

Vengeful Hearts Return Chapter 41

Audrey introduced, "Brian, this is Wendy and Callum Sands."

"Nice to meet you." Brian looked at the two people in front of him sweetly and said proudly, "Everyone says I look like Mommy."

The more Wendy looked at Brian, the more she liked him, especially his sweet and clever demeanor, which made her both fond and protective. "I'll make some food for you, okay? Your mother used to love the food I made for her when she was little."

"That's great." Brian nodded happily, eager to eat the same food his mother loved as a child. However, he thought it was a pity that Lucas couldn't taste it too.

After lunch, Audrey received a call from Phoebe, who was coming in the afternoon to take her to pick out a gown. Phoebe had originally sought a top designer abroad to create a custom gown for Audrey.

Since Phoebe had acknowledged Audrey as her goddaughter, she wanted her to appear as beautifully and perfectly as possible. She hoped Audrey would captivate all the young men in Northville.

However, the time was too tight, and Audrey showed little interest in the matter, so Phoebe had to take charge. She had waited for decades to have a beautiful and obedient daughter, to buy her pretty dresses and lovely jewelry. This dream was finally coming

true.

After picking up Audrey, Phoebe took her to a luxury gown shop named "Wellington" in the financial center.

Audrey glanced at the brand, raised an eyebrow, and followed Phoebe inside.

"Audrey, girls should dress themselves up beautifully. I will pick some clothes for you today because you don't have enough." Phoebe held Audrey's hand, eager to dress her up like a princess.

Although Audrey didn't particularly enjoy shopping, she didn't want to dampen Phoebe's spirits and obediently sat by while Phoebe picked out clothes.

"Mrs. Roscente, are you selecting clothes for this young lady? We have some new arrivals that you might like." The saleswoman was quick-witted and immediately handed Phoebe a booklet of the latest collections.

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Phoebe happily took the booklet and boasted “Yes, this is my daughter. I’ll give you an address, and you can deliver the new arrivals to my home.”

“Of course, ma’am.” The saleswoman nodded respectfully.

“Godmother, I have plenty of clothes, there’s no need to waste money,” Audrey said. She indeed had many clothes. While she rarely bought them herself, people frequently sent her new ones, particularly those that weren’t available on the market.

“No way. No woman ever complains about having too many clothes. I’ll buy you some more jewelry later too.” Phoebe held Audrey’s hand with gentle affection.

Be it in the past or now, Audrey had never felt a mother’s love. Being pampered by Phoebe, she felt a slight warmth in her heart.

“I’ll take this, this, and this.” Phoebe pointed to several gowns in the booklet.

Wellington was known for its luxurious gowns. They were often chosen by celebrities for formal events. Each gown was unique and exquisite, contributing to Wellington’s prestigious and high-end reputation.

When the saleswoman brought out the gowns, Phoebe urged Audrey to try them on. Audrey reluctantly got up.

Shortly, the dressing room door opened, and Audrey emerged in a dazzling silver gown. Her naturally glowing skin shone even brighter under the lights, making her look radiant. Her delicate features were further illuminated, making her look almost ethereal.

Phoebe was mesmerized at first sight.

“This gown looks stunning on her. It makes her look like a fairy.” Even the saleswoman was taken aback. She had never seen such a beautiful woman before. Despite serving many celebrities, none came close to Audrey’s beauty.

“Try these two next.” Phoebe was both excited and delighted, wanting to shower her daughter with the best of everything.

Audrey tried on several gowns, each one more dazzling than the last. Phoebe, thrilled, decided to buy them all.

After selecting the gowns, Phoebe picked out a few casual outfits and then dragged Audrey to buy more jewelry. For the first time, Audrey found shopping exhausting. Yet, seeing Phoebe’s joy and satisfaction, Audrey couldn’t help but indulge her.

By the end, Phoebe affectionately referred to Audrey as “Auddie” instead of “Audrey,”

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indicating her deep affection.

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The day only ended after they had dinner together. Phoebe dropped Audrey back at her home.

Three days later, the Roscente family’s party arrived. This was the first time they had held such a grand event. The family had gone all out, inviting almost all the elite families of Northville. The back garden was magnificently decorated, reflecting the importance of the occasion.

This grandeur piqued the curiosity of many attendees, eager to see the young lady who had earned such favor from Phoebe.

The Hernandez family, though not a top-tier family, held a certain status in Northville and naturally received an invitation too.

Phoebe had personally arranged to send them the invitation to ensure Audrey would shine in front of them. She wanted them to know the daughter they had neglected was now treasured by her. She also wanted them to see how remarkable Audrey was.

From now on, it wasn’t the Hernandez family who didn’t want Audrey but Audrey who couldn’t be bothered with the Hernandez family.

Since Sarah signed with Winter Entertainment, she had been laying low. She had also been waiting for this day. After today, she would see to it that Audrey met her downfall,

Sarah wouldn’t miss such a big event. She wanted to see Audrey embarrass herself before all of Northville.

Sarah got out of the car with her parents, a sinister glint in her eyes.

“Sarah, aren’t you close with the daughter of the Roscente family? Do you know who Mrs. Roscente’s new goddaughter is?” Rebecca asked. She eyed the luxurious manor

with envy, recalling the unpleasant memory of being driven out of the Hernandez family's home by Audrey.

"Mom, you'll find out soon," Sarah replied, keeping the secret for a grand reveal.

Rebecca detested Audrey. If it hadn't been for Audrey's mother occupying the position of William's wife for so long she wouldn't have been a mistress, and Sarah wouldn't have been illegitimate.

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family of three was led to the back garden, there were already quite a few people there, including nearly all of the prominent families of Northville’s clite circle.

The Hernandez Group had be... unstable recently, and William was looking for opportunities to network and explore potential collaborations.

When William left, Sarah saw Emely waving to her from the other side. Sarah smiled, told Rebecca where she was going, and walked away.

From a window on the second floor, several people with wine glasses in hand leaned against the railing, looking at the bustling crowd below.

“Why is the Hernandez family here?” Shawn asked when he spotted Sarah’s family from afar. Recently, because of Elizabeth, he was in a foul mood.

Andrew glanced down calmly. “Mom said the Hernandez family kicked out Audrey, so she invited them just to show them that from now on, they can’t match up to her,” Andrew replied.

“Phoebe is so domineering,” Shawn remarked.

“Why isn’t Boss here yet? He is coming tonight, right?” Cade couldn’t help but ask.

“He wouldn’t dare not to appear. Didn’t you see how Mom invited all the single men in Northville?” Andrew responded.

Andrew wasn’t worried about Dylan not coming. He was worried that Dylan would not be able to take it when he arrived. Considering Dylan’s current feelings for Audrey, he probably couldn’t handle the consequences if Audrey became entangled with the many excellent men his mother had arranged.

Phoebe had specially prepared a room for Audrey, which would be her room in the Roscente family from now on. She even thoughtfully prepared a room for Brian, filled with various toys and clothes for the current season she brought.

With plenty of time before the party started, Phoebe held Audrey in the room for makeup and preparations, while Brian was taken to the back garden by the Roscente family's servants.

Brian, holding a phone, was video-calling Lucas. "Lucas, it's so beautiful here today. It's a shame you couldn't come.",

"Yeah. Take a few more pictures of Mommy for me." Lucas, seeing the scene on the

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screen, wasn't very interested. He just wanted to see pictures of his mommy.

"Sure, Grandma is doing Audrey's makeup now. Grandma said she wants to make her the most dazzling princess tod" Brian said. He called Phoebe "grandma" now.

"Dummy, Mommy is clearly the queen," Lucas remarked.

"Don't call me a dummy. I'm not a dummy." Brian was a bit upset and distracted. He bumped into someone holding a wine glass. The entire glass of red wine spilled on the white dress the person was wearing.

Emely looked at her high-fashion dress. She had obtained it after a year's wait, but now it was ruined by red wine. Her face turned red with anger. She violently pushed Brian to the ground, yelling, "Can't you see there's someone here? Whose child are you? How can you have no manners at all?"

Known for her temper and as the only daughter of the Roscente family from the second branch, Emely was somewhat spoiled.

Brian, stunned by the push, sat on the ground, dazed.

The servant following Brian was frightened by the situation. She hurriedly came forward but didn't dare to offend Emely. She could only help Brian up and check if he was hurt while apologizing to Emely. "Ms. Roscente, it's my fault for not watching Brian. I apologize on his behalf."

Recognizing the servant as working for the Roscente family, Emely gave a disdainful glance at the child, her expression still hostile. “Who is this brat? Do you think you can apologize for him? Do you know how much this dress cost? As if you could afford it.”

The servant trembled. She couldn't possibly compensate for the dress and could only say nervously, “This is Ms. Audrey's child.”

When Emely heard this brat was Audrey's child, she sneered. “So, you're Audrey's bastard. You're a scum just like your mother.”

Brian, initially confused, glared fiercely at Emely when he heard her insult his mother. His little fists clenched tightly. There was a flash of silver in his hand as he rushed at Emely.

“Bad woman, don't insult my mommy,” Brian growled angrily. His movement was too fast for the servant to stop.

Emely felt a sharp pain and almost fell. She regained her balance with difficulty. Furious, she pushed Brian hard and kicked at him with her sharp heels, shouting

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arrogantly. “I'll call your mom scum as I like. Scum, What can you do about it?”

Brian's eyes turned red with anger, his gaze fierce. He wanted to kill Emely. The usually cute child turned into a little d when someone insulted Audrey. The murderous.

intent in his eyes almost frightened Emely to death.

From the fallen phone, Lucas's worried voice came. “Brian, are you okay?”

On the second-floor lounge, Andrew and others were also shocked by the scene.

“Fuck. Isn't that Audrey's son and Emely?” Cade was startled. “Something's wrong. Let's go down.”

Andrew's face changed at the sight below. He put down his wine glass and rushed downstairs, followed by Shawn and Cade.

At this moment, another tall figure arrived first. He scooped up the enraged boy protectively in his arms. His cold gaze swept over Emely.

“Scram.” Dylan’s face was dark. His icy eyes glared at Emely.

Emely was startled by the ruthless look in Dylan’s eyes.

The commotion attracted everyone’s attention. They were surprised to see Dylan holding Audrey’s child protectively. Everyone was puzzled. They wondered, ‘Isn’t that Audrey’s son? What is Mr. Clifford doing now?’

Everyone was looking toward them. None of them expect Dylan to step forward and protect Audrey’s son. After all, Dylan was the one who sent Audrey to prison back then.

The gaze of the surrounding crowd turned speculative.

Emely, under Dylan’s fierce stare, lost some of her arrogance. She felt a bit scared of the man before her.

“Baddie, put me down.” Brian was held by Dylan for the first time. He stiffened but soon, struggled to get down, his small face full of anger.

Dylan rubbed the boy’s head, his voice low but slightly gentle, “If you don’t want your mommy’s party to be ruined, stay put and let me handle it.”

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The furious Brian quietened w

he heard Dylan’s words, but he still glared fiercely at

Emely. “I want her to apologize to Audrey. Brian pressed his lips together and coldly said to Dylan.

“Alright.” Dylan nodded.

Only then did Brian contentedly stay in Dylan’s arms, though his heart was still pounding wildly.

This was the first time Brian was held by Dylan. He thought, ‘Is this what it feels like to be held by Daddy? It’s not bad. However, this baddie treats Audrey poorly, so I’m still on Audrey’s side and don’t want to acknowledge him.

“There’s no way I’d apologize to Audrey. I didn’t say anything wrong. Why should I apologize?” Emely, although fearful of Dylan, still appeared arrogant. After all, she was the daughter of the Roscente family. If she apologized to Audrey, she wouldn’t be able to hold her head high next time.

“You don’t want to apologize? Fine. Richard, escort her to apologize.” Dylan’s dark, cold. eyes swept lightly over Emely.

The chill in Dylan’s gaze nearly terrified Emely. Dylan would never show mercy to anyone. She protested, “No. You have no right. This is my family’s home, and I’m their daughter.”

Emely couldn’t believe Dylan would force her to apologize to Audrey. She was frightened yet unwilling. But she knew Dylan, nicknamed the “Prince of Northville“, always kept his word and was ruthless. Seeing Richard coming over to take her away, she became even more scared.

“So what if you’re the daughter of the Roscente family?” Dylan always remained aloof and never cared about anyone. The only person who could affect his emotions was Audrey.

At this moment, Dylan’s expression remained indifferent as he looked at Emely. His thin lips were pressed into a sharp line and he exuded an intimidating presence. Dylan wore a black, hand-tailored suit, appearing noble yet aloof. Just by standing there, he induced fear.

Emely’s face turned nearly pale.

When Emely’s father, Jake Roscente, heard the news, he hurried over to apologize to Dylan. “Mr. Clifford, my daughter is young and ignorant. I hope you won’t hold it

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against her. Don’t worry, I’ll have her apologize to Ms. Hernandez later with a big present.”

Jake naturally knew today’s part

for Audrey. Audrey had healed his father, and his father valued her highly. Thus, he couldn’t let Emely cause any trouble today. Otherwise, it would disgrace the entire family

“Dad, why should I apologize to Audrey? I’m not going.” Emely was furious that even her father wanted her to apologize to Audrey. She thought, ‘Why does everyone want me to apologize? I’m not going.’”

Smack! Jake was angered and slapped Emely. He said angrily, "You must apologize today, or you can't come back home."

Jake had spoiled his only daughter since young. But now, with the heir of the Clifford family looking on, he couldn't continue to indulge Emely.

No one knew how Dylan would make Emely suffer if Jake continued to indulge her. Jake knew Dylan's methods well. He looked at Emely with a more serious expression.

Emely couldn't believe her father, who had always doted on her, hit her for Audrey. Her resentment and jealousy toward Audrey deepened.

Seeing Emely's hurt expression, Jake suppressed his heartache, hardened his heart, and quickly said to Dylan, "Mr. Clifford, rest assured, Emely knows her mistake. I'll take her to apologize now."

After that, Jake dragged the unwilling Emely away.

In the crowd not far away, Sarah, who had been watching, almost vomited blood with hatred. She didn't expect Dylan to protect Audrey so much, even tightly guarding her bastard child. Emely should have killed that bastard child just now.

"Are you okay, Brian?" Andrew and the other two hurried over.

If something had happened to Brian in the Roscente family's home, they would have had a hard time explaining it to Audrey. Moreover, the whole family liked Brian. If something happened, Phoebe would be the first to throw a fit.

"Andrew, I'm fine." Brian shook his head. Luckily he had fallen on grass, or it would have hurt a lot when he fell. Even though that bad woman scolded him, he didn't lose out. He had pricked Emely with a silver needle. She would suffer later.

Thinking this, a fierce light flashed in Brian's lowered eyes, completely unlike what a six-year-old child should have: He thought, 'No one can bully Audrey. Those who

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bullied Audrey must die.

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"Andrew, your uncle's daughter needs to be properly disciplined. She even went after a child. She's bound to cause trouble! Shawn and Cade, standing beside

Andrew, also said with unpleasant expressions.

Emely dared target a child in front of so many people today. It showed a serious lack of discipline.

“Yeah. I’ll remind Uncle Jake later.” Andrew nodded lightly, feeling a bit angry too.

“Brian, Brian...” The video on the phone on the ground wasn’t hung up yet.

Dylan, holding Brian, walked over and picked up the phone. He saw a young face on the other end that looked just like his. Dylan’s eyes narrowed as he gripped the phone tightly. His icy black eyes almost pierced through the screen to see the other side’s

Lucas.

Lucas didn’t expect Dylan to pick up the video, he pressed his lips together. His body exuded coldness as he stared icily at Dylan.

the phone. Looking at a face similar to his

Lucas and Dylan had nearly identical faces and almost the same cold commanding presence. Both refused to give in to each other as they stared at each other icily.

Finally, Brian snatched the phone from Dylan and struggled to jump down from Dylan’s embrace.

Dylan placed Brian on the ground, his dark, cold eyes still fixed on him. There was shock in his gaze.

“Lucas, I’m fine. I’ll hang up now.” Brian was a bit scared after being discovered by Dylan. After speaking to Lucas, he hung up the video call.

After putting away the phone, Brian looked up at Dylan.

Dylan’s heart was pounding, but his face remained calm and almost indifferent. His eyes were filled with overwhelming emotions. After a while, he closed his eyes, suppressing the intensity in them. When he opened them again, his gaze was calm. He walked over and ruffled Brian’s small head.

“Don’t tell Audrey you saw Lucas, or she will be angry.” Brian slapped away Dylan’s hand, pouting angrily. There was a hint of regret in his tone.

Dylan nodded. His voice was slightly hoarse. “Alright.”

Dylan knew why Audrey didn't want him to see Lucas. It was because once he saw Lucas, it wouldn't be hard to guess the father of Brian and Lucas. This was probably why Audrey only brought Brian back this time.

Dylan never knew that when he handcuffed Audrey, she was already pregnant with his children. If he had known... Dylan dared not recall that scene. Each time he did, it felt like it was tearing his heart torturously apart.

If Dylan had known, given that he had lost his memory at that time, he would still have sent her to prison after seeing his mother severely injured by Audrey and lying in a pool of blood.

Dylan couldn't imagine how his children were born in prison, or how Audrey felt back then. She had to hate him for how ruthless he had been then. That was why Audrey never sought him out. It was because she had already despaired of him.

Dylan couldn't help but remember Audrey's last words to him. She would never be with him ever again.

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Dylan almost dared not ask Brian how they had been doing these past few years.

At this moment, Andrew and

Brian could clearly feel the sadness surrounding their

boss, though they couldn't understand why.

The affectionate interaction between Dylan and Brian also caught the attention of many onlookers. They wondered, "Why is Dylan, the eldest son of the Clifford family, so close to Audrey's child? Is it because he loved the mother, so he loved the child too? But doesn't Dylan dislike Audrey? Otherwise, why would he have sent her to prison back then?" For a moment, everyone was puzzled.

Speaking of Audrey, people couldn't help but be curious. No one had seen her so far, not even when her son was in trouble. They were also astonished that the Roscente family invited Audrey and her son to the party where they acknowledged a goddaughter.

At that moment, the lights of the entire hall suddenly went out. A spotlight appeared. In a dreamlike scene, a stunningly beautiful figure walked in. The woman wore a silver gown that shimmered brilliantly under the light, making her skin appear glowing. As she walked, the entire world seemed to fall silent.

The most striking feature was her face. She was almost indescribably beautiful. Even though her expression was cold, Audrey's stunning beauty was undeniable. At this moment, she was undoubtedly the most beautiful and captivating presence in the room.

Despite Audrey's poor reputation in Northville, her queen-like entrance mesmerized many young men in the crowd. The former top socialite of Northville had not lost her charm. Even after seven years, she remained dazzling.

Seeing Audrey's radiant presence made Sarah almost insane with jealousy. She couldn't hide the hatred that burned in her eyes in the darkness. She thought, 'Audrey, enjoy your moment of glory. Soon, you will be utterly disgraced.'

Since Audrey appeared, Dylan's gaze followed her. He always knew Audrey was beautiful, breathtakingly so. But at this moment, seeing her beauty coveted by all the outstanding men present, a strong possessiveness surged in him. He wanted to hide her so that no one else could see her beauty, for it was his to cherish.

The intensity in Dylan's eyes seemed to ignite him. Feeling someone tug at his clothes, Dylan looked down at the child beside him.

Brian asked, "Is Audrey very beautiful?"

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Dylan nodded. "Yes. She's gorgeous."

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No matter how beautiful she is, she's not yours." Brian snorted coldly at Dylan. Then he turned and went to find Audrey.

Seeing Audrey dressed so splendidly, everyone already guessed the significance. But no one had expected that the goddaughter the Roscente family recognized would be once the top socialite of Northville, now the notorious woman, Audrey.

The Roscente family was one of the four major families in Northville. They had a status far above other wealthy families. Even though Audrey had a tainted reputation and an illegitimate child, her exceptional beauty and elegance still caught many people's attention.

Moreover, Audrey now had a new identity. She was the Roscente family's daughter. The importance the Roscente family placed on this party indicated how cherished Audrey

was.

Although the Roscente family was acknowledging a goddaughter, the grandeur and fanfare were akin to treating Audrey as their biological daughter.

Moreover, many socialites and wealthy ladies knew that the Roscente family was led by the main branch and that Phoebe, the matriarch, had only one son, Andrew. Many had already heard of Phoebe's preference for daughters. The future status of Audrey in the Roscente family became even clearer.

After understanding this dynamic, many prominent families began to eye Audrey. Having Audrey as a daughter-in-law meant establishing a connection with the Roscente family, and by extension, the other three major families. It was an advantageous alliance.

The only dissatisfaction among these wealthy families

illegitimate child.

was that Audrey had an

The Roscente family's patriarch, Samuel, sitting in a wheelchair, was pushed onto the stage, smiling as he introduced Audrey. "Thanks for taking the time to attend this party. Let me introduce my granddaughter, Audrey

Everyone had guessed Audrey was favored by the Roscente family but were shocked to see Samuel making the introduction, especially when they saw Samuel so doting on Audrey. It showed how much Audrey was cherished.

"Audrey, come stand by me Samuel beckoned with a kind smile. "Audrey is young, so please watch over her in the future."

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As she stood beside Samuel, Audrey's aloof demeanor exuded nobility. She nodded slightly to the guests in response to Samuel's words.

When Samuel finished speaki

"I have an announcement. My Roscente Group's shares."

pencer also took the stage and addressed the guests, daughter, Audrey, will receive five percent of the

Samuel's dotting attitude shocked the guests, but Spencer's announcement was an even bigger bombshell, instantly silenced the crowd.

As one of the four great families in Northville, the Roscente Group's wealth, passed down through generations, was immense. It was once concluded that the assets of Roscente Group could not be calculated through material wealth.

William and Rebecca's expressions had been sour since Audrey appeared. They never imagined that Audrey, whom they had cast out, would be pampered by the Roscente family like a princess. Hearing about the five percent shares made their faces turn even more ashen. A five percent share of the Roscente Group was enough to buy out the entire Hernandez Group.

Rebecca couldn't believe that Vivienne's daughter had such good fortune. She thought, 'Is the Roscente family blind and deaf? Audrey is a notorious ex-con with an illegitimate child, yet they all adore her. My precious daughter is obviously better in every way, but no one appreciates her. It infuriated Rebecca.

"Damn, five percent. Andrew, your family is really generous." Shawn and the others were taken aback.

Get your gifts ready." Andrew smiled gently.

Shawn snorted. "Don't worry. Your sister won't miss out on anything. Grandpa made sure I brought gifts before I left the house," he retorted, making a face.

They were about to present their gifts when a bright light suddenly hit the backdrop. One by one, photos started flashing across the screen like a slideshow.

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The sudden appearance of the photos stunned the entire hall into silence, with almost everyone staring in shock at the images. The photos were mostly of a young woman in prison attire. It looked like she was in a men's prison. What shocked everyone even

more was that the woman was surrounded by men in every photo.

A voice suddenly broke the silence of the party. "This... this is the men's prison."

The sight of a young woman in a men's prison was the most shocking to everyone. The young woman looked extremely disheveled. Her short black hair was messy. She had numerous wounds on her body and face, yet her eyes were fierce and filled with murderous intent.

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was dark and vicious, with a desperate ruthlessness that made her seem like a demon from the depths of hell. Just one look from those eyes was enough to instill fear.

At the end was a segment from a video. The video showed the previously disheveled young woman being kicked into a corner by several men in prison uniforms, who surrounded her and beat her relentlessly.

Although the young woman was beaten unconscious, the curses and blows did not stop. It was a scene that was terrifying to watch.

“Is this... The scene on the screen stunned everyone, including Shawn and Andrew. They dared not look at Dylan’s expression. They only sensed the overwhelming murderous aura emanating from him.

The video then shifted to another scene. The same disheveled woman was once again surrounded by several men, but this time, she was the one throwing punches. She savagely beat the men who had tried to assault her, leaving them half-dead on the ground.

The young woman seemed to have gone berserk. Her messy hair obscured her face, yet her bloodthirsty reddened eyes were still visible. She stared coldly at the men beneath her with a cruel smile.

The next moment, horrifying screams filled the cell as the woman broke the arms of the men. The scene was so gruesome that, even without sound, the viciousness in the young woman’s cold gaze sent chills down everyone’s spine.

The video ended with the young woman turning her head toward the camera. Her expression was vicious, merciless, and bloodthirsty, yet her grin held a hint of arrogance and defiance.

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When the video ended, the guests all took a step back in shock, looking at Audrey on stage with terror. The disheveled, bloodthirsty young woman in the video perfectly overlapped with the dazzling, cool Audrey standing before them.

In addition to shock and fear

distance themselves from Aud

st everyone instinctively backed away, wanting to

“No way. How could that woman be Audrey? Wasn’t she supposed to be in the women’s prison? How could she end up in the men’s prison? Moreover...” Cade was almost too scared to speak.

The same questions echoed in Shawn and Andrew’s minds. They did not know how Audrey ended up in a men’s prison.

Even with their doubts, they understood one thing. Someone had deliberately sent Audrey to the men’s prison, where she endured inhuman torture and abuse. The scenes. in the video and photos likely played out daily in Audrey’s life, leading to her icy demeanor now.

And the person responsible for all this....

Andrew and the others nearly didn’t dare to look at Dylan’s face.

Dylan never imagined that the truth would be so brutal. It almost tore his heart apart. He had asked Richard to investigate Audrey’s prison conditions countless times, but never did he expect the reality to be so horrifying. At this moment, Dylan felt as if his heart was cut into pieces.

Cade thought he was seeing things when he saw Dylan crying. After all, their boss was the cold and unfeeling heir of the Clifford family.

“Turn off the projector and lock down this place. No one is allowed to leave,” Dylan ordered coldly. His domineering and furious aura swept through the room, making Cade believe the tears were an illusion. Their boss was still the ruthless and cold. business king, the high and mighty prince of Northville.

But only Shawn and the others saw Dylan’s hands trembling slightly, Even his cold voice quivered.

The Roscente family also snapped out of their shock. Each wore a grim expression. This was clearly targeted at Audrey.

Phoebe’s heart ached uncontrollably, especially seeing the despair and bloodlust in Audrey’s eyes

in the video.

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The usually gentle Phoebe couldn't help but become furious. "Didn't you hear Mr. Clifford's order? Turn off the video and guard the doors. No one is allowed to leave."

When Phoebe spoke, the servants of the Roscente family immediately took action.

The guests were unhappy, the

expressions darkening.

One of them questioned, "What does the Roscente family mean by this? This video and those photos have nothing to do with us. Why won't you let us leave?"

Another asked, "Exactly! We came to the Roscente family's party as a courtesy, and now you won't let us leave?"

A third added, "I want to see if you really dare to stop me from leaving."

These were the heads of powerful families, and they were naturally infuriated. Many people no longer looked at Audrey with admiration and infatuation as they did just

now.

Instead, they looked at her strangely. Audrey had been in a men's prison for three years. After all, no one knew what had happened at that time. They speculated that even the child she brought back might have been conceived in prison.

At this moment, everyone distanced themselves from Audrey as if she were a plague.

At the back of the crowd, Sarah watched with satisfaction. She thought, 'Audrey, if you make my life difficult, I won't let you off either. With this video, Audrey was practically ruined.

However, to Sarah's disappointment, Audrey remained calm and indifferent. She appeared unaffected by the videos and photos, as if the person in them wasn't her.

Seeing some people insisting on leaving, Dylan looked at Richard and coldly commanded, "Collect everyone's phones. Beat anyone who tries to leave to death if necessary. I'll account for it."

Dylan had decided to act. No one in Northville dared to be presumptuous in his presence.

Hearing his words, those who were about to leave stopped. However, they were unwilling to be threatened by someone younger than them.

One of them even mocked, "Mr. Clifford, take a good look. Ms. Hernandez was in a men's prison for three years. Who knows how many men she slept with? That bastard she brought back might even be from sleeping around in prison."

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When the man finished, Dylan's cold, dark eyes swept over him. His voice was chilling. "Richard, rip his mouth off."

Richard immediately stepped

and after hearing his boss's order.

The man had spoken without thinking, and Dylan's words made his face pale. Before he could even beg for mercy, Richard had already ripped his mouth off.

As the man's agonized scream sounded, the surrounding crowd gasped. They hadn't expected Dylan to take action. Now, no one dared to make a move recklessly. Everyone obediently handed over their phones, afraid of angering the powerful Dylan and having to suffer the consequences.

Dylan declared, "Look into this. If I can't find out who did this, no one leaves."

At this moment, everyone could sense that the high and mighty prince of Northville was truly enraged.

The Roscente family looked grim as well. Such an incident, especially on a day like today, was clearly targeted at Audrey. But Audrey was already their daughter. Even though she was their goddaughter, the Roscente family treated her as their biological daughter.

"Brian? Brian, what's wrong?" Phoebe suddenly noticed Brian's pale face. His usually lively and mischievous eyes were now dark as he stared unblinkingly at where the videos and photos were shown. His small body trembled continuously. His hands were so tightly clenched that blood flowed from his palms.

Phoebe's voice drew everyone's attention. Before they could react, Audrey quickly reached Brian's side. Her usually calm and indifferent eyes now showed a hint of urgency, her expression anxious.

Since Audrey's return, she had always appeared cold and strong, seemingly unbreakable. Even when those photos and videos were revealed, she remained calm.

But now, faced with Brian in such a state, her composure finally showed signs of cracking.

“Brian, take a deep breath,” Audrey said.

Hearing his mother’s gentle voice urging him to breathe deeply, Brian tried, but the pain overwhelmed him. He could only bite his lip. Bright red blood trickled down from the corner of his mouth. His dark eyes were filled with pain.

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Chapter 46

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“Mommy, I’m... I’m okay...” Though Brian was trembling with pain, he still tried to reassure Audrey.

“Mommy knows. Be good. Just hold on a little longer, and it won’t hurt anymore.” Audrey’s cold eyes were filled with heartache as she held Brian tightly. Then she looked at Phoebe. “I need to take hi his room.”

“Yes. Take him to his room now.” Phoebe and the others were also anxious, especially seeing Brian in such a state. It pained them deeply.

The six-year-old Brian shook in pain, his face deathly pale.

Dylan’s dark shrank. Brian’s condition reminded him of something. He immediately took Brian from Audrey’s arms, his voice tinged with urgency. “I’ll carry him.”

Dylan then swiftly carried Brian upstairs.

Audrey frowned but had no time to think, quickly following them. She instructed Phoebe and the others, “I need a set of silver needles.”

After hearing Audrey’s request, Phoebe hurriedly directed Andrew to find the needles. “Quick. Get the silver needles.”

Understanding the urgency,

Andrew quickly left.

Phoebe had already prepared a room for Audrey and Brian, and the servants promptly opened the door to Brian's room. Dylan gently placed Brian on the bed.

Brian endured the pain, his face turning, from pale to a translucent pallor. He bit his lip, holding back his cries, afraid to make Audrey sad. Not a single tear fell from his eyes, despite the agony. It made everyone around him feel heartbroken.

"Daddy..." Brian's faint voice came, heard only by Dylan, who was holding Brian, and Audrey, who was standing close by.

The word made Dylan's body stiffen. His eyes filled with suppressed emotions and grew redder by the second. He gently stroked Brian's head, his voice hoarse with infinite tenderness. "Daddy's here. Daddy's with you. Brian is the bravest

Dylan's hoarse voice trembled slightly. His voice made Audrey purse her lips. She watched as Dylan comforted Brian with a gentle voice, a tone none had ever heard from him.

But the word "Daddy" shocked everyone. However, despite their shock, they knew now was not the time to dwell on it. To prevent Brian from hurting himself, Dylan placed his hand in Brian's mouth, letting him bite down on him.

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Chapter 46

Brian didn't want to bite his father, but the pain was unbearable.

The onlookers saw blood drip from Dylan's hand, but he didn't make a sound and continued staying by Brian's side. He finally understood why Audrey's hand was injured, and why she had been so cold and ruthless toward him, to the point of wishing he was dead. It was because Brian had been ill that night.

This illness existed only in the Clifford family. It was incurable and it meant the affected could live only until adulthood. This illness last appeared in Dylan's grandfather's generation. The afflicted only lived until he was fifteen years old.

With this in mind, Dylan's lips tightened.

Just as Brian was about to pass out from the pain, Andrew rushed in with the silver needles.

"Everyone out." Audrey took the silver needles, masked her emotions, and began telling everyone to leave.

Phoebe and the others, knowing Audrey's medical skills, nodded. "Auddie, we'll be right outside. Call us if you need anything."

"Thank you, Godmother," Audrey expressed her heartfelt gratitude.

"Silly child, we're family. No need for thanks, Phoebe said, feeling heartbroken, then. led everyone out.

Audrey's cold gaze turned to Dylan. "You too, out."

Audrey's icy tone made Dylan's pupils shrank. This was the first thing she had said to him tonight. Recalling the earlier photos and videos, Dylan suppressed his emotions. and withdrew his now numb hand from Brian's mouth. "I'll be right outside. Call me if you need anything."

With that, Dylan left the room.

Without further interruptions, Audrey arranged the silver needles and began removing Brian's clothes.

Outside the room, the gazes of the crowd when they looked at Dylan changed slightly.

Cade spoke first. "Boss, is Brian really your son?"

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Cade question drew the attention of everyone outside the room to Dylan.

Dylan's cold eyes swept over 11

his emotions completely hidden. "Any objections?"

"No. Just trying to get used to the fact."

de shook his head. Of course, he was not used to this. They were all single, and suddenly one of them was a father. It took them by surprise.

They had often speculated about who the father of Audrey's child was. Brian looked exactly like Audrey, so there was no doubt he was her biological son. Now, they realized Brian was Audrey and Dylan's child. Considering Brian's age, everyone realized that he was conceived before Audrey went to prison.

This realization changed their perception of Dylan.

Before Audrey went to prison, she was young, Dylan's actions seemed despicable, almost beastly. He had not only slept with her but also sent her to prison after that. Anyone in Audrey's place would harbor lifelong resentment.

Suddenly, they felt a pang of sympathy for Audrey. The photos and videos of her in the men's prison that were shown earlier made them feel even sorrier for her. They began to think that Dylan deserved the torment he was going through. If they were Audrey, they would have killed Dylan long ago.

Dylan stood guard outside the room, not leaving for a moment. Unable to smoke, his dark eyes were filled with complex and painful emotions.

Seeing Dylan like this, the others refrained from saying anything.

Midway through, Richard called. "Boss, we found the person who released the photos and videos. It was Emely Roscente."

Emely was never particularly smart. She had been spoiled since young, which led to her arrogance now. Furthermore, she had tampered in the Roscente family's residence, but her actions were not well concealed and were easily traced. It didn't take Richard much effort to find out.

Hearing Emely's name, Dylan's expression grew even colder. "Keep an eye on her. We'll deal with her later. Also, find out how she got those photos and videos. If she refuses to talk, make her." His eyes were filled with a fierce glint.

Richard replied, "Got it, boss. What about the guests? Should we let them leave?"

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Dylan stated, "Let them go. Before they leave warn them. If anyone dares to leak what happened tonight, the Clifford family won't let them off."

After receiving Dylan's orders, Richard hung up to handle the situation.

When Dylan finished the call, A w asked. Did you find out who it was?"

"Emely," Dylan replied coldly, his dark eyes unable to hide his icy anger. His tone sealed Emely's fate. Given Dylan's usual methods, Emely would likely be left nearly dead.

Andrew frowned, not surprised but still disappointed. His cousin had always been arrogant and unruly. It was time to give Emely the harsh lesson she deserved.

Phoebe, on the other hand, was furious. "How dare she. Has our family wronged or owed her something to make her do such harmful things?"

Samuel and Spencer also looked displeased.

Fortunately, Samuel had recovered well after his surgery. Otherwise, today's events might have landed him back in the hospital.

"No one in the family can interfere in this. Such a fool will inevitably cause trouble for our family sooner or later. She needs to be properly disciplined," Samuel decreed. He looked at Dylan. "Dylan, don't hold back on our family's account. Do what you need to do, just spare her life."

When Samuel finished speaking, Jake's voice came from the staircase. Having overheard Samuel, Jake's voice was urgent. "Dad, Emely is still your granddaughter. She made a mistake, but you can't be so ruthless.

Despite everything, Jake still cared for his daughter.

Spencer snorted. "How dare you have the nerve to speak up? You've spoiled her into what she is today. She's a disgrace to our family. Just looking at you makes me angry. Scram. Samuel was infuriated by the sight of his son. When he thought of his failure of a granddaughter, his temper grew. He looked at Jake with annoyance.

Jake knew the trouble his daughter had caused was serious. It was beyond simply apologizing to Audrey like he could just now. He turned to Dylan. "Mr. Clifford..."

"Mr. Jake, sorry, but I can't make any promises. She must be held accountable for her actions. If not by me, then someone else will eventually deal with her," Dylan interrupted, his gaze cold.

Jake had no choice but to leave.

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"Boss, do you want to get your hand bandaged first?" Andrew suggested, seeing Dylan's bloodied hand. If he remained any longer then, the flesh might be bitten off entirely. Despite the pain, Dylan had reined silent.

“No need.” Dylan’s voice was com His dark eyes were fixed on the door, as if it might disappear if he looked away.

Downstairs, the guests had been escorted out by Richard. Before leaving, he sternly warned them. Given the power of the Clifford family and the Roscente family in Northville, no one dared to disobey. They all signed confidentiality agreements.

The Hernandez family also left the Roscente family’s residence. After getting in the car, Rebecca remarked displeasedly, “How lucky Audrey is. The Roscente family values her so much, even giving her 5% of Roscente Group’s shares. And Dylan is so protective of her.”

If it weren’t for Dylan’s protection, Audrey wouldn’t have been able to stay in Northville. after those photos and videos were made public. Rebecca was fuming, especially since they too had been forced to sign a confidentiality agreement.

“I wonder who released those photos and videos,” Rebecca asked.

Sarah was equally resentful, especially when Dylan still protected Audrey after seeing her disgraceful past.

Hearing Rebecca mention the photos and videos, Sarah’s eyes gleamed. She had been. careful, and no one should be able to trace it back to her. Even if they did investigate, it would only lead to Emely.

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After more than an hour, the door finally opened. Those waiting outside immediately looked inside. Treating Brian had drained Audrey, leaving her pale and her presence weakened.

Seeing Audrey like that, Phoebe felt her heartache at once. “How is Brian? Is he okay?” Phoebe hurriedly supported Audrey, worried she might faint.

“Yes, he’s stable for now. He’ll wake up after some rest.” Audrey nodded.

Hearing that Brian was okay, everyone breathed a sigh of relief. However, Dylan’s brows remained tightly furrowed as he watched Audrey intently.

“Thank goodness he’s finally okay,” Phoebe exclaimed with relief. She was so relieved. that she nearly fell to her knees to pray. Brian’s previous condition had frightened.

everyone.

“Come on, you need to rest too. If Brian wakes up but you fall ill, it will break my heart,” Phoebe said as she helped Audrey to a room prepared for her.

Throughout this, Audrey ignored Dylan, not even sparing him a glance.

Shawn and the others watching couldn't help but sigh for Dylan. But they felt he deserved it.

Dylan's eyes remained fixed on Audrey's retreating figure until she went into the room, then he turned and entered Brian's room.

Brian was still pale but appeared much better than the agony he was in before. Dylan looked at Brian. His face resembled Audrey's with a hint of his features. Dylan's heart softened. To him, Brian was a precious gift from his beloved, one he had nearly lost through his actions.

Dylan stayed in Brian's room for a while before heading downstairs.

Richard was already waiting for him. Seeing Dylan, Richard approached respectfully.

“Where is she?” Dylan's cold eyes gleamed with a fierce and icy light.

“Outside. She's being watched,” Richard replied.

Hearing that, Dylan's tall, imposing figure headed directly outside, with Richard following closely.

Outside, Emely was guarded by several men, looking disheveled and tear-streaked.

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Seeing Dylan's cold demeanor, her eyes filled with fear, and her body trembled.

“Take her away.” Dylan's voice was icy and unfeeling, his aloof and noble face looking sharp.

Hearing the command, Emel

amed and struggled. Tears streamed down her face. as she hoped for someone from her family to save her. But no one came. She was bound and taken into a car. At this moment, Emely truly felt fear.

Half an hour later, Emely was taken to the foot of a mountain. When the car stopped, she was dragged out and thrown to the ground.

Seeing the darkness around her, goosebumps rose on Emely's skin. Fear filled her. Her legs gave out, and she fell to the ground on her knees. However, the ground was full of small sharp stones. When her knees landed on them, they stung her.

Seeing the tall figure in the darkness, Emely felt utter despair.

Dylan looked coldly at the kneeling woman, his dark eyes almost blending with the night, yet his powerful and commanding presence instilled fear.

"Where did those photos and videos come from?" Dylan asked. He lit a cigarette. The glowing ember flickered ominously in the dark, making the deserted mountainside appear even more terrifying. Furthermore, the sounds of insects and birds added to the desolate and eerie atmosphere.

Emely was raised in luxury and naturally couldn't take this. She was on the verge of breaking down as she sobbed desperately, "I don't know who sent them. They were mailed to me. You can ask my maid. She received the package." She dared not lie.

"Richard, check it out," Dylan glanced at Richard and ordered.

Richard nodded and went to the side to make a call. Ten minutes later, he returned. "It was indeed mailed to her. I've started tracing the sender, Richard reported.

Hearing this, Emely, still crying, begged, "I told the truth. Now you know. Can I go home now?"

Emely was filled with fear. She didn't want to stay in this dark place for another second.

"Go home? You think you can go back?" Dylan sneered, his icy eyes filled with malice.

Dylan's tone exuded danger, making Emely shrink in fear. "What are you going to do? I'm the Roscente family's daughter, after all. Mr. Clifford, you can't treat me like this."

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"Emely, you must bear the consequences of your actions. I promised your grandfather to spare your life, but whether you survive is up to fate," Dylan replied coldly.

"Richard, leave her in the mountains. It's up to her if she lives or dies," Dylan ordered.

Emely's face went pale. "No, plea

't want to go. I was wrong, Mr Clifford. Please,

let me go back," she pleaded, terrified. The looming darkness of the mountain that blended with the night filled her with dread. She would go insane if she went in there.

"Take her away," Dylan commanded icily.

Soon, Dylan's men dragged Emely into the mountain.

Dylan wouldn't harm Emely himself. He would spare her life, but the mountain of dangers, and whether she would survive had nothing to do with him.

"Boss, you should treat your wound. It could get infected, Richard suggested, concerned about Dylan's bloodied hand.

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"Let's head back to the Roscente family's residence," Dylan said, dismissing his injury. The pain in his heart was far worse compared to his hand.

"You have three days to find out everything that happened to Audrey in the men's prison. I want to know every single one who touched her. I want all the details," Dylan ordered. When he recalled the videos and photos he had seen today, his heart felt like it was ripped into shreds.

"Also, find out who sent her to the men's prison. Use any means necessary," Dylan added, determined to seek vengeance on everyone who had wronged her, including himself.

"Yes, sir," Richard replied.

When Dylan returned to the Roscente family's residence, everyone was already asleep. He didn't drive into the courtyard, instead stopping on the small path outside the villa.

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Andrew opened the courtyard door and walked out, probably having heard the car engine downstairs.

"They're all asleep. You should rest. I'll keep watch here. Nothing will happen," Andrew said, knocking on th

window.

Dylan lowered the rear window. "No need." Even if he went back, he wouldn't be able to sleep.

Andrew glanced at Dylan's expression. He sighed and decided not to persuade him further. Instead, he instructed Richard, "Go get the medical kit and bandage your boss's wound."

Given their special status, they usually kept a first aid kit in the car for emergencies.

Richard went to the back of the car, opened the trunk, and took out a medical kit. He then walked to the back seat, turned on the overhead light, and began treating Dylan's wound.

The blood had already dried around the gory wound, making it look quite horrendous. Bandaging it wasn't difficult. Dylan didn't utter a sound throughout the process.

Dylan kept watch outside for the entire night.

The next morning, Audrey had regained her energy. She first checked on Brian, who had just woken up and was much better.

Brian's bright eyes scanned the room, looking slightly disappointed when he didn't see the person he was searching for, but he quickly flashed a sweet smile to Audrey. "Audrey, were you scared?"

Audrey hadn't missed Brian's searching eyes and the disappointment in them, nor his obvious longing for his father during last night's episode. Her eyes gleamed. She felt at surge of irritation, knowing Dylan might have guessed something.

Audrey replied, "Yes, so don't scare Mommy anymore. Get up and wash up. Everyone is waiting downstairs." She laid out Brian's clothes.

Brian dressed himself. Then, he brushed his teeth and washed his face before following Audrey downstairs.

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Chapter 49

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The pair were immediately greeted by Phoebe's warm concern. Once she confirmed they were both fine and in good spirits, she relaxed.

The photos and videos from the previous day made Phoebe feel even more tender toward Audrey and Brian. Brian's sweet demeanor, coupled with his adorable and sensible nature, endeared him the older folks even more. He made Phoebe very

happy.

After breakfast, Audrey and Brian prepared to leave. Phoebe was reluctant and wanted them to stay longer, but she eventually let them go. Before they departed, she loaded their car with plenty of food to take back.

As Audrey and Brian drove out of the Roscente family's residence, they saw Dylan outside.

Brian's eyes lit up. He wanted to run to Dylan, but a glance at Audrey's cold expression made him reconsider.

Audrey noticed Dylan too but ignored him. Dylan felt a pang in his chest when

Audrey's cold gaze passed over him. As the car drove past Dylan's, Audrey didn't look at him again.

Brian glanced at Dylan outside the car, then at Audrey. He said, "Audrey, Grandma said Mr. Clifford waited outside all night. Do you want to look at him?"

Audrey turned to Brian. Although Brian was more mature and sensible than other children his age, he was still just a six-year-old child, unable to hide all his thoughts.

"Do you like him very much?" Audrey asked.

Brian nodded, then shook his head. "Your feelings are what I care about. I just think Mr. Clifford seems a bit pitiful," Brian replied earnestly.

Audrey gently patted Brian's head, her gaze gentle.

When they got home, a message arrived from overseas. [The new blood sample you provided didn't match.]

Seeing the message, Audrey pursed her lips, her expression becoming more solemn. If William's blood didn't match, only one other person could be tested.

Another message soon came. [Moreover, I discovered something else.]

Audrey, preoccupied with the failed blood match, replied absentmindedly: [What is it?]

The response was quick. [The blood sample you provided not only didn't match but indicates there is no relationship between you and the owner.]

Audrey sat up abruptly at 11

o'clock. [What do you mean?]

The next message clarified: [It means you're not biologically related to that blood sample's owner.]

The phrase "not biologically related" hit Audrey like a bombshell. She knew very well she had personally taken the blood sample from William. If their blood didn't match, it meant William was not biologically related to her. In other words, he was not her biological father.

Audrey couldn't wrap her mind around it. She thought, 'If William isn't my father, then who is my real father?'

As Audrey struggled to process this revelation, her phone rang with a call from overseas.

"Do you

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have any other family members' blood samples? If not, there's only one last option," the voice on the phone said.

"What option?" Audrey asked, her lips tight.

The voice replied, "We can try cord blood. Preferably from a sibling of Brian with the same parents. The probability of a match is higher that way."

Audrey frowned, resistant to this idea. She didn't want too many entanglements with Dylan. However, no matter which choice she made, she couldn't avoid involving Dylan.

"I'll think about it," Audrey said, pursing her lips.

Around noon, Dylan called, but Audrey didn't answer. Dylan then called Brian's phone. Because of last night's events, Brian felt closer to Dylan and happily answered before handing the phone to Audrey.

With a slight frown and under Brian's hopeful gaze, Audrey took the phone. "What's up?"

I want to discuss Brian's condition with you, Dylan quickly said. Fearing Audrey would refuse, he hurriedly added, "This condition has appeared in the Clifford family before."

Hearing this, Audrey's heart sank. She realized Dylan must have figured out that Brian was his son. She didn't want to meet Dylan but couldn't ignore his last statement.

"Okay, Audrey agreed.

“I’ll book a place and send you the location tomorrow,” Dylan said hurriedly. He was relieved and happy Audrey agreed, and was afraid

Vengeful Hearts Return Chapter 50

It was night time and miles away, at the border.

Two figures were moving quickly through the darkness.

. “My boy, if we go any further we’ll be we’ll be discovered.”

One of the figures, a woman.

The young woman was dressed in a black leotard bodysuit that made it easy for her to move stealthily. She glanced at the few warehouses in the distance as she avoided the detection of the guards.

The small figure in front of her pursed his lips. His round, bright eyes looked coldly into the distance. His face was fair and his skin was young, smooth and supple, but he gave off a cold vibe.

It was a long moment before the small boy spoke in an impassive voice.

“Thank you for your hard work, Godma.” he said.

His childish yet icy voice nevertheless made Green Viper’s heart swell with affection.

She couldn’t resist reaching out to rub the boy’s face. Then she instructed, “Stand back a little bit and cover your ears. I’m gonna blow up that scumbag’s place and avenge your

mother.”

The boy, Lucas, obediently takes two steps back and covers his ears with his little hands.

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In the next second, a roaring boom was heard and the ensuing explosion lit up the sky. The entire warehouse was engulfed in flames.

Lucas’ calm face, finally broke into a satisfied smile. The flames of the fire could be seen reflected in his frighteningly bright eyes.

‘You bullied my mother so I blew up your warehouse!’ he thought.

After successfully carrying out the deed, they made a quick retreat.

When they were a safe distance away, Green Viper stopped to catch her breath and looked to Lucas, asking, "If your mom knew I helped you to do these bad things do you think she would rush over immediately to destroy me?"

Lucas looked back at Green Viper with his boyishly handsome face and replied. seriously, "That won't happen, I love you so I'll protect you!"

"You're such a good boy!" Green Viper cooed.

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The more Green Viper looked at Lucas, the more fond of him she became. A through her heart as she wished this smart, handsome and lovable boy was her own flesh and blood.

She was convinced that it was God's oversight and she wondered when she'd be able to have a child like Lucas.

At Clifford Mansion, Richard had just returned in a hurry with a slightly grave expression on his face.

"Sir, something's happened to the shipment at the border!" he reported.

For some reason, there seemed to be many incidents occurring at the border. The last shipment they had at the border had also been stolen previously.

Fortunately they were able to recover it in the end.

It hadn't been that long since then and this time, the entire warehouse over there was bombed.

They had only recently expanded their reach to the border, but they couldn't afford to take these occurrences lightly. After all, they had no idea who the mastermind of these consecutive attacks were.

Dylan frowned slightly, his stony and reserved face carrying an expression of mild disdain.

"Where's James?" he asked.

“After he found out about the bombing, he sent someone there to assess the situation. Luckily no one was hurt, but the batch of goods we were going to hand over to the buyer is gone.” Richard answered.

Dylan instructed, “Transfer the goods from other warehouses for now. When James has handled this mess he can go and collect his punishment from them.”

“Yes sir!” Richard nodded respectfully.

The border area had been entrusted to James to manage, but something like this had to happen just as the goods were scheduled to be handed over. It would be strange if the boss wasn't furious.

“Sir, could The Silence or Island Empire be behind this?” Richard ventured a guess.

The Silence and Island Empire were the two largest powers at the border, and they had carried out their businesses separately but peacefully over many years. It was very likely that Dylan's intrusion on their turf had incurred their ire and made them respond with violence to drive them away from the border

Dylan's cold lips pursed slightly as he replied in a sharp tone, “We can't rule them out.”

Both organizations were

was natural that they would.. new player.

of a duopoly and had always stood on equal footing, so it

be agreeable to give up part of their market share to a

“Any news on the information I asked you to look into?” Dylan asked.

“I'm working on it now, it might take two more days.” Richard answered formally.

At the Holland residence, Audrey was making Callum change the sign on their property to the newly made one.

Then, Audrey's phone started ringing. It was a number from the border.

She took her phone and made her way to a room upstairs.

The moment the call connected, a familiar man's voice said, “Green Viper brought your son to blow up the Clifford warehouse. Apparently, everything was blown to pieces and nothing's left. What do you think? Aren't you delighted?”

Audrey's eyebrows creased slightly. She asked. “Are the both of them okay?”

The man replied in an unconcerned manner, "What could possibly happen? At worst, they'll be locked up for a night in a dark and small room by the boss."

"Okay, I got it." Audrey replied flatly and proceeded to hang up.

After some consideration, Audrey dialed a number that she had memorized by heart.

The phone rang several times before the other party picked it up.

"Yes?" A magnetic voice that sounded slightly bored answered the phone. Even though it was only a single word, the low and sexy tone carried a wicked charm that was mysteriously intriguing.

"Did you lock Lucas and Green Viper in Campvan Hall?" Audrey asked.

"Yeah I did, you got a problem with that? Even if you do, keep it to yourself." The languidly evil voice said uncaringly. Although the tone was wilful and alluring, it had a domineering air of finality.

... No, I don't." Audrey finally croaked out after a beat. She didn't actually have anything against it, so she said, "Send Lucas back here when the training is finished."

"If you want your son back the... eme get him yourself." the voice replied coldly and hung up.

Looking at the disconnected phone, Audrey's eyebrows furrowed. She wondered what why this person was all worked up again.

The next day, just as Audrey arrived at Natural Heaven, the manager came out to welcome her and greeted her respectfully.

"Ms. Hernandez, Mr. Clifford has been waiting for you for a long time." he informed Audrey.

Audrey simple nodded and let him lead her into the premises.

As the manager navigated the way, he thought, 'Ms. Hernandez seems to exude a domineering presence and authority that's uncannily similar to Mr. Clifford's.

'Both of them seem distant and unapproachable, but seven years ago when Ms. Hernandez followed after Mr. Clifford, she was undeniably flamboyant and attention-seeking.'

At the entrance to the private room, the manager cordially stepped to the side and said, "Ms. Hernandez, Mr. Clifford is waiting for you inside."

Audrey stepped forward and pushed the door open.

Dylan was alone in the room, and when he heard the movement of the door, he raised his eyes and looked over. His deep, dark eyes, like the ocean, landed on Audrey's figure.

Audrey's expression didn't reveal much emotion. She strode in and took a seat across from Dylan.

Behind them, the manager stepped forward to close the door, sealing the two of them away from the outside world.

Dylan spoke first. "How's Brian?" He could see that Audrey seemed cold and detached from him, and he felt his chest tightening.

"He's fine." Audrey replied. She raised her eyes and looked at the man before her, then she lifted her wrist, looking at the time on her watch. "If there's something you'd like to say, then say it now. I'll give you ten minutes, she said.

Dylan's eyes darkened. "I orde replied.

your favorite dishes. We can talk after eating." he

Audrey rejected his suggestion. "That's alright, I have something on after this. You've got nine minutes now."

She looked indifferently at the man across from her. Her gaze was icy and uncaring.

Audrey's reluctance to be in the same space as him made his heart sting, but there was nothing Dylan could do about it, so he began to talk. "There are Clifford family members from past generations who were afflicted with the same medical condition as Brian. It's a closely-guarded secret that this disease is only passed on to boys and not to girls.

"From what I know, before Brian, the last time this occurred was during my grandfather's time. Then, the doctor's prognosis was that that person wouldn't live long enough to be an adult, and it was indeed the case, as he only lived to fifteen years old.

I'm not familiar about other details, but there are records of my family history, so I can make the trip back to my family home to find out more."