust in her life, which was rather sad.

If she really had to think of one, then perhaps she had only trusted that one person...

Thinking of this, Iris cast her eyes down. She pointed to the greenhouse next to them and said, "Let's talk inside." Because she wanted to like orchids, she had ended up really becoming fond of them. When she was gardening and taking care of the flowers, she was able to truly abandon all distractions and concentrate on work. Therefore, Iris had really fallen in love very much with orchids over the years. Her heart calmed and became peaceful after she entered the greenhouse. She sat there quietly and picked up the teapot that Mrs. Landis had prepared at the side. Then, she poured three cups of tea and put them on either side of the coffee table.

Sunlight streamed brazenly into the glass conservatory, making the place look warm and toasty in the cold weather.

The white coffee table and seats added a bit of rustic elegance to the place, making one feel as if they could really become at peace with the world just by sitting in there.

Iris' gaze fell onto the orchids next to them, but she didn't speak, seemingly in a struggle over how to start. At this time, Justin asked, "Is it related to the kidnapping back then?"

Iris was taken aback. She looked at him. Justin said indifferently, "When I was five, a woman I didn't know suddenly showed up at home and told me to call her Mom, but I refused. After that, I was kidnapped."

Justin cast his eyes down. "Later, I met a man. He got into a tussle with the kidnapers, so I took the opportunity to escape and returned home according to the route I remembered. I've always thought that I managed to escape because I was smart and seized the right opportunity, but now that I think about it, why did that person so coincidentally enter a confrontation with the kidnapers at that time? You were the one who sent him, right?" Iris pursed her lips tightly before she finally nodded. "You can say that." Justin continued with his analysis. "After they kidnapped me, they wanted neither money nor manpower. It was clear that they wanted to kill the hostage. On top of that, they also wanted me to die a distance away from home. At that time, the Hunts were already one of the largest families in New York, yet even they couldn't find me. In that case, who did you seek help from?"

Iris bit her lip.

Justin stared at her, light flickering in his deep-set eyes. "Or should I say, who did you beg for help? That person you begged for help is the one who

imprisoned you here in this small villa, and also forbade you from being with me, right?" Iris exclaimed, "How did you know that? Do you already know who he is?"

"I don't."

Justin said dispassionately, "Ever since I realized that you have reasons for doing what you did, all these years, I have been wondering what on earth those reasons are. At first, I thought that you had made some kind of agreement with Herman, but after he came back, I realized that that wasn't the case at all. You have never feared him, so how could you possibly make such a ridiculous agreement with him? Besides, you have always been afraid of giving me trouble all these years, so you always rejected the Evanses every time they approached you for anything. Therefore, it is impossible for you to harbor thoughts of usurping the Hunts' assets. Grandma also doesn't seem to be on guard against you. After thinking about it, that is the only possibility left."

Iris' eyes reddened. Since Justin had started the topic, she picked up from there. She said, "My marriage to your father is a political marriage between wealthy families. The one he liked was actually Yvette Anderson. I know all of that, so I've never blamed him for cheating—because I have never loved him either. However, he went too far. I'd already given them my blessings and left the family, yet they neglected you and caused you to be kidnapped! Everything related to the kidnapping has already been erased by now. I suspect that it's Lauren's handiwork and that she had colluded with that group of kidnappers, but I don't have any proof. That time, after I came back from my trip overseas and discovered that you were gone, I begged the Hunts and the Smiths for help. At that time, Nora's father was still the head of the Smiths. Mr. Smith helped me to search for your whereabouts, but unfortunately, there was no news of you at all. By then, it had already been more than twelve hours since your disappearance. If I still couldn't find you, there was a very high chance that they would kill you. So, I had no other choice. I could only approach him..."

Iris clenched her fists tightly at the mention.

Her eyes were full of hate towards Lauren.

Justin suddenly asked, "Who... is he?" Iris sighed and shook her head. "To be honest, I don't know either." Justin and Nora exchanged a look and both frowned.

However, neither of them raised any questions because the look in Iris' eyes had started to become distant, and she was already starting to go down memory lane. She said, "I met him in college. He was my first boyfriend."

Her simple few words stunned the two of them.

He was her first love? Then why didn't she know who he was? While they were thinking about it, Iris said, "When we were still studying, he was a poor boy named Philip Coleman." At this point, Iris looked at Justin. It was inevitable that she would feel a little embarrassed mentioning her first love in front of her son and daughter-in-law.

She lowered her head. "I met him at a dance party. He fell in love with me at first sight. After that, he tried to woo me for a very long time. Among all the rich youngsters, he was very unremarkable, but for some reason, he was the only one who caught my eye. After we graduated, my family wanted me to get engaged with Herman for the political marriage."

Iris' voice was a little serious and burdened when she mentioned that. After a while, she finally heaved a huge sigh and said, "It's actually a very cheesy story. My family was driving me into a corner. Mom was seriously ill, but Dad refused to pay for her high medical expenses unless I agreed to the marriage. I had no other choice at that time, so I broke up with him."

At this point, Iris looked at Justin and gave him a wry smile. "He had been pretending to be a poor boy in school because he was worried that people would be attracted to his money, whereas I happened to be in need of it."

The two of them had let each other slip by perfectly.

Iris sighed. "Both he and I were relatively self-restrained people, so the breakup went smoothly. After that, your father and I got married. Everything was fine until one day, your father said that a foreign businessman had come to America and was holding a party. He wanted me to attend it with him..."

She hadn't expected to meet Philip again at the party. Philip was the foreign investor at the party.

Everyone was trying to please him because they had heard that he was from a foreign wealthy family. Even though the Hunts and the Smiths had already reached the pinnacle in America, there was another family in another country



that loved doing business very much. They had been merchants for generations and had amassed a lot of wealth over the years.

People like them had always been low-key in their behavior. Even when he was out, he used a pseudonym. Philip Coleman was not his name; it was just the pseudonym he used in America.

She had never known his true identity.

At the party, Philip found an excuse to corner her.

Iris knew that Herman was someone who hated being embarrassed, so she said, "My husband doesn't know about my first love. Please don't tell him about it."

At that time, Iris' belly was already showing slightly.

She had given all her love to the baby in her womb.

At that time, the way Philip looked at her had changed. He let out a sarcastic laugh and said, "I have never been acquainted with Ms. Evans before. Nice to meet you." When he said that, Iris had felt like someone had suddenly gripped her heart tightly. What she'd thought was a peaceful breakup was still capable of piercing her heart two years later.

She put on a graceful smile and nodded at Philip.

But after she turned around, she was unable to maintain the smile on her face.

However, Philip would appear in her life again. Philip became good friends with Herman and visited them at home. Herman had pointed to Iris' belly and said to Philip, "Philip, he'll be your god-son in the future!" At that time, Philip had looked at Iris pointedly and remarked, "I'm so envious of you for having such a good wife, Herman." Herman asked, "Aren't you married yet, Philip?"

Philip shook his head and immediately said, "I have someone in my heart I can't forget, no other woman can capture my eye."

When he said this, the look in his eyes as he stared at Iris had been persistent and terrifying. Herman, however, was still unaware of what was happening. He said, "Oh? Then why didn't you marry her?" Philip lowered his head. "I had

concealed my identity at the time, so she thought I was poor and went to someone of higher social status instead.”

Herman cursed the woman for being materialistic and shameless.

Iris flushed as red as a tomato as she listened to them from the side.

Philip, however, said, “It is instinctive to pursue a better life, so I don’t hate her. In fact, if she is ever in trouble in the future, I would still be willing to help her.”

Herman had immediately given him a thumbs-up. “You sure are magnanimous, Philip!”

Philip then said, “My family also has a lot of secret properties in America, it’s just that most people don’t know that. If you ever run into trouble in America, I can also be of assistance.”

Herman hadn’t thought much about it at the time and had thought that those words were directed at him. At once, he started chatting and laughing happily with Philip. However, Philip’s attitude suddenly became cold and he left.

Since then, he had never stepped into America again. It was only later that Herman finally understood why Philip had fallen out with him back then.

After he left, Iris had let out a long sigh of relief.

She admitted that her decision had betrayed Philip back then, but Philip had also hidden his family background from her. Wasn’t that also a form of deception towards her?

Their relationship had ended without any real reason. They were ultimately just not meant to be.

When Justin was five years old, Philip had called her.

He was still using the same phone number he had used when they were in college. Iris answered the call. At that time, she had already found out about Herman’s cheating, so she was in a bad mood.

Philip had only asked her a question on the phone: “Do you regret what you did?” Did she regret what she had done? Occasionally, in the dead of night, Iris would think of Philip. If she had been a little more firm and resolute back

then, and if she had lived as unrestrainedly and happily as Yvette had, then would her life have been better?

But every time the thought formed, she would look at Justin. Although she didn't love Herman, Justin was the greatest gift that God had given her. She loved her son more than anything in the world.

"Mom, buy me harder Lego sets next time. These are too easy."

Her son with a super high IQ made a request with a frown.

Iris immediately smiled and said into the phone, "I have no regrets."

She hung up the phone. Afterward, when Mrs. Hunt made her choose between tolerating Herman or doing something else, she had decided to be selfish for once. Perhaps her rebellious streak from college times had come too late, but she decided to file for divorce. She dragged her suitcase behind her and left the house.

After that, Herman had brought Lauren home. After she came back from her trip and learned that Justin had been kidnapped and was missing, she had felt like dying.

Even with the Hunts and the Smiths' power, they couldn't find Justin. At that time, she had panicked. Her five-year-old son, no matter how high his IQ, was still just a child.

If the other party was determined to kill the hostage, then he would probably have already become a corpse by then!

She didn't dare to wait any longer. In her panic, she inexplicably thought of what Philip had once said: "... My family also has a lot of secret properties in America, it's just that most people don't know that. If you ever run into trouble in America, I can also be of assistance."

She dialed Philip's phone number with trembling fingers. The man seemed very hesitant, only picking up the call after it rang for a very long time. The man smiled and said, "Do you need something? It's my wedding today. The groom can't be absent, you know." Iris didn't have the leisure to care about such things. Besides, so many years had already gone by, her feelings for him as her first love had already faded a long time ago. She immediately asked, "Can you save my son?!" Philip was startled. "What happened?"

Iris recounted the story. At last, she asked: "Aren't you very powerful in America? Can you find him?"

"Yes, I can." Philip was very confident. "But why should I help you?"

Why should he help her?

Iris had been stunned then. Indeed, why should he?

While she was in a daze, Philip said, "I'll give you two choices."

"What?"

"The first one: Fly over to my wedding now. I am still missing a bride."

Iris thought that he must be out of his mind. She said, "My son is missing! Philip, I am not in the mood to joke around with you."

"I'm not joking." Philip chuckled and said, "Why should I help you for no reason?"

Iris bit her lip. At last, she took a deep breath and said, "I can't agree to your request. I will never leave my son's side ever again."

Because she had gone overseas for a holiday, Justin had gone missing.

Her son needed his mother after all. She must not leave him

Moreover, her relationship with Philip was just puppy love during college. Compared with reality, she cared more about Justin. She started to cry. Her voice was choked with sobs as she said, "Philip, please, I'm begging you."

The other end of the call was silent for a long time. In the end, Philip sneered and said, "I can find him for you, but you have to promise me something."

"Tell me what it is!"

Philip enunciated every word carefully and said, "You can watch over your son, but I forbid you from ever getting close to him for the rest of your life. You can only look at him from a distance."

“Iris, this is your punishment for betraying me back then.”

“... Okay, I promise you that!”

Later, Iris and Herman got divorced, Herman was kicked out of the house, and Justin became the new leader of the clan with his grandfather grooming him ever since. As for Iris, she could only hide in the villa.

She could still remember the last few words that Philip had said to her. His voice was very cold and missing any trace of emotion. He said, “Since you have agreed to my condition, then you must keep your word. Otherwise, you know what I’m capable of, I will spare no costs to kill your son. I can save your son’s life, but I can also easily crush him like an ant.”

Even now, Iris still didn’t know who Philip really was.

Mysterious families like his kept their identities very well-hidden. She couldn’t make any contact with them at all. All she knew was that if she stayed away from Justin all her life and maintained a distant attitude toward him, then she would be able to guarantee his safety.

Therefore, that was exactly what she had been doing all these years.

The story was over.

There was no bloodshed nor intense love and hate. It was so plain and bland. In fact, when Iris mentioned Philip, she no longer felt any love for him but only fear and thoughts of her agreement with him. Iris looked at Justin. “The world’s top families can control the world economy and are very terrifying existences. I have distanced myself from you all this time because I’m afraid they would destroy you and the Hunts the moment they decide to take action. To be honest, my life here all these years by myself has been very comfortable. Aging and dying alone can also be considered a kind of happiness. “Justin, you wanted to know the truth and I’ve already said it, but I don’t want you to pursue it any further. Back then, I was the one who had let him down. After that, I even asked him to find you for me. He gave you your life, so let’s just leave it at that.” Seemingly because she had come clean about everything that had happened back then, Iris breathed a sigh of relief. She lowered her head. “You don’t have to become enemies with him for my sake. After all, I am already an old woman in my autumn years.”

After she said that, she slowly closed her eyes and sighed deeply.

Nora looked at her. She was actually very shocked, though she pretended to be nonchalant on the surface.

When Iris was young, she must have been very gentle and a big pushover, right?

That was why she had given in to her family's arrangements back then.

But was her mistake really so big?

Didn't Philip hold any responsibility for why they weren't together? They had already been in a relationship for several years, so why didn't he tell her his identity and his background?

Also...

Weren't there a few too many powerful people in the world?!

The mysterious organization's forces already spanned throughout the world, and now there was another mysterious mega-corporation? All her life, she had only been concerned with sleeping every day and also felt that it would do as long as she made enough to survive. It was only now that she suddenly realized that she was actually... so poor! While Nora's imagination was running wild, Iris' cell phone suddenly rang again. It was still that same unfamiliar number.

If Nora wasn't wrong, then he was likely Philip.

Sure enough, at the sight of the phone number, Iris' pupils shrank slightly and fear arose in her again.

She wanted to pick up the phone and switch it off, but before she could touch it, a big well-defined hand took the phone.

Iris' head whipped up abruptly and she looked at Justin incredulously.

Justin looked at her firmly. His voice was calm and steady, and he seemed capable of protecting Iris from everything in the world. He said, "Let me."

Iris shook her head.

She was very scared.

Although the Hunts were powerful, they were really no match for globally powerful families that had hundreds—even a thousand-of years of history.

She swallowed. “Justin, forget it.”

Justin could understand her fear and panic. His mother was worried that she would affect the Hunts because of her own affairs, but she didn’t know that he had another identity that was powerful enough to make him fearless.

It was just that due to certain reasons, he couldn’t reveal that identity of his.

He lowered his head and said, “Mom, don’t be scared.”

After saying that, he picked up the cell phone, got up, and answered the call. A deep and pleasant male voice traveled over through the phone: “Iris, you have broken our agreement.”

Nora stood beside Iris.

She held Iris’ shoulders and looked fixedly at Justin.

Justin said into the phone, “From now on, I will be the one to fulfill that agreement.”

The original agreement was that Iris would age and die alone in the suburban villa as punishment. If she couldn’t restrain herself and got close to her son, then Philip would take action against the Hunts and Justin.

When Justin said that he would fulfill the agreement, the man immediately understood what he meant.

Philip sneered, “Heh, that weak little boy from back then has grown up and become independent, hasn’t he? In that case, I’ll teach you how to behave.”

As soon as he said that, Iris panicked. She rushed forward and shouted, “Philip, come right at me if you want! Don’t do anything to the child, you...”

But before she could finish, Philip snapped, “Iris, that’s enough!”

Iris was taken aback.

Philip smiled and said, "Aren't you just saying that because you're very sure that I won't do anything to you? Now that the kid has grown up, you can't blame me for being nasty anymore!"

He hung up right after saying that.

Iris: "..."

The disconnected tone from the phone resounded in the depths of her heart like the bangs of a drum, making her feel terribly flustered. She swallowed and looked up at Justin, feeling like she had become the sinner of the Hunts.

The most mysterious megacorp was about to take action against her son.

Iris grabbed Justin's arm. She wanted to say that she would go and apologize to the other party, but when the words reached the tip of her tongue, she couldn't bring herself to say them-because if she did, then it would be no different from her throwing her own pride onto the ground and trampling on it.

Iris took a deep breath.

Just as she was filled with worry and trepidation, she saw Justin walk around her and look at Nora. He asked, "Nora, are you scared?"

Nora raised her brows. The Hunts had offended the most mysterious megacorp in the world, which sounded pretty exciting. Also, if Justin really lost everything, then wouldn't Pete's status as the next head of the family become useless?

But...

She broke into a grin and raised her eyes slightly. "It's okay, if you go bankrupt, I'll support you..."

After saying that, she spotted Iris, so the rest of her words did a U-turn in her mouth and she added, "... guys."

Justin: "?"

He'd originally intended to tell her not to be scared, but he hadn't expected Nora to say something like that. Suddenly, it made him really feel like going bankrupt for fun.



It seemed like it wasn't that bad an idea to have a sugar mommy and be kept as a lover?

Ahem.

Iris looked at the two of them, suddenly finding herself speechless.

This must be love.

If she had trusted Philip back then, things would not have come to where they were. Now that she thought about it, so what even if she had to fight to the death with her family back then?

At most, she would have just started all over from scratch.

The woman, who was nearly fifty, was moved by the love between Nora and Justin. This inspired the greatest fighting spirit in her.

She said, "Okay, if we go bankrupt, then... we'll let Nora support us!"

Justin: "?"

The corners of his lips spasmed. Those who didn't know better would have thought that Iris was saying that she would support them after he went bankrupt!

He couldn't reveal his identity, but when he saw that the two women seemed so full of fighting spirit, he got out of his internal struggle. He smiled and said, "Don't worry, even though I would very much like to sponge off a woman, I'll refrain from trying that." He spoke solemnly. "With me around, the Hunts will not go bankrupt."

Her son's firm and confident words made Iris' flustered heart calm down.

To be honest, before she told the truth, she'd still been taking a chance.

She felt that since twenty years had gone by, perhaps Philip had already forgotten her a long time ago, or perhaps he no longer minded. But now that things had reached this point, it was useless to dwell any further on

it.

When she was young, for Justin's sake, she had suffered so many grievances and wasted twenty years of her youth in this villa.

Now that her son had grown up, it was time for him to support and protect her.

After Iris came to terms with it, she got out of her internal struggle. She suggested, "How about having a meal before you leave?"

"Nah, it's fine."

Justin rejected her. Iris nodded and said, "Well, I'm sure you have a lot of arrangements to make. In that case, go ahead!"

Justin exchanged a look with Nora when he heard this.

There were some things that Justin was too embarrassed to say, but Nora understood what he was thinking, so she said, "Well, he does have a lot to do, but the most important thing now is helping you to move out, Iris."

Iris was a little surprised.

She looked at Justin in disbelief, only to see him nodding at her.

Iris bit her lip. "S-surely there's no need for that? I've already become accustomed to living here."

"Really?" Nora was a little troubled. "But both of us will be very busy in the future. I was thinking of asking you to take care of the three children at home..."

At the mention of the children, Iris hesitated.

Nora sighed again. "Pete has been with Justin since he was a baby and has mild autism. Cherry also likes her grandmother's company very much. As for Xander, the situation is even tougher. That boy was raised by Trueman Yale, so he lacks companionship from his family and is very insecure. Sigh! I wonder if Xander will end up straying onto the wrong path in the future..." Convinced, Iris gritted her teeth at once and said, "I'll come with the two of you!"

Iris was someone whose actions spoke louder than words.

Now that they had agreed on it, she would no longer be afraid. She immediately called Mrs. Landis over to pack her things for her.

Justin held her shoulders, walked to the side, and said softly, "Mom, after you come back, you have to take over the home."

Iris wanted to refuse, but Justin said with a cold look in his eyes, "Grandma has issues with Nora. Now that Herman is back, she'll definitely waver again. She has become muddleheaded, I can't let her control the house anymore. Otherwise, when Nora marries me in the future, the family will definitely be a huge mess."

Justin sighed. "You don't understand Nora. The only thing she likes to do is sleep, and she hates troublesome things the most. If she finds out she'll have to face so much trouble by marrying me, there's a high chance she won't marry me anymore."

Iris: "..."

Her son was being too exaggerated. Nora hadn't even uttered a single word of rebuttal despite the super huge trouble she had just caused. From that alone, one could see that Nora would never refuse to marry him just because of something as trivial as that.

However, her son was right in saying that she ought to take over the house. This way, when Nora marries into the family, there would be a lot less trouble handing over the family affairs.

Now that she could do something for them, Iris felt that her return was no longer entirely meaningless.

There were almost a hundred pots of orchids in the greenhouse. But with just a phone call from Justin, more than twenty bodyguards walked in one by one and started to move the flowers out.

Seeing them going in and out, Nora slipped over to Justin and remarked, "Pete said that you always bring more than twenty bodyguards with you when you go out. So, it really is true!"

Justin nodded. "Yeah, sometimes I bring more."

Ever since he was abducted at the age of five and subsequently rescued, Justin always traveled with this many people.

Nora glanced at him silently with a pitying look in her eyes.

Justin thought that she was feeling sorry for him because he had been kidnapped at a young age, but in the end, Nora unexpectedly said something that totally ruined the atmosphere, “Just how scared of dying are

you?!”

“???” :Justin

The night was so pleasant and the environment also so nice. There was a romantic mood in the air even till the woman had kept quiet, so how come it was ruined the moment she spoke?! The corners of his lips spasmed.

The group eventually separated.

Nora was going to the laboratory to continue her research into Xander’s affairs. For her, no matter how important something was, and no matter how big the Hunts’ fortune was, Xander’s affairs must still be handled first.

Because it would be time for him to be injected with the V15 in another three days.

Nora had been struggling over whether or not to inject it into him.

Would he really die if he was not injected with

it?

Was the gene serum really lethal, or was it more like a drug addiction where one must continuously consume it? She had to study it and find out properly before the deadline.

Besides, since Philip had said that he was going to take action against the Hunts, then it definitely was not going to be something he could accomplish with a few words.

He also needed to make preparations. It would take a few days for things to ferment. Therefore, her main task during these three days would still be to study the V15.

In the hospital.

When Nora arrived at the laboratory, Lily was analyzing the components of V15. Seeing Nora enter, Lily immediately said, "Boss, the serum's components are indeed not analyzable. It is too complex, I am afraid it will take a few years for us to study it thoroughly."

Nora was not surprised.

If the gene serum's formula was that easy to analyze, then Trueman and the others would not have pursued her mother so persistently.

Twenty-five years had already passed, yet Trueman and the others were still putting their hopes of finding clues on her. In that case, this must surely be a herculean task.

To be honest, Nora had already expected the results, but she still couldn't bring herself to terms with it.

She nodded. "I'll take over."

Lily stepped aside and Nora sat down. She held various instruments in her hands and separated the components of the serum, hoping to find clues from it.

Three days later. Nora's eyes were bloodshot and she had dark circles under her eyes.

After three consecutive days of work without any sleep, she had finally derived the V15 formula, but at the same time, her heart also sank.

It was really a gene-repairing drug and not some kind of narcotic drug.

In other words, Xander must be injected with the drug, otherwise, he would really die.

She took a deep breath.

A while later, she took out her cell phone and called Caleb, who was abroad.

As soon as the call connected, Caleb said, "Nora, I have been waiting for your call." Nora kept quiet for a while before she asked, "Is it necessary to inject him with the V15?" "Yes, it is." Caleb said, "If you don't, the reparation of the

previously repaired genes won't be adequate, and his brain will explode which would surely kill him. I have already looked into it-Xander's modifications are in his brain genes. If the V15 is not injected at the stipulated time, he will die."

Nora sighed. "The V15's formula does not seem very complex."

"Yes, none of the formulas from V1 to V15 are complex. The most complex one is the V16. In addition, there are a few types of gene serums. Some improve IQ while some improve physical strength. The formulas for V1 to V15 are all different for each type of serum. The only thing they have in common is that they all need the very last V16!"

Upon hearing this, Nora's pupils shrank.

Caleb sighed. "I'm dying, so I don't need the V16 anymore. However, every genetically-modified person would need the V16 at the end. Therefore, you should know the importance of the V16 now, right?"

Nora nodded to express that she had understood.

No wonder her mother had said that she must not expose her abilities, lest she ended up being targeted.

It was possible that some of the most outstanding people in the world might just be genetically-modified humans. Additionally, there were so many people that needed the V16 as an antidote.

She suddenly felt even greater pressure.

Such a group of people looking for her, could she really obtain the V16 for Xander?

Also...

If what her mother had left behind was really the formula... If she really produced the V16, thereby removing the last restriction on successful genetic modifications, what would the world turn into?

Would someone deliberately train a group of genetically modified warriors and unify the world?

Or would human beings with genetically modified IQ genes develop at a high speed and deplete the earth's resources in a dozen years -or perhaps even just a few years?

She dared not imagine such consequences.

But with how things currently were, she didn't have the leisure to care about such things anymore either.

Nora said, "I see."

Caleb was silent for a while. Suddenly, he said, "I didn't expect Xander to also be your son. Don't worry, I will contact you in time if I find clues regarding the V16."

Nora had been trying hard to find clues from the things that her mother had left behind, but she still couldn't find any.

It would be for the best if Caleb could inform her if he found any clues.

Nora replied, "Thanks a lot."

Caleb kept quiet for a while before he finally said, "You're welcome." After hanging up the phone, Nora called Justin.

The phone only rang once before Justin answered. He asked, "How is it?"

Nora was silent for a moment. Finally, she said, "Let's inject him with it."

When Justin heard this, he knew at once that the serum was safe and could be injected as-is. But at the same time, the injection would only extend Xander's lifespan by three months.

If they still couldn't find the V16 within three months, Xander would still die. He said, "Okay." Before hanging up, Nora asked, "How is Xander?"

"He was fine the last few days, but he started having a headache when he woke up today. I've gotten the family doctor to inject him with an anesthetic, so he is now asleep." Justin explained Xander's condition, "I will inject the gene serum into him now."

"Okay, I'm on my way. Observe all of Xander's reactions after the injection."

“Okay.”

Nora left and drove straight to the Hunts.

The car stopped right in front of the villa. When she went upstairs, she saw that Justin had not injected the serum into Xander yet. When he saw her, he explained, “Our medical equipment is constantly observing Xander’s condition, so it won’t cause any delays. I wanted you to see it with your own eyes.”

Nora nodded.

There would probably be physical reactions after the injection. These were all important clues and experimental data, which might play a certain role in Nora’s subsequent research and development of the V16.

This was despite Nora realizing after studying the v15 that she probably would not be able to develop the V16 in just three months with her own abilities.

Her only option now was to look for clues that her mother had left her.

Xander was lying quietly on the bed. She personally injected Xander with the V15. Little by little, the liquid was injected into his body. Xander, who had been under anesthesia, suddenly opened his eyes after the serum was injected.

His eyes were clean and clear as though he hadn’t been affected at all.

He sat up in a daze. He looked at Nora and then at Justin. Then, he rubbed his head.

Justin asked nervously, “Do you feel uncomfortable anywhere?”

Xander shook his head, his big eyes filled with puzzlement. He replied, “I don’t feel any discomfort. It’s just that a Mathematical Olympiad problem that I was discussing with Pete yesterday has suddenly become very simple...”

This was the consequence of taking the IQ improvement gene serum.

It seemed that Xander’s IQ would be the highest in the family in the future.

Nora observed all the numerical data of Xander’s body. In the end, she concluded that everything about Xander’s body was normal.



It was so normal that Nora even wondered if she had been fooled by Trueman.

Had she made the right decision in injecting Xander with the V15 or not?

Then, someone pushed the door open. Pete and Cherry followed behind Iris obediently, and the three came over together. When they saw Xander sitting there, all three of them released a huge pent-up breath.

The two little fellows and Iris' movements were exactly the same, which gave people a joyful feeling.

Nora and Justin looked at each other and smiled.

However, Nora's mood became increasingly heavy.

The more one understood the gene serum, the more they would realize just how amazing it was.

It was too un-human-like.

She sighed silently.

At this moment, they suddenly heard a noise from downstairs.

Justin went downstairs and saw Herman standing there. When Herman saw him, he immediately yelled, "Justin, have you become muddleheaded? How can you let Iris move back here? Do you have any idea how big a disaster she will bring to the Hunts by moving back here?!"

Herman was furious. He pointed to Iris and said, "And you, too. Never mind that you have offended an influential person, but you still have the cheek to come back here now? Will you really only stop after you've implicated all the Hunts?! Leave the Hunt Manor at once! Otherwise, the Hunts will really be in huge trouble!"

Iris frowned.

With regard to that, she had no right to speak.

Justin stepped forward and asked, "Where's the butler? Who let him in?"

The butler was wiping his sweat in silence beside him. No matter what, Herman was still Justin's father. The bodyguards did not dare to take any real action against him when he forcibly broke in.

The butler didn't speak. It was instead Herman who shouted angrily, "Do you know that Philip Coleman has already started to take action against the Hunts? I heard that he has been doing a large-scale acquisition of the Hunt Corporation's shares, our share prices are rising madly right now. A lot of the shareholders have all decided to sell their shares. He has made up his mind to take over the Hunt Corporation!"

Justin calmly replied, "Yeah, I know."

"You do? Are you sure you do?! With the shares becoming more and more expensive, we will have less and less cash flow to buy back the shares! At the same time, we will also have fewer and fewer shares in our hands. I know you have also been dispatching people to secretly buy them, but how can the Hunts' cash flow compare to theirs? They have accumulated generations' worth of riches! No one knows how many trillions of dollars they have! Can you beat them? As far as I know, the Hunts only have a few hundred billion dollars worth of cash flow!"

Herman pointed at him. Then, he lowered his voice and said, "I have also heard another piece of important news—I heard that Philip is a member of the Imperial League. Do you know what the Imperial League is?"

"The dozen or so people in there are in control of global economic trends! The Hunts can't beat them at all! What you are doing is no different from risking the entire Hunt Corporation! Everyone already knows about this and they are all waiting to laugh at the Hunts?! Your uncle's family are also waiting for you to step down!"

After saying all that, Herman went on anxiously and angrily. "You are my son, so I will definitely have to take your side. Justin, your only option now is to drive Iris out or send her to Philip. Otherwise, you won't be able to appease his anger! Our family really can't afford to mess with them! The Imperial League! They are part of the Imperial League, you know!"

Justin frowned when he heard him say the things he shouldn't be saying, and the look in his eyes turned cold.

Herman, who didn't know that he had already hit Justin's sore spot, was still talking about how powerful Philip was.

As he spoke, Iris gradually lowered her head.

She knew that she had destroyed the family's peace and tranquility.

Just as she was suffering through her psychological ordeal, and while Herman stood on the moral high ground and criticized her...

Justin suddenly said, "So, that's why you were willing to give your wife to someone else? And even cooperate with him to act as if your son had been kidnapped?"

His simple few words made all the sounds in the room cease abruptly!

Iris' head also whipped up and she looked at them in disbelief.

Herman's mouth was still open. He was staring at him in shock because he had been exposed, and it seemed like he'd never expected Justin to say such a thing.

Iris went from being confused to being shocked. Her brows slowly drew together and she looked at Herman in disbelief. She swallowed and asked, "Justin, what do you mean?"

Herman immediately shouted, "Justin, don't you dare make false accusations!"

Justin lowered his eyes. "I didn't want to thoroughly embarrass you, but since you insist on getting into the line of fire, then let's just speak frankly here!"

He looked at Herman and said, "When Philip Coleman visited the house as a guest and talked about his ex-girlfriend, you already knew that the ex-girlfriend he was talking about was Mom, right?"

Herman didn't admit it, but he suddenly didn't dare to look at Iris. "What nonsense are you talking about?"

Justin sneered, "In the following few years, the Hunts showed faint signs of being suppressed. During those few years, the Smiths also gradually gained the upper hand, and it looked like they would soon surpass us and become the number one family in New York, didn't it?"

Herman immediately said, “That’s because Ian Smith is very impressive, whereas I don’t have any talent for business!”

“Is that so?”

Justin cast his eyes down. “The Hunts do not have the custom of only letting the eldest son or people from the direct lineage inherit the title of the head of the family. Although you were a bit of a jerk back then, Grandpa had chosen you. He must have a reason for doing so, right? Uncle Raymond, as well as my other uncles, were eyeing your position, yet they couldn’t take it from you. Why was that? Is it also because you don’t have any talent for business?”

Herman choked.

Justin continued to speak with a contemptuous smile on his face. “Outsiders all say that the elderly Mr. Smith had placed all his energy and focus into the company during those few times because of the heartbreak he’d suffered, but he had been in a total daze at that time, so how could he possibly have had such great ambitions?”

Feeling that there was nothing to live for anymore, Ian had sought death at one point. He hadn’t even cared about his family property anymore and had given everything to his nephew.

In fact, one could even say that before Nora’s return, he hadn’t even considered adopting Joel as his son. Instead, he was just giving it away.

Even if Ian had turned his sorrow into motivation after Yvette’s departure, it was still impossible for him to really want to expand and develop the Smith Corporation. He would only casually work for the Smith Corporation out of sheer boredom.

But even when Ian was in a bad state of mind, the Hunts had gone from bad to worse. In addition, during that time, his grandfather had still been around and had been the person in charge of the Hunts. Herman hadn’t taken over the family yet!

Herman was not at all as incompetent as what outsiders made him out to be. Otherwise, how would it have been possible for him to take Lauren with him to another country, start from zero, and achieve what he had currently accomplished in just twenty years?

That's right, Herman and Lauren already had a successful business abroad. The fact that Lauren had immediately organized such a large orchid exhibition when she'd only just returned to the country was enough proof of their current economic strength. Moreover, there was something that Justin had actually been unable to figure out all these years.

Even if Herman had done something wrong and cheated on his wife, would anyone really be like the old Mr. and Mrs. Hunt, and drive their son out of the house but keep their grandson?

All of these were choices that the Hunts had been forced to make back then!

When the elderly Mr. Hunt and Herman felt like they had come to their wits' end regarding the company, they immediately understood what had happened. Thus, Herman had promptly and decisively cheated on Iris, in order to make her give up hope on him.

They'd originally thought that Philip would let them off once they sacrificed Iris, but they were wrong.

At that time, the only thing Iris had cared about was her son. When she went traveling, she'd actually run into Philip. However, she had no plans to rekindle her relationship with him.

This caused Philip to become even crueler, and he found someone to kidnap Justin!

One could say that the Hunts had abstained from taking action at that time, despite their ability to do so. The Hunts were so powerful in New York, how would they possibly be unable to find the child when he was first discovered missing?

It wasn't that they couldn't find him; rather, they hadn't searched for him at all!

By the time Iris returned and found that he was been abducted, too much time had already passed. By then, even if she sought help from the Smiths, the kidnapers would have already fled New York. Even the Smiths wouldn't be able to do anything about it!

Therefore, the Hunts had forced Iris to approach Philip.

They wanted to use Iris as a sacrificial offering

Unfortunately, Iris still didn't have any thoughts of reconciling with Philip. Instead, she reached a different agreement with him, which was to watch her son grow up in the Hunts without interfering with his life.

After the old Mr. Hunt heard about this, he realized and understood that since Philip loved Iris so deeply, he would never hurt her. Additionally, if he wanted Iris to protect the Hunts, then it would only be possible if Justin stayed in the family.

Thus, Mr. Hunt had pretended to drive away Herman, and also declared that he would take it that he never had a son like him. His purpose in driving him away was so that Herman could go overseas, start a new business, and open up a new world for the Hunts.

This was so that the Hunts could avoid a crushing defeat should something ever go wrong with Philip and he targets the Hunts in the future!

Herman might look like he had left the family without taking a cent, but when he went abroad back then, his father most certainly would have secretly given him a sum of money as start-up capital.

All of their schemes were closely linked with one another. The elderly Mr. and Mrs. Hunt, who seemingly had a deep sense of love and righteousness, were just doing all that for the sake of the Hunts.

Justin had only slowly pieced everything together after Iris told him the truth.

This was also the reason why he hadn't immediately sought revenge on Lauren for kidnapping him-because she wasn't the one who had instigated the kidnapping at all.

It was Philip!

Justin's words, like a sharp knife, cut open the Hunts' veil of pretense, exposing all of their ugly and nasty true colors.

Iris was shocked and astounded. She felt like the worldview she'd held all these years had come crashing down all around her. She thought that she had caused the Hunts huge trouble, but little did she think that the Hunts had been using her all this time?

Herman refused to admit it. "What are you talking about? I don't understand at all, you..."

"You don't understand? Is that so? In that case, shall I lay out all the evidence one by one?"

Justin's voice was low and deep, but there was a mocking smile on the corners of his lips.

Herman narrowed his eyes.

After some time, he finally dropped his pretenses. He calmly said, "Since you've already figured out everything, then take your mother with you and leave the Hunts at once

-because, I, the real head of the Hunts, am back."

Justin stared at him.

Herman lowered his head and looked at the family members who had hurried over after hearing about his return and the argument. He straightened his back. On his visage that was three parts similar to Justin's, his eyes were dark and deep.

He calmly said, "My father left all the shares in the family to me back then."

After saying this, he immediately took out a will.

Upon seeing the share transfer agreement, everyone was shocked.

When the elderly Mr. Hunt passed away, in his final words, he had only left instructions saying that Justin was to take charge of the company. Therefore, Justin had naturally inherited his shares.

With the will, though, Justin would be kicked out of the picture.

Everyone in the family fell silent. They all stared at the will and then at each other, all of them at a loss for words.

Roger said, "Uncle Herman, if a will exists, then Grandpa's shares should indeed be given to you. In that case, from today onwards, you will be the head of the Hunts!"

Some defenders of Justin said, “But is the will really valid? Who can prove it?”

Along with these words, someone supported a shaky Mrs. Hunt as she walked out. She said unhurriedly, “I can prove it.”

Nora was standing upstairs and watching the intense discussion downstairs.

She clearly saw that Justin had trembled lightly when Mrs. Hunt walked out.

Nora sighed silently.

Justin might never have ever thought that his grandmother, who had raised him into an adult, would also be part of the group of people plotting against him.

How sad and lonely must that man surrounded by his so-called family members be right now?

Justin was a man who had always been scheming and inscrutable, so he didn't say anything

Iris, however, stared at the group of people. The woman, who now knew the truth, was suffering quite the mental breakdown at the moment—not for herself, but for her son!

Her entire body shook with anger, and she rushed up to Herman, stretched out her hand, and slapped him across the cheek.

Smack!

She had put all of her strength into the slap, causing Herman's head to turn to the side.

Nora saw that Herman could have avoided the slap, but he didn't. Instead, he chose to take it.

Iris screamed, “Herman Hunt, you are so despicable! Never mind that you plotted against me, but how can you plot against even your own son?!”

Herman's head was turned to the side. The handprint on his cheek quickly swelled up visibly, which went to show just how furious Iris was.



He looked at Iris calmly. "Iris, I don't mind if you blame me for this. It's all because I am too incapable. Twenty years ago, I didn't have the ability to keep you by my side; twenty years later, I still don't have the ability to keep you with me. When we got married, we had clearly vowed that we would never abandon each other for the rest of our lives, but unfortunately, you have offended someone you should not have."

When Herman said that, there was sorrow in his eyes as he gazed at Iris.

To be honest, hadn't he also loved Iris when he was young?

In fact, one could even say that he still did.

At that time, he and Ian had both courted Yvette. Later, after Yvette chose Ian, he had also been envious of the beautiful love between the two of them.

Afterward, he had met Iris.

When he saw how gentle Iris had been to the poor lad Philip, his heart had skipped a beat.

Thus, he had gotten the Hunts to approach the Evanses and propose marriage.

Everyone said that he had married Iris because he could not manage to take Yvette as his wife. The only person in New York who was comparable to Yvette at that time had been Iris.

But nobody knew that he had only courted Yvette back then just to fight with Ian. Towards Iris, however... he had truly fallen in love with her.

He hadn't expected Iris to agree to the proposal, either.

Before they got married, Iris had told him honestly that their marriage was a political one, that she had no feelings for him.

However, Herman had still insisted on getting married. At that time, he was already in love with her. He'd even vowed that he would treat her well for the rest of his life.

He just never expected Philip the pauper to suddenly transform into the head of one of the mysterious families of the world.

Back then, when the Hunts were suppressed by him, just how tormented had he been? His father had spent his entire life turning the Hunts into a big and powerful family, but before the company and family were even handed over to him, he had already implicated them...

Herman had indeed deliberately betrayed Iris, but at that time, he had also suffered great emotional torment.

Iris didn't understand the complicated look in Herman's eyes. She merely felt that the man in front of her was simply too shameless!

She stared at him. "If that was the case, then you should have made things clear to me from the start! Even if I have to leave with Justin, I would never drag the Hunts in this!"

How could Herman possibly bear to let them leave, though?

He clenched his jaw and narrowed his eyes. "You want to take Justin away? Justin is my, Herman Hunt's, son! He is a descendant of the Hunts! Are you planning to take him with you as you turn to Philip?! I won't allow it!"

Iris really couldn't understand him.

He was the one taking full advantage of her and her son, yet he was also the one saying that Justin was his son, so they mustn't leave.

She felt that Herman must be schizophrenic.

She smiled in resignation and asked, "Herman, what do you mean by that?"

Herman cast his eyes down and sighed. "What I mean by that? Couldn't you have just behaved yourself, accepted your fate, and stayed in that suburban villa for the rest of your life? This way, I would never have returned to the family, and would never have fought with our son for the position of the head of the family! But look at you... You had already stayed there for the first twenty years, why did you let everything go to waste in the end?!"

Iris stared at him, finally understanding what he meant.

It was because of Herman's selfish intentions that they hadn't let her go back then!

Since he had given up Iris, then he totally could have just let go and push her into Philip's arms. Given Philip's means, he would have been able to trick Iris into staying with him eventually. But Herman hadn't! Instead, he had used Justin to keep her captive, preferring to imprison her for twenty years in a suburban villa as though she was a canary in captivity, over giving her true freedom!

She clenched her fists tightly. "Herman, you are such a despicable lowlife!"

Herman lowered his eyes and took a step forward. "I don't care whether you call me despicable or shameless, but Iris, you and your son only have two choices now."

Iris stared at him. "Go on."

Justin also looked at Herman.

Herman sighed and said, "Justin, you are my son, why would I do anything to harm you? If your mother goes to Philip and asks him to stop, then I will take it that this will doesn't exist. My business overseas is enough for me to support myself."

Iris took a step back.

Even now, Herman still wanted to sacrifice her.

While she was contemplating in a daze, she heard Justin's firm and sonorous voice.

"That's impossible. Tell me the second option."

"You—!" Herman was practically speechless towards Justin. He pointed at him, his finger in the air for a while.

The elderly Mrs. Hunt took a step forward and held Justin's arm. "Justin, my good grandson, just agree to it! Iris had already moved to the suburbs when you were five, and she has never taken care of you ever since. Besides, who knows if her heart had already been with Philip long ago? They are each other's first love, so can't you just take it that you're giving your mother your blessings? Once she is gone, the will would be considered non-existent. All these years, it was only under your leadership that the Hunts could come this far, everyone can see that. If your father ever dares to fight with you for the

position of the head of the family after your mother leaves, I will be the first to raise my voice!”

Justin looked at Mrs. Hunt as she spoke.

It was not that she did not love him.

It was just that before loving him, the Hunts’ interests mattered more than anything else!

Justin then looked at Herman.

All these years, he had hardly ever called him, nor had he ever paid any attention to him. He had just been taking advantage of him all along

From beginning to end, Iris had been the only one who did things for his sake.

## **Chapter 662 - The Plan of Saving Nora Novel Free**

She paused abruptly at this point. Only then did she finally realize something and she exclaimed, “Y-you are Orchidance?”

Nora glanced at her and said nothing.

Iris lifted her chin and looked at her proudly. “That’s right, my daughter-in-law is Orchidance.”

In an instant, it raised a huge furor in the entire exhibition. Everyone looked at Nora in astoundment. “Not only is she Dr. Zabe’s disciple, but also Anti the surgeon. I’m actually not surprised at all to hear that she’s also Orchidance... Ms. Smith’s medical skills are truly amazing!”

“Oh my god, as it turns out, Orchidance has always been right by our side. Isn’t she supposed to be staying abroad?”

“I heard that Ms. Smith only came back from overseas a few months ago...”

“Yes, now that you mention it, all the facts line up.”

Amid everyone’s speculations, Lauren bit her lip tightly. She still couldn’t believe it, but she also knew that there was no need for someone like Nora to impersonate someone else.

After all, even if she was not Orchidance, she was already popular enough in New York.

Nevertheless, she felt that she couldn't admit defeat just like that, so she said, "Ms. Smith, since you are Orchidance, then you should have known that the prescription given to the orchid was wrong from the moment you entered the exhibition. Why didn't you bring it up and save the orchid then? Instead, you had to wait until it started withering to show off your medical skills? How much do you think the Ghost Orchids have suffered as a result?"

Nora: "?"

Iris sneered and stepped right in front of Nora. She said sharply, "Lauren, you're being unreasonable. Didn't my daughter-in-law already say so just now? What can we do when you refuse to admit that your prescription is wrong? Besides, my daughter-in-law has said that the flowers can still be saved!"

Lauren bit her lip. "But I didn't know that Ms. Smith is Orchidance. If I had known, I definitely would have agreed to it. I get it now, the two of you just wanted to use that to make a bet with me... so that I would admit my mistake. But why bother doing something like that? Wouldn't you ruin Matthew's Ghost Orchids by doing that? Iris, if you hate me, then you can just come at me. You are also an orchid lover, how can you treat a pot of Ghost Orchids like this?"

Her fallacious and heretic arguments surprisingly sounded like they made sense at first.

If Nora had revealed her identity the moment she entered the hall, would they have stopped her from treating the orchids? Did she have to wait until the orchids became like this to highlight her abilities?

They were clearly using that pot of orchids to slap Lauren in the face, and also to make the bet with her!

Everyone looked at Iris and Nora.

Even Matthew, who clearly knew that he couldn't blame the two of them-after all, he still had to rely on Orchidance for help if he wanted to save the Ghost Orchids-couldn't help but feel uncomfortable about the situation.

He didn't like Lauren, because not only did she use the Ghost Orchids to threaten him into selling the Jade Orchids to her, but she even forced him to put his pot of Ghost Orchids on display in the exhibition.

He'd initially thought that Iris was different from her, but he didn't expect her to actually turn out to be the same type of person in the end.

Matthew sighed. Even the way he looked at Iris had changed a little. An orchid lover beside him couldn't help but say, "Mrs. Hunt... Everyone here is a flower lover, is there a need to do something like that?"

"Yeah, how can you make that pot of Ghost Orchids suffer such calamity just to vent your anger on someone? Even if it's cured, it probably won't be able to return to its former glory, right?"

"Lauren is not an orchid lover anyway, and was just using them to show off. We all despise her in our hearts, but Mdm. Iris, you are not supposed to be someone like that!"

Everyone was reproaching her softly, and their voices were so low that one couldn't tell who was the one speaking. After all, no one dared to openly offend Iris.

There was, however, a straightforward person who stepped forward. She pointed at Iris and sighed. "Mdm. Iris, you have always been a fairy-like person all these years, and your love for orchids is also a role model among our peers. All these years, how many potted flowers have you saved from the hands of people who have no love for flowers? Why have you lowered yourself so much that you would fight with someone like her?! And for the sake of fighting, you even used a pot of Ghost Orchids to vent your anger! Sigh!"

Lauren's countenance alternated between being pale and being sullen as she listened to the remarks.

She'd originally thought that everyone would see her in a different light after she came to the orchid exhibition, but little did she expect that they had never thought highly of her before!

They must have been polite to her only because they were afraid that if they offended her, they wouldn't have anyone to ask for help when their orchids fell sick, right?

So, now that they knew that Nora was Orchidance, and knew that her medical skills were not as good as hers, they were starting to voice their real thoughts?

When Lauren saw everyone attacking Iris, she secretly felt very happy.

What kind of person was Iris?

One must know that Iris had been a beauty who was equally famous as Yvette in New York back then.

Yvette owed part of her fame to her looks and the other part to her talent. After all, her amazing talent and brilliance had indeed shocked and astounded many.

But Iris was different.

When one spoke of her, everyone would only marvel at and admire her for her beauty and her ethereal character. She was just like a celestial maiden. Anyone who had seen her wouldn't be able to describe her negatively.

She was lively and cheerful.

Her voice was as beautiful and pleasant as a bird's.

Her nimble movements made her look even more like a celestial maiden from the heavens.

Therefore, when Herman and Iris divorced, out of everyone in New York, half of the men had insulted Herman and called him blind while the other half was secretly happy that their goddess was single once more.

In addition, Iris wasn't fond of disputes. Unlike Yvette, who had made enemies everywhere and become the women's imaginary enemy, she had a good personality. Moreover, she was simply so beautiful and on top of that, her beauty was not the aggressive kind. Even women were amazed by her beauty. No one would be jealous of her beauty; instead, they would only want to defend and protect her beauty.

But hadn't she brought Iris down from her exalted position all the same?

In order to fight Iris, she had ended up being criticized by others. When she thought of it that way, Lauren felt a sense of accomplishment again.

She could work with this, too!

At the very least, not everyone would be biased towards Iris anymore whenever the two of them were mentioned.

While she was thinking about it, Nora said, "You've misunderstood Aunt Iris."

She took a step forward and spoke to Matthew. She said, "When I told Aunt Iris yesterday that there was a problem with the prescription, she had wanted to contact you right away. I was the one who stopped her."

Lauren said, "Ms. Smith, there's no need for you to shoulder all the responsibility just to protect Mdm. Iris' reputation."

Nora looked at her. "I'm not trying to shoulder anything. It's because it has to be done that way."

Lauren was taken aback.

The people around them also all looked at her.

Nora lowered her head and said dispassionately, "Matthew said yesterday that the prescription had already been used on the Ghost Orchids, so it was already too late to stop him at that time. Therefore, it was necessary that we wait for the medicine to take effect before further treatment can be carried out. Otherwise, if I use any more medicine on it, the Ghost Orchids won't be able to handle it, and will end up dying."

Everyone was taken aback.

Nora looked at Lauren. "Therefore, there is no need for you to slander Aunt Iris here. It is only on Aunt Iris' account that I'm even here to treat that pot of Ghost Orchids."

With that, everyone looked at Iris.

Iris stood where she was, her back straight.

In spite of how she was nearly fifty years old, one couldn't see any signs of age on her at all. She was slim and graceful, as though she had always been that youthful celestial maiden from back then all this time.



Matthew was very ashamed of himself. He hung his head at once and said, "To think I've misunderstood you, Mdm. Iris. I am so despicable! All these years, you are the only one who has shown true love for orchids!"

The others also apologized.

Iris was a distant and unemotional person, and she didn't feel much for relationships in the first place. She usually didn't interact much with them, either, so she merely said dispassionately, "It's fine."

In any case, she wouldn't be taking it to heart at all.

At this point, Nora, who didn't care about what the others were saying, had taken out a bottle that she had prepared in advance and handed it to Matthew. She said, "This is the medicine that Aunt Iris brewed last night using my prescription. Rub the leaves gently with the solution and water it with 0.1 ounces a day. The flowers will recover in half a month."

A very grateful-looking Matthew took the solution from her with both hands.

At this time, someone looked at Nora and said, "Orchidance... Ms. Smith, there is a small problem with my orchid. Can you..."

Nora cut the other party off. "Sorry, but if you want a medical consultation with me, then you'll have to follow my rules."

The man was taken aback.

Nora said, "I only accept two patients a month. You can contact my assistant to get an appointment and queue up."

Everyone: "??"

Everyone knew that it was hard to book a medical consultation with Nora. The dates were already full for as long as five to six years in the future. Humans could still afford to wait, but how could flowers afford that?

When they were about to speak, Nora looked at Iris and said, "Alternatively, I visit Aunt Iris on the 15th of every month to check on her flowers for her. You can try then."

Everyone looked at Iris again as if they had found a savior.

Iris: "..."

Nora was completely pushing her out as a shield.

However, Iris also understood that Nora had blown her own cover in order to intimidate Lauren for her. Additionally, she was also probably making them visit her in order to alleviate her loneliness.

At this moment, Nora looked at Lauren, who was about to walk aside, and stopped her. "Mdm. Lauren, have you forgotten our bet?"

Lauren paused and turned around.

Nora pointed to Iris. "Please apologize for wrecking someone else's family back then!"

Lauren: "!!!"

She bit her lip hard and looked at Iris, her expression extremely awful. But in front of so many people, she had to take responsibility for her actions.

Thus, she took a deep breath and bowed to Iris. She said, "Iris, Herman and I couldn't help ourselves from falling in love back then and ended up betraying you. We are truly in love with each other, and we also know very well that we have let you down; that was why Herman had left the family without taking a single cent. If you feel that we still owe you something, then I solemnly apologize: I'm sorry!"

By putting a hidden message in her words and mentioning that Herman had left the family without taking any money from them, she wanted to tell everyone that she and Herman had already paid the price for their actions.

Still, no matter what, she had admitted to wrecking someone else's family!

As a result, she had thoroughly embarrassed herself in front of everyone.

She clenched her fists and took a deep breath. Then, she forced a small smile and said, "Alright, it's okay even if you resent me or dislike me, but since I've gathered everyone here, then why don't you guys enjoy and admire the orchids? I suddenly remembered that I have something to do, so I will leave first. You can direct all matters about the orchid exhibition today to the manager."

After saying that, Lauren turned and left.

Nora narrowed her eyes as she looked at her from the back.

Lauren's final move had been very graceful, and she also spoke elegantly. Her words really didn't seem like something a vicious side character pretending to be a pure and innocent woman would say.

For her to be able to snatch Herman away from the top beauty Iris back then, it seemed that she did indeed have a trick or two up her sleeve.

She lowered her eyes.

For some reason, she couldn't help but feel that Herman and Lauren's sudden return to America was a little fishy.

Nora strolled around the orchid exhibition with Iris. The people there were simply too enthusiastic towards the two of them. Unable to bear it, they found an excuse and slipped away.

On the way back to the villa after leaving the orchid exhibition, Iris looked at Nora again and again. However, she didn't say anything at all. After thinking about it, she refrained from making conversation.

Soon, the two returned to the suburban villa.

As soon as they entered the gates, Iris spotted Justin's black Maybach parked outside the door. She took a deep breath and entered the house.

Justin stood up. As he stood there and looked at her, Iris asked, "Did you know that Nora is Orchidance?"

Justin shook his head.

He didn't know who Orchidance was-after all, he wasn't knowledgeable about orchids.

However...

The corners of Justin's lips curled into a smile and he said, "I believe in Nora's capabilities, so I waited here to listen to your story."

Iris looked at Nora and then at Justin. Nora had only said that she would attend the orchid exhibition, she hadn't revealed anything else to Justin at all. Even when they were on the way to the orchid exhibition, she had only said that she could save the Ghost Orchids. She hadn't revealed that she was Orchidance.

Therefore, Iris had always been skeptical about whether Nora could cure the Ghost Orchids or not.

But Justin had trusted her very much.

Was that how it felt to be mutually trusting towards each other? When she thought about it carefully, she actually didn't have a single person she could trust in her life, which was rather sad.

If she really had to think of one, then perhaps she had only trusted that one person...

Thinking of this, Iris cast her eyes down. She pointed to the greenhouse next to them and said, "Let's talk inside." Because she wanted to like orchids, she had ended up really becoming fond of them. When she was gardening and taking care of the flowers, she was able to truly abandon all distractions and concentrate on work. Therefore, Iris had really fallen in love very much with orchids over the years. Her heart calmed and became peaceful after she entered the greenhouse. She sat there quietly and picked up the teapot that Mrs. Landis had prepared at the side. Then, she poured three cups of tea and put them on either side of the coffee table.

Sunlight streamed brazenly into the glass conservatory, making the place look warm and toasty in the cold weather.

The white coffee table and seats added a bit of rustic elegance to the place, making one feel as if they could really become at peace with the world just by sitting in there.

Iris' gaze fell onto the orchids next to them, but she didn't speak, seemingly in a struggle over how to start. At this time, Justin asked, "Is it related to the kidnapping back then?"

Iris was taken aback. She looked at him. Justin said indifferently, "When I was five, a woman I didn't know suddenly showed up at home and told me to call her Mom, but I refused. After that, I was kidnapped."

Justin cast his eyes down. “Later, I met a man. He got into a tussle with the kidnapers, so I took the opportunity to escape and returned home according to the route I remembered. I’ve always thought that I managed to escape because I was smart and seized the right opportunity, but now that I think about it, why did that person so coincidentally enter a confrontation with the kidnapers at that time? You were the one who sent him, right?” Iris pursed her lips tightly before she finally nodded. “You can say that.” Justin continued with his analysis. “After they kidnapped me, they wanted neither money nor manpower. It was clear that they wanted to kill the hostage. On top of that, they also wanted me to die a distance away from home. At that time, the Hunts were already one of the largest families in New York, yet even they couldn’t find me. In that case, who did you seek help from?”

Iris bit her lip.

Justin stared at her, light flickering in his deep-set eyes. “Or should I say, who did you beg for help? That person you begged for help is the one who imprisoned you here in this small villa, and also forbade you from being with me, right?” Iris exclaimed, “How did you know that? Do you already know who he is?”

“I don’t.”

Justin said dispassionately, “Ever since I realized that you have reasons for doing what you did, all these years, I have been wondering what on earth those reasons are. At first, I thought that you had made some kind of agreement with Herman, but after he came back, I realized that that wasn’t the case at all. You have never feared him, so how could you possibly make such a ridiculous agreement with him? Besides, you have always been afraid of giving me trouble all these years, so you always rejected the Evanses every time they approached you for anything. Therefore, it is impossible for you to harbor thoughts of usurping the Hunts’ assets. Grandma also doesn’t seem to be on guard against you. After thinking about it, that is the only possibility left.”

Iris’ eyes reddened. Since Justin had started the topic, she picked up from there. She said, “My marriage to your father is a political marriage between wealthy families. The one he liked was actually Yvette Anderson. I know all of that, so I’ve never blamed him for cheating—because I have never loved him either. However, he went too far. I’d already given them my blessings and left the family, yet they neglected you and caused you to be kidnapped! Everything related to the kidnapping has already been erased by now. I suspect that it’s Lauren’s handiwork and that she had colluded with that group

of kidnapers, but I don't have any proof. That time, after I came back from my trip overseas and discovered that you were gone, I begged the Hunts and the Smiths for help. At that time, Nora's father was still the head of the Smiths. Mr. Smith helped me to search for your whereabouts, but unfortunately, there was no news of you at all. By then, it had already been more than twelve hours since your disappearance. If I still couldn't find you, there was a very high chance that they would kill you. So, I had no other choice. I could only approach him..."

Iris clenched her fists tightly at the mention.

Her eyes were full of hate towards Lauren.

Justin suddenly asked, "Who... is he?" Iris sighed and shook her head. "To be honest, I don't know either." Justin and Nora exchanged a look and both frowned.

However, neither of them raised any questions because the look in Iris' eyes had started to become distant, and she was already starting to go down memory lane. She said, "I met him in college. He was my first boyfriend."

Her simple few words stunned the two of them.

He was her first love? Then why didn't she know who he was? While they were thinking about it, Iris said, "When we were still studying, he was a poor boy named Philip Coleman." At this point, Iris looked at Justin. It was inevitable that she would feel a little embarrassed mentioning her first love in front of her son and daughter-in-law.

She lowered her head. "I met him at a dance party. He fell in love with me at first sight. After that, he tried to woo me for a very long time. Among all the rich youngsters, he was very unremarkable, but for some reason, he was the only one who caught my eye. After we graduated, my family wanted me to get engaged with Herman for the political marriage."

Iris' voice was a little serious and burdened when she mentioned that. After a while, she finally heaved a huge sigh and said, "It's actually a very cheesy story. My family was driving me into a corner. Mom was seriously ill, but Dad refused to pay for her high medical expenses unless I agreed to the marriage. I had no other choice at that time, so I broke up with him."

At this point, Iris looked at Justin and gave him a wry smile. “He had been pretending to be a poor boy in school because he was worried that people would be attracted to his money, whereas I happened to be in need of it.”

The two of them had let each other slip by perfectly.

Iris sighed. “Both he and I were relatively self-restrained people, so the breakup went smoothly. After that, your father and I got married. Everything was fine until one day, your father said that a foreign businessman had come to America and was holding a party. He wanted me to attend it with him...”

She hadn’t expected to meet Philip again at the party. Philip was the foreign investor at the party.

Everyone was trying to please him because they had heard that he was from a foreign wealthy family. Even though the Hunts and the Smiths had already reached the pinnacle in America, there was another family in another country that loved doing business very much. They had been merchants for generations and had amassed a lot of wealth over the years.

People like them had always been low-key in their behavior. Even when he was out, he used a pseudonym. Philip Coleman was not his name; it was just the pseudonym he used in America.

She had never known his true identity.

At the party, Philip found an excuse to corner her.

Iris knew that Herman was someone who hated being embarrassed, so she said, “My husband doesn’t know about my first love. Please don’t tell him about it.”

At that time, Iris’ belly was already showing slightly.

She had given all her love to the baby in her womb.

At that time, the way Philip looked at her had changed. He let out a sarcastic laugh and said, “I have never been acquainted with Ms. Evans before. Nice to meet you.” When he said that, Iris had felt like someone had suddenly gripped her heart tightly. What she’d thought was a peaceful breakup was still capable of piercing her heart two years later.

She put on a graceful smile and nodded at Philip.

But after she turned around, she was unable to maintain the smile on her face.

However, Philip would appear in her life again. Philip became good friends with Herman and visited them at home. Herman had pointed to Iris' belly and said to Philip, "Philip, he'll be your god-son in the future!" At that time, Philip had looked at Iris pointedly and remarked, "I'm so envious of you for having such a good wife, Herman." Herman asked, "Aren't you married yet, Philip?"

Philip shook his head and immediately said, "I have someone in my heart I can't forget, no other woman can capture my eye."

When he said this, the look in his eyes as he stared at Iris had been persistent and terrifying. Herman, however, was still unaware of what was happening. He said, "Oh? Then why didn't you marry her?" Philip lowered his head. "I had concealed my identity at the time, so she thought I was poor and went to someone of higher social status instead."

Herman cursed the woman for being materialistic and shameless.

Iris flushed as red as a tomato as she listened to them from the side.

Philip, however, said, "It is instinctive to pursue a better life, so I don't hate her. In fact, if she is ever in trouble in the future, I would still be willing to help her."

Herman had immediately given him a thumbs-up. "You sure are magnanimous, Philip!"

Philip then said, "My family also has a lot of secret properties in America, it's just that most people don't know that. If you ever run into trouble in America, I can also be of assistance."

Herman hadn't thought much about it at the time and had thought that those words were directed at him. At once, he started chatting and laughing happily with Philip. However, Philip's attitude suddenly became cold and he left.

Since then, he had never stepped into America again. It was only later that Herman finally understood why Philip had fallen out with him back then.



After he left, Iris had let out a long sigh of relief.

She admitted that her decision had betrayed Philip back then, but Philip had also hidden his family background from her. Wasn't that also a form of deception towards her?

Their relationship had ended without any real reason. They were ultimately just not meant to be.

When Justin was five years old, Philip had called her.

He was still using the same phone number he had used when they were in college. Iris answered the call. At that time, she had already found out about Herman's cheating, so she was in a bad mood.

Philip had only asked her a question on the phone: "Do you regret what you did?" Did she regret what she had done? Occasionally, in the dead of night, Iris would think of Philip. If she had been a little more firm and resolute back then, and if she had lived as unrestrainedly and happily as Yvette had, then would her life have been better?

But every time the thought formed, she would look at Justin. Although she didn't love Herman, Justin was the greatest gift that God had given her. She loved her son more than anything in the world.

"Mom, buy me harder Lego sets next time. These are too easy."

Her son with a super high IQ made a request with a frown.

Iris immediately smiled and said into the phone, "I have no regrets."

She hung up the phone. Afterward, when Mrs. Hunt made her choose between tolerating Herman or doing something else, she had decided to be selfish for once. Perhaps her rebellious streak from college times had come too late, but she decided to file for divorce. She dragged her suitcase behind her and left the house.

After that, Herman had brought Lauren home. After she came back from her trip and learned that Justin had been kidnapped and was missing, she had felt like dying.

Even with the Hunts and the Smiths' power, they couldn't find Justin. At that time, she had panicked. Her five-year-old son, no matter how high his IQ, was still just a child.

If the other party was determined to kill the hostage, then he would probably have already become a corpse by then!

She didn't dare to wait any longer. In her panic, she inexplicably thought of what Philip had once said: "... My family also has a lot of secret properties in America, it's just that most people don't know that. If you ever run into trouble in America, I can also be of assistance."

She dialed Philip's phone number with trembling fingers. The man seemed very hesitant, only picking up the call after it rang for a very long time. The man smiled and said, "Do you need something? It's my wedding today. The groom can't be absent, you know." Iris didn't have the leisure to care about such things. Besides, so many years had already gone by, her feelings for him as her first love had already faded a long time ago. She immediately asked, "Can you save my son?!" Philip was startled. "What happened?"

Iris recounted the story. At last, she asked: "Aren't you very powerful in America? Can you find him?"

"Yes, I can." Philip was very confident. "But why should I help you?"

Why should he help her?

Iris had been stunned then. Indeed, why should he?

While she was in a daze, Philip said, "I'll give you two choices."

"What?"

"The first one: Fly over to my wedding now. I am still missing a bride."

Iris thought that he must be out of his mind. She said, "My son is missing! Philip, I am not in the mood to joke around with you."

"I'm not joking." Philip chuckled and said, "Why should I help you for no reason?"

Iris bit her lip. At last, she took a deep breath and said, "I can't agree to your request. I will never leave my son's side ever again."

Because she had gone overseas for a holiday, Justin had gone missing.

Her son needed his mother after all. She must not leave him

Moreover, her relationship with Philip was just puppy love during college. Compared with reality, she cared more about Justin. She started to cry. Her voice was choked with sobs as she said, "Philip, please, I'm begging you."

The other end of the call was silent for a long time. In the end, Philip sneered and said, "I can find him for you, but you have to promise me something."

"Tell me what it is!"

Philip enunciated every word carefully and said, "You can watch over your son, but I forbid you from ever getting close to him for the rest of your life. You can only look at him from a distance."

"Iris, this is your punishment for betraying me back then."

"... Okay, I promise you that!"

Later, Iris and Herman got divorced, Herman was kicked out of the house, and Justin became the new leader of the clan with his grandfather grooming him ever since. As for Iris, she could only hide in the villa.

She could still remember the last few words that Philip had said to her. His voice was very cold and missing any trace of emotion. He said, "Since you have agreed to my condition, then you must keep your word. Otherwise, you know what I'm capable of, I will spare no costs to kill your son. I can save your son's life, but I can also easily crush him like an ant."

Even now, Iris still didn't know who Philip really was.

Mysterious families like his kept their identities very well-hidden. She couldn't make any contact with them at all. All she knew was that if she stayed away from Justin all her life and maintained a distant attitude toward him, then she would be able to guarantee his safety.

Therefore, that was exactly what she had been doing all these years.

The story was over.

There was no bloodshed nor intense love and hate. It was so plain and bland. In fact, when Iris mentioned Philip, she no longer felt any love for him but only fear and thoughts of her agreement with him. Iris looked at Justin. "The world's top families can control the world economy and are very terrifying existences. I have distanced myself from you all this time because I'm afraid they would destroy you and the Hunts the moment they decide to take action. To be honest, my life here all these years by myself has been very comfortable. Aging and dying alone can also be considered a kind of happiness. "Justin, you wanted to know the truth and I've already said it, but I don't want you to pursue it any further. Back then, I was the one who had let him down. After that, I even asked him to find you for me. He gave you your life, so let's just leave it at that." Seemingly because she had come clean about everything that had happened back then, Iris breathed a sigh of relief. She lowered her head. "You don't have to become enemies with him for my sake. After all, I am already an old woman in my autumn years."

After she said that, she slowly closed her eyes and sighed deeply.

Nora looked at her. She was actually very shocked, though she pretended to be nonchalant on the surface.

When Iris was young, she must have been very gentle and a big pushover, right?

That was why she had given in to her family's arrangements back then.

But was her mistake really so big?

Didn't Philip hold any responsibility for why they weren't together? They had already been in a relationship for several years, so why didn't he tell her his identity and his background?

Also...

Weren't there a few too many powerful people in the world?!

The mysterious organization's forces already spanned throughout the world, and now there was another mysterious mega-corporation? All her life, she had only been concerned with sleeping every day and also felt that it would do as long as she made enough to survive. It was only now that she suddenly realized that she was actually... so poor! While Nora's imagination was

running wild, Iris' cell phone suddenly rang again. It was still that same unfamiliar number.

If Nora wasn't wrong, then he was likely Philip.

Sure enough, at the sight of the phone number, Iris' pupils shrank slightly and fear arose in her again.

She wanted to pick up the phone and switch it off, but before she could touch it, a big well-defined hand took the phone.

Iris' head whipped up abruptly and she looked at Justin incredulously.

Justin looked at her firmly. His voice was calm and steady, and he seemed capable of protecting Iris from everything in the world. He said, "Let me."

Iris shook her head.

She was very scared.

Although the Hunts were powerful, they were really no match for globally powerful families that had hundreds—even a thousand-of years of history.

She swallowed. "Justin, forget it."

Justin could understand her fear and panic. His mother was worried that she would affect the Hunts because of her own affairs, but she didn't know that he had another identity that was powerful enough to make him fearless.

It was just that due to certain reasons, he couldn't reveal that identity of his.

He lowered his head and said, "Mom, don't be scared."

After saying that, he picked up the cell phone, got up, and answered the call. A deep and pleasant male voice traveled over through the phone: "Iris, you have broken our agreement."

Nora stood beside Iris.

She held Iris' shoulders and looked fixedly at Justin.

Justin said into the phone, "From now on, I will be the one to fulfill that agreement."

The original agreement was that Iris would age and die alone in the suburban villa as punishment. If she couldn't restrain herself and got close to her son, then Philip would take action against the Hunts and Justin.

When Justin said that he would fulfill the agreement, the man immediately understood what he meant.

Philip sneered, "Heh, that weak little boy from back then has grown up and become independent, hasn't he? In that case, I'll teach you how to behave."

As soon as he said that, Iris panicked. She rushed forward and shouted, "Philip, come right at me if you want! Don't do anything to the child, you..."

But before she could finish, Philip snapped, "Iris, that's enough!"

Iris was taken aback.

Philip smiled and said, "Aren't you just saying that because you're very sure that I won't do anything to you? Now that the kid has grown up, you can't blame me for being nasty anymore!"

He hung up right after saying that.

Iris: "..."

The disconnected tone from the phone resounded in the depths of her heart like the bangs of a drum, making her feel terribly flustered. She swallowed and looked up at Justin, feeling like she had become the sinner of the Hunts.

The most mysterious megacorp was about to take action against her son.

Iris grabbed Justin's arm. She wanted to say that she would go and apologize to the other party, but when the words reached the tip of her tongue, she couldn't bring herself to say them-because if she did, then it would be no different from her throwing her own pride onto the ground and trampling on it.

Iris took a deep breath.

Just as she was filled with worry and trepidation, she saw Justin walk around her and look at Nora. He asked, "Nora, are you scared?"

Nora raised her brows. The Hunts had offended the most mysterious megacorp in the world, which sounded pretty exciting. Also, if Justin really lost

everything, then wouldn't Pete's status as the next head of the family become useless?

But...

She broke into a grin and raised her eyes slightly. "It's okay, if you go bankrupt, I'll support you..."

After saying that, she spotted Iris, so the rest of her words did a U-turn in her mouth and she added, "... guys."

Justin: "?"

He'd originally intended to tell her not to be scared, but he hadn't expected Nora to say something like that. Suddenly, it made him really feel like going bankrupt for fun.

It seemed like it wasn't that bad an idea to have a sugar mommy and be kept as a lover?

Ahem.

Iris looked at the two of them, suddenly finding herself speechless.

This must be love.

If she had trusted Philip back then, things would not have come to where they were. Now that she thought about it, so what even if she had to fight to the death with her family back then?

At most, she would have just started all over from scratch.

The woman, who was nearly fifty, was moved by the love between Nora and Justin. This inspired the greatest fighting spirit in her.

She said, "Okay, if we go bankrupt, then... we'll let Nora support us!"

Justin: "?"

The corners of his lips spasmed. Those who didn't know better would have thought that Iris was saying that she would support them after he went bankrupt!

He couldn't reveal his identity, but when he saw that the two women seemed so full of fighting spirit, he got out of his internal struggle. He smiled and said, "Don't worry, even though I would very much like to sponge off a woman, I'll refrain from trying that." He spoke solemnly. "With me around, the Hunts will not go bankrupt."

Her son's firm and confident words made Iris' flustered heart calm down.

To be honest, before she told the truth, she'd still been taking a chance.

She felt that since twenty years had gone by, perhaps Philip had already forgotten her a long time ago, or perhaps he no longer minded. But now that things had reached this point, it was useless to dwell any further on

it.

When she was young, for Justin's sake, she had suffered so many grievances and wasted twenty years of her youth in this villa.

Now that her son had grown up, it was time for him to support and protect her.

After Iris came to terms with it, she got out of her internal struggle. She suggested, "How about having a meal before you leave?"

"Nah, it's fine."

Justin rejected her. Iris nodded and said, "Well, I'm sure you have a lot of arrangements to make. In that case, go ahead!"

Justin exchanged a look with Nora when he heard this.

There were some things that Justin was too embarrassed to say, but Nora understood what he was thinking, so she said, "Well, he does have a lot to do, but the most important thing now is helping you to move out, Iris."

Iris was a little surprised.

She looked at Justin in disbelief, only to see him nodding at her.

Iris bit her lip. "S-surely there's no need for that? I've already become accustomed to living here."



“Really?” Nora was a little troubled. “But both of us will be very busy in the future. I was thinking of asking you to take care of the three children at home...”

At the mention of the children, Iris hesitated.

Nora sighed again. “Pete has been with Justin since he was a baby and has mild autism. Cherry also likes her grandmother’s company very much. As for Xander, the situation is even tougher. That boy was raised by Trueman Yale, so he lacks companionship from his family and is very insecure. Sigh! I wonder if Xander will end up straying onto the wrong path in the future...” Convinced, Iris gritted her teeth at once and said, “I’ll come with the two of you!”

Iris was someone whose actions spoke louder than words.

Now that they had agreed on it, she would no longer be afraid. She immediately called Mrs. Landis over to pack her things for her.

Justin held her shoulders, walked to the side, and said softly, “Mom, after you come back, you have to take over the home.”

Iris wanted to refuse, but Justin said with a cold look in his eyes, “Grandma has issues with Nora. Now that Herman is back, she’ll definitely waver again. She has become muddleheaded, I can’t let her control the house anymore. Otherwise, when Nora marries me in the future, the family will definitely be a huge mess.”

Justin sighed. “You don’t understand Nora. The only thing she likes to do is sleep, and she hates troublesome things the most. If she finds out she’ll have to face so much trouble by marrying me, there’s a high chance she won’t marry me anymore.”

Iris: “...”

Her son was being too exaggerated. Nora hadn’t even uttered a single word of rebuttal despite the super huge trouble she had just caused. From that alone, one could see that Nora would never refuse to marry him just because of something as trivial as that.

However, her son was right in saying that she ought to take over the house. This way, when Nora marries into the family, there would be a lot less trouble handing over the family affairs.

Now that she could do something for them, Iris felt that her return was no longer entirely meaningless.

There were almost a hundred pots of orchids in the greenhouse. But with just a phone call from Justin, more than twenty bodyguards walked in one by one and started to move the flowers out.

Seeing them going in and out, Nora slipped over to Justin and remarked, "Pete said that you always bring more than twenty bodyguards with you when you go out. So, it really is true!"

Justin nodded. "Yeah, sometimes I bring more."

Ever since he was abducted at the age of five and subsequently rescued, Justin always traveled with this many people.

Nora glanced at him silently with a pitying look in her eyes.

Justin thought that she was feeling sorry for him because he had been kidnapped at a young age, but in the end, Nora unexpectedly said something that totally ruined the atmosphere, "Just how scared of dying are

you?!"

"???" :Justin

The night was so pleasant and the environment also so nice. There was a romantic mood in the air even till the woman had kept quiet, so how come it was ruined the moment she spoke?! The corners of his lips spasmed.

The group eventually separated.

Nora was going to the laboratory to continue her research into Xander's affairs. For her, no matter how important something was, and no matter how big the Hunts' fortune was, Xander's affairs must still be handled first.

Because it would be time for him to be injected with the V15 in another three days.

Nora had been struggling over whether or not to inject it into him.

Would he really die if he was not injected with it?

Was the gene serum really lethal, or was it more like a drug addiction where one must continuously consume it? She had to study it and find out properly before the deadline.

Besides, since Philip had said that he was going to take action against the Hunts, then it definitely was not going to be something he could accomplish with a few words.

He also needed to make preparations. It would take a few days for things to ferment. Therefore, her main task during these three days would still be to study the V15.

In the hospital.

When Nora arrived at the laboratory, Lily was analyzing the components of V15. Seeing Nora enter, Lily immediately said, "Boss, the serum's components are indeed not analyzable. It is too complex, I am afraid it will take a few years for us to study it thoroughly."

Nora was not surprised.

If the gene serum's formula was that easy to analyze, then Trueman and the others would not have pursued her mother so persistently.

Twenty-five years had already passed, yet Trueman and the others were still putting their hopes of finding clues on her. In that case, this must surely be a herculean task.

To be honest, Nora had already expected the results, but she still couldn't bring herself to terms with it.

She nodded. "I'll take over."

Lily stepped aside and Nora sat down. She held various instruments in her hands and separated the components of the serum, hoping to find clues from it.

Three days later. Nora's eyes were bloodshot and she had dark circles under her eyes.

After three consecutive days of work without any sleep, she had finally derived the V15 formula, but at the same time, her heart also sank.

It was really a gene-repairing drug and not some kind of narcotic drug.

In other words, Xander must be injected with the drug, otherwise, he would really die.

She took a deep breath.

A while later, she took out her cell phone and called Caleb, who was abroad.

As soon as the call connected, Caleb said, "Nora, I have been waiting for your call." Nora kept quiet for a while before she asked, "Is it necessary to inject him with the V15?" "Yes, it is." Caleb said, "If you don't, the reparation of the previously repaired genes won't be adequate, and his brain will explode which would surely kill him. I have already looked into it-Xander's modifications are in his brain genes. If the V15 is not injected at the stipulated time, he will die."

Nora sighed. "The V15's formula does not seem very complex."

"Yes, none of the formulas from V1 to V15 are complex. The most complex one is the V16. In addition, there are a few types of gene serums. Some improve IQ while some improve physical strength. The formulas for V1 to V15 are all different for each type of serum. The only thing they have in common is that they all need the very last V16!"

Upon hearing this, Nora's pupils shrank.

Caleb sighed. "I'm dying, so I don't need the V16 anymore. However, every genetically-modified person would need the V16 at the end. Therefore, you should know the importance of the V16 now, right?"

Nora nodded to express that she had understood.

No wonder her mother had said that she must not expose her abilities, lest she ended up being targeted.

It was possible that some of the most outstanding people in the world might just be genetically-modified humans. Additionally, there were so many people that needed the V16 as an antidote.

She suddenly felt even greater pressure.

Such a group of people looking for her, could she really obtain the V16 for Xander?

Also...

If what her mother had left behind was really the formula... If she really produced the V16, thereby removing the last restriction on successful genetic modifications, what would the world turn into?

Would someone deliberately train a group of genetically modified warriors and unify the world?

Or would human beings with genetically modified IQ genes develop at a high speed and deplete the earth's resources in a dozen years -or perhaps even just a few years?

She dared not imagine such consequences.

But with how things currently were, she didn't have the leisure to care about such things anymore either.

Nora said, "I see."

Caleb was silent for a while. Suddenly, he said, "I didn't expect Xander to also be your son. Don't worry, I will contact you in time if I find clues regarding the V16."

Nora had been trying hard to find clues from the things that her mother had left behind, but she still couldn't find any.

It would be for the best if Caleb could inform her if he found any clues.

Nora replied, "Thanks a lot."

Caleb kept quiet for a while before he finally said, "You're welcome." After hanging up the phone, Nora called Justin.

The phone only rang once before Justin answered. He asked, "How is it?"

Nora was silent for a moment. Finally, she said, "Let's inject him with it."

When Justin heard this, he knew at once that the serum was safe and could be injected as-is. But at the same time, the injection would only extend Xander's lifespan by three months.

If they still couldn't find the V16 within three months, Xander would still die. He said, "Okay." Before hanging up, Nora asked, "How is Xander?"

"He was fine the last few days, but he started having a headache when he woke up today. I've gotten the family doctor to inject him with an anesthetic, so he is now asleep." Justin explained Xander's condition, "I will inject the gene serum into him now."

"Okay, I'm on my way. Observe all of Xander's reactions after the injection."

"Okay."

Nora left and drove straight to the Hunts.

The car stopped right in front of the villa. When she went upstairs, she saw that Justin had not injected the serum into Xander yet. When he saw her, he explained, "Our medical equipment is constantly observing Xander's condition, so it won't cause any delays. I wanted you to see it with your own eyes."

Nora nodded.

There would probably be physical reactions after the injection. These were all important clues and experimental data, which might play a certain role in Nora's subsequent research and development of the V16.

This was despite Nora realizing after studying the v15 that she probably would not be able to develop the V16 in just three months with her own abilities.

Her only option now was to look for clues that her mother had left her.

Xander was lying quietly on the bed. She personally injected Xander with the V15. Little by little, the liquid was injected into his body. Xander, who had been under anesthesia, suddenly opened his eyes after the serum was injected.

His eyes were clean and clear as though he hadn't been affected at all.

He sat up in a daze. He looked at Nora and then at Justin. Then, he rubbed his head.

Justin asked nervously, "Do you feel uncomfortable anywhere?"

Xander shook his head, his big eyes filled with puzzlement. He replied, "I don't feel any discomfort. It's just that a Mathematical Olympiad problem that I was discussing with Pete yesterday has suddenly become very simple..."

This was the consequence of taking the IQ improvement gene serum.

It seemed that Xander's IQ would be the highest in the family in the future.

Nora observed all the numerical data of Xander's body. In the end, she concluded that everything about Xander's body was normal.

It was so normal that Nora even wondered if she had been fooled by Trueman.

Had she made the right decision in injecting Xander with the V15 or not?

Then, someone pushed the door open. Pete and Cherry followed behind Iris obediently, and the three came over together. When they saw Xander sitting there, all three of them released a huge pent-up breath.

The two little fellows and Iris' movements were exactly the same, which gave people a joyful feeling.

Nora and Justin looked at each other and smiled.

However, Nora's mood became increasingly heavy.

The more one understood the gene serum, the more they would realize just how amazing it was.

It was too un-human-like.

She sighed silently.

At this moment, they suddenly heard a noise from downstairs.

Justin went downstairs and saw Herman standing there. When Herman saw him, he immediately yelled, “Justin, have you become muddleheaded? How can you let Iris move back here? Do you have any idea how big a disaster she will bring to the Hunts by moving back here?!”

Herman was furious. He pointed to Iris and said, “And you, too. Never mind that you have offended an influential person, but you still have the cheek to come back here now? Will you really only stop after you’ve implicated all the Hunts?! Leave the Hunt Manor at once! Otherwise, the Hunts will really be in huge trouble!”

Iris frowned.

With regard to that, she had no right to speak.

Justin stepped forward and asked, “Where’s the butler? Who let him in?”

The butler was wiping his sweat in silence beside him. No matter what, Herman was still Justin’s father. The bodyguards did not dare to take any real action against him when he forcibly broke in.

The butler didn’t speak. It was instead Herman who shouted angrily, “Do you know that Philip Coleman has already started to take action against the Hunts? I heard that he has been doing a large-scale acquisition of the Hunt Corporation’s shares, our share prices are rising madly right now. A lot of the shareholders have all decided to sell their shares. He has made up his mind to take over the Hunt Corporation!”

Justin calmly replied, “Yeah, I know.”

“You do? Are you sure you do?! With the shares becoming more and more expensive, we will have less and less cash flow to buy back the shares! At the same time, we will also have fewer and fewer shares in our hands. I know you have also been dispatching people to secretly buy them, but how can the Hunts’ cash flow compare to theirs? They have accumulated generations’ worth of riches! No one knows how many trillions of dollars they have! Can you beat them? As far as I know, the Hunts only have a few hundred billion dollars worth of cash flow!”



Herman pointed at him. Then, he lowered his voice and said, “I have also heard another piece of important news—I heard that Philip is a member of the Imperial League. Do you know what the Imperial League is?”

“The dozen or so people in there are in control of global economic trends! The Hunts can’t beat them at all! What you are doing is no different from risking the entire Hunt Corporation! Everyone already knows about this and they are all waiting to laugh at the Hunts?! Your uncle’s family are also waiting for you to step down!”

After saying all that, Herman went on anxiously and angrily. “You are my son, so I will definitely have to take your side. Justin, your only option now is to drive Iris out or send her to Philip. Otherwise, you won’t be able to appease his anger! Our family really can’t afford to mess with them! The Imperial League! They are part of the Imperial League, you know!”

Justin frowned when he heard him say the things he shouldn’t be saying, and the look in his eyes turned cold.

Herman, who didn’t know that he had already hit Justin’s sore spot, was still talking about how powerful Philip was.

As he spoke, Iris gradually lowered her head.

She knew that she had destroyed the family’s peace and tranquility.

Just as she was suffering through her psychological ordeal, and while Herman stood on the moral high ground and criticized her...

Justin suddenly said, “So, that’s why you were willing to give your wife to someone else? And even cooperate with him to act as if your son had been kidnapped?”

His simple few words made all the sounds in the room cease abruptly!

Iris’ head also whipped up and she looked at them in disbelief.

Herman’s mouth was still open. He was staring at him in shock because he had been exposed, and it seemed like he’d never expected Justin to say such a thing.

Iris went from being confused to being shocked. Her brows slowly drew together and she looked at Herman in disbelief. She swallowed and asked, “Justin, what do you mean?”

Herman immediately shouted, “Justin, don’t you dare make false accusations!”

Justin lowered his eyes. “I didn’t want to thoroughly embarrass you, but since you insist on getting into the line of fire, then let’s just speak frankly here!”

He looked at Herman and said, “When Philip Coleman visited the house as a guest and talked about his ex-girlfriend, you already knew that the ex-girlfriend he was talking about was Mom, right?”

Herman didn’t admit it, but he suddenly didn’t dare to look at Iris. “What nonsense are you talking about?”

Justin sneered, “In the following few years, the Hunts showed faint signs of being suppressed. During those few years, the Smiths also gradually gained the upper hand, and it looked like they would soon surpass us and become the number one family in New York, didn’t it?”

Herman immediately said, “That’s because Ian Smith is very impressive, whereas I don’t have any talent for business!”

“Is that so?”

Justin cast his eyes down. “The Hunts do not have the custom of only letting the eldest son or people from the direct lineage inherit the title of the head of the family. Although you were a bit of a jerk back then, Grandpa had chosen you. He must have a reason for doing so, right? Uncle Raymond, as well as my other uncles, were eyeing your position, yet they couldn’t take it from you. Why was that? Is it also because you don’t have any talent for business?”

Herman choked.

Justin continued to speak with a contemptuous smile on his face. “Outsiders all say that the elderly Mr. Smith had placed all his energy and focus into the company during those few times because of the heartbreak he’d suffered, but he had been in a total daze at that time, so how could he possibly have had such great ambitions?”

Feeling that there was nothing to live for anymore, Ian had sought death at one point. He hadn't even cared about his family property anymore and had given everything to his nephew.

In fact, one could even say that before Nora's return, he hadn't even considered adopting Joel as his son. Instead, he was just giving it away.

Even if Ian had turned his sorrow into motivation after Yvette's departure, it was still impossible for him to really want to expand and develop the Smith Corporation. He would only casually work for the Smith Corporation out of sheer boredom.

But even when Ian was in a bad state of mind, the Hunts had gone from bad to worse. In addition, during that time, his grandfather had still been around and had been the person in charge of the Hunts. Herman hadn't taken over the family yet!

Herman was not at all as incompetent as what outsiders made him out to be. Otherwise, how would it have been possible for him to take Lauren with him to another country, start from zero, and achieve what he had currently accomplished in just twenty years?

That's right, Herman and Lauren already had a successful business abroad. The fact that Lauren had immediately organized such a large orchid exhibition when she'd only just returned to the country was enough proof of their current economic strength. Moreover, there was something that Justin had actually been unable to figure out all these years.

Even if Herman had done something wrong and cheated on his wife, would anyone really be like the old Mr. and Mrs. Hunt, and drive their son out of the house but keep their grandson?

All of these were choices that the Hunts had been forced to make back then!

When the elderly Mr. Hunt and Herman felt like they had come to their wits' end regarding the company, they immediately understood what had happened. Thus, Herman had promptly and decisively cheated on Iris, in order to make her give up hope on him.

They'd originally thought that Philip would let them off once they sacrificed Iris, but they were wrong.

At that time, the only thing Iris had cared about was her son. When she went traveling, she'd actually run into Philip. However, she had no plans to rekindle her relationship with him.

This caused Philip to become even crueler, and he found someone to kidnap Justin!

One could say that the Hunts had abstained from taking action at that time, despite their ability to do so. The Hunts were so powerful in New York, how would they possibly be unable to find the child when he was first discovered missing?

It wasn't that they couldn't find him; rather, they hadn't searched for him at all!

By the time Iris returned and found that he was been abducted, too much time had already passed. By then, even if she sought help from the Smiths, the kidnapers would have already fled New York. Even the Smiths wouldn't be able to do anything about it!

Therefore, the Hunts had forced Iris to approach Philip.

They wanted to use Iris as a sacrificial offering

Unfortunately, Iris still didn't have any thoughts of reconciling with Philip. Instead, she reached a different agreement with him, which was to watch her son grow up in the Hunts without interfering with his life.

After the old Mr. Hunt heard about this, he realized and understood that since Philip loved Iris so deeply, he would never hurt her. Additionally, if he wanted Iris to protect the Hunts, then it would only be possible if Justin stayed in the family.

Thus, Mr. Hunt had pretended to drive away Herman, and also declared that he would take it that he never had a son like him. His purpose in driving him away was so that Herman could go overseas, start a new business, and open up a new world for the Hunts.

This was so that the Hunts could avoid a crushing defeat should something ever go wrong with Philip and he targets the Hunts in the future!

Herman might look like he had left the family without taking a cent, but when he went abroad back then, his father most certainly would have secretly given him a sum of money as start-up capital.

All of their schemes were closely linked with one another. The elderly Mr. and Mrs. Hunt, who seemingly had a deep sense of love and righteousness, were just doing all that for the sake of the Hunts.

Justin had only slowly pieced everything together after Iris told him the truth.

This was also the reason why he hadn't immediately sought revenge on Lauren for kidnapping him-because she wasn't the one who had instigated the kidnapping at all.

It was Philip!

Justin's words, like a sharp knife, cut open the Hunts' veil of pretense, exposing all of their ugly and nasty true colors.

Iris was shocked and astounded. She felt like the worldview she'd held all these years had come crashing down all around her. She thought that she had caused the Hunts huge trouble, but little did she think that the Hunts had been using her all this time?

Herman refused to admit it. "What are you talking about? I don't understand at all, you..."

"You don't understand? Is that so? In that case, shall I lay out all the evidence one by one?"

Justin's voice was low and deep, but there was a mocking smile on the corners of his lips.

Herman narrowed his eyes.

After some time, he finally dropped his pretenses. He calmly said, "Since you've already figured out everything, then take your mother with you and leave the Hunts at once

-because, I, the real head of the Hunts, am back."

Justin stared at him.

Herman lowered his head and looked at the family members who had hurried over after hearing about his return and the argument. He straightened his back. On his visage that was three parts similar to Justin's, his eyes were dark and deep.

He calmly said, "My father left all the shares in the family to me back then."

After saying this, he immediately took out a will.

Upon seeing the share transfer agreement, everyone was shocked.

When the elderly Mr. Hunt passed away, in his final words, he had only left instructions saying that Justin was to take charge of the company. Therefore, Justin had naturally inherited his shares.

With the will, though, Justin would be kicked out of the picture.

Everyone in the family fell silent. They all stared at the will and then at each other, all of them at a loss for words.

Roger said, "Uncle Herman, if a will exists, then Grandpa's shares should indeed be given to you. In that case, from today onwards, you will be the head of the Hunts!"

Some defenders of Justin said, "But is the will really valid? Who can prove it?"

Along with these words, someone supported a shaky Mrs. Hunt as she walked out. She said unhurriedly, "I can prove it."

Nora was standing upstairs and watching the intense discussion downstairs.

She clearly saw that Justin had trembled lightly when Mrs. Hunt walked out.

Nora sighed silently.

Justin might never have ever thought that his grandmother, who had raised him into an adult, would also be part of the group of people plotting against him.

How sad and lonely must that man surrounded by his so-called family members be right now?

Justin was a man who had always been scheming and inscrutable, so he didn't say anything

Iris, however, stared at the group of people. The woman, who now knew the truth, was suffering quite the mental breakdown at the moment—not for herself, but for her son!

Her entire body shook with anger, and she rushed up to Herman, stretched out her hand, and slapped him across the cheek.

Smack!

She had put all of her strength into the slap, causing Herman's head to turn to the side.

Nora saw that Herman could have avoided the slap, but he didn't. Instead, he chose to take it.

Iris screamed, "Herman Hunt, you are so despicable! Never mind that you plotted against me, but how can you plot against even your own son?!"

Herman's head was turned to the side. The handprint on his cheek quickly swelled up visibly, which went to show just how furious Iris was.

He looked at Iris calmly. "Iris, I don't mind if you blame me for this. It's all because I am too incapable. Twenty years ago, I didn't have the ability to keep you by my side; twenty years later, I still don't have the ability to keep you with me. When we got married, we had clearly vowed that we would never abandon each other for the rest of our lives, but unfortunately, you have offended someone you should not have."

When Herman said that, there was sorrow in his eyes as he gazed at Iris.

To be honest, hadn't he also loved Iris when he was young?

In fact, one could even say that he still did.

At that time, he and Ian had both courted Yvette. Later, after Yvette chose Ian, he had also been envious of the beautiful love between the two of them.

Afterward, he had met Iris.

When he saw how gentle Iris had been to the poor lad Philip, his heart had skipped a beat.

Thus, he had gotten the Hunts to approach the Evanses and propose marriage.

Everyone said that he had married Iris because he could not manage to take Yvette as his wife. The only person in New York who was comparable to Yvette at that time had been Iris.

But nobody knew that he had only courted Yvette back then just to fight with Ian. Towards Iris, however... he had truly fallen in love with her.

He hadn't expected Iris to agree to the proposal, either.

Before they got married, Iris had told him honestly that their marriage was a political one, that she had no feelings for him.

However, Herman had still insisted on getting married. At that time, he was already in love with her. He'd even vowed that he would treat her well for the rest of his life.

He just never expected Philip the pauper to suddenly transform into the head of one of the mysterious families of the world.

Back then, when the Hunts were suppressed by him, just how tormented had he been? His father had spent his entire life turning the Hunts into a big and powerful family, but before the company and family were even handed over to him, he had already implicated them...

Herman had indeed deliberately betrayed Iris, but at that time, he had also suffered great emotional torment.

Iris didn't understand the complicated look in Herman's eyes. She merely felt that the man in front of her was simply too shameless!

She stared at him. "If that was the case, then you should have made things clear to me from the start! Even if I have to leave with Justin, I would never drag the Hunts in this!"

How could Herman possibly bear to let them leave, though?



He clenched his jaw and narrowed his eyes. "You want to take Justin away? Justin is my, Herman Hunt's, son! He is a descendant of the Hunts! Are you planning to take him with you as you turn to Philip?! I won't allow it!"

Iris really couldn't understand him.

He was the one taking full advantage of her and her son, yet he was also the one saying that Justin was his son, so they mustn't leave.

She felt that Herman must be schizophrenic.

She smiled in resignation and asked, "Herman, what do you mean by that?"

Herman cast his eyes down and sighed. "What I mean by that? Couldn't you have just behaved yourself, accepted your fate, and stayed in that suburban villa for the rest of your life? This way, I would never have returned to the family, and would never have fought with our son for the position of the head of the family! But look at you... You had already stayed there for the first twenty years, why did you let everything go to waste in the end?!"

Iris stared at him, finally understanding what he meant.

It was because of Herman's selfish intentions that they hadn't let her go back then!

Since he had given up Iris, then he totally could have just let go and push her into Philip's arms. Given Philip's means, he would have been able to trick Iris into staying with him eventually. But Herman hadn't! Instead, he had used Justin to keep her captive, preferring to imprison her for twenty years in a suburban villa as though she was a canary in captivity, over giving her true freedom!

She clenched her fists tightly. "Herman, you are such a despicable lowlife!"

Herman lowered his eyes and took a step forward. "I don't care whether you call me despicable or shameless, but Iris, you and your son only have two choices now."

Iris stared at him. "Go on."

Justin also looked at Herman.

Herman sighed and said, “Justin, you are my son, why would I do anything to harm you? If your mother goes to Philip and asks him to stop, then I will take it that this will doesn’t exist. My business overseas is enough for me to support myself.”

Iris took a step back.

Even now, Herman still wanted to sacrifice her.

While she was contemplating in a daze, she heard Justin’s firm and sonorous voice.

“That’s impossible. Tell me the second option.”

“You—!” Herman was practically speechless towards Justin. He pointed at him, his finger in the air for a while.

The elderly Mrs. Hunt took a step forward and held Justin’s arm. “Justin, my good grandson, just agree to it! Iris had already moved to the suburbs when you were five, and she has never taken care of you ever since. Besides, who knows if her heart had already been with Philip long ago? They are each other’s first love, so can’t you just take it that you’re giving your mother your blessings? Once she is gone, the will would be considered non-existent. All these years, it was only under your leadership that the Hunts could come this far, everyone can see that. If your father ever dares to fight with you for the position of the head of the family after your mother leaves, I will be the first to raise my voice!”

Justin looked at Mrs. Hunt as she spoke.

It was not that she did not love him.

It was just that before loving him, the Hunts’ interests mattered more than anything else!

Justin then looked at Herman.

All these years, he had hardly ever called him, nor had he ever paid any attention to him. He had just been taking advantage of him all along

From beginning to end, Iris had been the only one who did things for his sake.