

HELP! MY ONE-NIGHT STAND IS EXAMINING ME?!

Chapter 201 Spoiled rotten

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“She’s been spoiled rotten by my family her whole life, which is why she has such a high-handed and unreasonable temperament.”

“At the end of the day, it’s your family’s failure to raise her properly. Camila’s temperament is largely due to you and your family enabling her since she was young.”

Cole nodded and said earnestly, “I know. I’ll talk to her and make sure she stops picking on you. And I hope... the two of you can get along well...maybe even like sisters...”

Alana shook her head. “That’s impossible. Camila and I could never be sisters.” How could a bully ever become sisters with the one she bullied?

What about all the pain she’s endured?

Was she just unlucky? Was she just a total loser?

“Lana...” Cole’s lips twitched, as if he wanted to say something to persuade her.

Alana guessed his intention and cut him off without hesitation. “Cole, you’re not me. You haven’t gone through what I’ve been through, so you have no right to tell me to forgive Camila.”

Bullies and the bullied are forever at odds!

Cole was at a loss for words; he wanted to say something, but couldn’t find the right words.

Alana couldn’t help but add, “Besides, I just slapped your sister. Given her vindictive nature, do you really think she’ll let me off that easily? Please keep a close eye on your sister from now on. If anything happens to me, she’ll be the first person I suspect!”

Cole couldn’t argue.

He recalled back in middle school when Camila had even hired a few boys from outside the school to bully Alana and humiliate her.

If he hadn't shown up in time, the consequences would have been unimaginable. After a long moment, he finally said, "Alright, I won't let her hurt you."

Alana nodded. "Is that all? If that's it, I'll be going now."

Cole couldn't help but add, "One more thing..."

Alana asked, "What is it?"

Cole stared at her and said, "Camila said she saw a man, and that man said he was your boyfriend."

Alana nodded, her expression calm. "Yes, I told you before I have a boyfriend."

Cole frowned. "Camila said your boyfriend tried to hit her, that he has a violent streak...How could you date such a reckless boyfriend?"

Alana found it amusing. "Your sister, Camila, was bullying me and tried to hit me.

My boyfriend gave her a stern warning to defend me, isn't that perfectly normal? Was he supposed to just stand by and watch me get bullied by another woman without doing anything?"

Cole's breath caught, and he couldn't help but explain, "No, that's not what I meant. I'm worried he might abuse you or treat you badly!"

Alana replied earnestly, "I know exactly whether he'd abuse me or not. For your information, he treats me well, and I believe he isn't the kind of person who acts without reason or consideration."

Cole swallowed hard, his voice thick with emotion. "Is he really good to you? You're not lying to me?"

Alana replied, "Yes, he's very good to me."

Sadness welled up in Cole's eyes, but deep down, he refused to accept it and wouldn't give up so easily.

He had finally found her; he didn't want to let her be with another man so easily.

"In that case, bring him here so I can see him for myself." He didn't believe that man was truly good to Alana.

Perhaps, in every man's eyes, aside from himself, no one would feel comfortable entrusting their beloved woman to another man.

Alana pressed her lips together, finding that absurd.

Cole stared intently at her, his tone carrying an air of authority that brooked no refusal.

"Didn't you say you were going to treat me to a meal? Bring your boyfriend along. I want to meet him!"

Alana bit her lip, feeling uneasy inside. "I... I'll think about it."

Would showing up with Stephan make Cole let go of her?

Would she finally have some peace?

"Alright, I'll wait for your answer." Alana left Cole's office and returned to her own desk.

Thinking about what Cole had just said, she felt a bit uneasy.

Cole had asked her to bring Stephan to dinner. If she did, would there be any conflict between them?

Besides, she didn't want Stephan to find out she went way back with Cole.

If he found out, it would mean she could no longer hide her sordid past.

But... the truth couldn't be hidden forever; Stephan would eventually find out.

So, what should she do?

Alana was caught in a dilemma, unable to find an answer right away.

Even after she got off work and returned home, she still hadn't worked out a solution.

Stephan could tell she was distracted; she wasn't even eating properly during dinner.

He reached out and pinched her cheek. "What are you thinking about? You look so preoccupied. Are you still thinking about that woman who bullied you this morning? If you still feel wronged, I'll step in and teach her a lesson."

Alana looked up, meeting the man's deep gaze. His dark, speckled eyes overflowed with concern she couldn't hide.

She shook her head. “No, I’m thinking about something else.”

He pulled the girl into his arms, seating her on his lap, then looked at her intently. “What is it?”

Alana gazed at the man’s earnest, handsome features, her knuckles tightening.

Her throat felt as if it were blocked, and for a moment, she couldn’t speak.

Stephan could tell she was hiding something, but he didn’t rush her. Instead, he took one of her small hands and gently stroked it to comfort her.

“Tell me what’s on your mind. We’ll figure it out together.”

Alana gazed into his sincere eyes and suddenly found she couldn’t bring herself to keep this from him.

Although she had every right not to tell him, she simply couldn’t bring herself to deceive someone who was so sincere with her.

After much hesitation, she decided to speak up. “I... want to tell you something.”

Stephan smiled, ruffled her hair, and spoke in a voice so gentle it was almost unbelievable. “Go ahead, I’m listening.”

Alana blinked and warned him, “If I really do tell you, don’t get angry.”

Stephan smiled, coaxing her to speak. “Go ahead. I won’t get angry.”

Seemingly encouraged by his words, Alana bit her lip and whispered, “It’s just... last time, didn’t you hit Manager Cole from my company? I worked it out with him. I convinced him not to press charges for you hitting him, on the condition that I treat him to a meal.”

Stephan furrowed his brow. “So? Did you agree to that behind my back?”

Alana nodded. “Mm-hmm. I just figured that since I caused the trouble myself, I should handle it myself.”

Stephan’s tone turned stern. “What do you mean, ‘trouble you caused yourself’? It was clearly my doing. Why are you taking the blame on your own without even asking me, the person involved?”

Alana shook her head. “Not exactly. I just wanted to smooth things over for you. I was afraid he’d hold you accountable. If I agreed to treat him to a meal, he’d be willing to let you off the hook, wouldn’t that be for the best?”

Stephan gave a forced smile, “Your intentions are good, but don’t even start.”

The way he put it made it sound like she’d meant well but ended up doing more harm than good.

Stephan narrowed his eyes and asked, “So, did you agree to it?”

Alana nodded.

He laughed bitterly, grinding his teeth. “Lana, you agreed to treat a man to dinner, did you even consider how I’d feel? Besides, that man has feelings for you. Aren’t you afraid I’ll get jealous or misunderstand?”

“I...” Alana’s lips trembled; she wanted to explain, but didn’t know how.

She had indeed been thoughtless about this. She clutched the man’s sleeve with her small hand and tugged at it pleadingly. “I’m sorry. Don’t be mad. You just promised me you wouldn’t be.”

Stephan remained expressionless. “I’ve changed my mind! No one would be able to stay calm if they heard their girlfriend agree to treat another man to a meal!”

After saying that, he angrily shook off the sleeve she was holding onto.

He wouldn’t let her hold onto him.

The man’s expression was stern; he turned his head away coldly, deliberately avoiding her gaze.

Alana blinked.

He truly embodied the saying, “A man’s words are as unreliable as a liar.”

She felt both at a loss and exasperated.

What should she do?

She’d merely mentioned that she’d agreed to treat Cole to a meal, and he was already this angry.

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Chapter 202 True past

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If she were to confess to him about her true past with Cole, wouldn't he be even angrier?

Even if she had mentioned some things that night about Cole, it seemed Stephan didn't quite grasp that and was only focused on the fact that she wasn't dating anyone during the time he was pursuing her.

Well, she had been murmuring most of her words that day.

Never mind, she'd just have to take it one step at a time. Alana had no idea how to soothe an angry man, after all, she'd never had to do it before, so she could only repeat,

"Don't be mad. I'm telling you now, aren't I? Besides, I haven't even gone to dinner with him yet. If I actually went out to dinner alone with him, then you could get angry then."

But to her surprise, the man grew angrier the more he listened.

Stephan turned his dark eyes toward her, staring intently. "What? You really do want to go out to dinner alone with him?"

Alana immediately shook her head, shaking it like a rattle, "No, no! That's not what I meant! What I mean is, could you come with me?"

Stephan felt a little better hearing that. This little girl wasn't bad, she was still thinking of him and being considerate of his feelings.

If she were willing to take him along, that would be a different story.

Although the man was pleased on the inside, he didn't show it on the surface. He snorted and said sarcastically, "If I go with you, won't your Manager Cole mind?"

Alana quickly waved her hands and said, "No, no...actually, he's the one who asked me to bring you along."

Stephan furrowed his brow; his previously elated mood plummeted to rock bottom in an instant. “What do you mean? He asked you to bring me along? If he hadn’t made that request, you wouldn’t have brought me along?”

Alana widened her almond-shaped eyes. “Ah, no, no, that’s not what I meant...”

Oh dear, when you’re nervous, everything you say just comes out wrong.

She clearly didn’t mean that, why was it getting more and more off track the more she talked?

Alana really wished she could slap her own clumsy, tongue-tied mouth.

Stephan’s dark eyes narrowed sharply, as if he could effortlessly see right through all her little thoughts.

“If that’s not what you meant, then what else could it be? If he hadn’t made that request, I bet you wouldn’t have even thought of bringing me along, would you?”

Alana sighed, heavily.

Ah!

Wait, was he a mind reader or something? How does he know everything?

Seeing her shocked reaction, Stephan knew he’d guessed right. His long fingers couldn’t help but pinch the soft flesh at her waist, his tone tinged with a hint of gritted teeth.

“Lana, you’ve gone silent! I guessed right, didn’t I?”

She blinked her slightly guilty eyes, her fair cheeks flushing faintly. “I...I didn’t...”

Stephan snorted with a laugh. “If you’re not, why are you blinking nervously and stammering? You can’t even get your words straight?”

“I...” Hearing the man’s tone so certain, Alana felt even more guilty. She hesitated, unable to make any sense of what she was trying to say.

“Very well. I see you’ve gotten bold. You’re asking for it!” Stephan laughed in exasperation and immediately flipped their positions.

Originally, she had been sitting on his lap, held in his arms. Now she was pinned beneath him.

And beneath her was the soft sofa.

After pinning her down, the man buried his handsome face in the crook of her neck, nibbling and biting her incessantly.

Her delicate skin was soon marked with red imprints.

Alana pushed weakly against his chest with both hands. "Stephan, will you let me explain? Even if I did treat him to a meal, I didn't mean anything by it, I just wanted to stop him from pressing charges against you!"

"I'm not listening!" The man's voice was low as he continued his actions.

As if. Now that he finally had a chance to teach her a lesson...or take advantage of her...he wasn't about to let it slip away.

Soon, Alana was left breathless from his advances, her neck and chest marked with the traces he'd left behind.

Her clothes had also been torn off almost completely.

After what seemed like an eternity, the man lay on top of her, glaring at her.

"Lana, you didn't bring a pad to work this morning. Is it over already?"

Her mind was foggy; when the man asked, she answered instinctively. "Yes, it's over..."

Stephan pinched her flushed cheeks, looking as though he was already aroused.

His eyes burned with intensity, his voice low and hoarse. "Then... can we do it?"

She understood what the man meant. She jolted awake, and her mind...which had been clouded by his touch suddenly cleared by more than half.

"No, not yet...It's still too soon...we did it so much after I got back from my hometown. It's still too delicate... we can't do it yet..."

Stephan chuckled, and even though he was dying of anticipation, he let her off the hook.

He stood up, picked up a thin blanket from the sofa, and carefully wrapped it around the girl.

Then he pulled her back into his arms, savoring the warmth and softness of her body. He'd had his fun, and his anger had subsided.

Aside from a certain part of him stirring restlessly, the man was now, for the most part, calm and composed.

Alana's clothes had all but vanished.

Her skirt and underwear had been casually tossed onto the floor by the man.

The man, however, remained dressed in his suit and tie; though his clothes were slightly wrinkled, it did nothing to detract from his dignified and aloof demeanor.

Alana couldn't help but wrap herself tighter in the pitifully thin blanket, silently grumbling to herself: what a beast in human form.

He'd just devoured her all over; her skin felt sticky and clammy, covered in his...

Stephan ruffled her hair with his large hand. "I'll go with you to meet this Cole guy."

Perfect. He wanted to see for himself exactly what this Cole guy was up to!

A challenge?

He wasn't afraid of a challenge!

Stephan said coldly, "Perfect. Let him see just how powerful your man is. And while I'm at it, I'll warn him to stay the hell away from you. If he dares to have any improper intentions toward you, I'll beat him to death!"

"And you...don't keep anything from me from now on. I've told you before: if there's anything you can't handle, just tell me, and I'll take care of it for you. You want to handle everything on your own? What good am I as your boyfriend then? You've got to let me prove my worth as your boyfriend, don't you?"

After a moment's pause, it dawned on him. "Oh, right...when are you two meeting up?" After saying that, he waited for her reply.

But she didn't reply.

The man furrowed his brow and couldn't help but glance down at the girl in his arms, only to find that she had already curled up against him, closed her eyes, and fallen asleep. She looked so peaceful as she slept.

"Huh?!"

Wait, he'd been so domineering and said all that...only to have it fall on deaf ears?

He was both annoyed and amused, unable to resist reaching out to gently poke her soft cheek. “Lana, when will you ever let yourself rely on me a little more? Stop trying to do everything on your own, okay?”

The next morning, when Alana woke up in bed, the spot next to her was already cold. She was used to it; Stephan almost always woke up before her. But as she got up, she noticed a sticky note on the nightstand.

She picked it up and read it.

[I have an urgent matter to attend to. I’m heading out for a bit.]

[I made breakfast this morning and left it on the table. If it’s cold, just pop it in the microwave to warm it up.]

His handwriting was beautiful...bold and vigorous, flowing like a dance. His confidence and strength were evident in every stroke.

Alana felt a warm glow in her heart as she read it, then tucked the sticky note into a drawer. She went into the bathroom to wash up.

But when she saw the girl in the mirror, Alana couldn’t help but scream.

In the mirror, her delicate neck and collarbone were covered in a dense cluster of red kiss marks left by the man.

She was both furious and embarrassed.

“Stephan, are you a dog or something?!”

How was she supposed to go to work looking like this?

With marks this obvious, anyone who saw them would start imagining all sorts of things.

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Chapter 203 The marks

Chapter 203 The marks

Alana had gone out of her way to wear a high-neck chiffon blouse and tied a silk scarf around her neck, barely managing to cover the marks on her neck.

She had tried to cover it with foundation, but it was no use, the marks were too deep. She gritted her teeth, suspecting that Stephan had done this on purpose. Although he had left marks on her before, they usually faded away almost completely after a night's sleep, they were never this severe.

This time, he'd marked her so fiercely, who was he trying to protect her from?

When Alana arrived at the office, she ran into Carla.

Carla leaned in and slung her arm around Alana's, "Lana, why are you bundled up so tightly today? Aren't you hot?"

Alana glanced at Carla, feeling a little guilty. "It's okay, not too hot."

"Really?" Carla glanced at the neckline of Alana's top, her sharp eyes catching

something. She exclaimed in surprise, "Oh my, Lana, there seems to be something on your neck, it's all red. Did you get hives?"

Alana blushed and said nervously, "No, no, no, it's not..."

Carla said anxiously, "Then let me take a closer look. It looks just like hives to me. I had it once before, I had to go to the hospital and get IV fluids for several days before it cleared up. Yours looks pretty bad; you really need to take this seriously! If hives get severe, they can be life-threatening!"

"It really isn't hives!"

As Alana struggled, the scarf tied around her neck accidentally slipped off.

Carla could now clearly see what the marks on Alana's neck actually were. This wasn't hives at all, it was clearly a row of conspicuous strawberry marks.

Carla nearly choked on her own spit. "Cough, cough, cough...Sorry, I misread it. Okay, it doesn't look like hives after all..."

Alana's cheeks flushed bright red, and she frantically tied the scarf back on.

But when she looked up, she met Cole's gaze, dark and foreboding, radiating an

indescribable chill.

His gaze was so terrifying that Alana's heart tightened involuntarily.

Carla grinned and couldn't resist a bit of gossip. "Lana, I never would've guessed, you and your boyfriend really know how to let loose..."

Alana felt an overwhelming wave of embarrassment. "Carla, please stop."

Carla was about to say something else, but when she turned and saw Cole standing behind them, she fell silent.

"Ahem, ahem. Manager Cole, good morning."

Cole's eyes darkened as he forced a restrained "Mm."

Yet he couldn't help but fix his gaze on Alana.

To be precise, at her delicate neck.

He had seen it clearly just now: her fair skin was marked with traces that sparked all sorts of wild imaginings.

The mere thought that another man had done such things to her made the jealousy churning in his chest threaten to erupt.

He couldn't believe that the once innocent, conservative, and reserved girl would actually be with another man...

He simply couldn't accept it.

She should be pure and belong only to him!

Cole clenched his teeth, suppressing the raging fury in his chest, and ordered,

"Lana, in my office now!"

Alana frowned, fearing he might lose control and lash out, Cole turned and walked away without hesitation.

As soon as Cole left, the heavy tension surrounding the two of them instantly dissipated.

Carla let out a sigh of relief, still feeling a bit shaken. “Lana, Manager Cole is certainly handsome, and he seems like a gentle person, but I can’t help but feel he’s a bit unpredictable!”

Alana lowered her eyes and replied flatly, “I suppose so.”

When Alana arrived at Cole’s office, she discovered it was in complete disarray, with papers scattered all over the floor.

And she caught a glimpse of a side of Cole she’d never seen before.

He was sitting on the sofa, his collar loosened, a lit cigarette held between his m slender fingers.

Several more lay on the floor. His expression was far from gentle; instead, it was icy cold.

Alana paused for a moment, unsure whether she should go in.

The Cole before her seemed somewhat frightening to her. She had never seen him like this before.

As if sensing her presence. Cole snapped out of his trance, slowly stood up, and crushed the cigarette between his fingertips into the ashtray.

“Sorry, come in.” His expression quickly returned to normal, the menacing look gone. It was as if it had all been a figment of Alana’s imagination.

However, the papers scattered all over the floor told Alana that this was real.

Alana’s heart tightened involuntarily. She had always thought of Cole as someone who rarely loses his temper.

But at this very moment, she suddenly felt completely unsure.

A person’s character has many facets.

Just as she couldn’t guarantee that she, too, had only one side to her.

Nevertheless, at Cole’s request, Alana stepped inside and bent down to pick up the scattered papers one by one.

Cole didn’t stop her.

He was thinking about what he would talk to her about in a moment.

It wasn't until Alana had gathered the papers, sorted them one by one, neatly folded them, and placed them back on the man's desk.

When she was done, she instinctively turned around, only to nearly bump into Cole.

He had walked over from the sofa at some point and was now standing behind her. Silent as a ghost, it was enough to scare the life out of anyone.

Alana instinctively pressed her side against the desk, her clear eyes filled with panic and fear, still shaken by the close call.

"Manager Cole, could you please make some noise when you walk?"

Cole drifted over to her side like a wandering ghost, his eyes dark as he

asked, "Lana, did you... do it with him?"

Alana frowned. "Huh?!"

Wait, was it polite of him to ask her such a personal question?

She frowned and reminded him, "Manager Cole, this is my personal business."

Cole clenched his fist.

"Lana, as your ex and as someone you've known for years, I feel compelled to warn you: most men can't be trusted! Don't let men take advantage of your emotions so easily!"

Alana pursed her lips. "Thanks for the warning, but I'm an adult. I know right from wrong."

Cole's lips twitched. In the end, she still didn't trust him. "When are you going to bring your boyfriend over to meet me?" He was eager to meet her so-called boyfriend.

He intended to warn that man that Alana was not someone he could just touch at will!

Alana froze.

Thinking back on it, last night she had intended to come clean with Stephan and ask him when he'd be free to accompany her to meet Cole.

But then... after he'd kept her up for a while, she'd fallen asleep from exhaustion.

Plus, he'd left so early this morning that she hadn't had a chance to discuss it with him.

“I haven’t heard back from my boyfriend yet. We’ll talk about it once he agrees.”

Cole narrowed his eyes. “Is it that there’s no definite answer, or are you feeling guilty and afraid to face me?”

Alana blinked.

Wait, wasn’t he reading too much into this?

Cole couldn’t contain his anger and sneered, “Lana, I never would have thought you’d end up with such a cowardly man. Do you really think a cowardly, incompetent man like that is worthy of you?”

Alana’s face darkened as she said sternly, “Cole, I won’t let you speak of my boyfriend that way! He isn’t weak or incompetent, and he’s certainly not unworthy of me! He’s the best man I’ve ever met!”

Cole laughed bitterly. Once again, she was defending another man right in front of him.

His heart ached so deeply it felt like it was bleeding; his eyes, hidden behind his glasses, glowed faintly red.

He desperately wanted to find that man’s flaws, to go to great lengths to discredit him. “If that’s the case, why doesn’t he want to meet me?”

“Why does he have to come see you? Whether he meets you or not is his choice. Even if he doesn’t come to see you, it’s no

big deal to me.”

“Lana, if he doesn’t even dare to meet me, it means he doesn’t care about you at all!”

“You’re overthinking it. Whether he cares about me or not can’t be judged based on just this one thing!”

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Chapter 204 For his sake

Chapter 204 For his sake

“Alana, do you really have to keep arguing with me just for his sake?”

Seeing Cole’s attitude growing increasingly confrontational, Alana felt both exhausted and frustrated.

“Cole, I’m begging you, please stop meddling in my personal affairs. If you keep this up, I’ll have no choice but to resign!” Her tone was resolute, as if to make it clear she wasn’t joking, she really would quit.

Cole had been seething with anger, but Alana’s cold-hearted threat of “resigning” deflated him like a popped balloon.

He looked at Alana with a helpless expression. She knew exactly how to handle him with ease.

“Fine, I won’t ask anymore.”

Alana nodded. “Good, I’ve reorganized the scattered documents on the floor and placed them on your desk, all sorted by category. You can check them anytime. If there’s nothing else, I’ll be leaving.”

Cole didn’t dare to insist she stay. “Alright, go ahead.”

Alana left.

She returned to her desk, staring at the computer screen, unable to focus on her work for a long time.

She couldn’t shake the feeling that working alongside Cole wasn’t a wise decision. At first, even when Dane was harassing her at the company, she hadn’t felt a strong urge to quit and leave.

After all, she hadn’t done anything wrong, why should she be the one to leave?

The one who should have been fired was Dane, that scumbag who harassed female coworkers. At the end, Dane ended up getting fired.

But after Cole appeared, although he didn’t harass her as brazenly as Dane did but his relentless “concern” made her feel suffocated, as if she couldn’t breathe.

If she stayed here any longer, she feared she might lose her mind and it wasn’t in a good way at all.

Alana paused for a moment, then opened the document and typed the words “resignation letter.”

After finishing the resignation letter,

After much hesitation, she decided to send it to the Human Resources department’s email.

Cole sat in his office, still chiding himself for his uncontrolled outburst.

He didn’t want to act that way, but he simply couldn’t control himself.

From the moment he learned that Alana had a boyfriend, his emotions had been teetering on the edge between reason and loss of control.

The girl he had once cherished and protected was gradually drifting away from him, into the arms of another man.

How could he... bear it?

A bitter smile spread across Cole’s lips. Alana, why can’t you understand how much I care about you?

Just then, his phone rang.

Cole took a deep breath, answered the call, and his voice gradually steadied. “What’s up?”

The HR representative said, “Hello, Manager Cole, we just received a resignation letter from your assistant, Alana, addressed to our HR department. Would you like to approve it?”

Cole’s breath caught in his throat.

She really wanted to quit?

Just because he’d lost his temper a moment ago and called her boyfriend a cowardly, weak, and incompetent man?

He was clearly just looking out for her, how could she act so impulsively over something like this?

Cole desperately wanted to call Alana right away and demand to know why she’d done this.

But he quickly regained his composure. Doing so wouldn't stop her from wanting to quit; on the contrary, it would only make her want to distance herself from him even more.

He'd gone to great lengths to arrange for himself to work by her side; he absolutely couldn't make another mistake.

"Hold it up...don't approve it! If Alana asks why you haven't approved her resignation, just make up an excuse, say you haven't found a replacement yet, and you'll approve it once you do!"

"Understood."

After hanging up the phone, Cole's eyes darkened.

Alana, this time, he would absolutely not let her leave his side so easily!

Alana had made plans with Eve for after work.

Before heading out, she messaged Stephan, but he didn't reply, he was probably busy.

The two arranged to meet at a restaurant. When they met, the two sisters hugged each other.

Eve let go of Alana and took a good look at her outfit for the day, her face full of curiosity.

"Lana, you're... wrapped up so tightly. What's the deal? Is there anything your best friend isn't allowed to see?"

Alana felt a bit embarrassed and covered the scarf around her neck with her hand, using it to hide those suggestive marks as well.

"It's, it's nothing. Don't get the wrong idea." Her stammering made it clear she was feeling guilty.

Eve snorted, seeing right through her and calling her out, "Cut the crap. Marks

that obvious? They've definitely been left by a man!" Suddenly, her sharp eyes caught something, and she gasped, "Holy crap, there are even teeth marks! Is your boyfriend a dog?!"

Alana blushed and nodded hesitantly,

"Yeah, he does have a bit of a dog-like nature."

Eve rolled her eyes. “Looks like all men are the same, just gnawing all over women!”

Alana was taken aback. “What? Your boyfriend does that too...?”

She’d thought only Stephan would act like that, but she never expected other men to be like this too...

Eve whined, “You have no idea! What he does to me is way worse than what your boyfriend did!”

Alana was intrigued. “Huh? How much worse?”

Eve said with a straight face, “He makes me wear a uniform to seduce him! He even made me wear handcuffs and ankle cuffs. He’s into BDSM and he whips me a lot.”

“What?!”

Wait, was that even something a person would do?!

“Eve, your boyfriend is way out of line, he’s actually abusing you?”

Whipping someone with a whip, that must hurt so much!

It was terrifying just to think about it.

“I’m telling you, you need to break up with him right away. There are plenty of other guys out there, you’ll definitely find someone better! Or are you into stuff like that?”

Eve gave a low cough. “Well, we’ll definitely break up eventually. No rush, filling our stomachs is the priority right now!”

Alana looked serious. “Eve, this is a serious matter. I’m really urging you!”

“Don’t worry, I won’t be the one at a disadvantage. When he whips me, I’ll whip him back!”

What did she just hear? These two were abusing each other?!

Then was her best friend truly into it?

“Ahem, ahem, we’re eating. Let’s skip this topic and move on to something else!”

She certainly wasn’t going to tell Alana that it was because, on one occasion, she was reading some explicit content when that man happened to catch her in the act.

The very next day, he cornered her and reenacted that entire scene, step for step.

Suffice it to say, it was very explicit and violent.

Too bad innocent Alana didn't get it.

Alana swallowed a mouthful of rice and nodded, but then, as if remembering

something, added, "By the way, I'm

planning to quit my job. Do you know of any good job openings?"

It was usually safer to secure a new job before quitting.

Eve was surprised. "Huh? Quit? Why are you quitting? Weren't you doing just fine there before? That Manager Dane who was harassing you got fired, you don't have any threats now! Besides, you've already been officially hired, haven't you? You finally made it from probation to a permanent position, don't you think it's a shame

to quit now?"

Alana sighed, "That's true, but Cele is my boss now. Working under him feels weird."

"What's so weird about it? Is he picking on you?"

"No, it's just that he's a bit too controlling."

After a pause, Alana added, "The kind where he meddles in people's personal lives."

Eve's eyes widened in shock. "Oh my god, that Cole guy, he's not still harboring those feelings, is he?"

"He said Stephan isn't good enough for me and that I should break up with him."

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Chapter 205 To steal you away

Chapter 205 To steal you away

“Holy crap, he must be trying to steal you away from your boyfriend!”

The thing was, even if she wasn’t with Stephan, she still wouldn’t have considered taking a chance on Cole again.

That was something Cole just wouldn’t accept.

“So, I’ve been thinking, I should just quit. Otherwise, having to face him every day at work is pretty awkward and annoying.”

Plus, she was his assistant, she couldn’t very well ignore his orders.

So, she was in a bind.

Eve nodded. “Alright, my company is actually hiring right now. If you manage to quit, I’ll put in a good word for you!”

Alana smiled. “Thanks, Eve. Dinner tonight is on me!”

After dinner, the two hailed a cab and headed to the mall to pick out a few ties.

Armed with the experience from last time, choosing a tie went exceptionally smoothly; they were done in less than half an hour.

But the real challenge was yet to come.

Alana had decided to buy a set of sexy lingerie as a reward for Stephan.

Eve’s eyes widened, and she held up a finger. “Just one?! That’s not even enough for your man to tear apart!”

Alana blushed and said, “Oh my, don’t say that so loud. One is enough, I can’t reward him with that many.”

Eve raised an eyebrow. “True. You can’t spoil a man too much, or he’ll start taking advantage of it.”

Alana’s cheeks were still flushed. “Yeah, you’re right.”

“Well, let’s go inside then.”

“Well...” Just as they reached the door, Alana started to have second thoughts.

She was too shy to go in.

“What are you afraid of? I’m here with you!” Eve simply pulled her inside.

When Stephan got home, he found out that Alana had a date with someone else. His phone had died, so he hadn’t seen her message.

It wasn’t until he got home and charged it that he saw the message.

[I’m meeting my friend for dinner and shopping after work today, so you don’t need to wait for me to eat together.]

He narrowed his dark eyes. Dinner and shopping with a friend? Who was this friend?

It couldn’t be her Manager Cole, could it?!

That damn woman, did she sneak off to have dinner and go on a date with another man while he wasn’t looking?!

Besides, did he ever say he wouldn’t go with her?

He had already agreed to go with her last night, but she was asleep and didn’t hear him. This morning he had to host a major foreign client, so he rushed out without having time to tell her about it.

But he never expected this girl to go ahead and do it without asking first?!

Stephan was seething with jealousy.

Stephan: [Who are you going out to dinner with?! Answer me, I’m waiting. THIS IS URGENT!!!].

Sending a message wasn’t enough, so Stephan immediately video-called Alana. But to his surprise, the moment he sent the request, she rejected his video call.

His gaze grew increasingly menacing.

She actually turned down his video call?!

Something was wrong!

There was definitely something wrong!

Little did he know that Alana was actually picking out pajamas with Eve and didn’t dare answer Stephan’s video call.

Eve saw her frantically rejecting the video call and couldn't help but ask,

"Who's calling?"

Alana glanced at Eve, her face flushing. "My, my boyfriend..."

Eve blinked. "What? Why is he video calling you?"

"I don't know. I'll reply to his message first."

Alana: [Sorry, I'm out shopping with my best friend right now. It's not convenient to take a video call.]

Stephan snorted with a laugh. What's so inconvenient about shopping with your best friend?

Was her best friend someone she can't be seen with, or did she actually arrange to meet with her, not as a best friend, but as...

At that moment, the man's possessiveness and jealousy reached their peak.

Stephan: [No way, I'm going to video chat with you right now!]

[Right now, immediately, this very moment!]

Alana: [I really can't right now...]

The jealous man gritted his teeth, thinking, "Is she too busy to be interrupted while she's on a date with another guy?"

Stephan: [Alana, you don't want to video chat with me, are you secretly up to no good behind my back?!]

Feeling guilty, Alana looked around nervously. Could Stephan be nearby?

Could he have seen her walk into this lingerie store?

Stephan, who had been waiting a long time for a reply from the woman, was very anxious.

Stephan: [Where are you right now? I'm coming over immediately!]

Alana replied instinctively.

Alana: [No, don't come over!]

Stephan chuckled in exasperation. She didn't want him to come over?

So secretive!

Something was wrong, something was definitely wrong!

Stephan: [Alana, if you don't answer the video call, I'm coming over right now!]

Alana's heart skipped a beat at the man's menacing threat. The next second, his video call came through.

Alana was at a loss, turning to Eve. "What do I do? What do I do? My boyfriend insists I answer his video call! Should I find a place to take it right now?"

Eve blinked and teased, "Why go somewhere else? It's just as convenient to take it here, plus, you can ask him what style he likes!"

"No way, that's too embarrassing!"

"Oh, come on, just listen to me. Answer it now, he'll definitely be happy!"

Eve grinned mischievously and reached out to help Alana answer the call. "No, no, no..."

In the flurry of activity, Alana's finger twitched, and she accidentally tapped "Accept." The man's strikingly handsome face instantly appeared on the screen.

Realizing she was surrounded by all those embarrassing items, she quickly pressed her face against the screen.

So, what Stephan saw was a close-up of Alana's face.

Her petite face, no bigger than the palm of a hand, was practically pressed against the screen.

The girl's skin was delicate and smooth, as if it might break at the slightest touch. The fine white fuzz on it was clearly visible.

The girl called out nervously, "Hey, Stephan..."

Stephan chuckled, "What are you so nervous about? It's just a video call."

"Hehe..." She was so embarrassed she didn't know how to respond.

Eve was very curious about Alana's boyfriend and wanted to lean in for a better look, but Alana's face was completely blocking the view.

She silently opened and closed her mouth, mouthing, "Let me see your boyfriend."

Alana didn't dare move the phone screen and shook her head decisively.

To Stephan, she looked like a sneaky little dog!

Something was up!

And she was shaking her head...but at whom?

His dark eyes narrowed again. "Rotate the camera. Let me see where you are."

Alana blushed and looked away. "I...I'm at the mall. There's nothing to see. I'm not really in a position to talk right now. Can we talk about this when I get home?"

"No. I want to see right now."

Alana blushed and whispered, "I'll show you something else when I get home. Is

that okay?"

Stephan chuckled. "Something else? What exactly? Will you strip naked for me? Or take a romantic bath together?"

Eve's eyes widened.

Oh goodness, was this something she can listen to for free without a VIP subscription?!

Alana's face flushed bright red all over, her ears and neck turning a deep crimson.

"Stephan, I'm out in public!!!"

The man was shameless.

"I know you're out, which is exactly why I said it...to keep you from getting hit on by some random guy."

Eve blinked.

What random guy?

Alana whispered, "Where did you get this 'random guy' nonsense? Don't make things up...I'm with my best friend right now!"

Stephan wasn't about to let it go. "You're with your best friend...and you won't let me see? Are you with your best friend, or with some other guy?"

Alana gasped. “Huh?!”

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Chapter 206 All alone

Chapter 206 All alone

No way, what was he thinking?!

“Lana, are you secretly going on dates with that Cole behind my back, hmm?”

Alana pouted. “I didn’t! Don’t make things up!”

The man acted like a child, refusing to let it go. “Then let me see where you are right now!”

“I...” Before Alana could speak, a crisp voice chimed in from nearby.

“Hello, Miss. Are you interested in our store’s adult toys? We have electric ones,

manual ones, and implantable ones, plus various package deals. If you’re interested, we can even offer door-to-door delivery!”

Alana looked at Eve in shock.

What on earth was she rambling about?

Eve blinked, a mischievous smile spreading across her face.

“Sex toys?!” Stephan’s dark eyes lit up instantly, and his voice rose a few notches. “Lana, did you go to an adult toy store? What would you be doing at a sex shop? Did you go there just to buy those to spice up our sex life? Fuck! I never knew you could get so naughty. I would have already had everything prepared...”

This coy woman...she acts all shy around him on the surface, but behind the scenes she was secretly preparing all this?

And what was with the electric, manual, and built-in ones...

He could guess exactly what kind of mischief she had in mind with his little finger.

This little white rabbit has really gone bad!

“I, um, I wasn’t...” Alana instantly flushed crimson, stamping her foot. “Oh my gosh, my signal’s bad here. I’m hanging up!” Then she decisively hung up.

“Eve, if you dare ruin my reputation, I’ll kill you!” Alana glared at Eve, who looked slightly smug, and in a fit of rage lunged at

her, grabbing her by the throat.

“Aaaah, stop!”

The store clerk couldn’t help but step in to interrupt, “Ladies, may I help you with anything?”

“We don’t just sell sexy lingerie, we also offer other adult products, and we provide home delivery services.”

Alana released Eve’s neck, flicked her hair back, and instantly adopted a serious demeanor. “Ahem, no thanks. We’re just browsing.”

Eve rubbed her neck and interrupted with a mischievous grin, “Oh, actually, we do need some help. Please bring out your latest styles, sheer, silk, and revealing lingerie, and throw in some uniform-themed options too. Let’s give my best friend plenty to choose from!”

Alana sighed.

How did her “best friend” know exactly how to make her die of embarrassment?

The sales clerk smiled and nodded. “Sure, please give us a few minutes, ladies.”

Stephan was still shamelessly bombarding her with messages.

Stephan: [Sweetie, what kind of sex toys do you want to buy? Ankle cuffs, wrist cuffs, bondage rope?! No need for a massage wand...your boyfriend’s is better.]

[What did you pick out? Snap a pic and send it to me...I’ll help you choose.]

[Or send me your location, and I’ll come over right away to help you pick them out.]

Alana wanted to slam herself against the wall.

What was this? If she actually bought those, it would be the death of her!

Alana decided not to reply at all, just to make the guy wait impatiently.

Stephan chuckled.

But when he thought about how this little bunny had gone shopping just to reward him, rather than casually going on a date with some other guy, he decided to let her off the hook for now.

His main priority right now was to wash himself inside and out, then lie obediently in bed, waiting for her to return so he could shower her with love.

Meanwhile, with Eve acting as a troublemaker, Alana could only manage to pick out two outfits.

After making her selection, she grew increasingly furious, she wasn't going to be the only one left looking like a fool.

"Eve, are you going to buy any? I can give you some advice."

"Me?"

Eve thought of how fierce that man was and shook her head decisively. "I'm not buying them. If I actually bought this stuff, my tiny waist would be gone for good!"

Alana forced a smile. "We're best friends, we should share the burden. It wouldn't be fair if only my tiny waist were to go, would it?"

"Ahem, ahem, never mind. Since you've already bought your stuff, let's head out..."

Just as Eve was about to grab Alana's hand to leave, her phone suddenly rang in her pocket.

She pulled out her phone and glanced at it. "Oh, sorry about that. My boyfriend's calling. I'll just take this."

Alana couldn't help but glance at Eve's phone screen, and her eyelid twitched violently.

To her shock, she saw that Eve had saved her boyfriend as: "Hot cock."

Holy crap!

That name was so bold.

Who on earth saves their boyfriend's name like that?

Eve rested one hand on Alana's shoulder while holding her phone in the other, answering the call in a carefree tone, "Hey, sweetie, what's up?"

Her voice was sweet and syrupy, laced with a touch of affected coquetry.

Girl, wasn't she just complaining about the said boyfriend?

A deep, rich male voice came through.

"Where are you?"

Just three simple words, yet magnetic and melodious...unbelievably commanding.

Alana was close by; when she heard that voice, her ears couldn't help but tingle, as if she'd suddenly been zapped by electricity.

She didn't know who Eve's new boyfriend was, but judging by his voice, he must be a total hunk.

Eve said, "I'm out shopping with my friend."

"What are they buying?"

"Lingerie. She bought two sets...she said they're a special treat for her boyfriend."

Alana gasped.

Wait, Eve just said that so casually, without batting an eye or blushing?

There was a moment of silence on the other end, and when he spoke again, his voice had grown a few degrees hoarser.

"What about you? Did you buy anything?"

Eve snorted twice, pouting her rosy lips. "Sweetie, I don't have any money, so I'm not planning on buying any."

"Buy a few sets. I'll transfer the money to you."

His deep tone was so commanding it left no room for refusal. “What?”

Before Eve could refuse, her phone pinged, and a million dollars was instantly transferred to her account from the man.

Not only was Eve stunned, but Alana was shocked as well.

A million dollars...just handed over like that?

Just who exactly is Eve’s boyfriend?

Eve was thrilled the moment she saw the money. “Wow, big shot, you sure are generous! I’m going to buy you something then away, sweetie. Mwah, mwah, mwah! I love you, baby. I’ll buy it, wear it, and get ready for you to feast on me!” For the money, she’d let him rough up her tiny waist however he pleased!

After hanging up, Eve excitedly slung her arm around Alana’s shoulder. “Girl, let’s go, let’s go! I’m picking out a few outfits too!”

Alana was perplexed.

Both Eve and her man seemed to be the perfect match. Very vulgar couple.

After they finished shopping, Alana and Eve went their separate ways. Mainly because Eve’s boyfriend was urging her to come home already.

Alana didn’t know what kind of person her boyfriend is, but it seems Eve was pretty intimidated by him.

And who wouldn’t be? A man who strips his woman naked in bed and whips her, who wouldn’t be intimidated?

Alana shook her head, picked up her phone, and ordered a ride.

Once she got in the car, she saw a new message from Stephan.

Stephan: [I’ve already taken a shower and am waiting obediently in bed for my girlfriend to come home.]

There was also a photo he’d just taken.

The man was lying lazily on the bed, his gray silk pajamas open on both sides, his alluring pecs and eight-pack abs boldly exposed before her.

Alana’s cheeks flushed involuntarily.

That flirt!

She was still out, and he was sending her this kind of inappropriate photo. What if she got all worked up and starts nosebleeding?!

Gritting her teeth, Alana deliberately typed:

Alana: [I'm not coming over tonight. Just lie there in bed and spend the whole night all alone!]

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Chapter 207 On a whim

Chapter 207 On a whim

Stephan chuckled. He was all set and ready for tonight...how dare this little white rabbit not show up?!

Stephan: [That won't do. If you don't come over, don't blame me for breaking and entering, taking you for the whole night, and leaving you completely unable to get out of bed the next day!]

Alana's legs went weak.

Fine. If any other man had said those words, she might not have believed him.

But coming from Stephan, she believed him one hundred percent.

Alana: [Stephan, be reasonable. If I want to go to my house tonight, I can! You're not the boss of me.]

Stephan: [We'll see. Are you coming over? If you don't, I'll go to your place early and camp out at your door.]

Alana couldn't do anything about him.

Alana: [Fine, I'll come over.]

What for? To walk right into his trap...even if she goes home or to his house, with how hyped up he was, he was definitely going to wreck her body.

Just thinking about it made Alana blush.

Stephan: [Good girl. Tonight, I'm going to take good care of you.]

He sent another photo of his toned abs.

Alana swallowed.

When it came to this man's shamelessness...

Just as she was getting lost in the flow of their conversation, the car suddenly jolted violently.

Alana's body lurched forward instantly, slamming into the seat in front of her.

A throbbing pain shot through her forehead.

The driver turned around in a panic. "Miss, are you okay?"

She rubbed her sore forehead. "I'm fine, what happened?"

The driver said apologetically, "I'm sorry to have startled you. I just accidentally bumped into another car. Please wait a moment while I go check on the situation."

So it was a collision.

Still shaken, Alana nodded. "Okay."

The driver stepped out for a moment. She didn't know what he discussed with the other driver, but then he came running back, looking guilty, and said,

"Miss, I'm so sorry. The front of my car was damaged by the other driver's vehicle, so I can't drive it on the road right now. Please try to hail another taxi to get back. I won't charge you for this ride."

Alana was taken aback for a moment, then nodded.

She opened the car door and stepped out to take a look, only then noticing that the front of the driver's car had a large dent.

The other car, however, being a luxury vehicle with sturdy construction, had only sustained a minor scratch.

The driver discussed the situation with the other driver. Since the collision was caused by the other driver's sudden lane change, the fault lay with them, so they agreed to take full responsibility.

The driver was over the moon because he was about to get a brand-new car.

Only Alana felt a bit scared. If she hadn't dodged in time just now, she feared she would have ended up getting hurt.

Meanwhile, inside the luxury car, a boy dressed in a white suit, looking just like a little prince, lit up the moment he spotted Alana standing by the car across the street.

"Mommy, look! That's a pretty lady!"

The woman was puzzled. "What pretty lady?"

The boy pointed excitedly and said, "Look, the pretty lady is over there!"

The woman followed the boy's finger and her pupils suddenly contracted sharply.

Her eyes betrayed her disbelief.

Ho...how could it be...

In a moment of inattention, the boy suddenly opened the car door and slipped out.

The woman froze. "Son, where are you going?"

Without looking back, the boy replied,

"Mommy, I'm going to see the pretty lady!"

Her heart was pounding.

She didn't dare get out to grab her son back, because... she was afraid of being recognized...

The old driver returned and said respectfully, "Ma'am, I've already settled things with the other driver. We're willing to take full responsibility, and he's agreed. We'll just go through the insurance procedures in a moment."

The woman nodded absently, "Okay."

Old Chad asked, "But the young master just ran out. He's refusing to come back with me."

The woman stared at the slender figure outside, her gaze lingering for a long time.

“That girl, was she a passenger in that car?”

Chad nodded. “It looks like it.”

The woman said, “Go ask if she’s hurt. If she is, offer her some compensation and have her go to the hospital for a checkup. Give her 100,000... no, make it 200,000.”

The woman secretly wanted to give more, but fearing Chad might notice something was off, she just said 200,000.

Chad paused for a moment and glanced at the girl with some curiosity.

The girl was very pretty, as delicate as a porcelain doll. She was wearing a white dress, and her whole demeanor was pure and innocent.

She was a sight to behold; even Chad, despite his age, couldn’t help but be taken aback by her beauty.

Moreover, for some reason, he couldn’t help but feel that the girl bore resemblance to his Madam.

But he didn’t ask any questions; he simply nodded and said, “Alright, ma’am.”

Alana stood by the roadside. Stephan texted her, asking why she hadn’t arrived home yet.

Alana didn’t hide anything from him and told him about the near-accident that had just happened.

She was still shaken by what had just happened, her legs feeling weak, she was in desperate need of comfort.

Stephan couldn’t sit still any longer. He immediately called to ask if she was okay and inquired about her location, saying he would come pick her up.

Alana could hear the tension in his voice and quickly reassured him, “No need. I’m really fine. I’ll just take a cab home in a bit.”

Stephan grabbed his car keys and hurried downstairs. He hadn’t even had time to change his clothes, and as he was running down the stairs, one of his slippers fell off. Without looking back, he left the house with one bare foot.

His voice was laced with both irritation and anxiety.

“Don’t tell me that! I need to see you right this very second!”

Alana couldn't do anything about him, so she soothed him, "Okay, okay, calm down."

"Send me your location right now! I'm in the car!"

Alana heard the sound of a car door opening on the other end of the line.

She quickly sent him her location.

Anyway, she wasn't far from him, just a few minutes' drive.

Stephan sat down in the driver's seat. Feeling that wearing just one slipper was a nuisance, he simply shook his leg to knock it off before starting the car.

"Stay right where you are and wait for me. Don't go anywhere."

Alana felt a warm glow in her heart; she nodded with a smile. "Okay, I'll wait for you." Just as she finished the call with him, a small figure suddenly appeared in front of Alana, waving a small, fair hand at her.

"Hello, pretty lady!"

Alana froze for a moment, looked down, and stared intently.

The little boy was tiny, barely reaching her waist.

Dressed in a white suit with a red bow tie, he looked every bit the pampered young heir of a wealthy family.

Alana studied the little boy before her; he looked vaguely familiar. It felt as though she had seen him somewhere before.

Seeing her confused reaction, the boy looked a little disappointed. "Pretty lady, don't you recognize me anymore? We met at the supermarket last time..."

Alana suddenly realized, "Ah, I remember now. You're the little boy who gave me flowers that day at the supermarket."

The boy's eyes lit up. "That's right, it was me! Pretty lady still remembers me!"

Alana smiled. "Yes, it was the first time a little boy had ever given me flowers, so I remember you clearly."

For some reason, she felt an inexplicable sense of familiarity toward the little boy standing before her.

It was strange, they'd only just met for the second time.

The boy protested earnestly, "I'm not a little boy anymore. I'm a big boy now!"

Alana chuckled, "All right, all right, you're a big boy. But what are you doing here? Where's your family?"

"I'm with my mom. She's in the car right now!" The little boy pointed toward the luxury car.

Alana looked at the luxury car.

It really is a small world, she'd actually run into this little boy's car.

And judging by the looks of it, this little boy wasn't just anyone, he must be the young master of some wealthy family.

She looked down at the little boy. "Did your mom mind you coming out to find me?"

The little boy shook his head. "Not at all! I even told my mom about you. She's really curious about you too. Do you want to come with me to meet her?"

Alana's heart skipped a beat, and she quickly declined, "No, thank you."

Although the little boy said his mother was curious about her, Alana still felt it would be presumptuous to just go meet a stranger on a whim.

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Chapter 208 In a bit of a mess

Chapter 208 In a bit of a mess

Besides, she was in a bit of a mess right now and felt too embarrassed to show her face to a rich woman.

"Are you really not going to meet her?" The little boy blinked. "My mommy is just as pretty as you, Miss!"

Alana shook her head. “No, thank you. Given my current situation, it’s not really appropriate.”

“Okay.” The little boy sounded a bit disappointed.

But he quickly cheered up, his bright, clear eyes sparkling as he asked, “I didn’t get a chance to ask you last time...what’s your name?”

Alana softened her tone. “My name is Alana.”

The little boy nodded and repeated it with a hint of uncertainty, “Alana...I like your name...I’ll remember it! You have to remember my name too, okay? My name is Jamin. Everyone calls me Jam or Minmin. You can call me Minmin too!”

Alana chuckled. “Okay, Minmin.”

Jamin was such a cute name. And surely, his family must treat him like the apple of their eye. How lovely.

Chad hurried over. “Young master, stop fooling around. Your mom is calling you!”

Jamin ignored Chad and instead reached out to take Alana’s hand.

This pretty lady wasn’t just beautiful, even her hands were so pretty and soft to the touch.

They were so soft and comfortable!

Jamin blinked and asked earnestly, “Pretty sister, have you broken up with that old guy from last time yet? If you have, let’s get together! I remember I gave you my contact info...make sure to reach out to me, okay? I want to chat with you every day and hear your lovely voice!”

Alana blinked.

Chad gave Alana an awkward smile. “I’m sorry, miss. The young master keeps trying to act mature. Please don’t take it personally.”

Alana smiled. “It’s okay.”

She didn’t take what a child said, seriously.

Chad remembered the reason for coming back and pulled out the bank card. “By the way, miss, my car just hit yours. Are you okay? This is compensation from the Madam. There’s 200,000 yuan in there. The PIN is six sixes. If you’re hurt, take the money and go to the hospital for a checkup.”

When Alana saw the bank card Chad was handing her, she was taken aback and quickly refused, “No, no, thank you! I’m fine, I don’t need any compensation!”

Chad never expected that in this day and age, there were still people who weren’t tempted by money. He was giving her money for free, and she was actually turning it down?

How unusual!

“Miss, you really should take it. Madam said she wanted to compensate you...it’s a way for her to feel at peace.”

Alana waved her hand, refusing to take it. “I really don’t need it. Tell your Madam I’m fine...she shouldn’t worry so much! Besides, two hundred thousand is way too much!”

The woman from the car suddenly called out to Chad, saying they were running late.

Chad quickly grabbed the little boy. “Take care, Miss.” With that, he forced the card into Alana’s hand.

“No, I don’t need...”

Before she could return it, Chad was already hurrying away.

Alana was limping as she chased after him, having twisted her ankle. She hadn’t gone far before a large hand grabbed her and pulled her into a strong, burning embrace.

The scent was one she knew well.

The man held her tightly, his muscles taut, his Adam’s apple bobbing visibly as he struggled with his tension.

“Why are you running? Didn’t I tell you to wait right where you were and not move?”

“Stephan, how did you get here so fast?”

Stephan looked down at her, clenching his jaw. “I flew over on a rocket. What do you think?”

Alana blinked.

He let go of her, then couldn’t help but grab her rounded shoulders and examine her from head to toe.

“Are you okay? Tell me, where are you hurt?”

Alana could tell the man was worried about her, the large hands gripping her shoulders were trembling slightly.

She soothed him gently, “I’m fine. I’m not hurt, just a little shaken up.”

“Then why were you running just now? You were limping. Did you hurt your foot?”

“No, I just twisted it a bit. It wasn’t serious; I’m fine now.”

“Damn it, you really gave me a heart attack!”

Once Stephan was certain the girl was all right, he pulled her into his arms, resting his chin against her soft hair and gently nuzzling her.

Only by holding her like this, feeling her presence, did his frantic, anxious heart gradually begin to calm down a little.

Alana let him hold her like this, completely still.

The tension and fear from the near-accident also gradually subsided in his warm embrace.

She was truly surprised and relieved that he had rushed over to find her so quickly.

And didn’t this prove that he truly cared about her?

His care was never just empty words; he was showing her through his actions that he was worried about her and cared deeply for her.

Leaning against him, Alana felt truly safe.

Suddenly, as if she’d noticed something, her eyes widened. “You... why aren’t you wearing shoes?”

Plus, he was still in his pajamas, and the buttons weren’t even fastened.

He looked a complete mess.

Stephan voice was deep and firm. “A pair of shoes is nothing compared to you. Instead of wasting time putting on slippers, I’d rather find you as soon as possible.”

Alana felt a sweet warmth in her heart. “I...I told you I’m fine. Don’t be so worried!”

Stephan couldn't help but cup her fair, delicate face and say earnestly, "It's not just worry...it's fear! Alana, I was afraid something might've happen to you!"

If something happened to her, what would he do?

At that moment, his mind had gone blank; all he could think about was finding her as soon as possible to make sure she was safe.

Alana's heart was burning.

She gazed into the man's dark, deep eyes, where the tension, worry, and lingering fear were so clear and real.

Every touch conveyed his sincere and passionate feelings.

So intense, it moved her deeply.

Her eyes were warm and misty, yet the corners of her mouth couldn't help but turn up. "Stephan, don't worry. I'm fine. And I promise you, from now on I'll take good care of myself and won't make you worry or be afraid."

Stephan looked at her earnest expression, said nothing, but simply cupped her face and leaned down to kiss her forehead with all his might.

"Come with me to the hospital. I want to have you checked out." Then he bent down and scooped her up into his arms.

Alana wobbled slightly as he lifted her, and her arms instinctively wrapped around his neck.

"It's okay. I was in the car when it happened...I just got hit on the forehead. It's nothing serious."

When Stephan heard that her forehead had been hit, he immediately looked at it and noticed a slightly reddened spot.

Even though it was just a slight redness, he still couldn't rest easy. He coaxed her gently.

"Come on, let's get you checked out. I won't feel at ease until I do."

Alana sensed the firmness in his tone, sighed helplessly, and stopped resisting.

Stephan held her in his arms and strode toward his car with steady, confident steps.

Held in his arms, Alana felt completely safe.

She couldn't help but notice his bare feet stepping on the dirty pavement, and it pained her a little.

When had he ever looked so disheveled?

Also, the road was covered with tiny pebbles; stepping on them must hurt.

With that thought in mind, she simply asked him. "Does it hurt?"

Hearing the girl's soft, concerned tone, Stephan's brow twitched slightly, and he couldn't help but lower his gaze to look at the girl in his arms.

The girl looked at him with eyes that were clear and luminous, yet veiled in a misty haze, glistening with a faint sheen of tears.

His heart stirred slightly as well, and he replied in a hoarse, low voice.

"Your man's skin is thick; it won't hurt."

Alana bit her lip; she didn't believe a word of it.

Even if he were tough as nails, walking barefoot on a road covered in dust and small pebbles would still be uncomfortable.

She sniffed. "Stephan, no matter what, you have to remember to wear shoes, okay?"

Stephan chuckled. "Okay, got it."

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[Home](#) [Chapter 209](#) Be careful

Stephan lifted Alana into the passenger seat, then grabbed the shopping bag from her hand and tossed it casually into the backseat.

Seeing him toss it as if it were trash, Alana's heart sank. "Hey, be careful...there's the gift I bought for you in there!"

Hearing this, Stephan gave a meaningful smile, but his hands continued to fasten her seatbelt. "I almost forgot...you also bought some adult toys. Spill the beans...what kind of adult toys are they?"

Alana's cheeks flushed bright red. "No, I didn't...I just... I just bought you a tie..."

Hmm, she'd keep the fact that she'd bought the sexy lingerie a secret for now...it would be a surprise for later.

Stephan frowned, looking a little disappointed. "Just a tie? But I heard it on the phone..."

Alana explained, "That was my best friend messing around, she said it on purpose to mess with you."

Stephan blinked.

Alana watched his reaction and swallowed. "Um, are you disappointed?"

He gave a forced smile, "What, isn't my disappointment obvious enough?"

He had thought this little white rabbit had finally wised up and was trying to blow his mind tonight.

But she wasn't there yet.

And to think that just a moment ago, back in his bed at home, he'd been imagining her in some incredibly

provocative outfits, flirting with him and teasing him, making him use all kind of toys on her.

He'd even gotten as hard as a fucking hard just from imagining it!

Alana stifled a laugh. "Ahem, ahem, sorry

about that. She's just... a bit of a troublemaker..."

Stephan said irritably, "I'm taking you to the hospital first. Once we're sure you're okay, we'll deal with this when we get back!"

How exactly was he going to "deal with" her?

Perhaps picturing some unspeakable scene, Alana's cheeks couldn't help but flush slightly.

Stephan glanced at the girl's suddenly flushed cheeks and chuckled. Was she thinking about that again?

If she still has the mind to think about that sort of thing, her body must be fine.

Still, it was better to get checked out at the hospital.

"Hold on tight." He gripped the steering wheel and pressed the accelerator.

The car shot forward like an arrow leaving the bow...

Alana snapped back to her senses and instinctively gripped her seatbelt, feeling a bit nervous. "Hey, slow down! Be careful...we might get into another accident!"

That driver earlier was going too fast, which is why he couldn't swerve in time and crashed into that luxury car.

Stephan could tell the girl was still shaken, so he obediently slowed down a bit. Furrowing his brow, he asked, "What exactly happened just now?"

He'd been too worried about her condition to ask for details earlier; he'd simply asked for her location and driven over.

Alana didn't hide anything from him and recounted everything that had just happened in full detail.

She also told him that she recognized the driver of the car that had collided with hers, it was the little boy's people, the boy she'd met at the supermarket last time.

"It's a small world. I never thought I'd run into him again, but here we are. I wonder if it's fate."

"Oh, right. His mom gave me 200,000 yuan as compensation. I didn't think I was hurt, so I didn't want to take it, but they insisted on giving it to me. I wanted to give it back, but they drove off, and I couldn't catch up. Then you showed up just in time."

Stephan snorted with a laugh, and it suddenly clicked. "So that's the little brat who hasn't even grown a full set of hair yet, but already thinks he can steal my girlfriend?!"

What "fate" was that? More like a curse!

What kind of fate was it when two cars bumped into each other and nearly kill someone?!

Listening to the man's tone dripping with jealousy, Alana found it amusing. How could he even get jealous over a little kid? He was so adorably childish.

"The kid was just joking. You're a grown man...don't sweat it."

Stephan's face remained cold. "He's trying to steal my girlfriend right in front of

me....shouldn't I take issue with that? He also called me an old man and said I'm not good enough for you."

Alana blinked.

Was the “old man” joke really that hard to get past?

Stephan shot Alana a glance and continued, “The money they gave you as compensation is what you deserve. Don’t even think about giving it back.”

He hadn’t even held it against them yet for the incident where their car had almost knocked her over and nearly injured her, so what was a measly 200,000 yuan in compensation?

Alana looked at the man’s chiseled, smooth profile and blinked her beautiful eyes. “Is it that you don’t want me to give it back, or that you don’t want me to have contact with that little boy?”

Stephan laughed in exasperation. “Lana, you really are asking for it!”

She instantly fell silent.

Stephan took her to the hospital and arranged for a full physical examination.

The doctor looked at Stephan’s overreaction and hesitated to speak.

He really wanted to say, “Your girlfriend just has a slight red patch on her forehead. If you’d come a few minutes later, that redness would’ve faded on its own.”

And her ankle wasn’t sprained.

But seeing the stern look on Stephan’s face, the doctor dared not say another word. After Alana underwent the examination, the results came back, and naturally, everything was fine.

Stephan finally felt at ease and took Alana home.

As the man carried her out of the car, Alana didn’t forget to remind him, “Hey, don’t forget to grab the gift!”

Stephan chuckled, “Got it.”

He set her down on the ground and turned to retrieve the tightly wrapped bags from the back seat.

It was just a few ties she’d bought for him, yet they were wrapped so tightly, anyone unaware might think they were something scandalous.

But since this was a gift she’d carefully prepared for him, he was determined to go along with her sense of occasion one hundred percent.

So, he walked back of his own accord, wrapped his arms around her slender waist, and gently kissed her lips.

“Thank you for the gift. I really like it.”

Alana couldn't help but chuckle. He'd said he liked it before even seeing what the gift was.

But she was certain he would love it.

Stephan picked her up again.

With one hand holding the gift and the other hooking around her knees, he lifted her effortlessly.

Held securely in his arms, Alana couldn't help but remark, “Stephan, your arms are so strong.”

Stephan looked at her and curved his lips slightly. “Do you like it?”

Alana blushed and nodded. “Yes, I do.”

Flattered by the compliment, the man began to tease her again, his lips curving upward as he said, “In a little while, I'll let you feel the even greater strength in other parts of me.”

Alana's eyes dilated.

Once inside, Stephan picked her up and sat her down on the sofa.

Then he tossed the gift aside and captured her lips in a kiss.

Alana pressed her hands against his rock-hard chest, trying to dodge his kiss.

“Wait, wait a minute. Aren't you going to open the gift I gave you?”

The man had no intention of unwrapping the gift; he wrapped his arms around her slender waist, preventing her from escaping.

As for her hands pressed against his chest, their feeble resistance was negligible.

“No rush. Let me kiss you first.” The man impatiently pressed his thin lips against hers.

Alana quickly covered his lips with her hand, her cheeks flushing a tempting shade of red.

“No, please...open the presents first...”

She'd gone to great lengths to pick it out; she certainly didn't want him to just set it aside and ignore it.

Stephan couldn't resist her coy yet alluring demeanor. He brushed aside her slender fingers and leaned in again. "I told you, there's no rush. Let's kiss first."

Alana quickly turned her head away, and the man kissed her cheek.

Unable to kiss his woman on the lips, the man glared at her with a hint of resentment, as if accusing her of not satisfying him properly.

Alana stifled a laugh and said earnestly, "If you don't open it, don't blame me if you regret it later."

Stephan paused, staring at her slightly mischievous eyes. He hadn't expected much from the gift, but now, his curiosity had clearly been piqued by her.

Could it be that she'd bought some surprise he didn't know about?

Stephan immediately released the woman in his arms, turned around, and retrieved the gifts.

"Fine, I'm going to open them right now and see what my girlfriend bought me!" He unwrapped a red velvet box, untied the bow on top, and opened it.

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Chapter 210 Drove him wild

Chapter 210 Drove him wild

It was a gray tie.

The quality was quite good; you could tell she'd chosen it carefully.

Alana leaned in, her eyes sparkling. “Do you like it?”

Stephan chuckled softly and replied without hesitation, “I do. Even if you give me a garbage bag, I’d still love it.”

Alana scolded him playfully, “You’re such a smooth talker!”

The man raised an eyebrow. “Don’t you like a smooth talker?”

Alana blushed. “Stop teasing me. Keep unwrapping...there are more surprises, right?”

“Sweetie, what surprise could there be that I don’t already know about? Just tell me.”

“You’ll find out once you’ve unwrapped them all!”

Seeing the girl’s mysterious expression, Stephan played along and continued unwrapping.

He unwrapped two or three...all ties.

“Lana, did you buy me this many ties all at once?”

“Mm-hmm, so you can switch them up. Otherwise, that red one’s going to get all worn out from you wearing it so much.”

The man chuckled, taking it as a badge of honor rather than a source of embarrassment.

“So what if it gets worn out? I just love wearing that red tie...I’ll still love it even if it’s worn out.”

Alana couldn’t help but chuckle, a sweet warmth filling her heart. “Yes, yes, I know you like it. So I’ve decided, from now on, I’m taking over your tie collection.”

Stephan looked at her with amusement. “How can a girlfriend be this wonderful?”

Alana curved her lips into a smile. “Is it okay if I just like being nice to you?”

Stephan’s lips curved upward, and he couldn’t resist planting a deep kiss on her lips. “Of course it’s good. I feel like I’m going to die of happiness right now!”

A smile deepened on Alana’s lips as well.

In that moment, she felt her heart overflowing with sweetness.

It felt amazing to know that the gift she'd carefully selected was appreciated. The emotional value he gave her was so full it was practically overflowing. She loved it.

The man pinched her chubby cheek and asked with a smile, "You've taken care of the tie...so should you take care of my underwear too?"

Alana snorted with a laugh, "Don't get too carried away. Keep unwrapping!"

Stephan gazed at the girl's flushed, alluring little face, his heart stirring with desire, and he wanted to tease her again.

"I'm not unwrapping them anymore. Right now, I just want to hold you and kiss you to properly reward you!"

Alana's voice was sweet as she teased him, "Come on, there aren't that many left."

Stephan stared at her with burning eyes. Her voice was sweet and soft, and the hint of allure radiating from her innocent

features made his heart ache with desire.

He couldn't wait to pounce on her and devour her completely. "Lana, are you seducing me?"

Alana shook her head. "No, no, don't worry about me. Just open it first!"

Stephan lunged forward and pinned her down, his voice low and hoarse. "Before I open it, I'm going to take care of you first...so you stop acting all flirty in front of me!"

Wait, when did she start acting all flirty?

This was a total misunderstanding!

"Oh come on, Stephan, hurry up and take them off. There are still two left..."

The man lowered his head, capturing her lips to kiss her.

But she kept dodging him. He couldn't help but grab her slender waist as she tried to pull away. "Will you let me kiss you, hmm?"

"No way, no way! I won't let you kiss me until we're done opening the presents!"

The girl was incredibly stubborn, doing everything she could to avoid his kiss.

Stephan chuckled helplessly, climbed off her, and went back to unwrapping the presents.

The gift box he'd opened was a bit large. He reached inside and pulled out a rabbit-ear headband.

The two rabbit ears were long and black, with a touch of white in the middle. They felt soft and fluffy to the touch, with a particularly nice texture.

Stephan looked at Alana, his gaze taking on a meaningful expression. "Hmm? You bought me this bunny ear headband?"

Alana froze when she saw what the man was holding in his hand.

Goodness, she didn't remember buying something like this.

She had bought a sexy nightgown!

A very simple style!

The man set the bunny ears aside and pulled out another item. "Hmm? A necklace? And black fishnet stockings?"

Finally, he rummaged through her things and pulled out a piece of extremely thin, almost transparent black fabric.

His eyes darkened instantly.

This was actually... a bunny girl outfit?

Fuck...

This woman, actually prepared something this... This was going to drive him crazy.

Stephan clenched his teeth as his adrenaline surged, his blood boiling, and his body burning with heat.

Alana's almond-shaped eyes widened at the sight of the sheer fabric, and it all came back to her in an instant.

"Ah!" Don't look! I didn't buy this...it belongs to my best friend! I picked up the wrong one!" She and Eve had each bought one for themselves.

She had bought a slightly more conservative one that wasn't quite as sheer.

But Eve's choices were way over the top, all kinds of dazzling, indescribable things.

And this bunny costume? That was Eve's!

She never would have imagined she'd picked up the wrong one!

Stephan swallowed hard, his gaze burning as he looked at her. The girl's cheeks

flushed bright red, making her look just like a ripe berry.

If that tiny scrap of fabric in his hand were draped over her, who knows how alluring she'd look.

At that moment, the man was so overcome with desire that he could barely contain himself, he wanted nothing more than to strip her completely and slip that bunny suit onto her.

"Did your best friend really buy this? Since it was a mix-up, let's just go with it. After all, yours is at her place too, isn't it?"

Alana blushed fiercely and waved her hands frantically. "No, no, no, we can't do this..."

Stephan held the simple piece of fabric, slowly closing in on her. The way he stared at her was like a predator eyeing its prey, utterly wicked.

"Sweetheart, I absolutely love this surprise. Be a good girl and put it on for me to..."

"No, this is too embarrassing!" Alana hurriedly backed away.

But the man reached out and pulled her back.

Her delicate body was forced against his, and she realized his body was burning hot...so hot it felt like it would melt her.

Alana tried to break free and escape, but she couldn't.

His strong, muscular arms held her slender waist in a tight, unyielding grip.

Her lips trembled. "Ste...Stephan..."

"You're so hot..." The man drew close to her, kissing her delicate cheeks repeatedly.

His hoarse voice was laced with the heat of desire, as if he longed to seduce her into sinking into this passion together.

"You're the one who lit this fire, so you're responsible for putting it out."

Alana bit her lip, her face flushing so red it seemed about to burst. “This bunny girl outfit...no, it’s not mine. I have to return it...”

The man kept kissing her, teasing her. “No need to return it. I like it just the way it is. I’ll pay her back another day. As for this outfit, I’ll buy it for you.”

Alana’s eyelashes were damp with tears. She pressed her hands against the man’s chest in a flustered attempt to stop him from going any further...

“Be a good girl. I’ll help you take this off and put it on...”

“No, don’t.”

“It’s okay. I’ve seen you naked countless times anyway...”

“I...I haven’t taken a shower yet...”

“Just put them on first, then take a shower later . You’re going to have to shower eventually anyway...”

“Stephan

“Yeah, I’m here...”

“Don’t pull on my clothes...”

“I’m not pulling...I’m just helping you take it off!”

Despite Alana’s desperate attempts to stop him, the man managed to get her to wear the sexy bunny suit.

Stephan’s breath caught the moment Alana stood before her. The sexy bunny suit clung to every soft curve of her body, black satin stretched taut across her full breasts, the deep plunge of the neckline showing the warm swell of her cleavage, the high-cut legs framing the pale skin of her thighs.

Floppy ears perched atop her head, and a small white puff of a tail sat just above the curve of her ass. She stood facing him, shoulders slightly hunched, cheeks already flushed a deep pink, eyes downcast in that shy way that always drove him wild.

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Chapter 211 Shy little bunny

Chapter 211 Shy little bunny

“Fuck, Alana...” Stephan’s voice came out low and rough. He closed the distance in two strides, hands already on her waist, thumbs stroking the smooth fabric. “Look at you. You’re so goddamn beautiful in this. My shy little bunny, all dressed up for me.” He tipped her chin up so she had to meet his eyes. “You have no idea what you do to me.”

She bit her lip, a soft, embarrassed sound escaping her throat. Stephan grinned, that wild edge already showing, and guided her backward until the backs of her knees hit the sofa. “Lie down for me.”

Alana sank onto the cushions, the suit riding higher on her thighs as she settled.

Instead of climbing over her right away, Stephan dropped to his knees between her legs. He pushed the thin crotch panel of the bunny suit aside with two fingers, exposing the soft, already glistening folds of her pussy. The black satin framed her perfectly, the high-cut edges digging lightly into the soft flesh of her inner thighs.

“Look at this,” he murmured, voice thick with hunger. “Already so wet for me... and I haven’t even touched you yet.”

Alana’s face burned hotter. She tried to close her thighs, but his hands held them open. “Stephan...”

“Shhh...let me have my favorite meal...”He leaned in and dragged the flat of his tongue through her slit in one long, deliberate lick, from the bottom of her entrance all the way up to her clit.

“Ahh...” The sound tore out of her, half-shocked, half-pleasure.

Her hips jerked.

Stephan didn’t give her time to recover. He sealed his mouth over her and began to eat her properly, slow, filthy, thorough.

He licked broad strokes up and down her folds, gathering her wetness on his tongue, then focused on her clit, circling it with the tip before sucking it gently between his lips.

The soft, wet sounds of his mouth filled the quiet living room. Every time he sucked a little harder, Alana’s thighs trembled around his head.

“Nnh... oh god... Stephan...” Her voice was small, shy, almost ashamed of how good it felt. One hand hovered near his hair, unsure whether she was allowed to pull him closer. He solved that for her by grabbing her wrist and placing her hand on the back of his head.

“Hold me there,” he ordered against her pussy, then went back to work.

He licked deeper, pushing his tongue inside her and fucking her with it in slow, rolling thrusts.

Alana’s free hand clutched the cushion beside her hip. Soft, broken moans started spilling out of her...”Ahh... mmm... ahh...ahh...” growing higher every time he returned to her clit and sucked.

He kept the bunny suit’s crotch panel shoved aside with his thumb, the satin rubbing lightly against the outer edges of her lips as he moved. The contrast of the cool fabric and his hot mouth made her whimper.

Stephan added two fingers, sliding them into her while his tongue worked her clit. He curled them upward, searching, and when he found the spot that made her thighs clamp around his ears, he stayed right there...rubbing firmly while he sucked.

Alana’s moans turned louder, less controlled.

“Stephan...ohh... fuck... ahh... I’m... I’m...”

He didn’t stop. He ate her through the first orgasm, tongue relentless on her swollen clit, fingers pumping, until she was shaking and crying out in soft, desperate little sobs of pleasure. Only when her hips stopped twitching did he pull back, lips shiny, eyes dark with lust.

“So beautiful,” he said, voice rough, “even when you’re coming on my tongue.”

He stood, shoved his pants down just enough, and climbed onto the sofa. He didn’t bother removing a single piece of the bunny suit. He simply kept the crotch panel aside, lined himself up, and pushed into her in one hard thrust.

“Ahh...” Alana’s cry was sharp, her back arching off the cushions as he filled her completely. The satin of the suit rubbed against his hips and lower stomach with every movement.

He set a punishing pace right away...deep, heavy strokes that made the sofa creak and her breasts bounce inside the tight black top.

“Fuck, you feel perfect like this,” he growled, bracing one hand beside her head and the other on her waist. “Still wearing the whole outfit while I fuck you... my pretty little bunny taking every inch.”

Alana's eyes fluttered, half-lidded, cheeks blazing. Every hard thrust punched a soft, breathy moan out of her.

"Nnh... ahh... Stephan... ohh god..." The sounds were shy at first, almost whispered, but the longer he pounded into her the louder and wetter they became.

The wet slap of skin meeting skin mixed with the soft rustle of satin. He could feel the fluffy white tail brushing against his stomach whenever he drove particularly deep.

He hooked one of her legs higher, changing the angle so he could grind against her clit on every inward stroke.

Alana's moans broke into higher, more desperate sounds...

"Ahh-ahh... mmm...mmgh...more...no..." Her hands scrambled for something to hold onto, finally settling on his forearms, nails digging in as he fucked her harder.

"That's it," he praised, voice rough. "Let me hear you. Don't hide those pretty noises from me."

She tried to stay quiet, biting her lip, but another particularly deep thrust made her cry out again, the sound high and needy.

He kept going until she came a second time, clenching tightly around him with a long, trembling moan that ended in a soft, shy whimper. Only then did he let himself finish, burying himself to the hilt and spilling inside her with a low groan.

For a moment they stayed like that, breathing hard. Then Stephan pulled out, still half-hard, and scooped her up against his chest as if she weighed nothing. Alana made a quiet, surprised sound, arms looping around his neck as he carried her down the hall into the bedroom.

He set her on her feet in front of the full-length mirror, then turned her so she faced it while he stood behind her. The reflection showed everything...the black bunny suit still perfectly in place, ears slightly askew from the sofa, the flush high on her cheeks, the faint sheen of sweat on her collarbones, and the wetness glistening on her inner thighs where he'd just been.

"Watch," he murmured against her ear, already pushing back into her from behind in one smooth, deep stroke.

"Ahh..." Alana's eyes flew open, meeting her own reflection as he filled her again.

The mirror showed the way the black satin stretched over her breasts as they swayed with every thrust, the way her mouth fell open, the way her thighs trembled.

Stephan held her hips and fucked her hard from the start this time, long, powerful strokes that made her body rock forward with each impact. One hand slid up to cup her breast through the suit, thumb brushing roughly over the stiff peak of her nipple.

The other hand stayed low, fingers spreading her open so the mirror clearly showed where he disappeared into her over and over.

“Look how beautiful you are,” he growled against the side of her neck, teeth grazing her skin.

“My shy little bunny, all dressed up and getting fucked while she watches herself. Look at that face you make when I hit that spot... fuck, Alana, you’re perfect.”

She moaned louder now, the shyness cracking under the intensity and the visual.

“Ahh...Stephan...ohh... nnh-ahh...!” High, needy sounds spilled from her lips as she watched his cock sliding in and out of her in the mirror.

He teased her relentlessly, slowing down just when she started to tighten around him, grinding deep and circling his hips so she could feel every thick inch, then suddenly snapping his hips forward again in a sharp, hard rhythm that made her cry out.

“That’s it... moan for me,” he ordered, pinching her nipple through the satin and then sliding his hand down to rub tight circles over her clit. “Let me hear how good it feels to watch yourself take it.”

Her moans grew wetter, more abandoned... “Mmm-ahh... fuck... Stephan... ahh ahh...” Her reflection showing the way her lips parted, the way her eyes half-closed in pleasure, the way her whole body shook with every deep thrust.

He kept talking, voice low and filthy right against her ear.

“Look at those pretty tits bouncing... look at how wet you are... look at how your legs are shaking. You’re so fucking beautiful like this. My good girl in her little bunny suit, coming on my cock while she watches.”

Alana’s knees nearly gave out when the next orgasm hit. She came hard, a long, broken cry tearing from her throat as her body clenched and pulsed around him.

Stephan held her upright, fucking her through it without slowing, drawing the pleasure out until she was whimpering and trembling, soft aftershocks still rolling through her.

He didn’t stop. He kept going...harder now, chasing his own release while he forced her to keep her eyes open and watch.

Every thrust made the fluffy white tail bounce against his stomach. Every moan that left her lips was reflected back at both of them. When he finally buried himself deep and came inside her again, he bit down gently on the side of her neck and groaned her name, still murmuring how beautiful she looked, how perfect she was, how much he loved seeing her like this...his shy girl, completely wrecked and still wearing every piece of the outfit he loved on her.

Even after he pulled out, he kept her facing the mirror for a long moment, one arm around her waist, the other stroking slowly over the black satin covering her stomach and breasts, letting her watch the way she looked: flushed, marked, thoroughly fucked, and still so shyly beautiful in her sexy little bunny suit.

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Home Chapter 212 The bed collapses

Alana didn't know how much time passed, but he was even more insatiable tonight, he took her against the wall, and several times on the bed...

Finally, when it was all over, the two clung tightly to each other, savoring every last moment of pleasure.

Stephan leaned down and tenderly kissed the girl's sweat-dampened cheek. "Are you satisfied?"

Alana grunted and whimpered, too exhausted to even respond to him.

Stephan smirked, his large hand gently stroked her head. "Your best friend has good taste. Next time you go shopping, bring her along."

Out of the corner of her eye, Alana glanced at the floor, where the bunny suit lay pitifully, torn to shreds by the man.

She glared at him in mock anger. "Stephan, you've ruined my clothes again. I'm not buying you anything next time!"

His lips curled into a smile. "Fine. If you won't buy it, I'll buy it myself. A man who takes the initiative gets his reward."

Alana gasped.

What a shameless man.

There was nothing she could do.

She pushed him weakly with both hands.

“Get off me. I need to take another shower.”

Seriously, he’d gotten her all sticky and wet.

“Let’s shower together.” Stephan propped himself up, intending to lift the woman on the bed, who was as limp as a puddle of water into his arms.

But unexpectedly, the bed they were lying on suddenly collapsed, it just gave way completely.

Neither of them had time to react as they sank heavily into the bed.

Alana’s ankle was accidentally caught in the caved-in part of the bed. She let out a startled cry,

“Ah, it hurts! Ow...My foot’s stuck!”

Stephan immediately panicked and hurriedly got off her. “Where? Where is it stuck?”

Alana gasped in pain, “My left... my left leg...”

The man frantically checked her left leg; her ankle was indeed caught in a depression. “Damn it! What kind of quality is this bed? It actually collapsed? I’m going to file a complaint as soon as I can!”

He carefully lifted the girl’s leg. Despite his caution, her ankle had already begun to swell.

Alana’s eyes filled with tears from the pain. “What should we do? It hurts so much. Is it broken?”

Stephan gently pressed on the swollen area.

Alana clenched her teeth. “Ouch, be gentle...it hurts!”

Stephan withdrew his hand and soothed her gently, “Don’t worry, it’s not broken...it’s just a little swollen. Still, it’s safer to take you to the hospital to get it checked out!”

Go to the hospital again?

They’d just come back from the hospital, and now they had to go again. Alana was both embarrassed and annoyed. “You’re so annoying! It’s all your fault. Who told you to be so wild in bed!”

He had actually caused the bed to collapsed!

Not even the male leads in novels were that outrageous!

Seeing the girl's tear-filled, reddened eyes, Stephan felt a pang of heartache. He quickly pulled her into his arms, kissed her gently, and soothed her, "Yes, yes, it's all my fault! Sweetheart, I'll take you to the hospital right away. The pain will go away soon!"

As he spoke, the man reached out to pick her up.

Their skin pressed intimately together, and her cheeks flushed crimson.

"Wait...we're not even dressed yet!"

"Okay, I'll help you get dressed, and then we'll go to the hospital."

"You have to get dressed too!"

The young couple rushed to the hospital in a panic. The doctor who greeted them happened to be the same male doctor they had just seen.

"What's happened now?"

Stephan lifted Alana and sat her down in a chair. "Doctor, please take a look at my girlfriend. Her ankle is swollen...take an X-ray now!"

The doctor glanced at the red, swollen area on her ankle. "What caused this?"

"It's..."

Alana blushed, unable to get the words out, but Stephan spoke without batting an eye.

"The bed collapsed. Her foot accidentally got stuck in it."

The male doctor was stunned. "The bed collapsed? How?"

Out of the corner of his eye, he caught sight of Alana's face, flushed so deeply it was almost a different shade from her neck, along with some suggestive marks on her neck.

He wondered, could it be that they'd been engaging in rough late-night activities and caused the bed to collapse?

Should he say the man was incredibly strong, or that the bed was just too flimsy?

Alana lowered her head in shame, barely daring to meet the male doctor's gaze.

"The bed's quality must be too poor."

"Hmm, it really is terrible. It can't even handle everything."

Alana bit her lip and couldn't help but secretly pinch Stephan's thigh.

This man is so shameless. A broken bed isn't exactly something to brag about, why does he have to blab everything like a loose cannon?

Now she was too embarrassed to show her face in public.

The male doctor quickly arranged for Alana to undergo an examination.

The X-ray results came back with no major issues...it was just that the sagging bed slats had pinched her bone and flesh, causing the swelling.

Applying some anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving ointment to promote blood circulation and dispel bruising, and with a couple of days of rest, she'll be fine.

After the series of tests, Alana was so exhausted she'd fallen asleep in the man's arms.

Stephan didn't wake her, but immediately arranged a VIP ward for her so she could lie comfortably in bed and sleep.

As for the broken bed at home, he'd have someone take it away later and buy a sturdier one to replace it.

Early in the morning.

Cole arrived at the office and didn't see Alana at her desk.

He furrowed his brow and asked Carla, who was close to Alana, "Where's Alana?"

Carla stood up. "Manager Cole, Alana said she got her ankle caught in something. It's swollen pretty badly, and she's still at the hospital. So she asked me to call in sick for her for a day."

Hearing this, Cole couldn't help but feel concerned. "Did she tell you how badly it's swollen? How long will it take to heal?"

Carla shook her head. "I don't know. She just asked me to call in sick for her for a day; she didn't say anything else."

Cole asked, "Did she tell you which hospital she's at?"

Carla replied. "She didn't say."

"Alright, I understand." Cole returned to his office, and the more he thought about Alana's foot injury, the more worried he became.

Her foot was injured, and she needed time off...why didn't she just tell him directly, instead of asking a colleague she was close with to request the leave for her?

He was her direct superior, wouldn't it have been better to just tell him directly if she needed time off?

Cole took a deep breath and decided to call her to ask how she was doing. If it was serious, he needed to go see her in person to find out exactly what was wrong.

He took out his phone and dialed her number.

At that moment, at the hospital, Alana was currently sleeping in Stephan's arms.

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Chapter 213 Our bedroom activities

Soft morning light streamed through the window, bathing the young couple sleeping in each other's arms on the bed in a peaceful and cozy glow.

Earlier that morning, Alana had woken up briefly. Realizing her ankle was still swollen and she couldn't walk properly...making it impossible to go to work...she had asked Carla to call in sick for her. After making the request, she was so exhausted she fell back asleep.

After all, she'd been at it with her man for hours, and then had to deal with the hospital.

After taking care of that, she fell asleep again. She was fast asleep when her phone suddenly rang.

She wasn't woken by it, but Stephan woke up first.

Seeing that Alana was still fast asleep, he reached for her phone first and, without even looking at it, hung up the call for her.

He thought that would be the end of it, but to his surprise, the phone rang again.

The person in bed furrowed her delicate brows slightly, showing signs of being about to wake up.

Stephan quickly silenced the phone, then took a closer look at the caller ID.

The contact was listed as Cole.

Cole?

Stephan's eyes darkened as he glanced at the girl, who had drifted back into a peaceful sleep.

He didn't wake her, but instead chose to pull back the covers and tiptoe out of bed.

Stephan stepped out of the hospital room and looked at the phone number that kept ringing persistently. He tugged at his thin lips and decisively pressed the answer button.

Cole's voice came through, gentle yet tinged with urgency.

"Hello, Lana, you finally answered! You didn't come to work today. Carla said you injured your foot and are currently being treated at the hospital. Is it serious? I'm really worried about you right now. Send me the hospital's location, I'll come see you."

After Cole finished speaking, he didn't hear her reply.

He furrowed his brow. "Lana, why aren't you saying anything? Tell me, is it serious or not? I'm really worried about you!"

Stephan's thin lips twitched, and he let out a casual, mocking smile. "Sorry, Mr. Come, but my darling Lana is sleeping right now. It's not convenient for her to see you."

Cole's pupils contracted sharply upon hearing the man's voice on the other end of the line.

Even through the phone, he could sense the intense provocation in the man's tone and his overwhelming possessiveness toward Alana.

He sprang to his feet, his voice turning grave. "Who... exactly are you?"

Stephan lips curled into a casual smirk as he enunciated each word clearly, "I am Alana's boyfriend."

Cole's eyes darkened instantly. "Tell me which hospital Alana is in. I need to see her!"

Stephan offered a forced smile. "See her? I wonder, Mr. Cole, in what capacity do you intend to see her?"

Cole replied, "Alana is my assistant. She's injured, and it's my responsibility to visit her and make sure she's okay!"

Stephan slipped his hand into his pocket and replied slowly, "Well, let me tell you this: Alana is fine. She doesn't need you to meddle in her affairs. Besides, having me as her boyfriend is more than enough. Rest assured, as long as I'm here, she would be well taken care of."

Cole's clenched his fists uncontrollably, forcing back his anger. "She was perfectly fine when she left work! How did she get hurt? Did you hurt her...?"

Stephan sneered. The fuck?!

"If you're sick, go get treated! Besides, how she got hurt is none of your business. Know your place and keep your distance from my girlfriend!"

Cole clenched his jaw. "Who the hell are you?"

"I told you, I'm Alana's man!"

"I'm asking for your name!"

"Alana's boyfriend." Stephan repeated. "Refer to me as that."

Cole laughed bitterly. "I don't care who you are. You're not good enough for Lana. Stay away from her!"

Instead of getting angry, Stephan smiled. "Well, I'm sorry, but I actually think she and I are a perfect match...the best match in the world. As for you...what right do you have to tell me to stay away from my girlfriend?"

Cole narrowed his eyes. "Do you know what my relationship with Lana is? We've known each other since middle school. The one she truly loves is me!"

Stephan's eyes darkened as he clenched his fingers around his phone, tightening his grip inch by inch.

His thin lips twisted into a cold smile. "Is that so? And what of it? What matters is who she's with now. Me. And she's lying in my arms right now, exactly where she belongs."

"You!"

Without giving Cole a chance to reply, Stephan decisively hung up the phone. Cole gritted his teeth in fury; that man's provocative words had finally shattered his composure.

He dialed the number again. "Find out for me...a patient named Alana Martin with a foot injury. I need to know which hospital she's in?"

Stephan hung up the phone, thinking about Cole's words: that he and Alana had known each other since middle school, and that Alana... truly loved him?

He sneered. Was he some kind of fool?

Did Cole really think he would believe everything he said?

Stephan clenched his phone and turned to walk into the hospital room.

The person in the bed had already woken up, and was still groggy.

She sat up in bed, rubbing her swollen eyes. A few soft, unruly strands of hair stuck up from her head, making her look adorably cute.

"Where did you go?"

Stephan walked over to her side, reaching out to smooth down the stray strands of hair on her head. "I answered a call for you."

Alana's almond-shaped eyes looked dazed. "Huh? Who's calling me this early in the morning?"

Stephan handed her the phone. "See for yourself."

Alana took the phone and checked the call log.

When she saw that it was Cole calling, her heart skipped a beat.

The fleeting look of panic that flashed across her face didn't escape Stephan's notice; his eyes darkened instantly.

Alana bit her lip and asked Stephan nervously, "Why... why was he calling?"

Stephan's stared at her fair, delicate face, his smile forced. "He said he was worried about you and asked which hospital you're at. He wanted me to tell him so he can come see you." Seeing the man's half-smile, Alana felt an inexplicable sense of unease.

She hadn't done anything wrong, so why did she feel so... uneasy?

"So, did you tell him?"

The man countered, "Did you want me to?"

Alana replied nervously, "Of...of course not. After all, I'm fine. There's no need for him to go out of his way to come see me..."

At that moment, her phone started to ring.

Eve was calling, Alana was grateful at the timing and quickly picked up.

"Hello, Lana, I was going to call you last night that you took my costume instead of your lingerie but on second thoughts, I decided to let you have it to spice things up with your boyfriend, tell me, did he like it? I'm sure last night was fire..."

"Huh? This..." Alana couldn't help but glance at the man beside her, her cheeks flushing slightly.

Well... how should she put this?

Stephan watched her calmly, as if hinting that she should speak clearly.

Alana stammered, "Well... he really outdid himself."

They'd practically collapsed the bed, that was certainly going above and beyond.

Eve was all ears. "An exceptional performance, huh? Be specific...how many times exactly? Did you get severely dehydrated?!"

Alana swallowed.

Huh?

Wait, was this something you just casually chat about?

If she were just with her best friend, she might be able to chat about it, but right now Stephan was right next to her!

Overwhelmed with embarrassment, she whispered, “Eve, stop talking!”

This was so annoying....the phone’s volume was way too loud. Even without speakerphone, people two meters away could hear every word clearly.

Not to mention, Stephan was standing right next to her...

Eve didn’t seem to mind. “What’s there to be shy about? It’s just the two of us, c’mon girl, spill!”

“I really can’t talk right now. My boyfriend is right here. I’ll have to go!”

Before Eve could respond, Alana frantically hung up the phone.

When she looked up, she met Stephan’s dark eyes, which were brimming with amusement.

A faint, mocking smile played at the corners of his mouth. “Lana , I really didn’t expect you and your best friend to get so deep into things. You even tell her about our bedroom activities.”

Chapter 214 Give me a kiss

Chapter 214 Give me a kiss

Alana’s eyes widened as she struggled to defend herself. “I...I definitely don’t reveal

everything! I only let slip a tiny bit...it’s practically nothing!”

Stephan settled leisurely onto her bed, crossed his legs, and adopted an expression as if he were intently watching a play.

“So what exactly do you reveal? Tell me, I’m curious.”

“Nothing, really, nothing at all.”

“Did you mention that I’m really good in bed and have incredible stamina?”

Stephan glanced at her and asked with a straight face, “Did you mention how many long we fuck, what positions you like, how we do it on the couch, in bed, and in the bathroom?”

Alana blushed so hard she started fidgeting with her fingers. “We...well, you don’t go into that much detail...”

“Then what exactly do you say?”

“I don’t say a thing.”

“I don’t believe you!”

Alana scoffed. Her face flushing, she said earnestly, “I really don’t say much. If anything, she’s the one who talks more about being with her boyfriend.”

“Oh?” Stephan perked up again, raising an eyebrow. “So...do you think their relationship is better than ours? Which is better?”

If he was lacking in any way, he had to step up!

Alana said seriously, “If I told you, you’d definitely look down on her boyfriend. If he didn’t have some money, I’m not sure Eve would even date him.”

“Hmm, so what’s the whole story?”

“Her boyfriend is terrifying, he’s abusive toward my best friend! My friend says he puts her in handcuffs and leg irons, strips her naked, and whips her. Just listen to that, how terrifying and twisted is that? Thank goodness you’re not like that...otherwise, I’d wake up from nightmares!”

After hearing this, Stephan looked at Alana with a meaningful expression. This little white rabbit was truly as innocent as can be.

She actually thought that was domestic violence?

Some couples were into that.

What’s with the whip though? Maybe the more he whips her, the more she’ll enjoy it?

Whether it was pleasurable or not, just thinking about it now gave him a thrill.

Stephan reached out and hooked his arm around the girl’s waist.

He slowly drew closer to her, his thin lips brushing against her ear, his breath warm.

“Lana, why don’t we buy some of these things too? Then, you can strip me naked and whip me. How about that? Don’t worry, I couldn’t bring myself to whip you, but if you whip me, I’d be 100% up for it.”

Alana gasped.

She looked at the man in shock and bewilderment. What? What did he just say?

He wanted her to strip him naked and whip him?!

Wait, does he have some kind of masochistic tendency?

He might have a masochistic streak, but she certainly didn’t have a sadistic one!

She blinked and said earnestly, “Um, isn’t it a bit inappropriate for us to do something like that? It’ll ruin our relationship, won’t it?”

Wasn’t it better to love each other for a lifetime? Why all the fighting and violence?

Stephan curved his lips, his voice low and hoarse. “It’s great. I think I’d like it if you spank me.”

Was here actually someone who likes getting spanked?

“Stephan, tell me straight up, is there something wrong with your head? If there is something wrong, just tell me. I won’t look down on you.”

Looking at the girl’s innocent expression, Stephan laughed in exasperation and couldn’t help but give her cheek a firm squeeze.

“Lana, you’re so innocent it’s killing me!”

“What do you mean?”

“It means what your best friend and her boyfriend were doing was just some couple’s bedroom fun...not domestic violence, got it?”

“Huh?!”

“Plus, the whip they used was specially made...it doesn’t hurt much when it hits your body; it just feels amazingly painful!”

Amazingly painful, was that a thing?

Alana couldn’t believe it. “Is that true?”

Stephan curved his lips into a smile tinged with a hint of mischief. “Whether it’s true or not, why not give it a try and find out?”

Alana couldn’t help but blush. “But...isn’t it a bit inappropriate for us to get that kinky?”

Well, the imagery was too intense...she didn’t even dare to imagine it.

Stephan raised an eyebrow. “Why not? I think it’d great. I’ve pretty much tried a lot of things with you, it’s time for something a little more exciting. Like, you could tie my limbs to the bedposts, then take a little leather whip and do whatever you want to me. Don’t worry, I promise I won’t resist...”

The more he thought about it, the more restless he became, his heart itching with desire, desperate to snatch this sweet, tempting woman right then and there and take her home to have his way with her.

Alana blushed bright red, her lips bitten until they were a vivid shade of red.

What on earth is this? How can he be so perverted?!

No, no, I absolutely can’t let him corrupt me...I have to hold onto my principles!

“You... you broke the bed last night, and you still want something even wilder? Have you even thought about the bed at home?”

“It’s fine. If we wreck another one, we’ll just get a new one. After all, your man has enough money to buy plenty beds.”

Alana was mortified. “Stephan, be serious! Don’t be so perverted!”

Oh my, if I’d known, I wouldn’t have brought this up with him. Who knew he’d actually...

Stephan buried his face in her chest, rubbing against her softly. “Baby, I can’t be serious with you at all. Satisfy me, will you?”

Alana shook her head vigorously, holding firm to her limits, “No, no!”

Stephan said, shamelessly, “Yes, yes, yes...I want something exciting. My dear wife, your husband wants to...”

That single phrase, “My dear wife,” made her whole body burn. He was so shameless!

“I told you, don’t call me ‘My Dear Wife’...”

It was so unsettling when he called her that!

“If you don’t agree, I’ll keep calling you that. My dear wife, my dear wife, give it to me...”

Alana couldn’t help but reach out and cover his thin lips with her hand. “Stop calling me that...fine...I, I’ll think about it...”

After saying that, she was so flushed she couldn’t bear to look anyone in the eye, and she hung her head in shame.

She really had been led astray by him, she’d consider anything.

Upon hearing this, a glint of triumph flashed through Stephan’s eyes.

He couldn’t resist kissing the girl’s warm, soft palm, his voice low and hoarse.

“What should we do? I’m so looking forward to it...”

Hmm, once they got back, he’d secretly prepare everything he needed, then coax her into cooperating with him.

Alana shyly curled her fingers, unwilling to answer such an embarrassing question.

She was just frustrated...how did she end up with such a perverted boyfriend?

No normal guy would play around like this...

This was killing her!

He wasn’t normal at all.

Just then, Alana’s stomach growled, breaking the overly suggestive atmosphere.

It was a loud, hearty rumble.

Stephan curved his lips. “My fault for letting my little darling go hungry. I’ll feed you right away.” With that, he released her, his long fingers pressing against his metal belt buckle.

Alana instantly tensed up. “Oh my gosh, what are you doing?!”

Stephan looked at her amusedly. “I’m just adjusting my clothes. What are you thinking about? Why are you blushing so much?”

“I, I...” Alana stammered, too embarrassed to answer.

She certainly didn't want to recall that night, when he'd coaxed her into helping him... Stephan gave her a half-smile. "Do you want to? If you want to, I'm certainly capable of feeding you..."

Alana's face instantly turned bright red, and she couldn't help but clench her fists and punch him.

"Stephan! Try being normal for once!"

Seeing the girl on the verge of losing her temper, looking fierce, Stephan found it utterly hilarious.

He soothed her, "Alright, alright, I won't tease you anymore. I'll go downstairs and get you breakfast. What would you like to eat?"

"Anything will do. Let's have meat buns."

Stephan stared at her. "I want meat buns too."

"Then you go buy some too."

His gaze drifted over her chest. "No, I meant the other kind of meat bun."

Alana instantly caught on, grabbed a pillow, and threw it at him. "Stephan!"

He laughed as he caught the pillow, set it back down, then ruffled the girl's hair, which was about to stand on end. "Be good. Wait for me and don't miss me too much."

"Hmph!" Her lips puckered, her cheeks puffed out in a huff, making her look like an adorable little hamster.

Stephan's heart melted at the sight. "So cute! My girlfriend is so cute, give me a kiss!" He quickly planted a kiss on her pouting lips, then pulled away with a smile just as she was about to lose her temper.

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Chapter 215 Cole comes to visit

No sooner had Stephan left than a cold, imposing figure quietly approached the hospital room.

Alana kept her head down, replying to a message Eve had sent.

After suddenly hanging up the phone, that little rascal Eve wasn't giving up; she

kept sending messages to ask.

Alana replied with a few brief words, completely oblivious to the blue-clad figure slowly entering her hospital room.

The man spoke, “Lana...”

Startled, her hand trembled, and her phone nearly slipped from her grasp.

She looked up and saw Cole standing at the doorway of the hospital room, dressed in a dark blue suit with a white shirt underneath and a blue tie in the same shade.

A pair of gold-rimmed glasses rested on his high, straight nose; the lenses glinted slightly, concealing the emotions swirling in his deep, dark eyes.

Alana was taken aback. “Cole, why are you here?”

“I heard from Carla that you injured your ankle, so I came to see how serious it is.”

Cole walked closer, his gaze involuntarily scanning the space, searching for any trace of the other man’s presence.

But aside from the slightly disheveled bedding, he found nothing. His tense jaw relaxed slightly.

Seeing Cole arrive unannounced, Alana felt a twinge of nervousness.

“I’m fine. You didn’t need to go out of your way to come see me.”

Cole walked up to her and said earnestly, “But I was very worried about you. I won’t feel at ease until I see you in person.”

Alana gave an awkward smile. To her, his concern felt like a burden.

Cole’s gaze was gentle. “Which foot is injured? Let me take a look.”

As he spoke, he reached out to lift the blanket, intending to examine her slender legs beneath it.

Alana nervously covered herself with the blanket. “It’s okay, I’m really fine. I just accidentally bumped my left ankle.”

Noticing her resistance, Cole’s eyes darkened slightly.

His fingers curled slightly before he slowly withdrew his hand.

Pretending nothing had happened, he continued to ask with concern, “How did you suddenly get injured?”

Alana was too embarrassed to reveal the real reason. “I... just tripped while walking.”

Cole frowned. “Does this have anything to do with your boyfriend?”

Alana looked at him in surprise. How did he know her ankle injury was related to Stephan?

Could it be that during that phone call just now, Stephan had told him the reason for her injury?

No way...would he even bring something like that up?

Just thinking about it was embarrassing.

But then again, come to think of it, Stephan might actually say something like that...his face is thicker than a city wall.

But she was too shy!

How could she possibly bring herself to answer that?

What should she do...

She felt so embarrassed right now!

Seeing Alana’s silent reaction, Cole knew his guess was correct.

His eyes darkened instantly. “After what he did to you...injuring your ankle, are you still going to force yourself to stay with him? Break up with him right now!”

Alana gasped. “He... didn’t mean to. Also, I don’t feel like I’m settling for less when I’m with him.”

Cole laughed in exasperation. For the first time, he realized just how love-struck Alana was, but why couldn’t that same infatuation be directed at him?!

“He hurt you, and you still don’t feel wronged? Lana, do you have a masochistic streak?”

Alana took a deep breath and said earnestly, “I told you, it was an accident. Nobody wanted this to happen...I didn’t, and he certainly didn’t. Besides, even if there is something going on, it has nothing to do with you.”

Cole felt a sharp pang in his chest as he stared at her with pained eyes. “Is that

really how you feel?”

Alana pursed her lips and nodded. “Yes.”

Cole let out a short laugh, a dull pain spreading through his heart.

He had gone to every length to find her, hoping to win her back.

But she had gone to every length to stay away from him, wanting to completely cut ties with him.

How... had things between them ended up like this?

Alana glanced at Cole’s somewhat sorrowful expression. After a moment of silence, she steeled herself and said, “Cole, you’ve come, you’ve seen me. I’m fine. If you have other things to do, you should go back first. I have a boyfriend. He’ll take care of me.”

If Cole still had feelings for her, then what she needed to do now was cut off those feelings completely.

Better short-term pain than long-term suffering, wasn’t it?

She had managed to do it back then. She believed Cole could do the same.

Time would heal all wounds.

Cole didn’t move an inch. He asked calmly, “Then where is your boyfriend? You’re injured now. Why isn’t he by your side?”

Alana replied, “He went to buy breakfast for me.”

Cole stared at her and continued, “What’s your boyfriend’s name?”

Alana frowned. “Does his name really matter?”

Cole said, “To me, it matters very much.”

Alana said, “I’m sorry. I don’t want to tell you.”

The corners of Cole’s lips twitched. “It’s okay. Then I’ll wait here until he comes back.”

Alana felt suffocated. “Cole, why are you so determined to meet my boyfriend? Even if I didn’t have a boyfriend, there would still be no possibility between us.”

Unwilling to give up, Cole stubbornly asked, “Why is it impossible? You can be with another man, so why can’t you be with me again?!”

Alana felt helpless. Wasn't it obvious?

Did she really have to point everything out one by one?

"Putting aside the fact that your sister and I are like fire and water, I can never trust you again. And you yourself once said that I was only suitable for dating, not for marriage."

Cole hurriedly explained, "I was wrong back then. I shouldn't have said that. I regret it. I can marry you! As for my sister, I'll persuade her properly and stop her from targeting you every time."

Alana found it amusing. Every time Cole said the same thing, yet Camila's attitude toward her had never changed.

It only became worse each time.

The funniest thing she had ever done in her life was believing Cole's empty promises again and again.

"Even so, what about your parents? Would they agree?"

Cole's gaze was resolute. "My marriage is my own decision. I'll convince them to agree!"

Alana shook her head. "I'm sorry. Even then, I still wouldn't be with you, because... I don't like you anymore."

Unable to restrain himself, Cole grabbed her shoulders. His large hands tightened around them, his eyes filled with pain that couldn't be dissolved. "Lana...Please give me one chance."

"Don't reject me so quickly. Fall in love with me again. This time, I won't let you down again..."

Alana wasn't moved.

She only felt exhausted from his relentless persistence.

Especially when she saw the sorrow filling Cole's eyes, all she felt was helplessness.

"I'm sorry..."

Other than saying she was sorry, she couldn't give him what he wanted.

The strength in Cole's hands loosened slightly.

Still unwilling to give up, he asked, "Is there really not even the slightest possibility?"

Alana said seriously, “My boyfriend will be back soon. He’s the jealous type. I don’t want him to see you here and cause unnecessary misunderstandings.”

Cole gave a bitter smile.

Every sentence she spoke was about her boyfriend.

Was her boyfriend really that wonderful?

Or was she simply trying to provoke him and make his heart ache?

His voice turned hoarse. “Lana... what if I insist on staying here to meet your so-called boyfriend?”

Alana quietly clenched her fingers, trying her best to keep her voice steady.

“Cole, don’t make things awkward for everyone, okay?”

So in her eyes, his appearance only brought embarrassment. “Fine. I’ll leave!”

Cole’s expression darkened as he turned and walked away.

The door slammed shut loudly.

Alana’s body trembled slightly before she slowly let out a sigh of relief.

As long as he was willing to leave.

To be honest, if Cole had really run into Stephan, with the two men confronting each other, she would have had no idea how to deal with the situation.

Angrily slamming the door behind him, Cole strode toward the elevator.

The elevator doors opened, just as he was about to step inside, he happened to run into Stephan, who had just bought breakfast.

Cole stepped into the elevator.

Stephan walked out carrying breakfast.

As they passed each other, their shoulders brushed unintentionally.

Neither of them looked at the other.

Stephan calmly walked past Cole and continued out.

However, as if remembering something, he couldn't help but glance back toward the elevator.

At that moment, the elevator doors were slowly closing.

Inside the elevator, Cole also happened to turn his head and meet Stephan's gaze.

He met Stephan's deep, dark eyes and his strikingly handsome face that was almost bewitching.

The man's gaze was inexplicably sharp.

Cole's brows furrowed almost imperceptibly.

For some reason, the face seemed somewhat familiar, as though he had seen it somewhere before.

But he didn't think much of it.

At that moment, his heart was filled with the anger and sorrow of being hurt by Lana again and again. The two emotions intertwined, leaving him too unsettled to think about anyone or anything else.

What he never expected was that the man standing before him, the one he had just crossed paths with, was the so-called boyfriend of Alana, the very man he had spent so much time and effort trying, yet failing, to investigate.

The elevator doors finally closed.

Their gazes, which had met in midair, were completely cut off.

Stephan withdrew his gaze, his expression slightly dark.

Back in the hospital room, Alana was still wondering when Stephan would return.

Unexpectedly, less than two minutes after Alana left, the ward door was pushed open.

The man's tall, slender figure dressed in black walked in. There was almost no expression on his handsome face, causing her heart to tighten for no reason.

Alana nervously clutched the blanket and forced a smile. "Ste...Stephan, you're back..."

Just now... Cole hadn't run into him, had he?

Nothing like a showdown had happened, right?

Stephan replied expressionlessly, “Mm.”

Alana immediately sensed something was wrong with his mood, making her even more uneasy. “You... what’s wrong?”

Stephan glanced at her and said calmly, “When I came out of the elevator just now, I ran into someone who looked very familiar.”

He walked over, sat down on the edge of her bed, and fixed his deep eyes on the girl’s delicate, fair face. The corners of his lips lifted casually. “Don’t you plan to explain?”

Alana bit her lip. “Whe...when you went to buy breakfast... Manager Cole came by to see me.”

Stephan looked at her, the corners of his lips curling into a half-smile.

“He just came to take one look? Are you sure it wasn’t several looks... or more than ten?”

Alana replied weakly, lacking confidence. “I... I didn’t let him stay and look for long. I asked him to leave.”

Stephan smiled without warmth. “Is that so?”

Alana nodded vigorously. “Mm! Yes, yes. I promise.”

Chapter 216 A little cozy

Chapter 216 A little cozy

Alana spent the whole morning at the hospital; once she had her medication, she was free to go home.

The doctor said it wasn’t anything serious, just a minor sprain. There were no broken bones or torn ligaments. If she rested properly for two days and avoided further impact, she would recover completely.

The doctor prescribed some anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving ointment for her.

A single bottle of this ointment cost thousands of dollars, but its effects were remarkable, she could barely feel any pain in her ankle while walking.

Of course, Alana had no idea how much the ointment cost, after all, she wasn't the one footing the bill but if she'd known it was that expensive, she would have been heartbroken.

After Stephan finished the discharge procedures, he took her home.

He picked her up and strode out, confidently.

Alana was shy; she would have preferred him to simply help her walk, but he insisted on carrying her.

With people coming and going in the hospital, being carried by a tall, handsome man inevitably drew a lot of attention.

Her face flushed with embarrassment, and she couldn't help but bury her face in his chest, too shy to look at anyone.

Darla and Cynthia had just finished work and had planned to go out for dinner together.

The two walked into the hospital lobby, chatting and laughing. Darla caught a glimpse of a familiar male figure.

A flicker of delight crossed her eyes. "Auntie, look...that looks like..."

But the moment she noticed the man was holding a woman in his arms, the surprise vanished from her face.

Cynthia was puzzled by her reaction. "What's wrong? What are you telling me to look at?"

Saying this, she was about to follow Darla's gaze.

Darla didn't know why, but she instinctively shifted her feet, blocking Cynthia's view.

"Nothing. I must have seen wrong."

Cynthia's curiosity was piqued, and she wanted to keep looking, but Darla was blocking her view completely. She didn't notice at first that her own son was carrying a girl and walking past not far from her.

"What did you see?"

Darla stepped forward and wrapped her arm around Cynthia's, continuing to block her view.

"I... thought I saw someone I knew, but turns out I was mistaken. Oh my, Auntie, let's discuss where we're going to eat later!"

Out of the corner of her eye, she secretly watched Stephan's figure as he walked past her, holding a woman in his arms.

She desperately wanted to see who the woman in his arms was, but the woman had buried her face deep into his chest, not revealing a single detail.

All she could make out was a head of beautiful, jet-black hair, swaying gently from side to side with the man's every step.

The woman was petite, and as he carried her in a princess way, it only served to highlight his tall, imposing figure, radiating a sense of security.

Darla desperately wanted to rush over and see who the woman was.

But remembering that she was currently with Mrs. Hudson, she had to put the thought aside. She didn't yet know how Cynthia felt about Stephan's girlfriend, so for now, she didn't want Cynthia to discover the woman's existence.

Only after the two figures had completely disappeared from the hospital entrance did Darla's tense body finally relax a little.

She hadn't even realized that Cynthia had called out to her several times. "Darla? Darla, what's wrong?"

Darla snapped back to reality, her face looking a bit pale. "Auntie, hmm?"

Cynthia smiled helplessly. "I was just about to ask you the same thing. Didn't you just ask me where we should go for dinner? How about that Hunan restaurant we went to last time?"

Darla forced a smile and nodded. "Sure, that sounds good. I actually like Hunan cuisine too."

In truth, she didn't really like Hunan cuisine because it was too spicy.

But to cater to her future mother-in-law's tastes, she pretended she liked it too.

She had always been confident in herself, so she was determined to win Stephan over.

But now...Seeing him show up at the hospital with another woman in his arms, she was suddenly overcome by a powerful sense of crisis.

Who on earth was that woman?

How dare she so easily outmaneuver her and snatch away the man she had been so foolishly infatuated with?

Cynthia was unaware of Darla's thoughts.

Upon hearing this, she smiled again. "Darla, I've realized our tastes are really quite similar. What I like, you happen to like too. Doesn't that mean we're destined to be mother-in-law and daughter-in-law?"

Darla smiled faintly. "Auntie, do you really want me to be your daughter-in-law?"

Cynthia replied with a smile, "Of course. You're not only beautiful but also exceptionally capable. If you were to join the Hudson family, I can't imagine how many people would envy and begrudge me as your mother-in-law!"

The more time she spent with Darla, the more she felt Darla was the perfect choice for her daughter-in-law.

Gentle, sensible, and well-mannered, with a successful career and the poise of a lady from a distinguished family, she was a rare find.

She really couldn't understand what her son was being so picky about. Faced with such an outstanding and perfect woman, how could he not be moved?!

She suspected he was blind!

No wonder he hasn't found a girlfriend in all this time.

Not long ago, he kept insisting he already had a girlfriend, but more than a month had passed and he hasn't brought her home yet. He must have been lying to her, just to get her off his back.

Darla paused for a moment, testing Cynthia's reaction. "Auntie, if...Stephan ever actually brings a girlfriend home one day, would you approve, or..."

Cynthia chuckled, replying without a moment's hesitation, "Oh, come on, that's impossible. If he were really capable of bringing someone home, he wouldn't need me to set him up on blind dates every day!"

Darla bit her lip. "I mean, just in case... just in case it were possible..."

“Well...” Cynthia hesitated. If her son really did bring a girlfriend home...and if she was someone he genuinely liked, as his mother, she had no reason to stand in the way of their happiness.

After all... she wasn't some cruel mother-in-law. But if her son had just picked someone at random to placate her, that would be a different story.

Seeing Cynthia's hesitation, Darla's expression darkened slightly.

If Stephan really did bring that woman home, Cynthia might just agree.

If that woman were of a vastly different social standing, it wouldn't be so bad. But if their statuses were similar, wouldn't she have absolutely no chance of competing?

Her only advantage right now was the favorable impression she'd made on Cynthia. What if, one day, that woman outshone her? Wouldn't she then have no advantage at all?

She hadn't made much progress with Stephan yet, and now another woman had suddenly appeared by his side. In that case... she would have no chance of winning.

No, she had to find a way to expose the woman by Stephan's side!

Cynthia didn't want the conversation to go cold either, so she smiled and changed the subject. “Darla, we've talked about this enough. Let's go eat first.”

Darla nodded, her mind heavy with worry. “Okay.”

Stephan took Alana back to his house.

He carried her over and set her down on the sofa, then went to pour a glass of warm water and handed it to her.

His thoughtful gesture warmed Alana's heart.

He had carried her all the way; he was the one who should have needed a drink right away. But he thought of her first.

She obediently took a few small sips, then let Stephan drink the rest.

Alana seemed to remember something. She bit her lip and asked, “The bed in the bedroom has collapsed. Where are we going to sleep tonight?”

Stephan curved his lips. "I've already had someone order a new bed. Just give me a moment to make a call, and someone will deliver it right to our door."

Alana asked, her face flushing, "Then what about the broken bed? Are we going to throw it away?"

Stephan raised an eyebrow. "We won't throw it away. We'll keep it as a memento. That is my trophy...I can't part with it."

Alana gasped.

She was at a loss for words.

Less than half an hour after the man made the call, the new bed was delivered to the door.

But it wasn't just one bed.

To give Alana plenty of options, he had several delivered.

Several carefully selected large beds were arranged in the living room by a team of deliverymen, leaving the choice entirely up to the guest.

Stephan glanced at her, ruffling her hair with his large hand. "Take a look. Pick whichever one you like."

Alana hadn't expected him to be so proactive, and she certainly hadn't imagined he'd actually managed to arrange for several beds to be delivered right to their doorstep, leaving the choice entirely up to her.

Moreover, these beds were even larger than their old one; even four or five people could lie on them comfortably.

Was it really necessary to get such a huge bed just for the two of them?

Alana really wanted to ask, but with so many people around, she felt too embarrassed to do so.

She blinked and looked at the group of deliverymen. "Can I go lie down on one?"

Whether she liked it or not was secondary; the most important thing was that it was comfortable to lie on.

The delivery man replied, "Of course you can."

Alana immediately sat down on one of the beds, which bounced slightly.

It was springy and comfortable.

She tried lying down.

It was soft, like sinking into a marshmallow.

Stephan stood by the bed, smiling as he looked at the woman lying there. “Is it comfortable?”

Alana playfully rolled over, “Not bad, it’s pretty good. Want to try something else?”

“Sure.”

Alana tried several more, and the experience was great with each one.

Stephan pressed down on the one Alana was lying on and asked the deliverymen, “Are these beds sturdy?”

The delivery man nodded with a smile. “Mr. Hudson, they’re very sturdy.”

“If two people lie on the bed together, will it hold up no matter how we move?”

The delivery men instantly exchanged bewildered glances.

Um... exactly how would two people have to move together to break the bed? That was really hard to guess.

Alana’s eyes dilated.

What do you mean, “No matter how two people move on a bed together, it won’t break”? Dude, could you please not be so suggestive?

Alana caught the deliverymen’s shocked and absurd stares and couldn’t help but cover her flushed face.

Help!

He was the one speaking, so why did she feel like she was the one being embarrassed? The delivery man snapped out of it and cleared his throat apologetically. “Um, Mr. Hudson,

rest assured, these beds have all been carefully selected and are of excellent quality. No matter how much two people move around, they won't break."

Stephan's expression didn't change. "Mm."

He then turned to Alana. "Sweetheart, which one feels most comfortable to lie on? Pick one."

Alana still covered her face with one hand, but she pointed at the bed she was lying on.

Well, as long as no one could see her, they wouldn't see the embarrassment on her face.

After the bed was chosen, the deliverymen set it up in the bedroom. Of course, they also noticed the bed in the room that was half-collapsed.

Looking at that sagging bed, there were still some rather suggestive marks on it.

They understood exactly why Stephan had asked earlier if the bed was sturdy.

The delivery crew carried the broken bed downstairs to the storage room and left one by one.

However, as they left, the looks they cast at Stephan and Alana were slightly ambiguous.

Alana swallowed.

What an embarrassing shopping experience.

Once everyone had left, she couldn't help but clench her fists and give the man a hard punch. "It's your fault! How embarrassing!"

Stephan looked at her flushed cheeks with amusement. "How was that embarrassing?"

Alana scolded him in a mix of shame and anger, "And you had the nerve to say that You had the nerve to say those things!"

Stephan raised an eyebrow and asked deliberately, "What did I say? Why would I be too embarrassed to say it?"

She puffed out her cheeks, refusing to even acknowledge him.

He was so shameless.

Stephan couldn't resist cupping the girl's pouting face and asked with a smirk, "The new bed is ready. Want to go lie down together and get a little cozy?"

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Chapter 217 Lingering resentment

Alana refused without a second thought, “No. I’m still recovering from what you put me through last night...”

Stephan gave her cheek a playful rub with a half-smile. “What are you thinking about? I just want to lie down and rest with you. Don’t worry, I’m not that much of a beast. But if you want to, I wouldn’t mind fulfilling your wishes...”

Ashamed, Alana pressed her lips against his. “Enough, don’t say that!”

Stephan’s lips curved upward, thoroughly enjoying the kiss. “My girlfriend is so bossy.

What am I supposed to do? I love it. Be a little more bossy with me, hmm?”

She pouted, “What do you mean, ‘a little more bossy’? How about I boss you around and force you to make love to me...is that what you want?”

Stephan replied shamelessly, “Yes! Please do. Have your way with me, baby. Handcuff me, strip me naked...whip me!”

Alana blushed bright red, “Pervert!”

Stephan curved his lips and seized the moment to pick her up. “Alright, this pervert is going to carry his girlfriend back to the room and love her fiercely...”

The mischievous man gave the girl in his arms a playful jolt, causing her to quickly wrap her arms around his neck, her face pale with fear. “Aaaah, no! Let me go!”

“Your protest is invalid!”

After resting for two days, Alana could walk normally again and had to return to the office.

When she returned, Carla and a few colleagues came over to ask about her leg, how she’d suddenly sprained it out of the blue.

Alana was too embarrassed to tell the truth, so she simply said she’d been walking carelessly and twisted her ankle.

After two days off, a lot of work had piled up.

After handling the mountain of work, she took a moment to visit the HR department and asked the HR director if her resignation had been approved yet.

After all, it had been several days since she submitted her resignation letter, and with no word at all, she wanted to check on the status.

The answer was that it hadn't been approved.

Alana was puzzled. "Why? What's the reason why my resignation hasn't been approved?"

The HR Director asked in puzzlement, "Alana, why do you want to resign? Isn't your current job going well? You've just transitioned from an intern to a full-time employee, you're Manager Cole's right-hand person, and your salary jumped from four thousand to seven thousand. If you resign, won't all your hard work over the past few months be for nothing?"

Alana didn't really want to resign either. After all, she had worked hard during her time here, made new friends, and gradually adapted to the company's business model.

Plus, she had successfully transitioned to a full-time position and received a significant pay raise.

If she quit and moved to another company, she'd have to start all over again, working hard, adapting to a new environment, and rebuilding her professional network.

But whenever she thought of the suffocating pressure Cole occasionally put on her, she still made the painful decision.

Alana said, "I'm sorry, but I have personal reasons."

The HR director tried to persuade her, "For a woman, your career is what really matters. What personal reason could possibly be more important than your career? Think it over carefully. Don't let a minor personal matter derail your career. You still have room for promotion, please consider this carefully before making a decision."

Alana nodded. "I know, but I've already made my decision. Please approve my resignation as soon as possible."

The HR Director hesitated. It wasn't that she didn't want to approve it!

It was just that higher-ups had instructed her to hold it up and not approve it.

After a moment's hesitation, she decided to be honest. "Alana, you're now a full-time

employee of the company and Manager Cole's right-hand person. Your resignation requires his approval."

Alana was taken aback. "Can't I just resign on my own?"

The HR Director replied tactfully, "Well, regarding the specifics, you should ask Manager Cole. If he agrees, I can approve it as well."

Alana fell silent for a moment, then nodded. "Okay, I understand. Thank you, Director."

"You're welcome."

Alana returned to her desk, deep in thought.

From the way the HR Director spoke, it seemed Cole was deliberately holding up her resignation request, preventing HR from approving it.

So, what exactly was Cole up to?

Why won't he let her resign?

Given their awkward relationship, she had thought she could resign smoothly without going through him.

But now it looked like she'd have to go through him after all.

After a moment's hesitation, she decided to go see Cole.

Seeing that the office door was open and the man was working alone, Alana walked right in. "Manager Cole."

Cole heard the voice and slowly looked up. Seeing it was Alana, the corners of his mouth turned up slightly, and his tone was friendly.

"Lana, you look well. Is your foot better?"

Alana looked at him. It had only been two days, but he seemed somewhat haggard; she wondered what he had been through.

But none of that was any of her business anymore.

She nodded and replied politely, "Yes, thank you for asking. I'm fine now."

Cole smiled. "That's good to hear."

His smile was gentle, as if the acrimonious parting from that day had never happened.

Alana looked at his weary, bloodshot eyes behind the gold-rimmed glasses. Her lips trembled slightly; she wanted to speak but held back, unsure how to begin.

Cole saw right through her thoughts and said with a smile, "If there's something on your mind, just say it."

Alana paused for a moment. "I... want to quit."

Cole's expression remained unchanged, though his fists tightened imperceptibly. He stared at her. "Resign? Why?"

Alana shook her head. "There's no reason. I just don't want to do it anymore. I want to find another job."

Cole pursed his thin lips. "Is it because you think the pay is too low? If seven thousand is a bit low, I'll raise it to ten thousand for you."

"It's not about the salary being too low."

Cole furrowed his brow. "Do you think I'm giving you too much work? I'll lighten your workload a bit from now on. You won't have to work overtime anymore...just stick to regular hours."

"It's not about the workload either."

"Then what is the problem?"

Alana replied earnestly, "It's my own issue. I told you, I don't want to work here anymore. I want to find another job."

Cole tugged at the corner of his mouth.

Was it that she doesn't want to work here, or that she doesn't want to work by his side? Did she really not want to be around him that much?

"Lana, is it because of what I said to you that's troubling you, and that's why you've decided to quit?"

Alana fell silent.

Her silence spoke volumes.

Cole looked at her and said sincerely, “I apologize. I shouldn’t have said those things to you. I won’t say them again. Will that allow you to continue working with peace of mind?”

Alana bit her lip and said stubbornly, “I’m sorry, but I still want to quit.”

Cole’s face paled slightly.

Unwilling to accept this, he asked, “Lana, is this your own decision to quit, or did your boyfriend take it upon himself to decide for you and pressure you to quit?”

Alana shook her head. “It wasn’t him. It was my own decision.”

Cole looked at her and continued, “Then why do you insist on quitting? Haven’t I given you enough? If you quit now and look for another job, the benefits and compensation might not be as good as what you have here!”

Cole tried to speak gently, trying his best to dissuade her. “Lana, be a good girl. Don’t quit, okay? As long as you’re willing to stay and work here, I’ll give you anything you want.”

Alana thought for a moment, then shook her head firmly in refusal.

Cole’s heart sank.

She really wasn’t giving him even the slightest glimmer of hope.

He could have used force to keep her, but he didn’t want her to hate him.

What happened before had already left a lingering resentment in her heart, and he didn’t want their relationship to deteriorate any further.

Chapter 218 Standing there again

After much deliberation, he relented. “Alright. Once I’ve found a new assistant, I’ll approve your resignation.”

Hearing this, Alana’s tense expression softened slightly.

She asked softly, “When do you think you’ll have found someone?”

“Soon.”

Cole’s reply was vague.

Alana hesitated for a moment but decided not to press the issue.

After all, as long as he agreed to her resignation, asking more questions might make things awkward.

“Thank you. I’ll go back to work now.”

When Cole saw Alana about to turn and leave, his eyes darkened slightly, and

he asked, “Lana, you promised to bring your boyfriend to treat me to a meal, you haven’t kept that promise yet.”

Alana bit her lip, looking somewhat troubled. “I think it’s better if you two don’t meet.”

She recalled how he’d reacted strongly the last time she’d mentioned inviting Cole to dinner.

Moreover, when she had asked him if he’d be willing to go, he hadn’t agreed, clearly, he wasn’t interested.

So, bringing this up with Stephan again made her feel quite torn.

Cole stared intently at her face, as if he could see right through her inner reservations.

He smiled. “Are you worried I’ll make things difficult for him? Don’t worry, I won’t put him on a tight spot. I just want to confirm whether that man treats you well, that’s all.”

“It’s not for that reason. It’s...”

Cole fixed his gaze on her and pressed, “Then what is it? Because he’s too scared to see me?”

He had guessed her boyfriend was timid and cowardly, but he never imagined he lacked even that much courage.

How could a man like that possibly be qualified to make her happy?

A strong sense of resentment welled up inside Cole, and he was tempted to impulsively urge her once again to break up with that man.

But... he forced himself to hold back.

Because he knew that no matter what he said now, she wouldn’t agree. It would only make their relationship even more awkward.

Alana immediately denied it, “It’s not for that reason...”

Cole tugged at the corner of his mouth, not taking her seriously; he simply assumed Alana was trying to protect her boyfriend's laughable sense of dignity.

A man who needs his woman to help uphold his dignity was no better than a worthless piece of trash.

"If it's not that, then what else could it be?"

"Well, I told you, he's the jealous type and doesn't like it when I mention other men..."

Hearing himself categorized as "another man," Cole's breathing grew slightly ragged. "Whatever the reason, this is what you agreed to from the start, isn't it?"

Alana was at a loss for words and couldn't come up with a rebuttal.

At the same time, she regretted it...why had she gone and made trouble for herself?

Sure enough, Stephan was right...her intentions were good, but he'd told her not to go.

Now she regretted going at all, she'd just been showing off.

You learn from your mistakes. Next time before doing a good deed, she'd better weigh her own capabilities first and not go in blindly only to end up with egg on her face.

Alana reluctantly agreed, "Well... all right, I'll confirm the time with him."

Cole nodded, a smile playing at the corners of his mouth. "Alright, I'll wait for you."

"I'll head out now."

"Alright."

Alana couldn't wait to leave.

Cole watched her retreating figure, his eyes behind his glasses shifting unpredictably.

He thought to himself: Since he couldn't win her over, he would deal with her weak and incompetent boyfriend instead.

If that man took the initiative to break up with Alana, wouldn't she then come back to him on her own?

If she were willing to come back to him, she wouldn't be so fixated on quitting her job anymore.

Alana returned to her desk, hesitating over how to broach the subject with Stephan. Should she bring it up directly, or hint at it subtly?

Should she bring it up now, or wait until she gets back?

But before she could reach a decision, Stephan sent her a message.

Stephan: [Sweetheart, I have a business dinner tonight and might be home a little late. Get some rest early.]

When Alana saw the message, her inner turmoil finally came to a resolution. He has a business dinner tonight, so he's busy.

If he's not available, there's no point bringing it up. I'll wait until he has time.

After making up her mind, Alana replied,

Alana: [Okay.]

After a moment's hesitation, she added another line.

Alana: [Don't drink too much, and come home early.]

Stephan received that first single "Okay" and wasn't surprised.

After all, she was like this, her responses were typically robotic.

Getting even a single word back was already a sign of her utmost sincerity.

He'd looked into it, some men's girlfriends were too lazy to even reply at all.

So, he should be content and not ask too much of his girlfriend.

See? A sensible boyfriend already knows how to give his girlfriend a way out.

An inconsiderate boyfriend, upon seeing such a robotic reply from his girlfriend, might even stir up trouble and make a few snide remarks.

See? He perfectly embodies the self-discipline of a qualified boyfriend. Stephan was just about to put his phone down after praising himself.

Suddenly, a new message popped up on the screen.

Upon reading the message, the corner of his mouth turned up slightly.

Who said his girlfriend was a robot?

His girlfriend was clearly a warm-hearted and loving sweetheart!

Tonight, Stephan had a business dinner, so Alana planned to cook herself some tomato and egg noodles to get by for dinner.

But she hadn't expected that there were no tomatoes or eggs left in his fridge.

She realized that lately, he'd been doing most of the cooking and buying the groceries.

Living with him, she'd basically been freeloading, never having to worry about a thing, just eating, sleeping, and living it up.

She'd even put on a few pounds.

She had to admit that, lately, Stephan had been taking excellent care of her.

They say loving someone was like tending to a flower, and Stephan... wasn't he, in a way, nurturing her just like a flower?

Alana smiled, closed the refrigerator, and got ready to head to the nearby grocery store to buy some groceries.

The supermarket was very close to the apartment, only about 500 meters away.

Since she was already at the supermarket, Alana didn't want to skimp on herself. After picking out the vegetables she liked, she also grabbed some snacks.

Spotting a row of instant noodles, Alana instinctively picked up a few packs.

Mainly because she was sometimes too lazy to cook, so she'd just boil up some instant noodles for herself.

Although instant noodles weren't very nutritious, they fill you up and are perfect for office workers.

However, she hadn't eaten instant noodles since she started dating Stephan.

Oh well, she'd already picked them up. It was okay to switch things up every now and then, having a little now and then was fine. After all, instant noodles do smell and taste pretty good.

After picking and choosing, her shopping cart was almost full.

Alana pushed it over to the checkout counter to pay.

The cashier checked the total and said with a smile, “Hello, that comes to 1,380. Would you like to pay in cash or...”

Alana handed over her bank card. “Card.”

The cashier took her card and swiped it through the machine.

The card reader beeped.

The cashier swiped it several times, but the result was the same.

She looked at Alana. “I’m sorry, ma’am, but it shows here that your card has insufficient funds.”

Alana felt her face grow hot, so she pulled out another card from her purse and handed it to the cashier.

“Oh, sorry, I’ll use this one instead.”

The cashier tried swiping the other card, but it still showed an insufficient balance.”

Alana only had two cards, and she never expected both to have insufficient funds, it was so embarrassing.

She remembered that she had spent too much money buying ties and those sexy nightgowns for Stephan, leaving her with less than a thousand dollars on both bank cards.

The cashier smiled at her. “Miss, how would you like to pay?”

After all, there were people waiting in line behind her, so she couldn’t hold them up for too long.

Alana blushed. “Um, I’m really sorry. Just give me a few minutes, I...” Suddenly, someone tapped her on the shoulder.

She turned around to find Darla standing there again.

Chapter 219 More flirtatious

Chapter 219 More flirtatious

Darla smiled. “It’s only a little over a thousand dollars. I’ll lend it to you!”

With that, she pulled out her black card and handed it to the cashier. “Charge it to my card!”

When Alana saw Darla’s black card, she suddenly remembered that Stephan had given her one too.

However, she was afraid of losing it, so she hadn’t brought it with her.

The cashier, seeing the black card Darla handed over, instinctively reached out to take it.

Alana quickly stopped her, then said to Darla, “Thanks for the offer, but it’s not necessary.”

Darla smiled, amused by Alana’s overreaction.

“It’s only a thousand dollars, not a huge amount. What’s the matter? Are you afraid you can’t pay me back? If you can’t pay it back, just forget it. Consider it a gift for making you my friend.”

Darla had spotted Alana a while ago, but hadn’t called out to her.

Having seen Alana a few times before, always dressed smartly and with a certain poise, Darla had assumed she was from a wealthy family.

She never expected that Alana wouldn’t even be able to come up with a thousand dollars.

That meant she was wrong the other time. She definitely wasn’t Stephan’s girlfriend.

Seeing her standing alone at the cash register, flustered and at a loss because she couldn’t pay, she looked a bit pitiful, so Darla kindly stepped in to help.

Alana didn’t want to owe Darla a favor, so she politely declined, “Really, it’s okay. I’ll just call my boyfriend and ask him to help.”

Her kindness met with a cold shoulder, so Darla didn’t press the issue and put her bank card away.

“Alright then.”

Alana gave a polite smile, apologized to the cashier, then picked up her phone and turned to call Stephan.

It wasn't even eight o'clock yet, so Stephan was still out at a business dinner.

At such gatherings, it was inevitable that he'd have a few drinks.

However, Stephan kept Alana's advice in mind and drank sparingly.

As for the majority of the alcohol, it all ended up in the mouth of his assistant, Vance. Vance found the alcohol bitter, but his heart was even more so...yet he simply

couldn't bring himself to say anything.

Several of the business partners had wives at home, and not long after the gathering began, one after another, they started calling or sending messages asking when their husbands would be back.

"Mr. Hudson, I'm sorry, but my wife is quite clingy. She needs me to eat with her and needs me to tuck her in at night. Since I'm out this late, she's worried and fears I might be flirting with other women."

"My wife's the same. She's constantly texting and calling, she's love to check up on me 24/7!"

"Mine's the same!"

"Just listen to this...what a miserable life we live, day in and day out!"

Stephan listened as the executives complained about their clingy wives, his face expressionless.

He seemed unfazed, but inside, he felt a pang of bitterness.

Were these old guys complaining or bragging when they talked about this in front of him? In any case, it made him feel uneasy. Even though their business was nearly wrapped up, he didn't want to let a single one of them leave.

It was not like he had a woman texting him 24/7....unlike them. Hmph!

Vance glanced at his CEO's expression and inwardly gasped.

Usually, it was the CEO who flaunted his romance in front of him...now that someone else was doing it, he was feeling a bit sour, wasn't he?

Vance held back a laugh, finally, his boss getting a taste of what it was like for a single guy to be force-fed dog food! One of the other executives also noticed that Stephan was acting strange.

Seeing his face as dark as a piece of charcoal, and not knowing which remark had rubbed him the wrong way, he quickly stepped in to smooth things over.

“Oh, come on, let’s not go there. President Hudson is still single...he doesn’t understand the struggles of us married men, so let’s not show off... or rather, let’s not complain!”

“Mr. Hudson must be so happy being single!”

“Exactly! Unlike us, who have to spend our social events trying to appease that tigress at home...it’s such a drag!”

Stephan took a leisurely sip of red wine, a subtle smile playing on his lips. “I’ve already announced it to my buddies, but I forgot to tell you all. I have a girlfriend now...I’m not single.”

The other executives were all taken aback. “What? Mr. Hudson has a girlfriend?”

“I never would have guessed that President Hudson, who’s been single forever, would finally find a girlfriend!”

“Just who is the beauty who caught Mr. Hudson’s eye?”

“Yeah, back in the day, I set up so many women for Mr. Hudson to try to curry his favor, but not a single one managed to win his attention. I even thought he was gay...I was ready to set him up with men!” President Marco opened his big mouth, revealing a mouthful of gold teeth, and

accidentally let the truth slip.

Stephan shot a glance at him, his gaze turning a shade colder.

Marco’s heart sank instantly as he realized he’d said the wrong thing, and he quickly shut his mouth full of gold teeth.

He even slapped his own face hard.

“Ahem, ahem, my apologies. I was just joking...I certainly didn’t mean it!”

Stephan remained expressionless. “Whether it’s true or not, don’t pull that kind of stunt on me in the future. After all, I’m a man with a girlfriend, I cannot hurt her.”

Marco wiped the cold sweat from his forehead. “Yes, yes, yes!”

He never would have imagined that a man like Stephan standing at the very top of the pyramid, with the power to make the world go his way, could actually be kept in check by his girlfriend?

That was truly eye-opening.

Seeing that things were taking a turn for the worse, the other executives quickly changed the subject.

Suddenly, Stephan’s phone in his pocket rang.

He pulled it out and saw it was Alana calling; the corners of his mouth turned up slightly.

He raised an eyebrow, casting a somewhat triumphant glance at the executives.

“Sorry, my girlfriend is also clingy, she wants my attention all the time so she’s calling to check in. I’ll take the call.”

Paying no heed to the executives’ reactions, Stephan answered the call.

His expression, which had been stern just moments ago, instantly softened into one of tenderness and affection. His voice was deep, magnetic, and alluring. “Sweetheart, what’s up? Why are you calling me? Are you missing me too much?”

That deep, magnetic voice sent shivers down the spines of the executives, giving them goosebumps all over.

Where was the Almighty Stephan Hudson’s aloof persona?

Alana, who was in the supermarket, also felt a tingling sensation in her ears from the man’s deep, seductive voice.

Her cheeks flushed involuntarily.

Seriously, this guy, wasn’t he supposed to be on a business dinner?

Why was he still being so unprofessional?

But then she realized he must have stepped outside to take the call, with no one around which was why he dared to be so bold.

Since he’d asked, she couldn’t very well say she didn’t miss him, after all, she’d

need to ask him for money to pay the bill later...so she bit her lip and said, "Yeah, I missed you."

Stephan deliberately put the call on speakerphone so the girl's soft, sweet voice carried right into the ears of everyone in the private room.

This sudden dose of romance caught the executives completely off guard.

Vance remained relatively calm, after all, this wasn't the first time he'd been subjected to it.

Stephan glanced at the embarrassed expressions on the executives' faces and let the corners of his mouth turn up slightly.

"How much did you miss me, hmm?"

Alana blinked.

This man was getting way too bold.

It wasn't enough for him that she said she had missed him, he had to ask just how much she missed him.

Alana's face flushed, the heat spreading from her cheeks all the way to the back of her neck.

"I miss you. I miss you so, so much. Out of ten points, nine are spent thinking about you."

Stephan raised an eyebrow, his tone light and playful. "What about the remaining one percent?"

Alana bit her full, rosy lips. "I'm taking that last one second to think about it, I'm afraid you'll get too full of yourself."

Stephan couldn't help but let the corners of his mouth turn up again.

He spoke gently, "I miss you too. Every minute, every second, I'm thinking of you...I want to be with you every moment."

The onlookers were getting even more tensed.

Wait, were they just part of this couple's little game?

The couple really didn't care about them at all.

Alana couldn't help but rub her face, which was growing hotter by the second.

Why did he seem to be getting more and more flirtatious?

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Chapter 220 Anything anywhere

Chapter 220 Anything anywhere

Anytime, anywhere...

But she had no idea that her conversation with Stephan had been completely overheard; otherwise, she'd feel so embarrassed.

Alana remembered the main point and quickly asked, "Um, are you free right now? I need your help with something."

"What do you need?"

She replied, "I bought some stuff at the supermarket, but I don't have enough money to pay. Could you transfer me a thousand dollars?"

Everyone gasped.

What was going on?

Does Mr. Hudson's girlfriend not have enough money to spend?

Could it be that Mr. Hudson was stingy and hasn't given his girlfriend any spending money?

Stephan glanced at the group of executives watching the spectacle, realized his reputation was being tarnished.

He furrowed his brow, and immediately set the record straight.

"Sweetheart, didn't I give you one of my black cards? Why aren't you using it?"

Alana looked very embarrassed. "I forgot to bring it."

Stephan snorted with a laugh. “Forgot to bring it?”

She must have left it at home on purpose, right?

He’d given her his card, yet she was still reluctant to use it, he really didn’t know what to say to her.

“Remember to keep it with you from now on.”

“Okay, um, now...”

“I’ll transfer it to you right away.” Stephan tapped his fingers and transferred ten million directly to her.

Alana gasped when she saw the sudden appearance of ten million in her account.

“Ten million? Did your hand slip? Did you add a few extra zeros by mistake?”

“No, my hand is as steady as a rock.”

“But you didn’t need to send me that much...I was only short a thousand dollars.”

Alana’s mind raced with panic. Could he have transferred his entire fortune to her?

Stephan curved his lips. “It’s fine. Use it for now. I’m leaving the rest in your care. Use it whenever you need it. After all, what’s mine is yours.”

Alana felt a warm glow in her heart. “Okay, we’ll talk when you get home. I’ll go pay the bill so I don’t keep you from getting back to work.”

“Wait, don’t hang up yet. Kiss me before you do.”

Alana’s face flushed again.

This man! How did she end up dating such a frivolous man?

Oh well, she chose him herself, so she might as well spoil him.

She pressed her hand over her mouth and whispered into the phone, “Muah...”

A soft, sweet voice drifted over, burrowing into Stephan’s eardrums and immediately sending a thrill through his chest.

A tingling sensation, like an electric current running through him, tingling, sweet sensation.

In that moment, the man felt as if his heart was melting.

Alana's cheeks flushed as she lowered her voice. "Okay, no more kissing. I've got things to do. We'll kiss when you get back. I'm hanging up now. Bye."

Without waiting for his reply, she hung up.

Stephan's expression clearly showed he wasn't ready to end the call.

The other executives were no strangers to such matters. Seeing Stephan's dejected look, they all guessed he'd fallen head over heels.

Forced to endure this public display of affection, they had no choice but to put on flattering smiles.

"Mr. Hudson, you and your girlfriend are truly a loving couple!"

"When are you getting married? We'd like to prepare our envelopes in advance!"

Stephan smiled faintly. "Soon."

"I'm almost done with the courtship process. When the time is right, I'll bring her home to meet my parents, and then we'll discuss marriage. Dating, meeting the parents, discussing engagement, and then getting married...we'll take it step by step, one at a time. The order can't be changed. We can't skip any of the necessary steps."

The executives smiled and offered their blessings.

"No matter when the wedding takes place, we'd like to wish you and your girlfriend a long and happy life together, and a union that lasts a hundred years!"

"May you be blessed with children soon!"

Stephan raised an eyebrow.

They were going to let him get ahead of himself now, if he did, he might even come up with a name for the baby right now, a baby he'd have with Alana in the future.

Maybe they should have a baby girl just like her, delicate and adorable.

She'd surely be a delight.

Then, with Alana in his left arm and his daughter in his right, the three of them together...what a beautiful picture that would be.

Lost in these thoughts, Stephan lost all interest in lingering any longer. “Alright, let’s call it a night. My girlfriend says she misses me, so I need to head home early to spend time with her.”

Meanwhile, at the supermarket.

Alana had successfully checked out and was about to leave with her bags.

However, Darla suddenly stopped her.

She asked, “Alana, could you tell me who your boyfriend is?”

She was startled. She had thought Darla had left long ago, but to her surprise, she was still there.

Also, wasn’t Darla aware of her relationship with Stephan?

Or she needed further confirmation?

Hearing Darla mention her boyfriend, Alana’s heart gave a sudden jolt. “Why... why are you asking about my boyfriend?”

Darla had been quite curious about her boyfriend, so while Alana was intently on the phone, she had eavesdropped a little.

But to her surprise, when she heard the man’s voice on the phone, it felt very familiar.

It sounded like she’d heard it somewhere before.

Could it be that Alana’s boyfriend was a male friend she knew?

What’s more, when Alana asked her boyfriend to transfer money, he actually sent her ten million dollars in one go. The fact that he could casually hand over ten million meant her boyfriend wasn’t just rich...he was incredibly wealthy.

He’s probably the son of some wealthy family. And... he might even be someone she knows. “I just want to know if I know your boyfriend.”

Seeing that Alana wasn’t responding, Darla continued,

“Last time you were at the supermarket with your boyfriend, I saw my fiancé, Stephan. So I didn’t get a chance to meet your boyfriend then. Tell me now...who knows, maybe I actually know him.”

Fiancé?

Stephan didn't tell her they were dating?

Alana's heart skipped a beat.

Why the heck was she referring to Stephan as her boyfriend?

When did her boyfriend become Darla's fiancé?

Alana felt a lump in her throat. For a moment, she wanted to tell Darla straight out that her boyfriend was Stephan!

Stephan was hers, he was definitely not Darla's fiancé!

But then she thought about how Darla might be the future daughter-in-law recognized by Stephan's parents, and might even already be acting as his fiancée to his parents.

Alana felt as if something were blocking her throat; she couldn't get a single word out.

"Sorry, I have to go." Alana fled the scene as if in a panic, hurrying away with her bag in hand.

Darla watched her retreating figure and narrowed her eyes.

Darla had run into Alana a few times already. Since she lived nearby, and might even be living with her boyfriend...

If she followed her now and found out where Alana lived, she might even be able to find out who her boyfriend was...

Darla wasn't in the habit of following people, but at that moment, she really felt an urgent desire to confirm out who Alana's boyfriend was.

Especially... after hearing that man's voice on the phone....that faint, yet unmistakable sense of familiarity was overwhelming.

Darla was about to run after her when her phone suddenly rang.

It was a call from the hospital.

"Dr. Gordon, one of your patients is here looking for you. Could you please come to the hospital?"

"Okay, I'll be right there."

Alana returned to Stephan's apartment, set the bags on the coffee table, then sat on the sofa and stared into space for a moment.

Even though she and Stephan were officially dating now, every time she faced Darla and heard her refer to herself as Stephan's fiancée, she felt as if she were having an affair with him.

It felt illegitimate and improper, like she was a mistress hiding in the shadows.

Why was she thinking this way?

Besides, Stephan had already told her that he didn't like Darla and wouldn't marry her; it was just his mother who had taken it upon herself to treat Darla as her future daughter-in-law.

Alana, stop overthinking this.

Don't let some delusional woman affect your relationship with Stephan.

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Chapter 221 This once

Chapter 221 This once

She kept telling herself not to care, but her heart still felt heavy.

It seemed she was growing increasingly attached to Stephan. If one day she broke up with him, would he end up marrying Darla?

But she didn't want him to marry another woman one day.

If he doesn't marry another woman, then... would he marry her?

Would his parents accept her?

If his parents didn't accept her, what kind of ending would she and Stephan have?

Would they stay together, or be forced apart?

When Alana thought about this, her eyelid twitched violently.

What was going on?

She was clearly so against marriage...how could she be imagining herself marrying Stephan in the future?

When she first got together with him, wasn't it... just to date?

The more she thought about it, the more confused she became.

Alana had lost all desire to cook noodles for herself. She decided to boil some water, make herself a bowl of instant noodles, and just get it over with.

Just as the noodles were ready and she was about to sit down to eat, she heard the door open.

With the noodles in her mouth, Alana heard the sound, slurped them down in one go, and without a second thought, carried the bowl out of the kitchen.

Stephan was standing in the entryway, taking off his black leather shoes.

Alana looked at the man's handsome, striking features and suddenly found the instant noodles in her mouth tasted even better.

She was pleasantly surprised. "Weren't you out for a business dinner? Why are you back so early?"

He slipped on his slippers, then took off his black tailored jacket and walked toward her.

"Didn't you say you missed me? My girlfriend is all alone and feeling lonely and cold at home. As a considerate boyfriend, of course I'd hurry back to keep you company."

Alana smiled sweetly.

The frustration she'd been feeling just moments ago crumbled away and vanished in the face of his sweet talk.

That's right!

They were still in the honeymoon phase; they couldn't let some woman's idle chatter

affect their relationship.

Stephan sensed something was off, and his gaze involuntarily fell on the cup of instant noodles the girl was holding. “What are you eating?”

She replied, “Instant noodles.”

He walked over to Alana and saw that the cup of instant noodles she was holding contained only rehydrated noodles and a few scattered vegetable pieces...not even any meat.

He couldn’t help but frown. “Just instant noodles? Is this how you treat yourself when I’m not around?”

Alana blinked and said earnestly, “No, instant noodles are pretty tasty. They smell great. Don’t believe me? Try some.”

The girl picked up a forkful of noodles and held it to the man’s lips.

Stephan had never eaten instant noodles before. He’d heard that instant noodles were junk food...unhealthy and unsanitary so he instinctively resisted and refused to eat it.

He turned his head away. “I’m not eating it. Instant noodles aren’t hygienic.”

Alana had enthusiastically invited him to bring her some food, but she never expected to be left hanging.

“Fine, if you won’t eat it, I will.” She pulled her hand back, ready to shove the instant noodles into her own mouth.

Stephan suddenly reached out and snatched the fork and noodles from her hand. “You’re not allowed to eat it either!”

“Huh?!”

He looked somewhat exasperated. “Everyone says it’s unsanitary...why are you still eating it?”

Alana replied earnestly, “But I don’t eat it often. Sometimes work is just too exhausting, and I’m too lazy to cook, so I just make some instant noodles. It doesn’t really matter.”

Stephan couldn’t help but ruffle her hair, chuckling, “You little... If you’re too lazy to cook, just tell me, and I’ll make something for you right away.”

Alana replied earnestly, “But you just got back from a business dinner. I don’t want you to be too tired.”

Stephan retorted with a straight face, “Cooking for my girlfriend is a pleasure, not a chore.”

Her eyes lit up. “Is that true?”

He chuckled, “Why would I lie to you? Give me a kiss, and I’ll cook for you right away.”

Hearing this, Alana couldn’t wait, she stood on her tiptoes and kissed him on the lips.

Stephan wasn’t satisfied. He wrapped his arms around her waist and kissed her passionately for a long time.

He didn’t let her go until her legs were weak from the kiss.

Then, he tossed the instant noodles Alana had prepared into the trash can, rolled up his sleeves, and headed to the kitchen to cook for her.

Alana looked at the half-eaten instant noodles in the trash can and felt a pang of regret.

“It’s okay to have them once in a while. You didn’t have to throw them away. That’s wasting the farmers’ hard-earned grain!”

Stephan shot her a sidelong glance, a smirk playing on his lips. “I’m throwing it away. What are you going to do about it?”

Alana scoffed.

After a moment of silence, she deliberately raised her little fist. “I’ll beat you up!”

Stephan glanced at the girl’s tiny pink fist, white, soft, and delicate.

If she hit him with that little fist, would it really hurt him, or would it just feel good?

He pressed his tongue firmly against his cheek, as if to restrain himself, then raised his hand without hesitation and undid the buttons of his shirt. “Go ahead, hit me! I’ll strip naked for you to hit!”

Alana saw the man eagerly undoing the top few buttons of his shirt, revealing his delicate, handsome collarbone.

She blushed in shock and quickly took a few steps back. “I won’t hit you, I won’t hit you!”

She was really afraid she would give him too much of a thrill.

Stephan chuckled.

Even if she did beat him, he wouldn't actually do anything to her...he'd just pamper her in bed afterwards.

Stephan stopped teasing her and walked over to inspect the things she had just bought.

Several large bags...who knew what she'd bought.

"Did you buy all this at the supermarket just now? What's this?"

He casually pulled out a bag of snacks.

Alana walked over and explained, "These are potato chips!"

"Potato chips?" Stephan frowned. What on earth was this?

"I've never had these in my life."

Alana sighed. "Yeah, they're made by slicing potatoes and frying them. There are tomato, beef, and lots of other flavors. My favorite is the tomato one...it's really good. If you want to try some, go ahead and open it!"

Stephan wasn't particularly interested in this kind of snack, so he didn't plan on eating any.

He took another look and noticed that there weren't just potato chips, there were all sorts of random snacks: spicy strips, cookies, bread, spicy chicken feet, sunflower seeds, and more...

There were even several packs of instant noodles, all in different flavors.

There were so many items, many of which Stephan had never even heard of or seen before.

He glanced at Alana's slightly rounded belly.

"You bought this much...are you going to be able to finish it all?"

Alana blinked and nodded earnestly, "Of course I can finish it all, it'll only take a few days."

If they couldn't finish it all at home, she could take it to work and enjoy a few snacks during her break...it would be pure bliss.

Stephan chuckled, “Lana, do I not provide you with enough to eat?”

Alana shook her head. “No, my regular three meals a day are completely different from these snacks, you can’t compare them.”

Stephan checked the ingredient lists on some of the snacks and said irritably,

“These are all junk food. Look at the ingredients...the preservatives and flavor enhancers added to them are all harmful to your health. You just said you only eat them occasionally but bought this much, are you sure it’s just ‘occasionally’?”

Alana pouted.

This guy was so nagging, he was even more controlling than her own grandmother.

“Throw it all away.” With that, he pretended to toss all those random snacks into the trash can.

Alana quickly wrapped her arms around him, clinging to his waist to stop him. “No, no, no...don’t throw them away! I’ll only buy them this once, eat them this once...I won’t buy them again.”

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Chapter 222 Not in the mood

Chapter 222 Not in the mood

If she couldn’t even eat snacks, life would be no fun at all.

Stephan watched as the girl buried her face in his chest, her soft cheeks rubbing against him, her clear eyes looking pitiful, she looked just like a little kitten trying to be cute and clingy.

Stephan couldn’t take it anymore, how was this any different from blatant temptation and seduction?!

He immediately cupped her chin and planted another fierce kiss on her lips.

Alana, eager to keep the snacks, played along, actively returning his kiss.

A few minutes later, Stephan released the breathless woman, gazing at her soft, rosy, glossy lips, and said cheerfully, "Alright, I'll let you keep them, but this is a one-time exception."

Alana breathed a sigh of relief.

She thought to herself, "Beauty really does work wonders."

Since Alana had also bought vegetables and meat, Stephan took them to the kitchen to prep them quickly.

In less than half an hour, a steaming bowl of beef noodles soup was ready.

Stephan brought it over to her. "Try it. See if it suits your taste. I added noddles to make you happy. It's healthier this way."

Alana glanced at the beef noodle soup the man had made. The noodles were barely visible; the broth was covered with a layer of sliced meat and greens, along with a slice of fried egg and a sprinkle of chopped scallions.

The aroma wafting from the soup was inviting, and it looked pretty good too.

Alana picked up her chopsticks, stirred the soup a bit, then took a bite. The noodles were soaked in the savory broth and tasted delicious.

She didn't hold back her praise. "Mmm, delicious."

Stephan curved his lips. "If you like it, have some more."

Alana looked at the large, full bowl and seemed a bit hesitant. "But you made so much...I don't think I can finish it all."

"If you can't finish it, I'll eat it."

Alana shot him a look. "Do you have a habit of eating leftovers?"

Stephan raised an eyebrow, his smooth talk coming effortlessly, "No, but what you leave behind is a culinary delight, I can't bear to waste it."

Alana's cheeks flushed again. She quickly lowered her head, pretending to be focused on eating, and not falling even deeper in love with her boyfriend.

After eating to her fill and taking a shower, Alana didn't go to bed early; she sat on the couch cracking sunflower seeds and watching TV.

Stephan, meanwhile, was working on his laptop.

The two sat on opposite ends of the sofa, minding their own business. Yet the scene looked unusually harmonious and warm.

Alana glanced at him from time to time, afraid of disturbing his work, she picked up the remote to turn the volume down a bit.

She had intended to find an opportunity to discuss inviting Cole to dinner with him, but seeing how busy he was, she felt too shy to speak up and decided to wait until he was finished.

But as she waited, she grew drowsy and ended up falling asleep on the sofa.

Stephan looked up and saw the girl slump limply, her head resting on the arm of the sofa.

She wrapped her arms around herself, curling up into a ball.

Seeing this, Stephan set down his laptop, picked up his suit jacket, and carefully draped it over her.

He had intended to cover her with the jacket and then get back to work.

But when he saw her sweet, peaceful sleeping face, he simply couldn't bring himself to look away.

How could anyone be this adorable even while sleeping?

She looked like a soft, fluffy, milky-white little bunny.

He didn't know how long he'd been staring. Stephan was just about to pick her up and carry her to the bedroom.

Just as he was about to touch her, the phone she was holding suddenly slipped from her hand and fell to the floor.

Stephan bent down to pick it up, and just then, the screen lit up and the phone vibrated.

Then, he accidentally saw a message from Cole to Alana.

Cole: [Lana dear, when are you free to hang out?]

Stephan's eyes instantly grew cold.

Without hesitation, he blocked Cole's phone number.

After doing all that, he glanced at Alana with a hint of guilt.

Seeing that she was still fast asleep, he felt relieved.

But then he had a second thought and realized something was off.

Why was he feeling guilty?

Wasn't it perfectly normal to block a guy who was trying to steal his girlfriend?

And what was that guy up to just now?

What was he thinking, asking, "Lana dear, when are you free to hang out?"

Lana dear?!

What on earth could his girlfriend possibly have to do with that guy?

The more he thought about it, the more suspicious it seemed. With a cold expression, he paused for a moment, then unblocked Cole and messaged him directly.

Stephan: [What's this about?]

Could it be that Alana was doing something behind his back that could hurt him?

Cole hadn't expected Alana to reply so late at night; he was pleasantly surprised.

He replied immediately.

Cole: [You forgot about our dinner plans.]

Stephan's eyes instantly darkened.

A dinner date?

That scumbag of a homewrecker actually has the nerve to ask his girlfriend out to dinner?!

Does he have no shame?!

Stephan didn't hesitate to turn down the invitation on her behalf:

Alana: No way. I'm already taken, I don't go out with other men!

Cole frowned.

Cole: [But didn't you already agree to go with me?]

Stephan couldn't help but glance at Alana, who was fast asleep and completely unaware of what was going on.

He clenched his teeth, a bitter smile playing on his lips. Did she really agree to have dinner with another man behind his back?

What happened to the promise that she'd bring him along?

And now she's secretly gone ahead and made plans?

A woman's word was as good as a lie!

Stephan was furious and desperately wanted to shake the sleeping woman awake to confront her.

But he didn't do that, because a plan had suddenly come to mind. A plan to deal with this male homewrecker once and for all!

Stephan replied:

Stephan: [When should we meet?]

Cole: [Whenever you want, I'm good with anything.]

Stephan sneered. Good with anything?! What a phony!

Acting like some obedient good guy? He's just a male mistress!

Stephan: [Tomorrow night, 8 o'clock!]

Cole: [Sounds good. Where should we meet?]

Stephan paused for a moment, then gave the address of a restaurant.

Cole's lips curled into a smile when he saw the address.

Cole: [Alright, see you tomorrow night. I'll be waiting for you.]

Stephan rolled his eyes dramatically.

"Waiting for you?"

As if!

After ending the chat, Stephan deleted the chat history without hesitation and blocked Cole's contact information.

Once everything was taken care of, he picked up Alana, who was still sleeping soundly, and carried her back to their room to rest.

Alana slept soundly, almost straight through until dawn.

Just as she was about to wake up, she vaguely sensed someone staring at her, it felt eerily unsettling.

She couldn't help but open her eyes. The moment they fluttered open...still dazed and unfocused...she locked eyes with a pair of pitch-black, utterly lifeless orbs, dangerous and icy cold.

"Ahh!" She was so startled she snapped awake instantly, her face pale with fear.

Only after fully waking up did she realize that the owner of those eyes was none other than Stephan!

At that moment, Stephan was sitting in a chair, his legs crossed, his arms folded across his chest, staring intently at her.

His dark eyes were a whirlpool of emotion, dark and inscrutable.

Alana immediately sat up in bed, clutching her chest, and glared at the man in fear.

"You... what are you doing sitting by the bed and staring at me first thing in the morning?"

That was pretty scary!

The man continued to stare at her, his voice low and husky. "I wanted to wake you up for breakfast, but you were sleeping so soundly, I didn't have the heart to disturb you."

Alana was taken aback. He was already up, and still had time to wait for her to wake up and eat breakfast?

She had no idea how long he'd been sitting there waiting. Judging by his expression, he seemed to have been waiting long enough to be a little annoyed.

Alana cleared her throat awkwardly. “Um, aren’t you going for a run or to the gym today?”

“No, I’m not in the mood.”

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Chapter 223 Take a guess

Chapter 223 Take a guess

Alana was curious. “Why not?”

Every morning, he worked out without fail, insisting that a man had to stay in shape to keep exuding charm.

With such daily dedication, it was no wonder his physique was so impressive, his eight-pack was perfectly sculpted, every muscle flawless.

Stephan glanced at her, seemingly nonchalant. “Take a guess.”

She blinked.

What was she supposed to guess?

She wasn’t a mind reader, how was she supposed to know why he was in a bad mood?

Alana blinked and said earnestly, “I really can’t guess. Just tell me.”

Stephan looked at her and suddenly asked, “Do I look handsome today?”

Alana’s eyes widened. “Huh?”

What kind of question was that?

“Am I handsome?” He asked again.

Alana was baffled by his sudden change of subject, but she played along, “Yes, you’re handsome. You’re handsome every single day.”

“I’m talking about today.”

She noticed that the man had styled his hair differently today, he’d swept all the hair from his forehead back, using hair wax to set it in place, revealing a full, handsome forehead that made his features appear even more ruggedly handsome.

She blinked and said earnestly, “You look especially handsome today.”

Stephan was satisfied. It had been worth getting up early and fussing over his appearance for so long.

He’d carefully selected his suit and tie, and spent ages styling his hair himself.

So tonight, he was determined to blind that male mistress’s eyes and make him feel ashamed of himself in front of his rightful wife!

Alana was still puzzled. “But what does that have to do with whether you look handsome or not?”

“It has nothing to do with it.”

“Huh?” She was baffled again. “Then what does it have to do with?”

Stephan stood up and brushed imaginary dust off his clothes. “Get up. We’ll talk over breakfast.”

“Oh.”

Breakfast was over quickly; they finished in less than ten minutes. After finishing, Alana waited for the man to clear things up for her.

But she waited for ages, and he didn’t say a single word about it.

She felt too tensed to ask any further.

It was almost time for work.

Alana could only say helplessly, “Um, if you don’t want to talk about it, that’s fine. I’ll head to work first.”

Stephan put on his suit jacket without a flicker of emotion and picked up his car keys.

“I’ll drive you.”

Alana studied his expression; he didn’t seem to be in a very good mood.

But why exactly?

She didn't understand. Perhaps in the car, on a whim, he might be willing to tell her the reason.

But on the way to work, Stephan barely said a word.

Alana wanted to ask him several times, but she held back each time, unsure of what to say.

The car pulled up at the usual spot in front of her company.

Stephan said flatly, "We're here."

Alana glanced at him, bit her lip, and slowly unbuckled her seatbelt.

She was a very sensitive person and could sense that something was off with him today. Under normal circumstances, he wouldn't sit in the car without saying a word.

Clearly, something was on his mind.

So, she asked cautiously, "Stephan, what's wrong with you today?"

She thought to herself, she hadn't done anything wrong from last night until now.

Could it be that he was upset because she'd bought a lot of snacks and eaten them in front of him?

"Um, if you don't like me eating snacks, I'll just stop buying them from now on. You can do whatever you want with the ones we have left at home. Anyway, please don't be mad, okay?"

"That's not the reason."

She was puzzled. "Then what is it?"

Stephan fixed his gaze on her. "Tell me, is there something you're deliberately hiding from me?"

He was giving her a chance...a chance to come clean on her own.

Alana's heart skipped a beat; her pulse raced for no apparent reason, and she felt both nervous and flustered.

"Wh...what are you talking about? I don't understand what you're talking about."

She truly didn't understand. Her mind was a blank at that moment; she had no idea what Stephan meant when he said she was hiding something from him.

Out of the blue, why would he suddenly ask her that?

Stephan stared at her, his gaze growing increasingly dark.

Alana looked back at him, not flinching.

Even though she felt completely uncertain inside.

Stephan stared at her intently for a moment before finally slowly looking away.

"Never mind. Let's not talk about it. You should go to work now."

He'd deal with everything after he'd had a word with the other man.

Alana felt anxious and uneasy, but since he wasn't saying anything, there was nothing she could do.

She reached for the car door to get out, but then seemed to think of something and looked up at him. "Um, do you still want that goodbye kiss today?"

"Yes!"

Alana leaned in and kissed him.

Suddenly, he bit down on her lips as she leaned in, applying a little pressure.

Alana let out a muffled groan.

Stephan released her lips and saw the deep toothmark he'd left on them...one that wouldn't fade anytime soon.

Then, he reached out to brush aside the soft strands of her hair that had fallen across her chest, lowered his head to bury it in the hollow of her collarbone, and took a deep, forceful breath.

Alana's body instantly went weak with a tingling sensation. She bit her lip, struggling to suppress a cry of surprise. "Ah, no! It'll leave a mark!"

Stephan released her and saw the distinct hickey on her collarbone. His thin lips curled up mischievously, his low voice dripping with possessiveness.

“I left that mark on you on purpose! So those men who covet you will know that you belong to me!”

Alana blushed, covering the mark with her hand, and looked at him with a mix of shock and embarrassment.

She was wearing a beige, shoulder-length dress today, her fair, delicate collarbone exposed, making that kiss mark all the more obvious.

Stephan slowly leaned toward her, his large, slightly calloused hand tenderly caressing the back of her head.

He kissed her delicate cheek once more and coaxed her in a low voice, “Be a good girl, don’t cover it up. Let everyone see.”

Alana bit her lip.

A voice of shame cried out inside her: This man is playing way too much!

Stephan seemed to see through the embarrassment and resentment in the girl’s eyes. Curling his lips into a smile, he said,

“How about you leave a mark on me too? Then we’ll be even.”

After saying that, he raised his long, well-defined hand, casually loosened his neatly tied tie, undid the buttons of his shirt, and took the initiative to move closer to her.

Watching the man’s increasingly bold actions, Alana blushed with embarrassment, pushed him away, and fled in panic.

“No! I’m going to work. Bye!”

Stephan chuckled.

What a little...

When Alana arrived at the company, the bite mark on her lips and the ambiguous hickey on her collarbone were, as expected, noticed by everyone. One after another, they looked at her with meaningful smiles.

Alana once again experienced what it felt like to die from social embarrassment.

She hadn’t brought any foundation with her, nor did she have anything to cover the marks, so there was no way to hide them.

She could only wait an hour or so for the marks to fade on their own.

That bastard Stephan had deliberately left marks in such obvious places on her body. What a jerk!

Carla leaned over with a grin and said, “Lana, your boyfriend is really something!”

Blushing, Alana didn’t even dare raise her head.

“Stop talking and focus on work!”

Carla laughed teasingly. “When are you going to bring your boyfriend out for me to meet? I really want to see what he’s like. He’s so wild. In the future, I’ll look for a boyfriend based on your boyfriend’s standards!”

Alana gasped.

Danielle couldn’t help but cut in sourly,

“It’s been so long, and Alana’s boyfriend hasn’t shown up even once. Who knows if he’s really her boyfriend?”

Carla glanced at Danielle. “If he’s not Alana’s boyfriend, then is he your boyfriend? Oh, I almost forgot. You don’t even have a boyfriend! Is it because you’re too ugly, so no man wants to chase you?”

Danielle’s face instantly flushed red with anger!

Carla and Alana looked at each other and smiled.

Carla’s words had hit a nerve.

There was a morning meeting.

During the meeting, Cole also noticed the marks on Alana’s lips and collarbone.

His eyes darkened slightly.

No matter how hard he tried to ignore them, the feeling of being deliberately provoked by his romantic rival still infuriated him.

Especially when he thought that every night, Alana might be lying in that man’s bed, his chest hurt so badly that he could barely breathe.

But soon, he would get rid of that man and bring her back to his side.

The meeting ended, Alana organized the meeting minutes and handed them to Cole.

Looking at her strictly professional attitude, Cole did his best to restrain his emotions and asked nothing.

He accepted the documents she handed over and gave them a brief inspection.

“Very good. There’s no problem.”

Alana nodded. Just as she was about to leave, Cole stared at her and suddenly said, “Lana, I’m looking forward to tonight’s date.”

Alana was stunned.

What date tonight?

But before she could ask, Cole’s phone rang and he answered the call.

Although Alana was puzzled, she didn’t ask anything and turned to walk out.

At Hudson’s Group, Vance was reporting on work when he suddenly heard his president interrupt him.

“Vance, am I handsome enough today?”

Vance blinked in confusion.

Stephan sat in his office chair with his legs crossed, one hand resting lazily on the armrest.

With a serious expression, he asked again. “I’m asking you. Am I handsome enough today?”

Vance swallowed. “President, of course you’re handsome. Among all the men in the world, not a single one is as handsome as even one of your fingers!”

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Chapter 224 To remember

Chapter 224 To remember

When Alana received Stephan's message informing her he'd be coming home late tonight, she froze for a moment.

Does he have something else to do tonight?

What on earth could it be?

Thinking back to how strangely he'd been acting all day, she had no idea what was going through his mind.

Alana couldn't figure it out, but her intuition told her this wasn't good news.

With a heavy heart, she waited until the end of the workday.

Since Stephan had said he'd be home late, she figured she had nothing better to do and didn't want to go back so soon, so she invited Eve to grab a meal and catch up.

The two arrived at the restaurant and found a table in a corner to sit down.

Eve picked up a menu and was just about to order when she seemed to remember something and couldn't help but smile.

"Lana, did you notice? This is the exact same table we sat at the last time we came to this restaurant!"

Alana paused for a moment, looking at the familiar seat and the restaurant itself.

She recalled that this was where she had met Stephan for the third time.

At the time, she had gone to the front desk to pay the bill when Stephan suddenly appeared and handed a credit card to the receptionist.

The receptionist, thinking they were a couple, had mistakenly taken his card and swiped it.

Thinking back on all those past encounters, Alana couldn't help but smile.

Eve was curious about Alana's reaction.

"What are you laughing at? Did you just remember that handsome guy who accidentally paid your bill the last time you were at this restaurant?"

Alana blinked as she recalled she hadn't told Eve yet that her boyfriend was the same handsome guy who had accidentally paid for her last time.

That time, Eve had thought Stephan was handsome and had even wanted Alana to take the initiative and pursue him.

But back then, she had been trying to avoid Stephan at all costs and certainly didn't want to have much contact with him.

But as it turned out, the more she tried to avoid him, the more she ended up interacting with him, and the deeper their connection grew.

She never imagined that one day, she would actually become his girlfriend.

Sometimes, fate was truly a mysterious thing.

Perhaps her meeting, getting to know, and falling in love with Stephan was all part of a higher plan.

Eve blinked. "Hey, Lana, by the way, are you still in touch with that handsome guy from last time?"

Alana smiled. "Yeah."

"Huh?" Eve was shocked. "No way! You're still in touch with another guy! Doesn't your boyfriend get jealous? I thought you said he was super jealous, he even got jealous of you spending time with me."

Alana cleared her throat and said sheepishly, "Did I say that?"

"Yep." Eve was unconvinced. "He gets jealous of me, there's no reason he wouldn't get jealous of other guys, especially a total hottie!"

Alana said with a straight face, "He won't get jealous because he's the hottie."

"What?!"

Eve couldn't believe it, her eyes widened.

Eve couldn't even help but stand up. "What? Girl, what did you just mean by that?"

"That super-hot guy we ran into here that day...is he your crazy, possessive, jealous boyfriend?!"

Alana blushed, feeling incredibly embarrassed. "Shh, don't say that so loud. Sit down, sit down!"

Eve suddenly stood up, drawing too much attention but she sat back down, still finding it hard to believe. “No way! Girl, that’s not what you told me last time!”

“I remember you saying you weren’t interested in him and didn’t want to pursue him. So how did this happen...”

Alana shrugged. “To be clear...he’s the who did the chasing. I didn’t make the first move.”

Eve choked on her words for a moment. “Okay, okay.” She thought for a moment, then suddenly realized, “No wonder he suddenly paid the bill for you so he’s had a thing for you all along! What a scheming guy!”

Alana nodded; she had to agree with that.

Eve blinked. “So what happened next? How did he make his move on you, and how did you two end up officially dating? Tell me

all about it.”

Alana bit her lip, her face flushing slightly.

“Well, it’s a long story. Let’s order our food and eat first.”

“Alright, we’ll eat while we talk. Take your time...no rush. I’ve got plenty of time!”

The food arrived.

Before she was even halfway through, Alana felt a bit of bloating in her stomach.

She clutched her stomach and stood up.

“Um, I’m going to use the restroom.”

Maybe she’d eaten too many snacks last night, which was why she’d been running to the bathroom several times today.

Eve snickered, “Go ahead, just don’t fall into the toilet!”

Alana hurriedly grabbed a pack of tissues and slipped away.

Just as she left, a figure slowly walked into the restaurant.

Cole headed in, picked up his phone, and texted Alana.

Cole: [I’m here. Are you here yet?]

Because he was looking down, he didn't notice Alana flash past not far in front of him.

But just as Cole sent the message, he received a red exclamation mark.

It informed him that he had been blocked by the other party.

His eyes darkened slightly.

Blocked?

She actually blocked him?

Why?!

Cole's fist clenched slightly.

No!

Given Alana's personality, she wouldn't block him.

After all, he was still her boss.

So, he immediately suspected someone else did. His eyes darkened, and he immediately headed toward the private room on the second floor.

Alana wasn't back yet, and Eve felt bored eating alone, so she looked up and scanned the room.

To her surprise, she spotted a familiar face.

The man was dressed in a high-quality dark blue suit, wearing silver-rimmed glasses, exuding an air of being a "cultured rogue" yet refined and gentle.

Eve's was surprised. "Cole?"

What was he doing here?

Eve instinctively grabbed her phone and sent a message to Alana to tell her about it.

Eve: [Girl, guess who I just saw?! Cole!]

But just as she sent the message, she realized Alana's phone was still on her desk, she didn't bring it with her.

Seriously, in this day and age, there are actually people who don't bring their phones to the bathroom?!

If it were her, she couldn't stand being separated from her phone for even a second!

Eve watched Cole head upstairs. Just as she turned away, she heard a noise at the door.

She looked over and saw another tall, slender figure of a man walking in.

The man had handsome, chiseled features, broad shoulders, a narrow waist, and long legs. His cool, aloof demeanor was truly striking.

Most importantly, Eve had a vague feeling that this man looked familiar, as if

she'd seen him somewhere before.

She was the kind of person who was highly attuned to handsome men...she never forgot a face once she'd seen it!

She was absolutely certain she had seen this man before!

But where exactly had she seen him?

And when?

Eve couldn't help but run her fingers through her hair, but the more she fretted, the harder it was to remember.

However, she noticed that this tall, handsome guy with a great physique was also strolling leisurely toward the second floor...

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Chapter 225 His own accord

Chapter 225 His own accord

Cole walked into a private room and sat down in a chair to wait. There were less than five minutes until the agreed-upon time.

He was waiting.

Waiting for Alana to show up with her boyfriend.

If her boyfriend showed up, he would immediately pull out a bank card, slam it down in front of the man, and force him to leave Alana of his own accord.

If the man was willing to take the money and leave, it would prove that his feelings for Alana were nothing but a sham.

Alana might just see that man's true colors and break up with him immediately. And he would be there to seize the opportunity!

The plan was absolutely flawless.

Now everything is in place, all that was missing was the right moment!

At that moment, the clock struck eight.

It was exactly the agreed-upon time.

Suddenly, there was a click.

The door to the private room was quietly pushed open.

Black leather shoes stepped onto the cold floor, walking in at a leisurely pace.

The footsteps were neither hurried nor agitated.

Cole's brow twitched slightly. He instinctively looked up, and his pupils contracted sharply.

The man walked over at a leisurely pace and slowly sat down in the seat opposite Cole.

He leaned back lazily in his chair, crossed his legs, and adopted a relaxed posture, yet every movement exuded a cold, domineering aura.

He turned to the man across from him, the corner of his mouth curling up casually, exuding confidence and composure.

Cole's gaze fixed intently on the man who had suddenly appeared, his eyes betraying his astonishment. "You..."

How could it be him?

The man he'd met at the hospital...

"You're..."

Stephan saw the astonishment in his eyes and slowly curved his lips. “You guessed right. I am Alana’s boyfriend. I’m the one here to meet you tonight.”

So it really was this man!

No wonder they ran into each other at the hospital by such a coincidence.

No wonder the look this man gave him back then was so piercing...even hostile. He had been puzzled at the time.

But now, everything made sense!

Cole’s chest heaved violently as rage surged through him. He couldn’t help but stand up. “Why are you here alone? Where’s Alana? Where is she?”

Compared to Cole’s agitation, Stephan appeared much calmer. His tone was calm and measured.

“She doesn’t know I’m meeting with you. If she were to show up and see us at loggerheads, things might not end well.”

Cole stared at Stephan, his eyes behind his glasses narrowing slightly for a moment.

As sharp as he was, he naturally realized that the person who had messaged him last night wasn’t Alana, but the man standing before him.

This explained why his contact information had suddenly been blocked.

Cole gradually regained his composure, but the intense hostility in his gaze toward Stephan was impossible to hide.

He struggled to control his emotions, slowly regaining his composure, then sat back down and continued to scrutinize the man before him.

The man had a stern, chiseled face, with sharp eyebrows and starry eyes. His gaze was as deep and impenetrable as a thick, dark pool, unfathomable and elusive.

He was dressed in a black suit, impeccably tailored and of the finest quality.

Now he sat lazily in his chair, legs crossed, exuding an air of calm and composed poise from head to toe.

Cole furrowed his brow slightly.

This was a far cry from the image he had imagined of a timid, cowardly man who dared not show his face to the world.

The man before him exuded an innate air of nobility, and a sense of superiority flowed naturally from his every movement.

And the faint aura of authority emanating from him, the kind of pressure that comes with being in a position of power, all served to tell him that this man was no ordinary person!

Moreover, the more he looked at him, the more familiar the man seemed, as if he had seen him somewhere else before...

Cole watched Stephan with growing wariness. "Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Cole Parker. And you?"

Stephan's dark eyes rested on Cole, taking in every one of his reactions.

His thin lips curled up casually. "Stephan Hudson."

Stephan Hudson.

Cole's head spun.

The look of confusion and bewilderment in his eyes vanished instantly, replaced by clarity.

"So it's you!"

No wonder he'd felt a sense of familiarity when he first met this man at the hospital.

It turned out that the man standing before him was a legendary figure in the elite circle, a business tycoon with immense power and influence, the head of the Hudson Group, a big shot at the very top of the pyramid.

Cole had only ever seen him on TV, had heard of him from other people and businessmen but never seen him in person.

He never imagined he'd have the chance to speak with him face-to-face today.

Even more unexpected was the fact that Alana's boyfriend was actually Stephan Hudson!

Why did it have to be Stephan Hudson?!

Why him of all people?!

Cole clenched his fists silently, feeling both furious and powerless.

He couldn't understand how Alana had come into contact with Stephan in the first place, let alone how they'd become a couple.

But he knew one thing for certain: Alana and Stephan were completely mismatched!

The gap in their social status was vast; Stephan would never marry her, and his family would never accept Alana!

Maybe it was just a fling...

He couldn't let Alana become a plaything in the hands of the powerful!

Cole and Stephan locked eyes, their gazes thick with hostility, sparks flying. Just as the tension reached a boiling point, a waiter walked in, interrupting the silent, simmering tension.

"May I take your order, gentlemen?" Cole suppressed the emotions surging in his eyes and spoke calmly, "First, a cup

of coffee with sugar and milk, please."

After a brief pause, he looked at Stephan and remarked pointedly, "This is the way Lana likes her coffee. I'm just like her. I wonder what kind of coffee you prefer, Mr. Hudson."

Upon hearing this, Stephan's brow furrowed slightly.

This damn male homewrecker knew quite a lot.

A cold smile curled his lips. "Whatever my girlfriend likes, I like. I'll have a cup of coffee with sugar but no milk, please."

Upon hearing this, Cole's eyes darkened instantly.

An invisible aura of hostility and defiance radiated from both men.

The waiter sensed the oppressive aura emanating from the two men and immediately felt the pressure.

He quickly jotted down the order and hurried away.

Cole pressed his thin lips together, composed himself for a moment, then fixed his gaze on Stephan and asked, "Mr. Hudson, how long have you know Lana dear?"

Lana dear again?!

What a suggestive way to address her.

It was clear she didn't take him, her official boyfriend, seriously at all!

Stephan's eyes held a smile, though it didn't reach his eyes.

"It hasn't been that long, but it was love at first sight for us, and our feelings have deepened over time."

Cole's thin lips twitched. "I've known her longer than you have. I've known her since junior high, all the way up to today. When it comes to love at first sight, or love that grows over time, I'm more qualified than you."

Stephan's lips curled into a half-smile. "And then? Did you two end up together?"

Struck at his weak spot, Cole's eyes instantly grew colder.

"Stephan, do you really know her? Do you know what the real Alana is like?"

"I've known her for years. I know everything about her, inside and out. But you...what do you really know about her? Do you know what happened to her in the past? What she's been through?"

Stephan stared at Cole, his eyes deep and intense, and remained silent for a moment.

Cole noticed his expression growing increasingly cold, and the corner of his mouth curled up imperceptibly.

"You don't know, do you? But I know everything about her. The bond between us is not something you can compare to just knowing her for a few months!"

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Chapter 226 Declared war

Chapter 226 Declared war

“Back when we met in middle school, she loved being with me. She’d follow me around every day, clinging to me. She went wherever I went and never wanted to be apart from me. Oh, right...” Cole seemed to remember something.

Right in front of Stephan, he gently held up a string of sandalwood beads he was wearing on his wrist.

“This string of beads on my wrist is a birthday gift from Alana. She climbed so many steps to a temple to pray for me. She went to such great lengths to obtain this string of sandalwood beads to ensure my

health, safety, and good fortune, but would she be willing to do the same for you?”

“Of course. It’s not just this string of sandalwood beads; she’s given me many, many other gifts with all her heart.”

“So, Mr. Hudson, you should be able to see clearly which of us holds greater importance in her heart.”

Stephan couldn’t help but let his gaze fall on the string of sandalwood beads Cole wore on his wrist, his eyes growing even colder.

Sandalwood beads?

So she went to such lengths to get this for him?

Stephan’s expression remained unchanged, but his fists were clenched tightly, his inner turmoil intense.

His thin lips twitched. “So what? It still doesn’t change the fact the man by her side right now is me, not you. At the end of the day, you’re nothing more than a defeated opponent of mine. She doesn’t love you anymore so what right do you have to act so arrogant in front of me?!”

Upon hearing this, Cole’s expression darkened instantly.

The sliver of connection he’d taken pride in with Alana had been shattered by Stephan’s offhand remark!

Unable to keep his composure any longer, he gritted his teeth and demanded;

“What are you after by being with her? Is it for her youth? For her beauty? Are you willing to give her a future? If not, I beg you to leave her alone. She’s not the kind of woman who’ll let you trample on her feelings so casually! One mistake and you’re out!”

Stephan curled his lips and replied calmly, "I'm dating her with the intention of marrying her. As long as she's willing to marry me, I can take her to the civil affairs bureau to get a marriage certificate in no time."

Cole retorted coldly, "You may be willing to marry her, but in a wealthy family like yours, will your parents accept her? If Alana marries you and faces your parents' disapproval and opposition, she'd be unhappy all her life so it would be better to let her go sooner rather than later!"

Stephan gave a forced smile. "How do you know my parents won't agree? My parents might even be quite pleased with her. As for you, in what capacity are you demanding that I let her go?"

Cole clenched his fists. "At this point, I consider her as family."

Stephan sneered, "Do you consider her family, or do you have ulterior motives toward her? We're both men here...why are you playing her savior to me?"

Upon hearing this, Cole dropped the pretense and stated his intentions bluntly, "Fine, I like Lin Yuan! I want her back. I want to marry her and give her a stable home!"

Stephan's gaze grew dangerous and fierce. "Cole, you're trying to steal my woman right in front of me? Do you really think you have the right to say this to me?!"

Cole's met his gaze head-on. "I'm simply confessing my feelings."

Stephan's thin lips twisted into a sneer. "So what? What makes you think you have the ability to compete with me? The nerves of you!"

Cole remained expressionless. "In that case, let's compete on equal terms! I won't give her up to you! I believe I'm better equipped than you to make her happy!"

Stephan narrowed his dark eyes dangerously and spoke coldly, "Ridiculous. You won't even get the chance!"

Cole replied, "Opportunities are created by people!"

Instead of getting angry, Stephan smiled. "Are you declaring war on me?"

Cole nodded. "You could say that."

Stephan curled his lips in disdain. "You really enjoy being the other man, don't you? Too bad, in my eyes, you don't even have the qualifications to be a male mistress!"

Cole clenched his fist, the veins on his arm bulging taut.

A male mistress?

That cut deep into Cole's heart!

If the man standing before him weren't Stephan Hudson, he would have been fully capable of using threats and bribes to force him to give up Alana.

But as it happened, this man was someone so powerful that he was no match for him!

But... he wouldn't give up so easily.

Cole curled his lips. "You and Alana are just boyfriend and girlfriend. You're not

married, it's not legitimate. Even if I were to pursue her, I wouldn't be considered a homewrecker."

Stephan laughed in exasperation. "What the hell do you mean, 'not married' and 'lacking legitimacy'? A homewrecker is a homewrecker! Trying to justify yourself won't change a thing! Don't worry. On the day Lana and I get married, I'll invite you to sit at the head table and witness our happiness!"

"You!" Cole stood up in a rage, his eyes bloodshot, desperate to strangle the man standing before him.

Stephan raised his gaze to meet Cole's, his eyes sharp and menacing, as arrogant and defiant as ever.

Their gazes locked in mid-air, clashing fiercely, neither willing to back down!

A waiter stood a short distance away, holding two cups of coffee, trembling uncontrollably and too afraid to take a single step forward.

Cole's chest heaved violently as he ground out the words through clenched teeth. "I'll say it again: I won't give up easily. Mr. Hudson, let's call it a day. This coffee is on me. Take your time drinking it...I'll be on my way!"

With that polite farewell, he stood up and left.

Stephan stared at Cole's retreating figure, a cold smile curving his lips, his eyes radiating a fierce, murderous intent.

It was clear that the fucking Cole had a death wish.

Alana returned from the restroom just as Cole was coming down the stairs.

Cole was still seething with anger. When he saw Alana appear, a flicker of surprise crossed his eyes. "Lana?"

Why was she here too?

Didn't Stephan just say that she didn't know about tonight's plans?

Alana was also surprised. "Cole, what are you doing here..."

Cole couldn't help but step closer to her, his eyes brimming with a mad, obsessive intensity. "Lana, break up with your

boyfriend and be with me, okay? You two aren't right for each other at all. He's just playing with you. A man from a family like his has absolutely no future with you. Break up with him now!"

Alana was baffled by his words. Why was he suddenly saying this?

"Cole, what... do you mean by that?"

Eve was still waiting for Alana to return.

Just as she saw Alana coming out of the restroom, Cole had already cornered her.

"What's going on?" She was just about to step in to help, but another figure beat her to it.

Seeing that Alana didn't believe him, Cole couldn't help but grab her shoulders

and continue, "Lana, I'm serious. Do you know that your boyfriend is..."

Before he could finish, a fist slammed hard into his face.

Cole was forced to let go of Alana. He staggered back a few steps, then looked up to see that Alana was already being held protectively in Stephan's arms.

The thought of that girl who used to cling to him and adore him, now held in another man's arms...

Cole's felt his blood boil instantly, and his eyes gradually began to turn crimson.

Alana was equally stunned when Stephan pulled her into his arms.

“Stephan, how could you...”

Seeing the bewildered look on her face, Stephan’s eyes darkened. “I’ll explain later.”

He turned his gaze to Cole, his eyes cold and piercing.

“Stay away from my woman, if you want to stay alive. This time, it’s a warning. Next time, it won’t be just a simple warning!” With that, he bent down and gently ruffled Alana’s hair with his large hand. “Good girl, let’s go home.”

Then, he leaned down and, right in front of Cole, kissed her fair forehead.

A silent provocation!

Cole watched the scene, it felt like an arrow had been shot into his chest.

Alana bit her lip. With the back of her head firmly held by the man, she didn’t move. She could feel the force and intense possessiveness of his thin lips pressed against her forehead.

She had no idea what had just happened, nor why the two of them were at such odds. But in this moment, she decided it was best to say nothing.

Stephan released her, his gaze sweeping over Cole, who had gone completely rigid. A cold smile touched his thin lips, and he immediately wrapped his arm around Alana’s waist, striding away.

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Chapter 227 Rage mixed with helplessness

Cole watched Stephan and Alana leave, his fists clenched.

Gritting his teeth, he slowly raised his clenched fist and wiped the blood trickling from the corner of his mouth.

Watching it all unfold before his eyes, his blood boiled. A sense of rage mixed with helplessness racked through his chest, the pain so intense it nearly choked him...

Eve had witnessed the entire scene as well. She was so shocked she forgot how to react.

Just moments ago, she had felt that the man looked familiar.

But the moment she saw him lean down to kiss Alana, it all came flooding back.

“Holy shit! Isn’t he that super-hot guy with broad shoulders, a slim waist, and long legs who paid the bill for Alana at this restaurant?! He really is her boyfriend now!”

And just a moment ago, he and Cole had nearly come to blows over Alana. Two men fighting over one woman?

What a thrilling scene of male rivalry?!

Wait!

Wait a minute!

Eve suddenly realized the man had taken Alana away and her phone was still here...

At that moment, Alana was shoved into Stephan’s car.

The man stepped on the gas and drove away. His expression remained stern the entire time, and he didn’t say a word.

Alana’s heart was pounding with anxiety; she wanted to ask something, but her mind was a jumble.

Besides, she was still confused about what had happened that night and couldn’t quite put her thoughts into words.

When the man drove the car back home, Alana was pulled toward the car by the man, then pressed forcefully against it.

The two of them were pressed together, their bodies fitting together perfectly.

She bit her lip, her eyes filled with confusion as she looked at him. “Stephan, what’s wrong with you?”

Stephan’s eyes darkened. He raised his hand to cup her delicate chin and, without hesitation, leaned down to kiss her soft, supple lips.

It was fierce and forceful, brimming with possessiveness.

“Mmm...” The man kissed her so fiercely and relentlessly that Alana was completely powerless to resist.

Her hands instinctively pressed against his chest, trying to push him away, but they were limp and weak, unable to muster even a shred of strength.

It only made him kiss her harder and deeper.

Their breaths intertwined, their hot breath mingling, creating an atmosphere of intense intimacy.

Alana was kissed into a daze, her legs growing weak. Her lips were repeatedly devoured and ravished by him.

Only when she was nearly out of breath did he finally let her go. She buried her face in his chest, panting heavily, her lips swollen and vividly red from the kiss.

Her beautiful eyes were wet from the assault, misty and hazy, looking so pitiful.

Stephan desperately wanted to press himself against her again and take her fiercely... Seeing the man about to kiss her again, Alana couldn't help but press her hand against his chest to stop him from going any further.

"Enough, enough, stop kissing me..."

Stephan's eyes darkened as he grabbed her hands, clasping them tightly against the car door.

Then he lowered his head, burying his face in the tender hollow of her neck, and sucked on it fiercely.

The girl's body trembled uncontrollably; unable to bear it, she let out a whimper.

Stephan released her and saw the bright red marks that had appeared on her delicate neck, marks that belonged solely to him.

His breath brushed against them, his voice hoarse to the extreme. "Alana, what should we do? I want so badly to tie you to the bed and make you cry out in pleasure..."

Hearing this, Alana trembled even more violently.

Noticing his unusual behavior, she looked at him with tear-filled eyes, her lips trembling helplessly. "You... just tell me...what's wrong with you? And... how could you have met up with Cole tonight..."

Stephan pressed his forehead against hers, his Adam's apple bobbing as he struggled to steady the chaotic rhythm of his breathing.

It took him a long time, but his momentarily lost composure gradually returned.

His dark eyes fixed intently on her, clearly seeing the anxiety and panic overflowing in her own gaze.

His Adam's apple bobbed for a moment, and he decided to be honest.

“Last night, he sent you a message.”

Alana’s head spun. “What? What message did he send me? How come I didn’t know about it?”

“You were asleep at the time. I was just about to carry you back to your room to rest when his message came through.”

Stephan paused, his deep, dark eyes fixed on her, unblinking. “I just happened to see it.”

Alana’s eyelid twitched violently. Under his gaze, she felt inexplicably nervous, her heart racing.

“What... did he send me?”

Stephan’s dark eyes locked onto her fair, delicate face as he studied her reaction.

“He asked when you’d be free to meet up. I replied on your behalf, asking what kind of date he meant. He said the one you promised him.”

Alana’s breath caught in her throat as she suddenly realized why he’d been acting so odd today.

So, he’d misunderstood!

She immediately said, “Stephan, let me explain! I’ve already told you this before. Because of what happened last time when you beat him up, I was afraid he’d hold you responsible, so I agreed to treat him to a meal. I actually wanted to invite you to join me in treating him to dinner, but when I asked you last time, you didn’t agree, so I...”

Stephan had actually guessed that was the truth.

When he walked in, Cole had said in shock, “Why are you here alone? Where’s Alana?”

That indicated that Cole believed the dinner was meant not only for Alana, but for him as well.

So, upon catching this crucial detail, he quickly realized he really must have misunderstood Alana.

She hadn’t intended to secretly go out to dinner with Cole, she’d planned to invite him along as well.

However, she hadn’t had time to ask if he’d agree. Once he figured this out, he stopped dwelling on it...

What truly concerned him, however, was...

Stephan cupped her chin again, his gaze fixed on her, and asked earnestly,

“Lana, you and Cole, you’ve known each other for years, right?”

Upon hearing this, Alana’s eyes immediately flickered.

“Yes.” She bit her lip. “He... what did he tell you?”

Stephan stared at her, his eyes dark and brooding. His deep voice was deliberate, each word dripping with jealousy.

“He said he’s known you since middle school. Back then, you used to stick to him like glue; you loved being with him. He knows everything about you, every single detail. You two are deeply connected. And you gave him lots of birthday gifts. I heard you even climbed so many steps to get him a string of sandalwood beads, praying for his health and safety. The bead is on his wrist right now, he even flaunted it in front of me on purpose...”

With every word he spoke, Alana’s heart flew a little higher, until it was practically in her throat.

Finally, when she heard that she had climbed so many steps to obtain a string of sandalwood beads for Cold, her eyelid twitched violently, and she hurriedly explained.

“No! There weren’t that many steps. Maybe 100? Was it even up to?”

Stephan’s expression didn’t improve; on the contrary, it darkened considerably.

“That’s still many! So, you really climbed those stairs to beg for a sandalwood beads for him?”

Alana felt guilty and couldn’t quite meet the man’s dark, piercing gaze. “Well... sort of.”

Chapter 228 The bitterness

Chapter 228 The bitterness

“I didn’t have the money to buy expensive gifts, so I had to focus on the sentiment.”

Stephan felt a sharp pang in his chest, as if he'd been dunked in a vat of vinegar, the bitterness still fermenting wildly.

"So you guys dated since that time?"

Alana choked on her words, biting her lip as she timidly defended herself, "Back in school, having a crush on someone... that's... normal, right? We didn't date then."

Normal?

Whether it was normal or not, his heart felt as if it had been pierced by a needle...it ached!

Seeing the man's expression darken, Alana quickly added, "Anyway, I told you before. What I had with him is like child's play compared to what I had with you. Yes, we dated but we barely saw each other. I was young and naive thinking he was only busy but he was clearly seeing other people and had no time for me. So now, I think the only person I've ever truly been with is you...you're my first love!"

Stephan laughed with a sarcastic edge, "Not your first love...your second, right?After all, even if the guy didn't treat you well, you still liked him."

Alana's eyes widened as she tried to explain to him, flustered, "No, that's not how it works. In my eyes, a first love is the first man you made you feel things you've never felt before. I rarely ever did anything with Cole, how could he be my first love?"

"So, please calm down. Don't overthink it. You just need to remember that it's all in the past and has no bearing on our relationship now."

Calm down?!

How was he supposed to feel at ease?!

The man she once loved was now eyeing her hungrily, and there was a constant risk of her being stolen away...how was he supposed to feel at ease?!

Stephan ground his back teeth. "Fine, then let me ask you this: do you still have feelings for him?"

Alana immediately shook her head: "No, no, absolutely not."

"If he were to pursue you again, would you accept him?"

Alana shook her head again. "Of course not."

Stephan gave a forced smile. "I've heard that women are especially forgiving toward the first man they fell for, and that no matter what he asks of her, she can't bring herself to refuse."

Alana raised her hand in assurance. "I definitely won't be like that."

She was the kind of woman who, knowing full well that relationship was impossible, would never look back!

Since a relationship was impossible, why would she foolishly get so deeply entangled in it?

Wouldn't that just make her mistakes even more outrageous and her wounds even deeper?

She'd rather endure a short, sharp pain than a long, lingering one. She would cut all ties completely and never give herself another chance to make the same mistake.

Stephan crossed his arms, his expression cold and unyielding.

"Why should I believe you?"

"I..." Alana felt a bit deflated. "It's true I used to have some feelings for him, but that's all in the past. I don't have a single shred of emotion for him now. But if you don't want to believe me, I don't know what to do."

Alana glanced at him, bit her lip, and spoke with some difficulty, "But I understand you. I too would feel uneasy if there was a woman from your past being a threat. I guess, that makes you see me differently now and it might be too much to handle...I'd accept any decision you make. I really am sorry, if you want to break up..."

Stephan's breath caught in his throat, unable to believe it.

"Why would I want a break up?!"

Alana forced back the pain in her heart and said coldly, "I said, if you mind the fact that I once liked another man, and it makes you unable to trust me now..."

Stephan immediately grabbed her chin, gritting his teeth and saying fiercely,

"Who said I mind? I don't mind! I don't care at all! Alana, if you ever bring up breaking up with me again, I'll lose my temper! Is that so easy for you to say?!"

He'd just been a little upset tonight and wanted her to comfort him, he certainly didn't want her to break up with her.

He would never do that.

Alana hadn't expected such a strong reaction from him. She couldn't help but widen her eyes in surprise, looking at him helplessly.

Stephan feared she might actually go through with breaking up with him, so he couldn't help but wrap his arms around her delicate frame, softening his tone as he soothed her in a low voice.

"Sweetheart, I was being unreasonable. It's my fault. Let's not bring this up again. Don't mention breaking up, okay? You just took a wrong turn once and fell for a man who didn't deserve you, but that doesn't matter. What matters is that you're back on the right path now, and you're with me."

"You didn't end up with Cole. Instead, after all your twists and turns, you met me, we got to know each other, grew close, and fell in love. What does that tell you? It means I'm your true soulmate. I'm the one you were meant to be with! So, please don't ever mention the word 'breakup' again, okay?"

Alana blinked.

Did the word break up scare him so much?

His anger had suddenly faded.

Was this... normal?

Alana sniffed back a tear, her voice trembling with emotion. "Stephan, how could you do this to me?"

One second he was making her feel sad, and the next...

Stephan looked at her, his tone both resigned and earnest. "I'm sorry, sweetheart. I won't do that again. So please, don't ever mention the word 'breakup' again, okay?"

Alana bit her lip, a bittersweet ache in her heart. "Okay, I won't mention it anymore."

Stephan held her close and said sternly,

"Even if we argue in the future, you must never casually bring up breaking up!"

Alana nodded once. "Mm-hmm. We can't just casually bring up breaking up."

"Yes, we can't."

Stephan couldn't help but let out a sigh of relief.

He had made his girlfriend think about breaking up because of a few words from a male homewrecker meant to drive a wedge between them.

It wasn't worth it...not at all!

If they'd actually broken up, wouldn't that have played right into the other guy's hands, letting him take advantage of the situation?!

He would absolutely never give that man the chance!

Alana watched the man's reaction, biting her lip, still uneasy and asked cautiously, "So... are we just going to let this matter drop?"

Stephan was about to say yes, but then he seemed to think of something and changed his mind.

"No!"

Alana's breath caught, her face turning slightly pale. "What... do you want then?"

Stephan caught sight of her anxious expression, gave a soft snort, and spoke with even greater certainty.

"I was wronged by another man tonight. You need to make it up to me properly."

Alana looked at him with unease in her eyes and asked timidly, "Compensate for what?"

Surely he didn't mean she had to make it up to him in bed?

Like being handcuffed to the bed and whipped with a cane or something...

Stephan shot her a glance, his deep voice tinged with a hint of resentment. "You went to so much trouble preparing a birthday gift for that guy, I want one too! I'm your boyfriend. The birthday gift you prepare for me has to be better than any of his, or I'll get jealous!"

Thinking of that Cole guy still wearing the sandalwood beads Alana had given him, felt worse than if he'd swallowed a mouthful of shit.

Why should that man have it, but he can't?

No way, he wanted one too, and he wanted more than that man!

Hearing this, Alana breathed a huge sigh of relief.

So that was what he needed to feel better.

That was easy enough to arrange.

She nodded in agreement. “Okay, I’ll get you birthday presents from now on, and they’ll definitely be better than his.”

Stephan asked pointedly, “How many times have you given him birthday gifts?”

“Well...” Alana thought for a moment, then said somewhat sheepishly, “About six or seven times...”

She couldn’t exactly remember how many.

Stephan stared at her and asked with a touch of bitterness, “What did you send him?”

“A thermos, a hat and scarf I knitted myself, and stuff like that. It’s been so long, I don’t really remember...”

Stephan snorted with a laugh. “It’s fine, it’s fine. Just some cheap trinkets...nothing to get jealous over.”

But the next second, he spoke up.

“From now on, you’re going to get me a birthday present too! If you did it for him, you have to do it for me too, and I want something even better than his!”

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Chapter 229 Intense jealousy

Chapter 229 Intense jealousy

Hearing the intense jealousy in the man’s tone, Alana couldn’t help but chuckle.

Sometimes, she felt that even though he was a grown man, he was as childish as a three-year-old and needed to be coaxed.

“Okay, okay, I’ll get it ready for you. Not just your future birthdays, I’ll get you presents for all the birthdays you’ve already had, okay?”

Stephan shot her a glance. "I've already celebrated twenty-eight birthdays. Are you sure you want to get me twenty-eight birthday presents?"

Alana suddenly choked on her words. "I almost forgot...you're already twenty-eight."

Stephan gave her a half-smile. "What's that supposed to mean? Are you saying I'm too old?"

Alana quickly denied it, "No, no, no, that's not it."

"Twenty-eight it is, then. If you plan carefully, you can still manage it." Stephan felt a sense of relief.

This way, he wouldn't be outdone by that fucking Cole.

The next time they met, he'd at least have the confidence to act a little more cocky in front of him.

He asked again, "Why did you fall for that fucking Cole guy back then?"

"Ah, well..."

Stephan frowned, then decided he didn't want to know after all. "Never mind, let's not talk about it."

Why was he going out of his way to make things hard for himself? Asking Alana how she'd fallen for another man in the first place, wasn't that just asking for trouble?

Stephan had lost interest in the topic, but she couldn't help but become curious about him.

"Stephan, what about you? Was there a girl you liked back in school?"

"No."

Alana was surprised. "None? Are you serious?"

Stephan's thin lips twitched, slightly. "All I had on my mind back then was studying. When would I have had time to think about romance? I'm not like you. When I should have been studying, I didn't focus on my studies, I had time to worry about other things."

Alana gasped.

Why would he call her out like that?!

She bit her lip, hesitated for a moment, and tried to explain to him, "Actually, the reason I liked Cole is because..."

Before she could finish, the man furrowed his brows, cupped her face, and pressed his lips against hers, silencing her completely.

He gently nipped her lip. Hearing her faint whimper, he finally said, "Don't even mention it! The past is the past. You have to look forward, focus on our present and future together, and stop dwelling on all that nonsense."

Hmph.

He certainly didn't want her reminiscing about how she'd fallen for another man before.

Yes, he was petty; hearing that would make him uncomfortable.

Alana lifted her eyelashes to look at him, biting her slightly moist lips.

Fine, if he didn't want to hear it, she wouldn't say anything.

"Let's go back inside then. We shouldn't be standing out here in the cold."

Stephan rubbed the girl's cheek. "Feeling cold, are you? Come on, let's go back and take a romantic bath together to warm up."

Alana swallowed.

Giving her no chance to refuse, Stephan had already picked her up and was striding toward the apartment.

As soon as they entered the bathroom, Alana's clothes were stripped off, leaving her completely naked, and she was pulled into an intimate embrace with the man.

Alana was dazed, as if she'd just remembered something. "Oh, wait...I suddenly remembered something..."

Stephan held her close and kissed her passionately. "At a time like this, what are you daydreaming about? Focus on me."

Alana bit her lip and managed to say, "I left Eve at the restaurant..."

"She has her own legs; she can walk home herself!"

"I left my phone in the restaurant too..."

"If you lose it, I'll buy you a new one!"

Alana was completely at a loss, but she knew the man wasn't joking.

The temperature in the bathroom kept rising. Steam clung to the glass walls of the shower, turning the small space into a private world of heat and water. The gentle trickle of the shower mixed with the intimate, intertwined moans and heavy breathing of a man and a woman.

Perhaps because they'd just had a rather heated argument, they were exceptionally devoted to each other during this intimate moment, taking special care to cater to one another's needs. Every touch lingered. Every shift of weight was measured.

Stephan's hands moved over Alana's wet skin with deliberate care. He guided her under the spray, letting the warm water cascade down her shoulders and the soft curves of her breasts. His mouth found hers first, slow, deep kisses that asked nothing and gave everything. When he turned her around so her back rested against his chest, one arm stayed firm around her waist while the other slid lower.

"Are you okay?" he asked against her ear, voice low. "Tell me if you need me to slow down."

As if he would.

Alana's breath caught. A soft, embarrassed sound left her throat, half sigh, half whimper.

Her cheeks were already pink from the heat and from something deeper. She nodded once, small and quick, but the words wouldn't come. Instead she pressed back against him, the only answer she could manage.

His fingers parted her carefully. The first slow circle of his thumb drew a quiet

"Mmm..." from her lips. When two fingers slipped inside, her head tipped back against his shoulder and a longer sound escaped.

"Ahh... ohh..." She bit her lower lip afterward, as if the sound itself had been too much.

Stephan worked her with patience, learning the exact pressure that made her thighs tremble. The water ran over both of them, mixing with the growing wetness between her legs. He kept checking, small adjustments, quiet questions murmured against her neck.

Each time she only answered with those small, breathy sounds and the way her body opened for him.

When he finally guided himself between her thighs and pressed forward, he did it inch by careful inch.

Alana's hands flew back to grip his hips. A broken moan spilled out of her as he filled her completely

“Nnhgh...ahh... ahh...” She stayed quiet after that for several heartbeats, only the soft hitch of her breathing and the occasional tiny “Mmm...” giving her away.

He began to move. Slow, deep thrusts that rolled his body against hers. The wet sound of skin meeting skin under the shower blended with her rising sounds.

Every time he angled just right she made a sweeter noise into his ear.

“Ohhh... mmmnh...”

And her fingers tightened on him. He kept one hand low on her belly, steadying her, the other rising to cup her breast, thumb brushing the tight peak until another soft cry left her.

“Still good?” he asked again, voice rougher now.

She nodded hard, eyes closed, face turned slightly away. A faint, embarrassed flush spread down her neck. Instead of words, she pushed back to meet the next thrust, and the resulting moan was clearer...

“Ahh... yes... ahh...”

They climbed together under the warm water. Alana’s sounds grew longer, less controlled. They turned into higher, needier cries as the tension coiled tight.

When she came the first time her whole body tightened around him.

Loud moans of pure ecstasy broke from her throat, followed by a series of trembling little moans as the waves kept rolling through her.

The rhythmic clench pulled Stephan over a moment later. He buried himself deep and held there, forehead pressed to the back of her neck, breathing hard while the last pulses faded.

Even then he didn’t pull out, he turned her carefully in his arms and lifted her. Alana’s legs wrapped around his waist on instinct, locking at the small of his back.

He buried himself inside her again and stepped out of the shower. Water dripped from both of them onto the cool tile. Each step shifted him inside her, drawing soft, startled sounds from her lips.

She hid her face against his shoulder, arms tight around his neck, as he carried her through the bedroom doorway.

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Chapter 230 New angle

Chapter 230 New angle

The sheets were cool against Alana's back when Stephan finally laid her down, but he never left her body.

He stayed buried as he settled over her, elbows braced on either side of her head.

The new angle made her eyes flutter.

"Mmmm." She whimpered.

The man didn't shake his teasing streak when they got in bed. He used every trick he knew to coax a response from her. Long, slow strokes that almost left her empty, then a deep slide home that made her gasp.

He would hold still at the deepest point, rolling his hips in tiny circles until her breath hitched and soft, involuntary sounds spilled out before starting the deliberate rhythm again.

Alana's cheeks were already flushed a deep crimson. She looked both delicate and alluring like that...wet hair spread across the pillow, lips parted, eyes half-lidded.

Every time he changed the angle or the pace she made those sexy noises he had come to love so much. When he leaned down and bit gently at the lobe of her ear, her whole body shivered.

"Call me 'husband,'" he murmured, voice dark and warm, "and I'll make you feel even better..."

The request made the flush on her face deepen. She turned her head slightly, as if the words were too much, but her hips lifted to meet the next thrust. A soft, shaky "Ahh..." was the only sound she gave him.

Stephan kept the teasing pace, denying her the harder rhythm her body clearly wanted. He dragged almost all the way out, then sank back in with controlled power, watching her face the entire time.

“Good girl,” he coaxed, voice playful and low. “C’mon call me ‘husband,’ and I’ll fill up your beautiful pussy, you want that so bad...I can feel it...”

Alana’s cheeks burned bright red. The dirty talk made her squeeze her eyes shut for a moment.

Unable to stand it any longer, she wrapped her arms around his neck and pressed her lips against his in a desperate, silencing kiss.

Stephan chuckled softly against her mouth. The little white rabbit was getting better and better at this...she knew exactly what worked best to quiet him, at least for a moment.

But only for a moment.

He broke the kiss just enough to speak against her lips, still moving inside her with that same deliberate, maddening rhythm.

“Say it, baby.”

Her breath trembled. The pressure building low in her belly was too strong to ignore. Soft, broken sounds kept escaping between kisses...”Mmm... ahh... nnh...”

until finally the words slipped out, quiet and shaky.

“It feels...it feels so good...”

The admission alone made his eyes darken. He rewarded her with a deeper thrust that dragged a longer moan from her throat.

“Ohhh... ahh...Stephan...”

Still he waited, patient and relentless, rocking into her with focused precision.

“Husband...” She whispered at last, the word almost lost against his mouth.

The effect was immediate. Stephan’s control frayed. He drove into her harder, deeper, the steady rhythm turning urgent. One hand slid beneath her hips, tilting her so every thrust hit with devastating accuracy.

Alana’s moans rose higher.

“Ahh...ahh...ohhh... mmmnh... ahh!” She clung to him, legs locked around his waist, meeting every powerful movement. Soft cries spilled freely now...

“Yes... ahh... ohh... husband... ahh!”

The earlier hesitation melting under the force of sensation. The bed creaked softly beneath them. Sweat and residual water mixed on their skin.

He fucked her with focused intensity, chasing the second climax for both of them. Alana's sounds grew sweeter and more broken with every deep stroke. A long, trembling rose from her throat as the tension coiled tight again.

When she came the second time, it was stronger than the first. Her body arched hard beneath him, inner muscles pulsing in tight, rhythmic waves.

"Ahh...ahh...ahh... ohhh!"

The rhythmic clench milked him ruthlessly. Stephan followed her over the edge with a low, guttural sound, burying himself as deep as he could go and spilling into her in long, hot pulses.

They stayed locked together through every aftershock, foreheads pressed, breathing shared and uneven.

Even after the intensity eased he didn't rush to pull away, he kissed her eyelids, the tip of her nose, the corner of her mouth, gentling her down with the same careful attention he had used to build her up.

Alana's arms remained loosely around his neck. The deep flush on her cheeks had not yet faded. Soft, contented little sounds still left her lips whenever he shifted inside her.

Stephan brushed damp hair from her forehead and smiled, voice low and warm.

"Are you okay?"

This time, she answered without hesitation, though the soft, embarrassed curve of her mouth gave her away.

"Yes." Alana breathed.

She was so exhausted she fell asleep soon after.

Stephan was still wide awake.

He carried her to the shower, then back to the bed, where he laid her down.

He lay down beside her, pulled her into his arms, and quietly gazed at her sleeping face. A ringtone suddenly cut through the silence.

It was his phone ringing.

Afraid of disturbing his girl's rest, Stephan quickly let go of her, got out of bed, and went to the balcony to answer the call.

"What's up?" His voice still carried a hoarseness from their recent encounter, making it particularly sexy and alluring.

Vance's face flushed crimson. Had he picked the wrong time and interrupted the CEO's private moment?!

However, judging by the CEO's tone, he didn't seem angry.

He cleared his throat and got down to business. "Um...President, I've found the person you asked me to look into. Cole Parker, he's from the Moore family, the son of the current head of the family, Elliot Moore."

The Moore family were averagely rich. Not really impressive compared to the Hudson family, their influence was by no means insignificant.

Stephan frowned. "If he's Elliot Moore's son, why does he have the surname Parker?"

Vance replied, "His mother's surname is Parker, so he took his mother's surname."

"Is any of his parents from Kete?"

Vance replied, "Yes, his mother."

Stephan sneered. So she's from the same place as Alana, no wonder he knows so much about her.

As for what Cole had said, what exactly did he know about Alana?

Now that he thought about it, he really didn't know much about her family and her early life.

The girl kept her cards close to her chest; there were many things he simply couldn't know.

But if he really wanted to find out, all it would take was a phone call to send someone to investigate.

But... he didn't want to.

What he wanted was for Alana to one day, without holding anything back, take the initiative to open up to him about everything.

Not just a few cold, impersonal pieces of paper he'd get from sending someone to

investigate!

He was waiting...waiting for the day she would truly be willing to tell him everything...

As for Cole's blatant provocation tonight, talking about fair competition and trying to poach his girlfriend.

There weren't any doors or windows for that stupid Cole to enter...there wasn't even the slightest opening!

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Chapter 231 To marry me

Chapter 231 To marry me

He hung up the phone.

Stephan returned to the bedroom and pulled the sleeping figure in his arms close.

He kissed her repeatedly, caressing her body with passion. "My darling, you belong to me. No one can take you away from me!"

When Alana woke up the next day, her whole body ached terribly.

She walked unsteadily, nearly splitting her legs wide open.

Stephan teased her for being delicate and unable to handle him.

Embarrassed, Alana grabbed a pillow and threw it at him. "Do...do you know how big you are?! Who can handle that!"

Stephan caught the pillow, placed it back on the bed, then pulled Alana into a tight embrace and showered her with kisses.

"Thanks for the compliment. Even if you won't admit it, I know you love my big dick. But don't I'll be gentler with you from now on."

"I'd believe in ghosts before I'd believe you."

Stephan chuckled softly, pinching her cheek. “You little smart aleck!”

Alana shot him a playful glare. “Can I borrow your phone in a minute? I want to call Eve and ask if she picked up my phone for me when she left the restaurant last night.”

“Sure.”

Stephan reached for his phone and handed it to her.

Alana took the phone and tapped the screen.

The wallpaper that greeted her eyes instantly made her blush.

“You...how could you use this photo as your wallpaper?! Change it right now!”

It was a photo Stephan had sneaked a kiss and taken on the sly.

In the photo, the man was leaning down to kiss her, looking completely lost in the moment.

She, on the other hand, was blushing, looking adorably shy.

She never expected him to set it as his phone’s screensaver and stare at it every day. Aaaah!

So embarrassing!

Stephan glanced at the photo on his screen and grinned mischievously.

“I’m not changing it. Look at you in that photo...so lost in the kiss, so intoxicated, so enjoying it. I absolutely adore this picture. How could I possibly change it?”

Alana’s embarrassment reached a fever pitch, and her face turned bright red.

“Enough, stop talking about it. Change it right now!”

Stephan curled the corners of his lips. “I won’t change it. Not only do I not want to change it, but I even want to print this photo out, stick it on the headboard, also put it in my office so I can look at it anytime, anywhere!”

“You!” Alana stamped her foot, overcome with shame and indignation.

“Aren’t you afraid someone will see it?”

Stephan looked completely unconcerned. “So what if they see it? If they do, they’ll just be envious and jealous that I have such a beautiful girlfriend, it won’t affect our relationship at all.”

Alana blinked

This guy was getting more and more carried away.

“I don’t care, I’m taking this off!”

“Go ahead. I’ll putt it back later.”

She sighed.

There was just no dealing with him.

“Stephan, you’re so shameless!”

“You love it when I’m shameless with you.”

“I don’t!”

“I don’t believe you!”

“I...”

In the end, Alana was pinned down by Stephan and kissed forcefully, and she immediately calmed down.

With her lips swollen and red, she angrily gave up on changing the wallpaper. Never mind that...she’d call Eve first and ask her about the phone.

If she kept messing around with him, she’d probably end up unable to even get out of bed.

She entered Eve’s number and dialed.

The phone rang for less than three seconds before it was picked up.

Alana asked impatiently, “Hello, Eve, do you have my phone?”

There was a moment of silence on the other end; no one spoke for a while.

Alana asked in confusion, “Eve?”

A deep, husky male voice answered, like wine that had been left to ferment through the night.

“She’s still asleep.”

Alana jolted. That voice... it was Eve’s boyfriend...

“Oh, I’ll call back later...” Alana hung up the phone, her face flushed bright red.

Stephan stood nearby. Seeing Alana’s reaction, his dark eyes narrowed dangerously. “Why are you blushing?”

“A man’s voice made you blush that much?”

Alana explained, her face flushed, “No, I didn’t expect my best friend’s boyfriend to answer the phone. I’ve never met this new one, so I felt a little awkward...”

Stephan couldn’t resist reaching out to pinch her flushed cheek, smiling jealously.

“Even if you feel a little awkward, there’s no need to blush.”

“I can’t help it. I guess I’m just...I blush easily.”

Stephan chuckled, not bothering to quibble over such trivialities.

He thought for a moment. “But that voice...it sounded kind of familiar.”

Alana frowned.

What does that mean?

Could it be that Stephan knows Eve’s boyfriend?

That can’t be, can it?

Was the world really that small?

Does everyone end up in the same circle after all?

Before long, Eve called me herself.

It was probably because her boyfriend had told Alana to call her.

Eve sounded like she’d just woken up, her voice was lazy and tired, like a sleepy little kitten, and she was even yawning.

“I’ve got your phone here. You got swept off your feet by a guy yesterday and forgot to grab your phone. Good thing I grabbed it for you, otherwise, you’d have had to buy a new one!”

“Thank you so much. When are you free? I’ll come pick it up.”

Eve grumbled, “Don’t bother. I’ll bring the phone to your office after work at noon.”

Alana smiled. “Okay, okay, I’ll wait for you. I’ll treat you to lunch!”

“Mm-hmm. Gotta go. I’m exhausted. I’m going to lie down for a bit.”

Alana’s eyes dilated.

Exhausted?

By whom?

Was it the kind of “exhausted” she was thinking of?

The call ended and she handed the phone back to Stephan.

Stephan took his phone back and raised an eyebrow at her. “Your friend’s boyfriend is pretty impressive.”

Alana blushed and muttered instinctively, “You’re pretty impressive too, aren’t you?”

He gave her a half-smile. “Hmm? Who are you saying is pretty impressive? Say it louder...your husband can’t hear you.”

She scolded him shyly, mumbling, “What ‘husband’? Don’t say things like that!”

Stephan said shamelessly, “You’re the one who gave me that title. I’ll call myself whatever I want! Sweetheart, I am your husband!”

Seriously, here he goes again, acting so shameless!

Stephan couldn’t help but cup her flushed cheeks. “My darling, when will you be willing to marry me, hmm?”

Cole’s provocation last night had given him a strong sense of crisis.

It made him even more determined to whisk her home as his wife.

Lure her home and hide her away, so no other men can set their sights on her!

Alana's eyes flickered slightly, a hint of guilt in her voice. "I've already told you, I'm not thinking about marriage right now."

Stephan chuckled, pinching her cheek between his thumb and forefinger, making her rosy lips look plump and full.

"You've been with me this long, and you haven't considered marrying me?"

"I..."

He seemed to anticipate her response so he frowned and cut her off. "Don't you dare say you haven't thought about it! You can say you're not considering it for now, but you can't say you'll never consider it!"

"I don't care. You need to think about it right now...and decide when you're going to marry me!"

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Chapter 232 So bossy

Chapter 232 So bossy

"Stephan, you're so bossy."

"If I weren't a little domineering with you, you'd never know how desperately I want to make you my wife!"

Stephan's heart was deeply moved. She stared blankly at the man's handsome face.

"Really?"

Stephan stared at her, his eyes brimming with sincerity. "Really, I want it so bad. More than I've ever wanted anything in this world."

Alana lowered her eyes, her heart filled with anxiety. "What if, after we're married, you stop being kind to me? What if you stop cherishing me?"

Most men stop caring once they've got what they want.

Wasn't that exactly how her parents were?

They stopped loving each other not long after getting married. Arguing over every little thing, always at each other's throats...

"Lana, look at me, I'm more than a 100% confident in my feelings for you. My feelings for you will never change. I want to spend the rest of my life with you, I want to spend the rest of my life worshipping the ground I walk on, if any day, I stop cherishing you, it means I'm no longer in this world."

Alana gasped. "You...why are you suddenly talking about death."

"Because I hope to die before you do. I cannot live with you."

She was moved to tears by his words. "How am I supposed to live with you then?"

Stephan smiled. "Then we could die together."

"Stop talking about death!" She thundered.

Jesus! She was still very young.

"Fine, fine, I'm not wishing for any one of us to die, I want us to grow old and grey, to be together, forever."

That felt better to hear.

"Also, if anyone should be scared of getting abandoned, it should be me."

Alana frowned. "What do you mean?"

"While, I'm sure that I will never leave you, I don't completely sure you would never leave...I might not even be the number one man in your heart."

Alana wrapped her arms around him, looked up at him, and blinked her beautiful, clear eyes as she said earnestly, "No other man can take your place in my heart!"

Those words really pleased the man.

Stephan raised an eyebrow. "So, does that mean I'm the number one man in your heart?"

Alana nodded. "For now, yes."

Stephan gave her a half-smile. “What do you mean, ‘for now’? Does that mean it won’t be the case later?”

Alana blinked. “Well... that depends on how you behave in the future.”

Stephan snorted with a laugh. “Just know that I’d never let you go.”

Stephan dutifully drove Alana to the entrance of her company.

Alana was just about to get out of the car.

But he pulled her back.

His dark eyes fixed on her, his expression clearly displeased. “What am I supposed to do? I really don’t want you to go into that company!”

Alana found it somewhat amusing. “Why? Don’t you trust me?”

“It’s not that I don’t trust you...it’s that I don’t trust that Cole guy! He’s got his eyes on you!”

“Last night, he kept telling me he wanted to compete with me on fair terms! Do you think he’s qualified to compete with me?”

“Of course not.”

Hearing this, Stephan felt a little better.

“Come here. Let me keep hold you more.”

Alana’s expression changed, and she immediately stepped back. “No, no, no...I can’t!”

“It’s not up to you to say no!”

The man lunged forward like a hungry wolf pouncing on its prey, scooping up the little white rabbit and devouring her with a series of kisses.

Finally, Alana walked into the company looking utterly dejected, her face marked with the strawberry-shaped hickies the man had sucked onto her skin.

She thought to herself, filled with shame and anger, ‘This bastard...does he play these perverted games every day?!’

She couldn’t let him get away with this. She’d have to teach him a lesson later.

Lost in her thoughts, a furious figure suddenly burst out, raising a hand to slap her.

Alana dodged immediately, but the blow still grazed her arm.

She clutched her stinging arm and looked at the woman who had burst in. “Camila, what the hell are you doing, losing your mind first thing in the morning?”

Camila glared at Alana with fury, as if she wanted to tear the woman in front of her to pieces.

“Lana, my older brother was in a car accident! He was supposed to have dinner with you last night. What on earth did you do to him? Why did he get into a car accident?!”

Alana’s head spun in disbelief. “What did you say? Cole was in a car accident?”

Camila clenched her teeth in fury. “Yes!”

“Last night, after finding out you’d asked him out to dinner, he spent ages getting all dressed up before heading out to meet you! But he left and didn’t come back for hours. At midnight, the hospital called me, saying my older brother had been in a car accident and was in the operating room undergoing emergency surgery!”

“Alana, what on earth did you do to him last night? Why did he get into a car accident?! Did you cause his accident?!”

Alana’s mind was spinning. “I...I didn’t...It wasn’t me who asked him out to dinner last night. I don’t know how he got into that accident...”

Camila demanded angrily, “If you didn’t ask him out, then who did? My brother told me it was you who asked him out! It’s definitely your fault, so don’t try to act like you don’t know anything!”

Alana couldn’t bring herself to say that Cole had actually met with Stephan last night, nor did she know what the two of them had discussed.

“Camila, is this really the time to be arguing about this? What’s your brother’s condition right now?”

Camila glared at her. “He just came out of surgery and is still unconscious. While he was unconscious, he kept calling out your name! That’s why I’m certain you’re the one who caused my brother’s car accident!”

Alana was speechless. It was laughable that someone with such low intelligence could reach that conclusion.

“Believe it or not, your brother’s car accident has absolutely nothing to do with me.”

Last night, when Stephan took her away, Cole was still fine.

Camila sneered, “Just because you say it has nothing to do with you, does that make it so?”

“Fine, then come with me to the hospital right now and confront my brother! If you’re involved, I won’t let you off the hook!”

Alana nodded. “Fine, let’s go. I have nothing to hide!”

Camila immediately grabbed her hand, trying to pull her into the car.

Alana shook off her grip. “Don’t worry, you don’t need to drag me...I’ll walk on my own!”

Camila sneered, “Who knows if you’ll try to run away because you’re guilty!”

Alana couldn’t be bothered to respond.

Next, Alana got into Camilla car and went with her to a hospital.

She met Cole in a VIP ward.

His arms and legs were wrapped in bandages, and his face was covered in scrapes and minor cuts.

His face was pale, and he looked utterly weak.

She couldn’t understand how the man who had been standing right in front of her just last night, shouting at her to break up with Stephan, could be lying in a hospital bed in the blink of an eye.

The man on the bed had his eyes tightly closed, yet he was muttering to himself.
“Lana...my darling Lana...”

“Lana, will you break up with that man?”

“Break up with him now...he’s not right for you...”

“He’s just playing with you...”

At first, Alana was too far away to make out what he was muttering.

It wasn’t until she got closer that she caught a few words.

She wondered: Could it be that last night, Stephan said something to provoke him, causing him to act impulsively and accidentally get into a car accident?

Camila walked up to Alana and said coldly, with a hint of bitterness, “Just listen to this!”

“My older brother really has poured his heart and soul into you, he cares for you so deeply that even while unconscious, he’s still muttering your name!”

“Alana, what exactly is so great about you that my brother cares so deeply for you?”

Alana frowned. “I don’t know what’s so great about me either, so why don’t you talk some sense into your brother and tell him to stop caring so much about me? Okay?”

Camila glared at Alana again. If she could persuade her brother, would things have come to this?

“It must be that you’re seducing him again, making him completely devoted to you! You have a boyfriend and yet you’re still trying to seduce my brother? You shameless vixen, you slut!”

“Camila, I’m not going to argue with you about this nonsense! Your brother hasn’t woken up yet. He needs a quiet environment to rest. Are you trying to make him feel even worse by shouting and causing a scene right next to him?”

Camila denied it, “I’m not!”

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Chapter 233 The same affection

Chapter 233 The same affection

“I’m only standing up for my brother and calling you out, you slut!”

Alana was speechless once again.

“Camila, if you want to fight, just say the word. I’ll go outside with you and we’d settle this one-on-one.”

She’d only slapped Camila once before, she still hadn’t had her fill.

Now that she was cursing right in front of her again, her hands were itching to strike.

Camila had a fiery temper and had been waiting for Alana to say exactly that. “Hah, if you want to fight, go ahead. Come on! I haven’t settled the score with you yet for that slap you gave me last time!”

“If it weren’t for your boyfriend backing you up last time, do you think I would have let you off so easily?”

She’d always been the one bullying Alana. After Alana slapped her last time, the more she thought about it after returning home, the angrier and more resentful she felt.

She’d actually been slapped in the face by a woman she used to bully?!

Back then, when she bullied Alana, Alana would be so terrified that she would go out of her way to avoid her.

Now Alana actually had the nerve to slap her in the face...how could she, who had always been on top, possibly tolerate that?

So after she returned home, she couldn’t stop thinking about getting her revenge!

Alana remained expressionless. “Fine. Let’s go find a quiet place.”

Camila sneered, ready to show off her skills. “Fine!”

Just as the two were about to leave the hospital room.

Cole, lying in bed, suddenly began to cough.

Camila immediately turned her head and rushed over. “Brother!”

Alana turned around and saw that Camila had already thrown herself onto Cole.

“Brother, how are you feeling? Are you feeling any better?”

Cole coughed painfully for a while, then opened his eyes and replied weakly to Camila, “I’m fine,”

At least he wasn’t dead.

As soon as the words left his mouth, he spotted Alana standing in the hospital room. A flash of light immediately crossed his eyes, filled with surprise and delight.

“Lana, what are you doing here?”

Alana walked back over and stood by the bed. “Camila told me you were in a car accident, so I came to check on you.”

Cole felt a sense of relief. “So, you were worried about me after all.”

Deep down, she wasn’t entirely without feelings for him.

Alana thought to herself that he had helped her a great deal back then and had resolved many of her troubles for her.

She wasn’t a heartless person; hearing he’d been in a car accident, she couldn’t possibly remain indifferent.

Besides, the cause of his accident might be related to what happened last night, so she felt it was necessary to come and see for herself to understand the situation.

Camila saw that Cole’s heart and eyes were fixed only on Alana, not on her, her heart instantly churned with jealousy.

It was always like this, whenever Alana was around, her brother completely ignore her.

“Brother, can’t you stop thinking about that woman?”

“Don’t forget how you got into that accident...she might have done it on purpose!”

Cole frowned. “It has nothing to do with her. It was my own carelessness.”

Camila retorted, “What do you mean ‘carelessness’? You got into that accident last night because you went to see her. I don’t believe it has nothing to do with her!”

Thinking of last night’s events, Cole’s eyes darkened instantly.

Alana watched Cole's expression, feeling a bit uneasy.

She bit her lip and asked, "Last night, what did you talk about with my boyfriend?"

Cole raised his eyes, his expression tinged with sorrow. "Didn't he tell you?"

"He mentioned a little."

But she still wasn't entirely clear on the details.

Instead of answering, Cole asked, "Lana, how did you end up with him in the first place?"

Alana choked on her words.

How did she end up with him?

That was a bit hard to explain.

And she certainly couldn't go into the specifics.

"After we broke up, it just happened naturally."

Upon hearing this, Cole's eyes brimmed with an indescribable sorrow.

"After we broke up? You met him, but do you really know him? If you knew his true identity and still chose to be with him, what about me?"

"You said the gap between our social statuses was too great and we weren't a good match, but why should it be okay with him? The gap you have with me can't even be compared to his. Why did you choose him and not me?"

Alana furrowed her brow. She had guessed there was a significant gap in status between her and Stephan, but she didn't know just how vast it was.

Regardless, she didn't want a third person meddling in their affairs.

This was a matter between her and Stephan; it was something they should resolve behind closed doors, just the two of them.

So she said, "He's not like you."

Cole retorted, "How is he different?"

Alana thought for a moment, then said earnestly, "It feels different. He gives me a sense of stability and reliability. But you're like a gust of wind...elusive and ephemeral, always out of reach."

Cole's was always away, barely made time for her and the few times he did, he always maintained the image of a gentle, refined, and caring older brother.

But behind her back, he sided with his sister, belittling her status with his friends.

He was like the opposite of Stephan character-wise.

That was why she could never believe his feelings were genuine.

Cole couldn't help but say, "Lana, I can give you that sense of security too! If you're willing, I'll marry you and make you my wife!"

Alana found it amusing. "When you say you'll marry me, that just doesn't make any sense. Will your sister agree? Will your parents agree? Marriage isn't just about two people; it involves two families too and someone like you will never stand up for me against your family. Instead, you'd just allow them treat me like trash."

Camila seized the opportunity to say, "Lana, at least you have some self-awareness, you know there's no way my parents and I would agree! With your lowly status, you're only fit for some lowly trash...don't even think about climbing the social ladder by hooking up with my brother!"

Cole's quest to win back her heart was already a long and arduous journey, and now his sister, a complete liability, was standing in his way, making him even more exasperated.

"Camila, shut your mouth!"

Camila snorted coldly and said bluntly, "Brother, I've already told Mom and Dad about you and Alana. They don't approve! She is just an orphan abandoned by her parents...a total nobody. With a background like that, she isn't even fit to tie our family's servants' shoes. How could she possibly be worthy of you, let alone become your wife?!"

"As children of a wealthy and prestigious family, we're expected to marry someone of equal standing, not some woman with no status or background! In a little while, Mom and Dad will arrange another matchmaking for you, all well-educated, refined young ladies from distinguished families. They're in a completely different league from a lowly woman like Alana."

She kept calling her a "lowly woman," as if she wanted to degrade Alana to the very core of her being.

Alana frowned; no one likes being belittled like that.

But it seemed that those from wealthy families were simply meant to be superior.

And to them, ordinary people were nothing.

Alana didn't argue with them, their worldviews were simply too different.

Any further explanation would be futile.

Cole said, "I'm not going on a blind date. I only want Lana! So what if she has no parents and no one wants her? I want her, and that's all that matters. I don't care if you oppose it, or if Mom and Dad oppose it! As long as she's willing, I'm willing to be her family, her only family!"

Upon hearing this, Alana clenched her fists slightly.

If she had heard those very words a while ago at his birthday party, she would have been so happy.

What she had needed from him was to be chosen so resolutely by someone.

No matter how much others opposed it, as long as he was willing to have her.

Then she would have the courage to stand by him against anything.

But as it happened, it was only today that she heard Cole's words of unwavering commitment to her.

And now, she no longer felt the same affection for him as she once did.

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Chapter 234 In the past

Chapter 234 In the past

All that was in the past.

People always look forward, and she has bid farewell to that version of herself, as well as to that naive and innocent romance.

No matter how deeply in love Cole might seem now, it had nothing to do with her.

Alana said, "Cole, I'm sorry, but you should find a woman who's your equal."

Cole's pupils contracted slightly. He had thought that saying such words in front of Alana would move her.

But to his surprise, she still rejected him.

A wave of grief and heartache washed over him.

Camila snorted coldly, utterly disdainful of Alana's pretentious, high-and-mighty attitude.

Back then, hadn't Alana approached her brother precisely because she was attracted to him because he was from a rich family.

What was she playing at now?!

"Can you see? You're willing to treat her like family, but she isn't! Some people just aren't worth it!"

Alana couldn't be bothered with Camila's sharp, cutting remarks. "Since we're done here, I'm going home."

Cole couldn't help but speak up, "Lana, let me warn you: you'll regret getting involved with Stephan! He's just toying with you. He'll never give you his heart, and he certainly won't marry you!"

A slight ripple flashed across Alana's eyes.

"Thanks for the warning, but this is between him and me. You don't need to worry about it. You just had surgery and you're still very weak. I won't disturb your rest any further. Goodbye."

She nodded slightly and turned to leave.

Cole watched her retreating figure with a dazed expression, wanting to stop her but unable to find an excuse.

Seeing that Alana had left, Camila couldn't help but ask, "Brother, what did you mean by that just now? You mean Alana's boyfriend is Stephan?"

Could it be that guy from the Hudson family?!

As far as she knew, the one from the Hudson family was also named Stephan.

Cole didn't say a word, but the grim look on his face spoke volumes.

Camila immediately thought of the man who had stood up for Alana that day. She had seen at a glance that he was no ordinary man, he exuded an air of nobility and an innate

aura of a natural leader, a presence that ordinary scions of prominent families could never possess.

But she never would have imagined that he was actually the one from the Hudson family?! No wonder he wasn't afraid of her threats.

No!

What gives Alana the right?!

Alana left her brother...what gives her the right to be with that man from the great Hudson family?

How dare she find someone even better?

Look at her, in terms of status and standing, wasn't she better than Alana in every way?

Why don't outstanding men like her? Why weren't they chasing after her?!

Camila was seething with jealousy. "No wonder Alana's been acting so cocky around me lately, turns out she's found herself such a powerful backer!"

"But that powerful backer will never truly belong to her. She's just being used for fun. Once he gets bored of her, sooner or later he'll kick her to the curb, stomp her into the mud, and she'll never be able to get back up!"

Upon hearing this, Cole clenched his fists tightly, his expression growing even darker.

The woman he cherished above all else had become another man's plaything, how could he possibly tolerate that?!

As for Stephan's claim that he would marry Alana, he didn't believe a single word of it!

He was a man; naturally, he understood what other men were thinking!

Only that foolish woman, Alana, would fall for a man's sweet talk and be so thoroughly deceived!

Alana came to the hospital in Camila's car.

Now that she had to go back, she didn't have her phone on her and didn't have much cash, so even hailing a taxi would be difficult.

But she still had a little money left paid for a public phone and called Eve.

Eve immediately said, "I'll come pick you up and bring your phone back!"

Alana asked, “Don’t you have to work today?”

“No, I’m on leave.”

Alana didn’t hesitate and immediately gave her the hospital address.

In less than half an hour, Eve showed up, driving a Maserati.

Alana was taken aback when she saw her friend had switched cars again. “Is this... your boyfriend’s car too?”

Eve rested her hand on the car window, wearing a pair of very cool, edgy sunglasses.

“No, this is my car. “You know we swapped what we bought by mistake and so I had to wear those sexy lingerie for him. I made him feel good, so he was in a great mood afterwards and just placed an order for this...buying it for me instantly.”

Alana blinked.

How does Eve just accept these stuff? She could never bring herself to.

Eve beckoned to Alana, “Come on, hop in and take a ride in my new car...I’ll take you for a spin!”

Alana didn’t hesitate; she opened the door and hopped in.

Eve started the car and sped off.

The howling wind blew freely across Alana’s face.

Even though it was so strong she could barely keep her eyes open, it felt incredibly comfortable and exhilarating.

If only she had a car of her own.

Too bad she hadn’t even gotten her driver’s license yet, she’d have to find time to take lessons.

Eve asked as she drove, “By the way, shouldn’t you be at the office at this time?What are you doing at the hospital?”

Alana didn’t hide anything from Eve and explained, “Cole was in a car accident. His sister thinks I’m to blame and insisted I come take a look.”

Eve was stunned. Her eyes widened so much her sunglasses nearly fell off. “What?What on earth is going on? Did he die?”

Alana gathered her thoughts and explained the whole story.

Last night, when Cole and Stephan had secretly arranged to meet for dinner behind her back, and, as luck would have it, they’d chosen the exact same restaurant as the one they were at.

That’s how they ran into each other.

Next, Stephan punched Cole and dragged her away.

As for Cole, for some reason, he suddenly got into a car accident.

Perhaps he’d been distracted by something. But Cole didn’t say anything, and she wasn’t going to ask.

But as long as she knew he was still alive, that was enough.

Otherwise, if something really did happen to him and she got framed again, Camila won’t let her hear the end of it.

Eve said, “I think Cole probably couldn’t accept that you abandoned him to

be with another man, so he was speeding, and that’s why the accident happened.”

Alana paused for a moment, then nodded. “That’s possible.”

Eve didn’t quite understand. “But why would Cole do that? If he really cared about you, why did he hurt you like that? Even when he wasn’t giving you any attention back then, you still considered him your boyfriend, he had enough chances to finally treat you right but he never did.”

“What kind of person is he, anyway? Does he think that just because he suddenly wants you back now, you’ll just gratefully accept him? Belated affection is worth less than dirt. You’re not some pet he can summon at will, one he can snap his fingers at and have you come running!”

“If you ask me, men are just jerks. When you care about him, he takes it for granted; when you stop caring, he suddenly thinks he can’t live without you!”

Alana nodded, finding the words quite reasonable.

“Anyway, I already have a man I like now. No matter how deeply Cole feels, it doesn’t mean anything to me.”

“Exactly. A man’s true feelings can change in the blink of an eye. Cole says he cares about you now and that he’ll marry you, but who knows if he’ll change his mind the very next second? If it were me, I wouldn’t trust him ever again.”

“Also, he had proven that he’s someone who can never put you first so if his parents and sister don’t accept you, why would you marry him and suffer? Anyone with half a brain wouldn’t jump into this pit on their own!”

Alana paused for a moment.

Suddenly she remembered that Cole had mentioned the vast disparity in social status between her and Stephan.

So, just how big was that gap, exactly?

If the gap was that wide, would Stephan’s parents, just like Cole’s parents, look down on her and refuse to let her stay with him?

She fell silent for a moment, then couldn’t help but ask Eve,

“Eve, be honest, have you ever thought about your future with your boyfriend?”

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Chapter 235 Stay away from the male lead

“Like marrying him, becoming his wife, and so on.”

Eve shook her head. “I haven’t thought about marrying him. His family is from a wealthy, prominent clan, and such families place great importance on social status. My background is nothing special, how could I possibly hope to marry him and live the life of a wealthy socialite?”

“People need to have a sense of self-awareness. What’s meant for you will be yours; what isn’t, is pointless to yearn for. Anyway, as long as I’m by his side now and can scrape together a lot of money to live comfortably, that’s enough for me. As for the future, I don’t even dare to think about it.”

“Besides, I don’t really want that high-society life anyway. They say once you step into a wealthy family, it’s like diving into a deep sea, endless danger and trouble. I’d much rather be on my own, living freely and enjoying my peace and quiet!”

Eve had read plenty of “alpha male” novels where the female lead marries the male lead only to face endless trouble and danger, even though he always shows up just in time to save her.

But all her crises only arise because she’s with him.

So, the only way to keep the heroine safe was to stay away from the male lead.

The same principle applies in real life.

Alana smiled, faintly. “If you ask me, you’re the one with a clear head.”

Eve looked at Alana curiously. “What’s up? Are you thinking about getting married?”

Alana lowered her eyes. “When you meet a man who pampers you and treat you well, isn’t that perfectly normal to wish for more?”

Eve stared at Alana in surprise. “Girl, are you really, truly, completely head over heels with him? You really want to marry him?”

Alana looked up and smiled. “I...I just thought about it. As for whether I’ll actually decide to marry him, I still need to think it over carefully.”

Eve said earnestly, “Then you’d better think it through carefully. After all, this concerns the rest of your life, you can’t just get married on a whim.”

So many people regret getting married because only after getting married do they realize that married life isn’t what they wanted.

“Besides, you told me before that you didn’t plan on getting married at all.”

Alana chuckled. “I also said I didn’t want to date anyone anymore.”

Eve nodded. “That’s right, you did say that. But then Stephan came along.”

“Exactly. So who knows what might happen in the future?”

“Since the future is uncertain, you shouldn’t make promises lightly, otherwise, you’ll end up eating your words the very next moment.”

Alana smiled. After chatting with Eve, she felt much better.

“Let’s go get something to eat. We made a deal: you bring me my phone, and I’ll treat you to a meal.”

Eve agreed with a smile, “Sure!”

She asked deliberately, “But do you want to go to the same restaurant as last night?”

Alana’s eyelid twitched. “No way, let’s try somewhere else.”

She was still a little shaken by what had happened last night.

The two went to a different restaurant. It was a fairly well-known restaurant; she’d heard the food was quite good.

Alana and Eve hadn’t tried it before, so they wanted to check it out.

The restaurant was packed to the brim. With so many people coming here, it probably wouldn’t be a letdown.

The two found a table and sat down, then scanned the QR code to order.

“Should we order the fish head with chopped chili peppers?”

“Let’s order it, a lot of people have recommended it.”

“Let’s also get a plate of chili pork, it looks pretty good.”

“The spicy chicken looks good too, I noticed a lot of people ordering it.”

“Let’s get another plate of stir-fried pork with red peppers, it smells so good. I can practically taste it already... mmm, my mouth is watering...”

“Let’s get some greens too.”

Meanwhile, at a table a few meters away from them.

Darla and Cynthia were sitting across from each other. The two were regulars at this restaurant, coming in for a meal almost every other day.

Mainly because the hospital cafeteria food was just so-so, and they were too lazy to go home for a meal, so they’d just grab a bite out.

Cynthia asked, “Darla, how are things

going between you and my son lately? Any progress?”

Darla’s expression stiffened.

How was she supposed to answer that?

She'd been trying every which way to run into Stephan these past few days, but she hadn't managed to.

She actually had Stephan's contact information, Cynthia had given it to her so she could get in touch with him.

But as soon as she'd said hello to Stephan, he'd blocked her.

She was too embarrassed to tell Cynthia about such a humiliating incident.

Besides, Stephan had a girlfriend now. She'd intended to properly confirm if the relationship was serious, but work at the hospital had been so hectic these past few days that she hadn't had much time to look into it.

Besides, it wasn't even certain if he was going to take the girl seriously, she might just be a secret mistress he was keeping on the side.

If she really were his girlfriend, why wouldn't he bring her home to meet his parents?

Darla hesitated for a moment. "Auntie, has Stephan brought any woman home recently?"

Cynthia replied without hesitation, "Of course not. Otherwise, I wouldn't be nagging him about it every day."

Darla secretly breathed a sigh of relief; perhaps her guess was correct.

"Auntie, I'm sorry. I've been so busy lately, and there hasn't been much progress between me and your son."

Upon hearing this, Cynthia didn't want to discourage Darla, so she smiled and reassured her, "I see. It's okay. Take your time. My son is the type who's cold on the outside but warm on the inside. As long as you keep at it, he'll eventually be won over by your warmth and sincerity!"

Darla smiled. "Alright, but you have to help me too, Auntie."

Cynthia immediately replied, "As soon as we get back, I'll give that rascal a call and tell him to treat you better!"

Hearing this, Darla felt a little reassured.

With her mother-in-law's help, things should go much more smoothly.

However, she really didn't care for the strong flavors of cuisine; after just a couple of bites, she had to take a sip of water.

Besides, the place was too crowded, the smells were too overpowering, and the atmosphere was too down-to-earth, she didn't like that either.

She really couldn't understand how Cynthia, a wealthy socialite, could possibly enjoy this kind of down-to-earth restaurant with its rustic, working-class atmosphere.

It didn't suit her noble status at all.

What kind of place is this for a lady who lives secluded in a wealthy household to come out and eat?

However, she forgot that Cynthia wasn't just your average reclusive socialite from a wealthy family; she was now a chief physician, one with nearly thirty years of experience, at that, and a professor and expert in her field. Having witnessed the hardships of the world firsthand, her perspective, mindset, and outlook were naturally worlds apart from those of Darla, a green, newly returned doctor from abroad.

Darla scanned the restaurant, her eyes clearly betraying her disdain.

But she soon spotted Alana and was somewhat surprised.

She never expected to run into her just while having a meal.

Cynthia noticed Darla's gaze and asked curiously, "What are you looking at?"

Darla averted her gaze. "I saw someone who looked familiar."

"Who?"

"It doesn't really matter."

Alana and Eve had eaten and drunk to their fill and were ready to pay the bill and leave.

When Alana said she'd treat, she meant it. She picked up her phone and went to the cash register to pay the bill.

As she turned around, she accidentally bumped into someone.

She even knocked the other person's bank card out of their hand.

“I’m so sorry.” Alana immediately picked up the card and was about to return it.

But when she looked at the person she’d bumped into, she felt a vague sense of familiarity.

But soon, her eyes widened in disbelief.

How could it be...

Cynthia took the bank card Alana handed her and smiled, saying thank you.

But when she saw Alana’s pretty face, she also froze for a moment, feeling a sense of familiarity.

It felt as though she’d seen her somewhere before.

Suddenly, her eyes lit up. “It’s you, young lady. Do you remember me?”

She remembered the young girl standing before her from that day! When her son had personally examined her patient for the first time.

Chapter 236 Not sure

Chapter 236 Not sure

No wonder she had such a vivid memory of her.

Alana certainly remembered. That day, when she went to the hospital for a checkup, she had specifically requested an appointment with this Dr. Cynthia.

But when she went in, it wasn’t Cynthia she saw or any other female doctor, it was Stephan.

And this Dr. Cynthia was none other than Stephan’s mother.

That mix-up had been so awkward; she remembered it vividly, how could she possibly forget?

She just never expected to actually run into this Dr. Cynthia, that is...Stephan's mother. Now that they'd met again, Alana's perspective had changed. To her, the woman before her was no longer just a doctor, but...

Alana's mind went blank with nervousness, especially when she heard the woman ask with a smile, "Do you remember me?"

Her mind seemed to go haywire, and she blurted out, "Mom?"

The moment those words left her mouth, not only was Alana stunned, but Cynthia was stunned as well.

Eve, standing nearby, and Darla, who was following behind Cynthia, also looked on in disbelief.

Alana wished she could slap herself across the face!

It was all that bastard Stephan's fault. He was always going on about "my wife" and even forced her to call him "husband" in bed, making her get so caught up in the role that she actually started to see herself as...

Now that she'd run into Stephan's mother, she'd actually...

Her face flushed with panic as she scrambled to recover. "Ah, no, Mother-in-law...no...Auntie, no...Dr. Cynthia...hello!"

Cynthia also snapped back to her senses, feeling a bit awkward. "Ahem, hello."

Alana's face turned bright red; she'd made another huge blunder and didn't know what to say.

Cynthia, however, broke the awkward silence with a smile, "Do you like the cuisine here too?"

Alana nodded sheepishly. "Yes, it's really delicious."

Cynthia smiled. "Me too."

Just then, Darla stepped out from behind Cynthia, curious about the relationship between Cynthia and Alana.

"Auntie, do you know her?"

Cynthia looked at Darla and explained, "She's a patient who once made an appointment with me."

Darla nodded. So that's how it was.

There really are a lot of coincidences in this world.

When Alana saw Darla there as well, her heart skipped a beat.

Recalling that Darla had told her Stephan's mother adored her and already treated her like a daughter-in-law, she felt even more awkward and embarrassed.

Cynthia seemed to remember something. Out of professional habit, she asked Alana, "Hey, has your boyfriend been treating you badly again?"

After all, during that last consultation, the young girl had been reduced to such a state by her boyfriend, it was quite pitiful.

Alana couldn't help but blush. "No, he's not."

Cynthia nodded. "That's good. If you ask me, if your boyfriend is still treating you that badly, it's fine to break up with him."

"You're young and pretty, there's no need to limit yourself to just one person."

She bit her lip and said sheepishly, "Dr. Cynthia...um...my friend and I have something else to do. We'll have to go now."

"Alright."

Alana immediately grabbed Eve's hand and hurriedly left.

It was as if some kind of flood or beast were chasing her from behind.

Darla, listening to their conversation, grew even more curious. "Auntie, what was the reason she made an appointment with you back then?"

"Well, the young lady has a boyfriend. The man is probably too energetic and very wild in bed, so she ended up having to come to the hospital."

Darla wasn't a three-year-old; she naturally understood what Cynthia meant.

Cynthia couldn't help but add, "It was actually my son who examined her. That rascal...he went and treated my patient on his own while I wasn't there. He's completely out of control!"

Darla was stunned. "What? You mean it was Stephan who..."

Cynthia nodded, finding the whole thing absurd even as she thought about it. “Yeah, that brat’s a total weirdo and doesn’t like interacting with the opposite sex. I have no idea what got into him that day, he actually examined that girl for me. I thought the sun had come up in the west.”

Darla’s fists clenched involuntarily.

That really wasn’t the kind of thing Stephan would do.

Every time she got close to him, he’d go out of his way to avoid her, how could he possibly take the initiative to interact with a woman?

Especially to help that woman...

Darla couldn’t help but watch Alana’s retreating figure, her eyes narrowing slightly.

“To be honest, that girl is quite pretty. If she didn’t have a boyfriend, I might’ve tried to set her up with my son, after all, it’s rare for him to take an interest in a girl...”

Before Cynthia could finish her sentence, she suddenly realized Darla was there and quickly changed the subject, smiling as she said, “Just kidding, just kidding. I don’t really know her, so it wouldn’t be right to just try to set them up.”

Hearing this, Darla gave a somewhat forced smile.

Eve was dragged out of the restaurant by Alana before she knew what was happening.

“Hey, why are you dragging me along so fast? You look like you’ve got something to hide!”

Alana did indeed look a bit like a guilty party.

After all, she had accidentally run into her boyfriend’s mother and, without meaning to, had called her ‘Mom’

If she hadn’t caught herself in time, who knows what kind of embarrassment she would have caused.

After all, her boyfriend’s mother didn’t even know she was her son’s girlfriend yet.

What’s more, standing right beside her boyfriend’s mother was Darla, a woman who kept insisting she was her boyfriend’s fiancée.

What kind of hellish scene was that?!

If she didn’t get out of there fast, was she just waiting to be dumped?

Eve leaned closer to Alana, batting her eyelashes curiously. “Girl, that look on your face tells me something’s up. What’s going on?”

Alana took a deep breath, trying to calm her nerves.

She whispered, “That woman from earlier, Dr. Cynthia...she is my boyfriend’s mother.”

Alana gasped. “What?!!”

No way!

Was that just a coincidence?

“How do you know she’s your boyfriend’s mother?”

Alana said, looking a bit embarrassed, “I’ve met her before. Once when I went to the hospital for a check up, I was assigned her appointment number, but she wasn’t there at the time. Her son, my boyfriend now...was there instead, and he handled the check-up for me on his mother’s behalf.”

Upon hearing this, Eve’s smile turned mischievous. “Oh my gosh, so that’s how you and your boyfriend met!”

“What kind of exam did you have back then?”

Alana replied. “That’s a private matter...I’m not telling!”

Eve watched her bashful reaction, the corners of her mouth curling upward. “It wasn’t... a gynecological exam, was it?”

Alana glared at her.

No way...how did she guess that so accurately?!

“Did they examine your private parts?”

“Shut your mouth and stop guessing!”

Eve raised an eyebrow. “Tsk. So, you know she’s your boyfriend’s mother, but she doesn’t know you’re her son’s girlfriend?”

Alana nodded. “Yeah, pretty much.”

“You just called her ‘Mom’ a moment ago. Didn’t you just give yourself away?”

Alana sighed, heavily.

Eve blinked. “But why didn’t you have the guts to tell her you’re her son’s girlfriend?”

Alana shot a glance at Eve, who was clearly relishing the drama, “If it were you, would you dare?”

Eve gulped.

Okay, she really wouldn’t dare.

“Plus, that woman standing next to her just now, Darla Gordon, is her idea of the perfect daughter-in-law. Do you think I’d dare reveal my true identity in front of her?”

That would be like walking into a death trap.

Eve was stunned. “Wow, you even know who her ideal daughter-in-law is?”

“Darla told me that.”

“You know your boyfriend’s mother’s ‘perfect daughter-in-law’ too?”

“She revealed it herself. She said she’s my boyfriend’s fiancée.”

“Does she know that you’re actually your boyfriend’s girlfriend?”

“I’m not sure.”

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Chapter 237 A puppet

Chapter 237 A puppet

Eve stared at her friend, incredulously.

Everyone else knows about you, and all the relationships are clear, only they don’t know about you.

You've kept it pretty well hidden.

Eve said with a straight face, "Sis, don't you feel like you're playing a game of 'I'm the Mole,' manipulating everyone else like a puppet?"

Alana blinked.

Eve patted Alana on the shoulder,

speaking earnestly, "This is a high-stakes game. Make sure you play your cards, right?"

Eve asked again, "So, what do you plan to do? Your mother-in-law doesn't know your position yet, and there's a fierce rival eyeing your boyfriend. How are you going to break this deadlock?"

Alana shook her head. "I haven't thought about it. I'll just take it one step at a time."

"Girl, you're so laid-back."

Alana smiled, unfazed. "Never mind. I'm heading back to work."

Camila had dragged her out this morning, and since she didn't have her phone with her, she hadn't even had time to call in sick.

"You really are a model worker!"

With the situation so urgent, she still has the energy to go to work.

Still, Eve dutifully walked Alana all the way to the entrance of her office.

In the evening, Stephan arrived right on time to pick up Alana after work.

He ruffled Alana's hair with a half-smile. "Sweetheart, nothing happened at the office today, did it?"

Alana blinked. "No, nothing happened at work."

"Oh, so that homewrecker Cole didn't bother you?"

He was getting more and more comfortable using the term "home-wrecker Cole."

It was as if she and Stephan were already married.

"He was in a car accident today. He's not at the office."

“Oh?” Stephan raised an eyebrow, his tone rising slightly. “A car accident? Is he...dead?”

Alana eyed him.

Why did she feel Stephan wanted Cole dead?

No. Her boyfriend couldn't be that evil.

She twitched her lips. “He's not but he's still at the hospital so he didn't bother me today.”

“Tsk!” A smile played at Stephan's lips. “I told you there's no good end to being a man's mistress. See? He got into a car accident right away. Karma!”

Alana blinked.

She was at a loss for words.

Stephan continued. “Was the crash serious? Did he die, or is he paralyzed from the waist down, missing an arm or a leg?”

Alana thought for a moment. “I don't know, but he has a cast on both his arm and leg, so it must be... pretty serious.”

Stephan was about to laugh out loud.

But soon, he sensed something was off.

He glanced at Alana. “How do you know all this? Did you go see him?”

Alana swallowed, it was a shame this man wasn't a detective, his insight and sharpness would be terrifying to anyone.

She explained helplessly, “It wasn't my choice. His sister, Camila, came to see me, claiming I caused her brother's car accident. She insisted I come see him, so that's how I found out.”

Stephan frowned. “What does his car accident have to do with you?”

“It has nothing to do with me, but she thinks I was the one who met up with him last night and said something to provoke him, which is why he got into the accident.”

Stephan's lips twitched slightly, his expression turning terrifyingly stern.

“I was the one who asked him to meet up, and I was the one who provoked him. If his sister has a problem with that, she should come talk to me directly.”

Alana was taken aback. “Are you saying you really said something to provoke Cole?”

“I only called him a homewrecker, the other man...a male mistress. He’s emotionally fragile, if he can’t handle that, what can I do?”

Alana felt even more perplexed.

Stephan glanced at her and said sternly,

“If they give you any more trouble in the future, just tell me. I’ll take care of it for you.”

Alana nodded. “I know, but they won’t pursue this matter, after all, it doesn’t directly involve us.”

Stephan chuckled. If they really did pursue it, he wasn’t the type to shy away from a fight.

Alana remembered something. She hesitated for a moment, then spoke up, “By the way, I ran into someone while I was out eating today.”

She deliberately kept him in suspense. “Guess who I ran into?”

Stephan shot her a sidelong glance, his smile forced. “It’s not another one of your old flames, is it?”

Alana immediately glared at him. “What are you talking about? I don’t have that many exes! Just one!”

Stephan sighed: “Then who was it?”

“I ran into your mom!”

The moment he heard that, Stephan slammed on the brakes. He turned to look at her. “You ran into my mom?”

She nodded.

He pressed her, “And then?”

Alana felt a bit embarrassed to describe the process.

She couldn’t very well tell him that she’d called his mother “Mom,” could she?

It made it sound like she was dying to become her daughter-in-law.

Alana blushed. "I just... saw your mom, and she was with Darla."

Stephan asked, "You saw them, and that's it?"

"That's it."

Stephan gave her a half-smile. "Alright, I overestimated you. I thought you'd actually gone up to say hello to her and introduced yourself as my girlfriend."

Alana's eyes dilated.

The car behind them was honking.

Stephan had no choice but to start the car again.

He drove on, staring straight ahead, his voice low as he explained, "I've told you before, I have no interest in Darla. Even if my mom is trying to set us up, I wouldn't be with her, let alone marry her. So don't let the fact that my mom was with her make you feel uneasy. Don't get hung up on the idea that there will be something between Darla and I in the future, that's not going to happen."

Hearing this, Alana felt much more at ease.

Seeing Darla with his mother had indeed caused her some worry.

She feared that Darla and his mother might become too close, and that his mother would then do everything in her power to bring them together.

She also feared that if Darla and his mother discovered she was with him, they might try to break them up.

But he seemed to know what she was worried about, so he reassured her time and again, giving her a sense of security.

Alana's lips curved upward. "Okay, I understand."

After the accident, Cole needed to stay in the hospital for a while.

During this time, he didn't shown up at the company, so Alana was happy to have some time to herself.

She stopped pressing him about resigning.

After all, with Cole away from the office, there was no one pestering her.

Meanwhile, Luca had also returned from his business trip.

He immediately transferred 20,000 dollars of her salary to Alana.

To thank her for taking care of his two pets during his absence, he also planned to treat her to a meal.

But Alana declined.

Luca didn't need to ask to know who she was thinking of when she turned him down.

He sighed. "I never thought I'd be too late after all. If only I'd met you sooner."

It was rare to meet a girl he liked so much, but the moment he was about to confess his feelings, it all came to an end.

Alana comforted him earnestly, "Luca, you're a good man. You're bound to meet a good woman who's right for you."

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Chapter 238 Wish you happiness

Chapter 238 Wish you happiness

That was a truly unique way to offer comfort.

He didn't know what else to say, so he could only offer sincerely, "I wish you happiness."

Alana smiled. "Thank you."

After saying goodbye to Luca, Alana returned feeling refreshed.

Actually, if Cole could be as sensible as Luca in wishing her well, how wonderful that would be?

She would have wished him well just as openly.

They couldn't be lovers, but they could still be friends, at least when they meet, it wouldn't be awkward.

She hoped that one day, Cole would be able to let go of his feelings too.

Alana returned to Stephan's house. She had barely closed the door when she heard the doorbell ring.

Had Stephan come back?

But even if he had come back, he wouldn't ring the doorbell at his own place, would he? Besides, he said he had a business dinner tonight and wouldn't be back this early.

Alana didn't open the door right away; instead, she looked through the peephole to see who was there.

To her surprise, she saw Darla.

Darla was wearing a cream-colored long dress and carrying an LV bag, standing outside the door with poise and grace, exuding an air of both nobility and gentleness. What's going on?

Why had Darla suddenly dropped by?

The doorbell rang incessantly.

She seemed determined not to give up until the owner opened the door. Alana bit her lip, hesitating over whether to open the door.

If she opened the door, she wouldn't be able to hide the fact that she was Stephan's girlfriend...

Seeing that the door remained closed, Darla spoke up, "Stephan, I know you're home. Could you please come out for a moment? Mrs. Hudson asked me to bring you something." Since the lights were on in the apartment, she was certain someone was home.

Plus, just a moment ago, she'd seen a figure moving by the window.

But she never imagined that the person inside wasn't Stephan, but...

Upon hearing Darla's words, Alana guessed that she was determined to see Alana.

After a moment of silence, she reached for the doorknob, ready to open the door and step out.

But just as she turned the knob, the sound of a car horn blared from outside. Alana immediately looked up and peered through the peephole.

She saw Stephan's black Bentley.

Was he back?

Stephan was nowhere to be seen. Darla was just about to ring the doorbell again.

But just then, a beam of light shone on her, accompanied by a piercing car horn.

Darla instinctively shielded her eyes with her hand, but it did little to block the blinding glare.

Not until the light dimmed. Darla finally felt a little more comfortable.

She opened her eyes and took a long moment to adjust before she could make out the man sitting in the car.

He was in the driver's seat, his arm casually draped over the window. The deep night shrouded him, blurring his handsome features and making him seem even more mysterious and inscrutable.

Darla froze.

If the man in the car was Stephan, then who exactly was the person in the house?

It was obvious who it was.

She bit her lip and walked up to the car.

Stephan looked up at her, his tone as aloof as ever. "Miss Gordon, standing at my doorstep...is there something you need?"

Darla said, "Your mother asked me to bring you something."

Stephan showed no emotion. "What is it?"

Darla handed him a bag. "I don't know what's inside, but she told me I had to make sure you received it personally."

Stephan took the bag without expression, didn't even glance at it, and casually tossed it into the passenger seat.

"Alright, you can go now."

Darla could tell Stephan didn't want to deal with her, but perhaps she was just

masochistic, the more he ignored her, the more she wanted to get close to him and win him over.

"Are you free this weekend? I have two movie coupons. Want to go together?"

Stephan chuckled. "Miss Gordon, I thought I told you I have a girlfriend."

Darla curled her lips. "Just because you have a girlfriend, does that mean you can't go out to the movies with other members of the opposite sex?"

Stephan remained impassive. "No, I can't, at least, not with someone of the opposite sex who has her eyes on me."

Darla really wouldn't have guessed that Stephan was such a man of principle.

She knew plenty of playboys in her social circles, which one of them wasn't a real womanizer?

Even if they had girlfriends, fiancées, or even wives by their sides, it didn't stop them from having flings and playing the field.

The more chaotic his friends' lives were, the more rare and precious a man like Stephan seemed.

She despised men who were fickle and indecisive; she wanted a man who would be

devoted solely to her, treat her as his one and only, and love and be loyal to her with all his heart.

She never imagined she would find such a man. Even less did she expect that she'd arrived too late, that this man's heart already belonged to someone else.

Stephan gripped the steering wheel, his tone utterly detached. "Miss Gordon, please move out of the way. I need to drive."

Darla didn't move for a moment. "Stephan, the lights are on at your place. I just saw a figure moving around inside. Could a burglar have gotten in?"

She knew exactly who was inside the house. This neighborhood was full of high-end condos with top-notch security measures, there was no way a burglar could have gotten in.

But she deliberately brought it up to hear him admit it and test his reaction.

Stephan curled the corners of his lips and admitted it outright, "You're wrong. That wasn't a burglar, that was my girlfriend."

Darla's breath caught in her throat. She never expected him to admit it so bluntly. She clenched her teeth, a pang of jealousy welling up inside her.

"Are you two living together?"

Hearing the accusatory tone in Darla's voice, Stephan found it amusing. "Miss Gordon, what business is it of yours?"

Darla clenched her fists. "Living together before marriage, if word gets out, it won't reflect well on a young woman. Besides, if she were a girl from a respectable family, she wouldn't just casually move in with a man!"

"Stephan, don't let her take advantage of your feelings!"

Instead of getting angry, Stephan smiled. "You're right. But living together was my idea, it has nothing to do with her. I made the request, so I'll take responsibility. That's why I'm going to marry her."

Darla couldn't believe it. Was he serious?

Seeing Darla's reaction, Stephan continued bluntly, "Besides, compared to my girlfriend, Miss Gordon is the one acting frivolously. You knew I had a girlfriend, yet you still asked me out to the movies. Isn't that the behavior of a homewrecker?"

Hearing this, Darla couldn't help but blush.

She knew her behavior was despicable, but she simply couldn't control herself.

Perhaps she simply couldn't believe that someone as outstanding as herself would lose to a stranger.

Gritting her teeth, she said, "Stephan, I want to meet your girlfriend. I want to know exactly how I'm inferior to her."

Unless she met her, she would never know exactly how she fell short compared to that woman.

Stephan remained expressionless. "Boring."

Darla deliberately provoked him. "By not letting me meet your girlfriend, are you implying she's not good enough to show off?"

“That’s not it. I simply don’t think you’re worthy of meeting her. And in my eyes and in my heart, you fall short of her in every

way...you lose to her in every aspect.

Compared to her, you’re nothing. Is that clear enough?”

Darla laughed through gritted teeth. He was as sharp-tongued as ever, a single remark was enough to make her chest ache with frustration.

Stephan honked the horn impatiently. “I’ll say it again: move out of the way.”

Darla gritted her teeth but stepped aside anyway.

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Chapter 239 The protest

Chapter 239 The protest

Stephan immediately started the car and drove toward the main gate.

The gate was automatic; recognizing the owner’s car, it swung open to the sides.

Darla watched his car drove through the gate. She wanted to follow, but her feet felt as if they were made of lead; she couldn’t bring herself to take a single step.

She could only watch helplessly as the man drove through and the gates closed behind him.

That closed gate separated not only her from Stephan, but also symbolized that his heart toward her was like a tightly shut door, one that seemed unlikely to ever open for her.

Darla felt a sudden pang of bitterness and jealousy.

But she quickly reassured herself: It’s okay, she still had a chance.

As long as Aunt Cynthia was willing to help her, she still had a chance to be with Stephan.

Just as Darla was about to leave, she was surprised to see the door to the house opening.

A graceful yet playful figure suddenly threw herself into the arms of the man stepping out of the car...

Stephan was caught off guard by Alana's sudden embrace, and his entire body was forced against the car behind him by the momentum.

He lowered his gaze and saw a dark head nestled softly against his chest.

He raised an eyebrow. "Why are you out here?"

Alana lifted her head, blinking her clear, beautiful eyes. "I saw Darla, so I came out to stake my claim and crush any feelings she might have for you."

Stephan chuckled. "Hmm, and then? Is that all? Just hugging me...do you think that's enough?"

Alana blinked. "What else do I have to do?"

He pointed at her two crimson, full lips and said with a straight face, "Hurry up.

Right now. Kiss me."

Alana eyed him.

Why did it feel like he was getting off on this again?

Stephan raised an eyebrow. "Hurry up and kiss me. If you don't, she'd leave, and you won't get your thrill."

Alana couldn't help but blush. "I'm not as shameless as you. I can't bring myself to kiss in front of other people."

Stephan chuckled. "Oh, I get it. You want me to make the first move. You should've said so earlier. I'll do whatever you want."

Her eyes dilated.

No!

She didn't!

Don't accuse her of that!

But before she could deny it, he grabbed her chin and a scorching kiss followed.

His large hands gripped her slender waist, pressing her forcefully against him.

But his back was still pressed against the car.

To an outsider, it looked as though she was forcefully pressing Stephan against the car and demanding a kiss.

To make the display more effective, he even shifted slightly with Alana, ensuring Alana, standing outside the door, could see clearly.

So she could see clearly how passionately they entwined, kissing with such abandon, lost in the moment.

Seeing this scene, Darla was thoroughly provoked.

She trembled with rage, she was so enraged that she didn't even bother to look closely at who the woman kissing Stephan was or what she looked like; she simply turned and stormed off.

A few minutes later, Stephan finally let go of Alana.

Alana clung to him, her body limp beyond belief.

Her face flushed, she couldn't help but glance at the spot where Darla had been standing, it was now empty.

She must have been successfully driven away by anger.

Embarrassed, she punched the man's solid chest with her fist.

"Stephan, you're such a jerk!"

Stephan caught her tiny fist, leaned down to kiss her, then raised an eyebrow as he looked at her flushed, indignant face and asked with a smirk. "Isn't this what you wanted?"

She was at a loss for words.

In the moonlight, the girl's face was flushed to an extreme, like a ripe, tempting berry, beckoning to be plucked.

Her rosy lips glistened with a dewy sheen.

Stephan cupped her face in his hands, his gaze intense.

"Come to think of it, we haven't tried it in the car yet, have we? Why don't we give it a try right now?"

Her eyes widened instantly.

Wait, why was he getting more and more perverted?!

It was not enough that he's been running wild in the house...now he wants to have car sex out here?!

"Well, I think it's getting pretty late...it doesn't seem appropriate..."

Stephan chuckled. "If it's not appropriate at night, do you want to do it during the day?"

In broad daylight? Wouldn't that be worse?!

She couldn't help but push the man away, trying to make a hasty escape. "Um, I haven't taken a shower yet. I'm going home first!"

The next second, he wrapped his arms around her waist and decisively shoved her into the car.

"Aaaah! Stephan, behave!"

"Go ahead and scream. Even if you scream yourself hoarse, no one's coming to save you!"

Alana's eyes widened the moment she realized she had been pressed against the backseat. Her hands pressed lightly

against his chest as he climbed in after her, crowding close in the limited space.

"Stephan...wait. Not here. This isn't... it isn't appropriate. Someone could..."

He cut the rest of the protest off with a deep, deliberate kiss.

His mouth covered hers completely, lips firm and insistent, tongue sliding past the soft barrier of her lips before she could finish the sentence.

The kiss was slow at first, then deeper, hotter, swallowing every half-formed objection. Alana made a small, muffled sound against him.

"Mmmnh..."

Her fingers curled into the front of his shirt. For a moment she tried to turn her head, but he followed, one hand cradling the back of her neck, the other braced against the seat beside her hip so he could lean over her fully.

When he finally drew back just enough to let her breathe, her cheeks were already flushed dark in the low light. Her lips looked swollen.

She opened her mouth again, voice soft and unsteady. “We shouldn’t... not right outside...”

Stephan kissed her again, harder this time, until the words dissolved into another quiet moan.

“Shh.” The single syllable was spoken against her mouth.

He shifted, guiding her further across the seat until her back met the opposite door, then settled between her knees, the confined space forcing their bodies close.

The leather creaked softly under their weight. His hands moved with purpose. One slid beneath the hem of her blouse, palm warm against the bare skin of her waist.

The other traced up her thigh, pushing the fabric of her skirt higher.

Alana’s breath hitched.

A soft moan escaped when his fingers brushed the sensitive inner skin just above her knee. She caught his wrist lightly, not quite stopping him, only holding on as if the contact itself was too much.

“Stephan...” The name came out shaky.

Her eyes flicked toward the fogging windows, toward the dark shape of the house only a few meters away.

“We should just go in...”

He silenced her once more with his mouth, this time slower, deeper, tasting her thoroughly while his hand continued its upward path.

When his fingers reached the edge of her underwear she made a small, embarrassed sound and her thighs tensed for a second before softening under his touch.

He stroked her through the thin fabric, slow circles that drew another involuntary moans from her throat.

The windows began to cloud more noticeably.

Outside, the estate street remained empty, the house dark and still.

Inside the car, the temperature rose with every shared breath. Stephan tugged her blouse free of her waistband and pushed it higher, exposing the soft curves of her breasts still covered by her bra.

He lowered his head and kissed the warm skin just above the lace, then mouthed over one nipple through the fabric until it tightened.

Alana's head tipped back against the door. A longer moan slipped out;

"Ahh... ohh..."

She tried to stay quiet but it was so hard.

He unhooked the bra with practiced ease and pushed the cups aside. The cool night air that had seeped in earlier now felt distant; only the heat of his mouth mattered.

He licked and sucked gently at first, then with more intent, drawing soft, broken sounds from her while his free hand slid beneath the waistband of her underwear and found her already slick.

Alana's hips gave a small, involuntary lift.

Her fingers tightened in his hair. "We really shouldn't..." The protest was very weak now, breathless. "Not here..."

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Chapter 240 Deep crimson

Chapter 240 Deep crimson

Stephan lifted his head just enough to look at her. In the dim light, her face was flushed deep crimson, eyes half-lidded, lips parted.

She looked both delicate and completely undone. He kissed the corner of her mouth, then the hinge of her jaw, then the sensitive spot just below her ear.

"Tell me to stop," he murmured. His fingers stroked deeper, circling, pressing. "Say the word and I'll take you inside."

She didn't say it. Instead a soft, she moaned out in pleasure when he slid two fingers inside. Her inner walls fluttered around him.

He worked her slowly, thoroughly, the wet sound of his fingers moving almost too loud in the quiet car.

Alana's moans grew sweeter, less restrained even as her hands still clutched at his shoulders as if part of her still felt the need to protest the location.

When he withdrew his fingers she made a small, needy sound of loss.

He shifted back just enough to unfasten his own trousers and free himself. The confined space made the movement awkward; his knee pressed into the seat cushion, one hand braced on the headrest.

He hooked his fingers into the sides of her underwear and drew them down her legs, tossing the scrap of fabric somewhere onto the floorboard. Then he settled between her thighs again, the blunt head of him pressing against her entrance.

Alana's eyes widened. Her hands came up to his chest once more, not pushing, only resting there. "Stephan... the windows... someone might..."

He kissed her deeply, swallowing the rest, and pushed forward in one smooth, careful thrust.

The stretch drew a sharp, broken moan from her that filled the small space. He sank in slowly until he was buried to the hilt, then held still, forehead pressed to hers, giving her time to adjust. The leather seat creaked under the shift of their weight. Outside, a distant dog barked once and fell silent again. No footsteps approached. No lights came on.

Alana's breathing was uneven. Soft, embarrassed little sounds kept escaping her even as her legs slowly wrapped around his hips, drawing him deeper.

He began to move in short, controlled strokes, limited by the height of the roof and the narrowness of the back seat. Each thrust rolled his body against hers, the wet friction loud in the quiet.

"Ahh... ahh... mmmnh..." Her moans rose with every deep slide and her fingers dug into the fabric of his shirt.

Stephan kept one hand braced beside her head, the other sliding beneath her hips to tilt her just enough for a better angle.

The new pressure made her cry out more clearly, the words slipping out before she could catch it.

He smiled against her mouth and thrust a little harder, the limited space forcing them into a tight, grinding rhythm that rubbed against every sensitive place inside her.

“Still think this is a bad idea?” he asked, voice rough, lips brushing hers between thrusts.

Alana’s only answer was a series of soft, helpless moans and the way her body tightened around him.

Her earlier protests had dissolved into pure sensation. The risk of the open driveway, the fogged windows, the dark house only a few steps away, all of it seemed to heighten every feeling rather than dampen it.

She turned her face into the curve of his neck, muffling the next cry, but he gently guided her chin back so he could watch her.

“Let me hear you,” he murmured. “No one else is listening.”

A longer, sweeter sound left her as he drove deeper. The car rocked subtly with their movements.

The windows were almost completely opaque now. Outside, the street remained empty and silent.

Stephan changed the angle again, lifting one of her legs higher against his side so he could sink even further. The new depth dragged a sharper moan from her throat and her nails scraped lightly down his back.

He kept the pace steady, deliberate, building her higher with every controlled thrust.

Soft, wet sounds filled the car along with her rising voice.

“Mmm... ahh... ohhh... Stephan...”

He leaned down and bit gently at the lobe of her ear, the same way he had before. “Call me husband,” he said, voice low and dark. “Right here. Where anyone could see if they looked close enough.”

The request made the flush on her cheeks deepen further. She shook her head once, small and quick, even as her hips lifted to meet him.

He slowed deliberately, almost pulling out, then sliding back in with exquisite control until she was squirming beneath him.

“Husband...” The word finally slipped out, soft and shaky, barely audible over the sound of their bodies.

The effect was immediate. Stephan's rhythm turned harder, deeper, the limited space of the back seat forcing every thrust into a powerful grind.

Alana's moans grew louder, less controlled echoing inside the fogged interior. Her legs locked tighter around him.

One hand braced against the window, leaving a clear streak through the condensation.

He fucked her with focused intensity now, chasing the peak for both of them. The car rocked more noticeably. Soft, rhythmic creaks of leather and the wet slap of skin filled the night.

Alana's climbed higher until the tension inside her snapped.

She came hard, body arching as much as the confined space allowed, inner walls clamping down in tight, pulsing waves. A long, broken cry tore from her throat, followed by a series of trembling little moans as the orgasm rolled through her.

The rhythmic clench pulled Stephan over the edge a moment later. He buried himself deep and held there, forehead pressed to hers, spilling into her in long, hot pulses while soft, leftover sounds still trembled out of her.

They stayed locked together through every aftershock, breathing hard, the windows completely fogged, the car filled with the scent of sex and warm skin.

Stephan kissed her slowly, gently now, easing her down from the intensity. Alana's arms stayed loosely around his neck. Soft, contented little sounds still left her lips whenever he shifted inside her.

The deep flush on her cheeks had not faded. She looked thoroughly, beautifully undone in the dim light filtering through the condensation.

He brushed a damp strand of hair from her forehead and smiled against her mouth.

"Still think it wasn't appropriate?"

Alana's only answer was a quiet, embarrassed "Mmm..." and the way she tightened her arms around him just a little, holding on while the night remained still and private around them.

She lay on the back seat, her body limp and weak.

Her mind was still reeling from the man's freakiness.

Stephan pinched her flushed cheek. "Still savoring the moment? Can't get enough?"

Her face flushed, she averted her eyes, refusing to look at him.

Stephan curved his lips, took hold of her chin, and turned her face back toward him.

“Be a good girl. Answer me. Did you really like it?”

Alana was so embarrassed she opened her mouth and bit down on his finger.

Stephan laughed wickedly, “Ouch, that hurts!”

She blinked...did she just unlock one of his numerous fetish?

She quickly let go of his finger and saw the wet, bright red teeth marks on it, she was too embarrassed to even look.

Stephan curved his lips, utterly smitten by her bashful expression.

“Sweetheart, do it again. Reward me, I really like it.”

Alana scolded him playfully, “Stephan, you pervert, you masochist!”

“Mm, that’s exactly what I like. The more you hurt me, the more I love it.”

Alana closed her eyes, unable to bear looking at him. He really was beyond help.

Stephan smiled, leaned down to kiss her cheek, then picked up the clothes scattered on the floor and draped them over Alana.

He effortlessly lifted her into his arms and said with a smile, “Sweetheart, we’ve only just begun. Let’s head back to the bedroom for round two.”

Alana gasped.

Oh no, her waist was doomed!

It was indeed doomed but luckily for her, the next day was the weekend.

Otherwise, Alana wouldn’t have been able to get out of bed at all.

And seeing the man still looking so full of energy, Alana felt incredibly bitter inside.

He was the one who put in all the effort, so why was she the one who was exhausted? It’s so unfair!

Stephan, in a good mood, wrapped his arms around Alana and leaned down to kiss her beautiful eyes and brows. “It’s the weekend today. Shall we go out on a date?”

They'd been together for so long, yet they'd never gone on a proper date.

Like a normal couple, going shopping, watching a movie, that sort of thing.

Alana had never been on a date with a man before, so she was really looking forward to it.

"How would you like to go on a date?"

Stephan pinched her nose playfully. "Isn't that something girls are supposed to think about?"

Alana pouted. "That's not true, it's supposed to be the guys who plan everything in advance!"

Stephan raised an eyebrow. "How about we go see a movie together?"

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Chapter 241 In ages

Chapter 241 In ages

It was thanks to Darla inviting him to a movie last night that Stephan instantly had an idea.

Alana immediately agreed, "Sure! I haven't been to the movies in ages!"

As far as she could remember, the last time she'd been to the movies was back in college. Since graduating, she'd been so busy running around that she hadn't had much time for movies.

Besides, going to the movies alone wasn't much fun.

Hearing this, Stephan suddenly asked with a hint of jealousy, "Be honest, have you ever gone to the movies with another guy?"

"No, you're the first."

"So before this..."

“I used to watch them with my best friend.”

Stephan was thrilled. He pulled her close and kissed her passionately, then confessed of his own accord.

“Me too. You’re the first girl I’ve ever asked out to a movie.”

Alana’s eyes crinkled with a smile. “It seems going to the movies as a couple is a first for both of us.”

Stephan curved his lips. “From now on, we’ll have many more ‘firsts’ together.”

Alana smiled. Yes!

She was really looking forward to it.

After eating breakfast at home, the two began thinking about what movie to watch.

“Let’s go to the theater and pick one there.”

Alana pulled out her phone and said earnestly, “No need to go through all that trouble. We can check Oasis first to see what good movies are playing. Once we’ve picked one, we can compare prices across different theaters to see which one has the cheapest tickets, and then decide which theater to go to.”

Stephan was speechless.

Somehow, it felt like her description made it sound even more complicated than he had imagined.

But since he’d never been to the movies before, he figured she, with her experience, should take the lead.

Alana quickly picked a movie.

After comparing prices, she chose a theater offering a 12% discount, plus a free coke and popcorn with the purchase of two tickets.

Alana quickly selected two seats in the middle of the theater with a good view, then placed the order and paid.

She raised an eyebrow at Stephan. “I paid for it...this movie is on me!” Her voice rose slightly, tinged with playfulness.

Stephan found it amusing and ruffled her hair. “I’m truly lucky to have a girlfriend who

spoils me so much.”

Alana’s face flushed instantly.

Here he goes again, spouting all that sweet talk. I really can’t stand him.

Stephan looked down and asked, “Ready to go?”

Alana replied, “No rush. I’ll go upstairs to change into a dress and put on some light makeup.”

After all, it was their first date. She had to make it special and look her best.

Stephan curved his lips. “Then I’d better get ready properly, too.”

The young couple exchanged a knowing smile, stood up in unison, and walked hand in hand toward the bedroom.

Alana picked out a blue strapless dress with a fitted waist that hugged her slender waist, making her figure look delicate and graceful.

She also put on some makeup and applied lipstick. A light touch of makeup enhanced her features, making her look even more delicate and beautiful.

Her lips, painted with lipstick, were rosy and full, like a juicy red cherry, looking so tempting they seemed ready to burst.

Stephan saw this and wanted nothing more than to pull her close and kiss her passionately.

Alana stopped him. “No kissing...the lipstick will smudge.”

Stephan raised an eyebrow and said shamelessly, “So what if it smudges? Let it smudge into my mouth. My lips are parched...I need some lipstick to moisturize them too.” With that, he wrapped his arms around Alana’s slender waist, leaned down, and gently brushed his lips against hers.

It left a trace of color.

The man licked his lips slightly, then curved his mouth into a smile. “It’s a bit faint, but it has a very fresh, crabapple blossom scent. Delicious.”

Alana blushed and couldn’t help but glance at her reflection in the mirror. Sure enough, her lipstick was smudged.

She glared at him angrily, her tone sharp. “Don’t you dare do that again!”

Stephan smiled.

His girlfriend was so cute, like a little kitten with its fur all ruffled up, he just wanted to pet her.

In the end, Alana had to reapply her lipstick.

Stephan wasn’t wearing a suit today; he was just wearing a blue shirt, the same shade as Alana’s dress.

So when they stood together, it looked like they were wearing matching outfits.

Once they were all set, the two got into the car and headed for the movie theater.

On the way there, Stephan’s phone rang.

Since he was driving, it wasn’t convenient for him to answer, so he asked Alana to take it for him.

His phone was in his back pocket. Alana had to reach into his back pocket to find it.

His pocket was quite deep; she fumbled around in it for a long time but couldn’t get it out. The girl’s soft little hand was scratching around between his legs, making him feel aroused.

Stephan felt a sudden heat rise in his throat. “Lana, I asked you to get my phone, what exactly are you doing?”

Alana realized she’d touched a place she shouldn’t have, and her cheeks flushed involuntarily. “I didn’t mean to. Why did you have to tuck your phone so deep...”

Stephan clenched his teeth, his throat burning as if flames were about to burst forth. “Hurry up, or we’ll miss the movie.”

Alana bit her lip and, in one swift motion, pulled the phone out.

She glanced at the caller ID: Pesky mom.

Huh?

Does anyone actually label their own mother like that?

Alana’s hand trembled involuntarily, and she looked at the man, somewhat flustered.

“That looks like your mom’s number. Should I... answer it?”

“Answer it.”

Alana couldn’t help but feel nervous. “I’ll just answer it for you, I won’t say a word.”

Stephan glanced at the nervous girl and smiled. “What’s the matter? Is the bride afraid to meet her in-laws?”

Alana blushed and couldn’t bring herself to answer.

Stephan knew she was embarrassed, so he smiled and reassured her, “Go ahead and answer it. I won’t give you away.”

Hearing this, Alana finally felt at ease and answered the call for him. As soon as the call connected, a furious voice came through.

“You little brat! I’ve been calling for ages, and you’re just picking up now?! What the hell have you been up to all this time?!”

Alana hadn’t expected Dr. Cynthia’s voice to be so loud and angry; when they’d met recently, she’d seemed so easygoing and friendly.

The sound accidentally hit her ears, making them ring, so she instinctively moved a little further away.

Stephan glanced at the girl beside him.

Seeing her pouting and frowning, he quickly moved the phone away, he couldn’t help but find it amusing and laughed out loud.

“You little brat, you still have the nerve to laugh?!”

Stephan remained impassive, his tone calm. “Mom, what’s the matter? Get to the point. Your son has important business to attend to.”

Cynthia snapped, “Did you open the package Darla delivered to you last night?”

“Nope.” He’d been too busy last night to even think about opening it. “What did you send me?”

“Something good, of course, to boost your manly function. You haven’t had a girlfriend in forever, no woman in your life...I suspect you have some deficiency!”

Upon hearing this, Alana felt a strange flush rise to her ears.

Deficiency?

Stephan?!

In what world?

Stephan couldn't help but glance at Alana to see her reaction. "Mom, you're trying to embarrass my girlfriend to death."

Cynthia laughed in exasperation. "Cut it out. Don't think I don't know you're lying about having a girlfriend, and 'embarrassing her to death'?"

"It's true. My girlfriend is right here with me."

Alana stared at him in disbelief.

Hadn't he just promised her he wouldn't expose her?

This jerk...just as expected, he says one thing and does another!

Cynthia just snorted in derision, not believing a word of it.

"I'm asking you, Darla wanted to invite you to a movie last night. Why didn't you say yes?"

"I don't like her. Why would I agree?"

Cynthia frowned. "Just because you don't like her doesn't mean you can't try to get to know her!"

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Chapter 242 Get out of the way

Chapter 242 Get out of the way

"Darla's such a great girl. If you don't make your move soon, some other guy will snatch her up, and it'll be too late! You have no idea how popular she is at my hospital. There are

tons of guys chasing after her, she gets so many flowers every day, she can't even keep up!"

Hearing this, Alana felt a pang of unease.

She had already been skeptical of Darla's words, but now that she heard Stephan's mother say it herself...

It was clear that his mother genuinely liked Darla and wanted her to be her daughter-in-law.

If she were to marry Stephan, his parents wouldn't approve or support the union, would they really be happy after getting married?

After all, marriage wasn't just about two people; it involves two families.

What if the relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law was strained after marriage, with constant conflicts?

Suddenly, she thought of the short videos she often watched on YouTube: a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law at odds, constantly arguing and even fighting, while the son is caught in the middle, unable to please either side.

She had to admit, she was becoming more and more afraid of marriage...

"Mom, you're being really disrespectful right now. I just told you my girlfriend is right here and you're still talking about Darla! Stop it." Stephan let out, getting really pissed.

"You're the one who needs to stop lying."

"I'm not lying!"

"Fine, if you want me to believe you then you bring her over!"

"I'll bring her over before the end of the year so stop talking about Darla!" With that, Stephan hung up.

Alana blinked. "I'm going to meet your mom?"

Stephan sighed. "Lana, I know you're not very confident in our relationship and you think we might not last but I really am serious with you and I hope you can take me serious too."

"But your mom..."

“We might argue all the time but I assure you, she’s not a bad person and she won’t treat you badly, I assure you.”

Seeing her still lost in her thoughts, Stephan reached over and placed his hand above hers.

“We have a date to enjoy so stop overthinking...let’s just focus on our date, let’s take things one at a time.”

Alana nodded, really wanting to enjoy their date.

On getting to the Cinema, Stephan softly told Alana to sit and wait while he went to get their tickets.

Not long after Alana got seated, she heard a voice.

“Oh...it’s you.”

Looking up, Alana’s mood almost soured.

Seriously?

Was she cursed or something?

Why did she keep running into this woman.

Darla unhesitatingly sat down in the seat next to Alana.

“Are you here to watch a movie too?”

Alana paused for two seconds before nodding and murmuring, “Mm-hmm.”

Darla glanced at her curiously. “With whom? Your boyfriend?”

Alana nodded. “Yeah, with my boyfriend.”

After a brief pause, she looked at Darla and asked pointedly, “And you, Miss Gordon?”

“Are you here to watch the movie alone, or with your fiancé?”

Upon hearing this, a trace of

embarrassment flashed across Darla’s face, and she gave a vague nod.

She was too embarrassed to admit that she had actually come out with another man, and it wasn't the man she liked.

She smiled, a faint hint of sarcasm in her expression.

Darla didn't want to delve deeper into the topic, so she changed the subject.

"What about your boyfriend? Why isn't he with you?"

"He's in line getting our tickets. Where's your fiancé? Why isn't he with you?"

Darla frowned. Why did Alana's tone sound like she was deliberately picking on her?

She hadn't done anything to provoke her, had she?

Suppressing a flicker of irritation, she replied, "My fiancé is also in line getting tickets for me."

Alana nodded, her tone flat. "Oh."

Darla seemed to remember something and asked, "Come to think of it, I haven't met your boyfriend yet."

"Which one is your boyfriend? Why don't you introduce him to me?"

She'd missed the chance to meet Alana's boyfriend several times already, and to be honest, she was growing increasingly curious.

Besides, she had a strong hunch that she should already know Alana's boyfriend.

Alana gave a faint smile. "Why are you so eager to meet my boyfriend, Miss Gordon?"

Darla curved her lips. "I feel your boyfriend is someone I know, so I just want to confirm."

"I think you'd rather not know, Miss Gordon."

"You're wrong. I really do want to know."

"If you find out, you'll regret it."

Hearing this, Darla became even more eager to confirm this.

Just what kind of person could make her regret finding out?

Darla said, "Then I'm even more determined to meet him."

Alana pursed her lips.

Seeing Alana's silent reaction, Darla asked, "What's the matter? Don't you want to introduce him?"

She smiled, feigning nonchalance.

"If you feel uncomfortable, I won't push you."

Though she said that, her gaze couldn't help but drift toward the crowd in line, hoping to spot a man she recognized.

Suddenly, Alana's gaze slowly settled on a certain spot, and she spoke softly, "Of all the men in that line, the most handsome one...that's my boyfriend."

Darla froze for a moment, and just then, she spotted Stephan in the crowd.

He was wearing a blue shirt and black dress pants, standing tall with broad shoulders and a narrow waist, a truly impressive head-to-body ratio.

Standing out in the crowd, his noble bearing was immediately apparent.

His face was turned slightly to the side, revealing sharp, flowing features: a full, well-defined forehead; deep, angular brow bones; a high, straight nose; and sensual lips.

It was as if he had been meticulously carved, so perfect that not a single flaw could be found.

Seeing Stephan, she was a bit surprised, how had he ended up at the movie theater?

However, when she heard what Alana said, she found it somewhat amusing.

Alana said that among all the men in line, the most handsome one was her boyfriend?

Truly, beauty was in the eye of the beholder.

She surely didn't think her boyfriend was on the same level as Stephan, did she?

Darla laughed. "Sorry, but I really can't tell which one is your boyfriend."

Alana smiled back but didn't answer.

If Darla was acting blinding to the truth and unwilling to admit it, there was nothing she could do about it.

Alana couldn't help but lift her gaze and look over again. Stephan had already successfully picked up the tickets and was walking toward her, holding a bucket of popcorn and a can of Coke.

With his handsome looks and toned physique, he naturally drew attention.

Quite a few girls had already noticed him, their eyes fixed on him as they gazed at him dreamily.

"Wow, he's so handsome!"

"Tall and handsome, with broad shoulders, a slim waist, and long legs, he's practically the perfect man!"

"I wonder whose boyfriend he is. I'm so jealous of her!"

Hearing this, Alana felt a surge of

sweetness in her heart, yet she couldn't help but feel a little nervous.

Darla was right beside her now. If Stephan walked over and they met, their relationship would inevitably be exposed.

But... So be it.

She no longer wanted to hide anything.

Perhaps, once Darla got the confirmation she needed that Alana truly was Stephan's girlfriend, Darla would immediately order her to break up with Stephan.

If she refused, Darla might team up with Fu Mingxiu's mother to coerce her into breaking up with him.

And there were many other things she couldn't even imagine happening.

But when she thought of how Stephan had always stood by her, supporting her, not even giving his own mother any hope that he'd ever be with Darla, and also his words earlier that he intended to take her seriously.

Alana realized that she had to stop being so scared. She shouldn't keep running away.

Instead, she should resolutely choose to face everything with him.

So, as Stephan walked toward her, Alana decided to set aside that lingering nervousness and unease, stood up, and prepared to walk toward him.

She would slip her arm through his, then introduce him to Darla officially, openly and proudly.

However, she didn't expect Darla to act faster than her.

Darla stood up first, walked in front of Stephan and blocked his path.

Stephan was returning with a bowl of popcorn and a Coke, but before he could reach Alana, he was blocked by a figure who suddenly appeared.

Seeing Darla standing there, he couldn't help but frown.

He must have forgotten to check the almanac before leaving today, he'd actually run into the one woman he didn't want to see.

Darla had seen Stephan walking toward her and assumed he had spotted her, which was why he was coming over.

He had come for her!

Plus, with a few starry-eyed girls around them staring intently at Stephan, curious about his girlfriend,

She couldn't help but take the initiative and walked up to him.

Sure enough, when the girls around them saw Darla suddenly standing in front of Stephan, they all gasped in surprise.

"So she's that handsome guy's girlfriend!"

"She's a total stunner too...they make a perfect match!"

"Yeah, yeah...a handsome guy with a beauty. We don't stand a chance!"

Darla felt quite smug inside. See? So many people thought she and Stephan were a perfect match, she wasn't just imagining things after all.

Stephan frowned, clearly growing impatient. "Darla, can you please get out of the way?"

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Chapter 243 Plenty of other men

Hearing this, Darla was instantly snapped back to reality.

She snorted lightly and asked pointedly, "Stephan, didn't you say you didn't want to watch a movie? So why are we suddenly at the cinema?"

Stephan remained expressionless. "Sorry, you misunderstood me. When I said I didn't want to watch a movie, I meant I didn't want to watch a movie with you."

Darla felt a sudden stab of pain in her chest. It felt humiliating, as if she had placed her true feelings in the palm of his hand, only to have him cruelly toss them aside.

She retorted, somewhat annoyed, "If you don't want to watch a movie with me, there are plenty of other men who'd love to take me."

Stephan curled the corners of his lips. "Is that so? It seems you already have a new lover. Thank goddess. Congratulations."

Darla's face went stiff.

Was he genuinely congratulating her, or was he just being sarcastic out of jealousy?

She clenched her teeth. "Stephan, actually, I'd much rather watch a movie with you. If you don't want me to go with another man, I can turn him down."

Stephan's tone was cold. "No need. You can go see a movie with whichever man you like...it's none of my business."

Darla could no longer keep a straight face. "Stephan, are you really going to be this heartless toward me?"

She had already gone out of her way to accommodate him, was he really going to remain so indifferent to her forever?

Stephan's thin lips curled into a faint, mocking smile. "Darla, don't give me that look as if I've wronged you."

"My girlfriend is right here. She's sensitive and gets jealous easily. Don't say anything that could be misinterpreted, or I'll be sleeping on the floor tonight."

She had been about to step forward to stake her claim, but suddenly her image was completely ruined!

"Your girlfriend?"

Darla froze, only then realizing something.

“Who is your girlfriend?”

Before Stephan could say a word, a slender, graceful figure in a blue strapless dress suddenly stepped between him and Darla, possessively hooking her arm around his.

“Miss Gordon, let me formally introduce you. This is the person I was just about to introduce to you, my boyfriend, Stephan.”

Alana wrapped her arm around Stephan’s, stood in front of Darla, and introduced him with confidence.

On the surface, she appeared calm, but inside, she felt inexplicably nervous.

Stephan raised an eyebrow, somewhat surprised. He hadn’t expected this little white rabbit to take the initiative to stake her claim in front of Darla.

Not bad...she’s making progress.

The man felt pleased inside, but he didn’t say a word.

Darla took a shocked step back, staring at the handsome man and beautiful woman standing side by side, her eyes brimming

with disbelief. How could this be?

How could Stephan’s girlfriend be her?

And how could it possibly be her?

Darla suddenly remembered the last time Alana had spoken to her boyfriend, that familiar voice was gradually overlapping with Stephan’s.

Except that Stephan’s tone toward her was usually cold and indifferent.

But the man speaking to Alana was gentle and doting. That’s why she couldn’t recognize him at first.

But she never imagined it was the same person.

Moreover, on one occasion when she happened to run into Alana, she had also seen Stephan.

She had been surprised by such a coincidence, but it turned out, they were together! Thinking back to the times she'd referred to herself as Stephan's fiancée in front of Alana, and how Alana had remained silent, had she been treating her like a clown all along?!

Darla laughed bitterly. She really had underestimated Alana, this woman had been silently deceiving her all this time!

Why hadn't she realized from the start just how calculating this woman was?

Then again, if she weren't a bit scheming, how could she have managed to hook up with a man like Stephan?!

Darla was seething inside, but her good upbringing allowed her to control herself and keep her anger in check.

She sneered, "Alana, I never would have guessed that Stephan's girlfriend would be you!"

Alana deliberately feigned ignorance of Darla's sarcasm and replied calmly, "Miss Gordon, didn't you say you were here to see a movie with your fiancé?"

"Where's your fiancé? Aren't you going to introduce him to me?"

Hearing this, Darla felt a pang of panic and couldn't help but glance at Stephan. "I..."

The male doctor suddenly hurried over. "Darla, I've already picked up the movie tickets. It's almost showtime...why don't we go in early..." He walked up to Darla and only then noticed Stephan and Alana. "These two are..."

Alana glanced at the male doctor, as if realizing something. "So you're Miss Gordon's fiancé. Nice to meet you."

Upon hearing this, the male doctor's face flushed instantly, and he glanced at Darla sheepishly.

He'd thought he was the only one interested in Darla, but it turned out she felt the same way, so much so that she'd already told others they were engaged.

Stephan raised an eyebrow. "Miss Gordon, I never would have guessed you already had a fiancé. Congratulations."

Darla's face flushed with anger.

That woman, Alana...she must have done this on purpose!

She had clearly told Alana that Stephan was her fiancé, and that his parents liked

her and treated her like their future daughter-in-law.

And now, right in front of Stephan, Alana was claiming another man was her fiancé.

Wasn't she just trying to deliberately distance herself from Stephan, and make him dislike her, making him think she was fickle?

Fine, very well!

In their first showdown, she was utterly defeated!

But would she, Darla, ever admit defeat so easily?

Absolutely not!

She forced a smile. "I was just joking earlier. I didn't expect you, Miss Alana, to take it seriously."

She glanced at the male doctor. "Let me introduce you. This is my colleague, Miguel Diaz. He's currently pursuing me."

After speaking, she deliberately glanced at Stephan, hoping to catch even the slightest sign that he cared.

But she was disappointed; Stephan's expression remained impassive, showing no reaction whatsoever.

Hearing this, the male doctor gave an awkward smile. "Yes, I'm Darla's colleague, and I'm currently pursuing her."

Alana nodded. "I see."

Stephan lowered his gaze and looked at Alana affectionately. "Sweetheart, the movie is about to start. Let's go inside first."

Alana smiled. "Okay."

She then turned to Darla, "Sorry, my boyfriend and I are going into the theater. Miss Gordon and Mr. Diaz, please excuse us." With that, she tugged Stephan along.

It seemed as though she didn't want to have anything to do with them at all.

Watching the two walk away, Darla could no longer control the clenching of her fists.

Jealousy raged within her; she wanted nothing more than to rush over, tear them apart, and shred them to pieces.

The male doctor glanced at Darla's reaction. "Darla, shouldn't we also..."

Darla's face darkened. Filled with rage, she desperately wanted to turn and walk away immediately.

But the moment she recalled Alana's smug, triumphant expression from just moments ago, she forced herself to suppress the urge to leave.

She would never admit defeat so easily!

Darla suppressed her anger and set off to catch up with Alana and Stephan. Seeing this, the male doctor had no choice but to follow.

Meanwhile, Alana and Stephan had already made their way inside.

They took their seats in the center, the best spot for watching the movie.

Stephan looked at the girl sitting next to him with a chuckle. "Alana, I've suddenly realized you're actually quite a force to be reckoned with."

A classic case of "innocent on the outside, cunning on the inside."

On the surface, she looks like a little white rabbit, but in reality, she's a cunning little fox. Just now, the look on Darla's face had nearly made her steam with rage.

Alana held her coke and took a big gulp.

Hearing this, she looked quite innocent.

"I didn't know, I was just telling the truth. Darla said herself that she was out at the movies with her fiancé. I just didn't expect her to get so angry when I mentioned it."

Chapter 244 Moody and irritable

"She's not going to hold a grudge against me and try to get back at me, is she?"

Stephan snorted with a laugh. "Would she dare?"

Alana blinked. "What if she does dare?"

Stephan reached out and pinched her cheek. "If she dares, I'll take revenge for you." Alana nodded, feeling instantly reassured.

"Let's not worry about her. Let's just focus on the movie."

They wouldn't let some random stranger ruin the good mood of their date.

Stephan curved his lips. "Is the Coke good?"

Alana nodded. "It's pretty good."

"Let me have a sip."

Alana held the straw up to his lips.

Stephan opened his mouth and took a sip.

Then, taking advantage of the dim lighting in the theater, he leaned down and kissed Alana on the lips...

Wait, was it really appropriate for him to do this to her in public like this?

Darla walked into the theater with the male doctor just as the movie was about to start.

Relying on her keen eyesight, she wanted to see where Alana and Stephan were sitting.

But to her surprise, she immediately saw Alana and Stephan kissing right there, completely oblivious to everyone around them.

Darla felt like she could grind her teeth to dust.

In a movie theater, with all these people around, they were actually kissing?

How shameless!

Alana's face flushed crimson from the kiss; she was so embarrassed she quickly

pushed the man away. "That's enough, stop kissing me. If someone sees us, how am I supposed to save face?"

Stephan wrapped his arm around her waist, pulling her close against him. "It's fine. It's pitch black in here; no one can see us."

Alana pushed him away weakly, her face flushed. "There are security cameras in the theater. They can see everything clearly. You might want to be watched, but I certainly don't!"

Stephan raised an eyebrow. "Then shall we find a spot without cameras to kiss?"

Is there any way we can just watch the movie in peace?

Alana turned her head away, deliberately ignoring him.

Stephan curved his lips and gently traced his finger along the soft curve of her waist.

“Sweetheart, I’m sorry. Don’t ignore me, my dear wife.”

“My dear wife?!”

Alana felt her ears burn at the sound. She grabbed a handful of popcorn and shoved it into his mouth. “Here, eat some popcorn. Shut your mouth!”

Stephan pouted.

The movie began, Alana and Stephan began watching the movie in earnest.

Suddenly, Stephan felt a figure shift slightly in the seat next to him. He turned his head and saw Darla’s face.

For a moment, he was startled.

Was he being haunted by a ghost or something?

Darla had swapped seats with the person next to Stephan and sat down right beside him, as if it were perfectly normal.

Maybe she was a masochist, insisting on sitting right there and enduring the pain of watching the man she lived with another woman.

She even did something on purpose, using her toe to gently brush against the man’s long pant leg.

To inform him of her presence.

Stephan’s expression instantly turned cold.

He immediately leaned in close to Alana and bit her delicate ear. “Sweetheart, let’s

switch seats. I don’t really like the woman sitting next to me.”

Alana had intended to scold him for being tactless, but upon hearing this, she turned to look at the person sitting next to Stephan, and to her surprise, it was Darla. She was perplexed, she hadn’t expected Darla to be sitting right next to Stephan. What a coincidence.

Naturally, she didn't want her man to be too close to another woman either.

"Let's switch seats."

The two immediately stood up and swapped seats.

Darla saw that Stephan had switched seats with Alana to distance himself from her, and her eyes darkened instantly.

Alana acted as if she hadn't noticed Darla on purpose.

"Honey, I want some popcorn." Stephan raised an eyebrow.

"Sure, I'll get you some popcorn. You can have some too."

"You have to feed me, I'll only eat what you feed me."

"You're such a picky eater. Fine, I'll spoil you! Open wide!"

Stephan opened his mouth and ate the pop corn the girl fed him, but he seemed unsatisfied. "What should I do? I want the imported kind even more."

Alana didn't catch on at first, "What do you mean, imported?"

"The one in your mouth..."

She instantly blushed.

What a shameless man!

The two of them teased each other and showed off their affection as if no one else were around.

Though they kept it quiet and spoke softly.

But Darla, sitting right next to them, heard every single word.

Darla's fists were clenched tightly.

She never would have imagined that Stephan had a side like this.

After all, in front of her, he was so cold, so heartless, and had such a sharp tongue!

The slightest disagreement could make her heart ache with anger.

But in front of Alana, he was a completely different person.

Gentle and doting, with a hint of mischievous charm seeping from his very core.

She never would have imagined he'd say things like, "Imported," or "The one in your mouth..." the kind of dirty talk that made a woman blush and her heart race.

Yet just hearing him say those suggestive things to another woman...that deep, magnetic, seductive whisper silently crept into her ears, giving her an inexplicable sense of being right there, being thoroughly teased by him.

For a moment, she couldn't control the rapid pounding of her heart.

She couldn't imagine how thrilled Alana, sitting right beside him, must feel hearing those words. She probably was already so aroused she couldn't help but react.

A man who, in the eyes of others, was aloof and reserved yet exuded mature masculine charm, now acting so flirtatious and naughty in front of her, was something no woman could resist.

Darla closed her eyes and found herself fantasizing that right now, she was Alana.

And Stephan was biting her ear, whispering sweet nothings to her, even doing some forbidden, wild things.

It was impossible to imagine just how mesmerizing and wild he was in bed... But after the fantasy, a wave of emptiness washed over her.

Because none of it was real...it was merely a figment of her imagination. And in reality, she wasn't the real protagonist.

She had merely stepping into Alana's shoes for a moment, savoring the affection Alana received from that man.

"Hmm, Stephan, you... you're going too far...Stop it, stop it right now!"

Darla heard Alana's shy, timid voice and couldn't help but look over.

Just one glance was enough to make her eyes burn with jealousy.

The man's slender fingers gripped the girl's chin, ignoring her faint resistance, and he leaned down to kiss her soft, delicate lips.

To prevent her from pulling away, his scorching fingers dug deep into the roots of her hair.

His breath was heavy and intense, as if it might set her ablaze.

Darla's face turned ashen. Unable to bear it any longer, she abruptly stood up and m turned to leave.

Sensing the movement behind her, Alana hurriedly nudged the man. Her breath was slightly ragged, and her soft, sweet voice trembled uncontrollably.

"That's enough. She's gone."

Stephan pressed his forehead against hers, his deep eyes locked on her flushed cheeks. "Just now... was it exciting?"

Alana was too embarrassed to answer.

This bastard was so wicked! But she liked it.

He'd kissed her like that right in front of Darla...Darla must be mad furious by now.

Stephan smiled, leaned down, and kissed her cheek again. "Good girl, I won't tease you anymore. Just relax and enjoy the movie."

Darla stormed out of the theater in a rage.

The male doctor was baffled, but he gave up on the movie and ran after her.

"Dr. Gordon, what's wrong? Is it that time of the month?"

There were always a few days each month when girls were particularly moody and irritable.

Chapter 245 Take a look

Chapter 245 Take a look

Clearly, Darla's reaction was much like it was during those days.

Darla was extremely irritable, and her tone naturally lacked her usual composure.

“Dr. Diaz, can you just get lost?!”

The male doctor was at a loss. “Dr. Gordon, I’m just concerned about you. What’s wrong? You don’t look well.”

Darla gave a cold laugh, showing him no mercy. “Whether I look happy or not has nothing to do with you. And don’t think just because I agreed to go see a movie with you that there’s anything going on between us! I don’t like stuffy, boring guys like you, I don’t like you now, and I never will!”

“You should know your place. Do you really think someone like you is good enough for me?”

The male doctor turned pale, stripped of every shred of dignity.

His lips trembled. “If you say you’ll never like me, then why did you accept the flowers and gifts I gave you?”

By accepting his gifts, wasn’t she just giving him hope, giving him a chance to pursue her?

Darla smiled coldly. “You’re not the only man who’s ever sent me flowers and gifts. Besides, you chose to give them to me, I didn’t force you. You’re the one who wanted to be a sycophant, fawning over me. Who’s to blame?”

“Oh, and by the way, what I hate most are people like you, suck-ups who don’t know their place and have delusions of grandeur. Keep dreaming!”

Hearing this, the male doctor’s heart shattered into a thousand pieces.

Unable to bear the blow, he broke down and left.

Seeing the male doctor in such a heartbroken state, the tangled emotions of anger, jealousy, and resentment swirling within Darla were instantly soothed.

She finally understood the feeling of deriving joy from another’s suffering.

Darla seemed to have calmed down considerably. She pulled out her phone and made a call.

“Look up a woman for me! I want every detail about her...leave no stone unturned!”

After Darla left, the young couple could finally relax and watch the movie together.

They had expected a comedy, but to their surprise, the film had a bittersweet and somber tone.

The film told the story of a female protagonist who lives in an extremely impoverished family.

Her father was a gambler, and her mother made a living by running a street stall selling various snacks.

Because her father was a compulsive gambler who refused to change his ways, he would often steal the family's money and gamble it all away.

Her mother's street stall doesn't bring in much money. So the protagonist is exceptionally mature; in addition to studying hard, she often takes on part-time jobs to supplement the household income

and ease the burden on her family.

But even so, life has not been kind to her. Her gambler father, having lost all their money, would often beat or berate her.

Many times, she was left covered in bruises. At school, she was mocked and bullied by her classmates.

At her part-time job, she was often harassed and teased by customers.

If it weren't for the male lead coming to her rescue time and again, the female lead would never have been able to escape these hardships.

Alana hadn't even watched half the movie when, for some reason, everything before her eyes began to blur.

Many scenes in the movie began to overlap with her own past experiences.

She felt heavy-hearted and oppressed.

The ending was even more painful to watch, because although the male and female leads loved each other, they couldn't be together.

The female lead's father was jailed, and her mother fell gravely ill.

Meanwhile, the male lead came from a wealthy family, and his parents refused to allow him to continue seeing her.

What parents would accept a daughter-in-law whose father was in prison?

And so, the two were forcibly torn apart.

The male lead went abroad to study.

The female lead took on part-time jobs to pay for her mother's medical treatment.

It was an open-ended ending; no one could tell if the two would ever meet again.

But even if they do meet again, so what?

The male lead's parents would still never approve of them being together.

So, even if they do meet, they were destined never to be together.

Alana felt a stinging sensation in her eyes, and an indescribable sense of loss welled up in her heart, lingering for a long time.

When the movie ended, the lights came on, and everyone filed out.

Only then did she say in a hoarse voice,

"Let's go."

Stephan noticed the redness around Alana's eyes and found it somewhat amusing.

He gently wiped the moisture from the corners of her eyes with his fingertip. "It's just a movie. Why did you get so caught up in it?"

Alana looked quite sad. "I just feel so sorry for the female lead."

"Her life has been so hard already, and she worked so hard to improve herself and

become outstanding. Why, in the end, does she not deserve happiness? She clearly mustered the courage to pursue her love for the male lead, and the two of them were finally happy together. Why won't the male lead's parents accept her?"

Stephan couldn't help but cup her face in his hands. Seeing her tear-filled eyes, he couldn't help but feel a pang of sympathy.

"Silly girl, it's just a movie...it's not real.

Don't be sad. Besides, isn't the ending open-ended? The heroine is already getting better little by little. She'll keep getting better and better, and she'll become an even more outstanding person."

Alana's eyes were red-rimmed as she gazed softly at the handsome, tender man before her, her heart still aching with a bittersweet sorrow.

“But she and the male lead will never be able to be together. The heroine might marry someone else, and the hero will marry another woman too. Don’t you feel sorry for them?”

“It is a pity, but that’s their life, not ours.”

Alana bit her lip. “Suppose...and I mean suppose...that in the future, we might end up just like the male and female leads in the movie...”

Before she could finish, his fingertip pressed against her lips, silencing her. His voice was low, yet firm and resolute.

“There are no ‘ifs.’ We’re not like them. We’ll be together, we’ll get married, we’ll have children, and we’ll live happily together for the rest of our lives!”

Alana looked into the man’s determined eyes and couldn’t help but be moved.

Unable to hold back, she leaned in and kissed his full lips.

No one can predict what the future holds.

But she knew that right now, he had her in his heart, and she had him in hers. As long as they loved each other, that was enough.

Love was not only sweet; it also brought uncertainty and bittersweet moments about the future.

No matter how it ends, cherishing the present and the person right in front of them is what they should do.

Leaving the movie theater.

To help Alana cheer up, Stephan decided to take her to the mall to shop.

Alana feigned modesty. “I don’t really need to buy anything.”

Stephan raised an eyebrow. “But I have plenty of things I want to buy for you.”

Alana was curious. “What is it?”

“Come with me!”

Alana let Stephan take her hand, and they walked into the mall together.

Both of them were exceptionally good-looking, so arriving at the crowded mall naturally drew the attention of many passersby.

“Are they a couple? They look so good together!”

“Of course they are. Would regular friends hold hands like that?”

“That guy is so handsome! His features are sharp, and he has such a great physique, broad shoulders, a narrow waist, and long legs. He’s the classic type who looks slim in clothes but has muscle underneath! I wonder if he has six-pack abs or eight-pack abs under there? I really want to see!”

“The girl is pretty too...she’s got a great figure, slim and slender, but she looks like she’s got some meat on her bones. Plus, she’s got that S-curve...a perfect body!”

“Waaah, I really want a boyfriend this handsome!”

“I want a girlfriend that pretty, too!”

Hearing all the compliments from the people around her, Alana looked quite shy.

She had never before walked around a mall so openly with a man, flaunting their affection like this.

She couldn’t help but glance at the man walking side by side with her.

She had to admit, Stephan was too handsome, no wonder so many girls were staring at him, completely smitten.

She felt a strange sense of pride and satisfaction, knowing that such a handsome and charming man belonged to her.

A female sales clerk at a jewelry store enthusiastically called out to customers.

“Ma’am, sir, are you looking to buy a diamond engagement ring? Please come on in and take a look at our jewelry store!”

Alana blushed and tried to deny it. “Um, we haven’t...”

Stephan’s eyebrows twitched, and he cut her off. “Come on, let’s go inside and take a look.”

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Chapter 246 So annoying

Alana's eyes widened. "Stephan, you don't really mean to..."

Stephan fixed her with an intense gaze. "I do."

Hearing this, Alana's heart skipped a beat.

Stephan took her hand firmly and led her to the ring section.

"Take a good look. See if there's a ring here you like."

Alana bit her lip, her ears burning with embarrassment. "Isn't this... a bit wrong?"

They hadn't even discussed marriage yet, wasn't buying a ring a bit too fast?

"How about we look at some other jewelry instead? A necklace or a bracelet would be fine."

Stephan raised an eyebrow, looking at her amusedly. "I was just asking if there were any rings here you liked...I didn't say I was going to buy one for you."

Alana frowned.

Did she read too much into it?

But if he didn't want to buy her one, why ask if she liked it?

Men's hearts were as inscrutable as the depths of the ocean, impossible to fathom. But Alana couldn't help but glance at the rings displayed behind the counter. The rings came in a wide variety of styles, a dazzling array.

Most were dazzling diamond rings, sparkling and eye-catching.

The diamonds came in white, pink, and red, with varying patterns, shapes, and sizes. Some diamonds were even larger than pigeon eggs.

Alana glanced at the price tags...tens of millions.

She was instantly put off.

Stephan had been watching Alana's reaction the whole time. "Do you like this big diamond ring?"

Alana shook her head decisively. "No, no, no. A diamond ring this big wouldn't look right on my finger."

Stephan curved his lips. Deep down, he still hoped she'd let him buy it for her to wear. Women...they always say one thing but mean another!

Alana had her eye on a pink diamond ring.

The pink diamond was neither too large nor too small; the design was simple yet elegant, delicate and petite, perfect for everyday wear.

However, it wasn't cheap...it cost several million.

But Stephan had no intention of buying it for her, so she might as well take a few more looks and feast her eyes on it.

Stephan noticed Alana's gaze, raised an eyebrow slightly, and turned to instruct the sales clerk.

"Bring out that pink diamond."

The clerk retrieved the pink diamond ring and respectfully handed it to Stephan.

Stephan took the ring and looked at Alana.

"Give me your hand. I'll let you try it on."

Alana's heart skipped a beat, and her voice trembled slightly. "No need to try it on. We're not buying it anyway."

But Stephan took her small hand in his.

Sensing her slight resistance as she tried to pull her hand back,

Stephan held her hand firmly, the diamond ring on his finger sliding decisively yet gently onto her slender little finger.

Alana felt a cool sensation on her finger and couldn't help but look down.

The pink diamond ring was gently slipped onto her little finger by the man, sliding slowly all the way to the very end.

Her heart was racing.

The ring locked firmly around her finger, as if it were meant to lock away her entire life, leaving her with no chance of escape.

Stephan raised his gaze, his eyes fixed intently on her. "It fits perfectly."

Alana blushed and pressed her lips together slightly. She was afraid that once she put it on, she wouldn't be able to bear to take it off.

Alana pulled her hand away from his, clenched her teeth, and ruthlessly slipped the ring off her pinky finger, carefully placing it back where it belonged.

She tugged at his arm nonchalantly.

"Alright, it doesn't look that great on me, and I don't really like it. Let's go look at some other jewelry."

Stephan looked at Alana, his gaze seeming to hold a deeper meaning.

But he didn't resist, letting Alana lead him away.

In the end, Stephan selected a necklace and a bracelet for her based on her preferences.

Stephan thoughtfully fastened the newly purchased necklace around her neck. The girl had a slender, beautiful neck, fair and delicate, perfect for a stunning gemstone necklace.

"Why aren't you wearing the ruby necklace I gave you last time?"

Alana muttered softly, "That one is too valuable. I'm afraid I'll lose it if I wear it, so I put it away. I'll save it for a special occasion."

He chuckled but didn't say anything.

Alana tugged at his hand again. "Come on, let's go check out the rest of the store."

Stephan didn't move for a moment, then instructed the clerk, "Wrap up that ring from earlier for me."

Upon hearing this, Alana immediately grew anxious. "You... didn't you say you wouldn't buy me a ring?"

Stephan lowered his gaze, amused by the girl's flustered reaction. "I'm not buying it for you...I'm buying it for my future wife."

She gasped.

The clerk handed over the wrapped diamond ring with a smile. "Sir, the ring is wrapped. The total is six million."

Stephan handed his bank card to the teller, then took the red box and cradled it in his palm.

He looked down and saw the girl's eager gaze fixed on him. He curved his lips into a smile. "Do you want it? Call me 'husband,' and I'll give it to you."

That teasing, mischievous tone pierced Alana's ears, making her blush instantly.

Combined with the teasing, gossipy stares from the female tellers around her, Alana felt she couldn't bear to stay there any longer.

"You're so annoying!"

"I'm not talking to you anymore!" She was mortified, so she let go of his hand and turned to walk away.

After retrieving his bank card, Stephan set off in pursuit of Alana.

He quickly caught up to her, grabbed her hand, and pulled her into his arms. "Why are you running so fast, hmm?"

Alana clenched her fist and gave the man's solid, muscular chest a light punch.

"Who told you to be so mean, making me call you 'husband' in front of all those people?"

Stephan raised an eyebrow. "I thought you'd like it. After all, you call me that every night." He lowered his head and playfully bit her soft earlobe. "You call it over and over again, until my bones go weak and tingly...I can't even explain just how good it feels."

Amanda's cheeks flushed, as rosy as ripe berries.

She pouted, her voice a mix of playfulness and annoyance, "As if you didn't force me to call you that every night!"

Stephan laughed. The way she looked so fierce yet couldn't help but get all riled up was incredibly adorable.

"Yes, I forced you to call me that. After all, I want to be your husband."

Alana blinked. She really didn't want to deal with him anymore; he was getting more and more shameless.

Suddenly, she felt a chill on her finger.

Alana looked down and was surprised to find that, while she wasn't paying attention, the man had secretly slipped the ring back onto her little finger.

Staring at the sparkling pink diamond ring on her finger, she looked at Stephan in shock.

“You...”

Stephan wrapped his arms around her slender waist and said earnestly, “I told you, this ring is a gift for my future wife. Alana, you are my future wife.”

Upon hearing this, Alana couldn’t help but tear up, her eyes misting over.

“But I haven’t decided to marry you yet.”

Stephan curved his lips, showing no sign of discouragement. Instead, he cupped her face and said sincerely, “It doesn’t matter if you’re not ready now. It’s enough that I intend to marry you. I’ll prove to you, step by step, how determined I am to marry you. Whether you agree to marry me or not right now, it won’t change my resolve. This ring is proof of that.”

He would make every preparation necessary to marry her, and when the day came that she had made up her mind and agreed to marry him, he would have her carried home in a grand style.

Alana’s heart was deeply moved.

She thought that in her entire life, she might never again meet a man like Stephan, one who would care for her unconditionally and always have her best interests at heart.

Time and again, he had shaken her resolve never to marry. If she were ever to marry, that person had to be Stephan and no one else.

Her nose grew slightly stuffy. “Stephan, you just bought this ring, and now it’s already on my finger. Aren’t you afraid I’ll lose it?”

He replied sincerely, “I’m not afraid. If you lose it, I’ll buy you another one. I’m not scared you’ll lose the ring. What I’m afraid of is losing your desire to marry me.”

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Chapter 247 Down to kiss it

He took her ring-adorned hand and leaned down to kiss it.

Alana bit her lip, her nose stinging once more.

What should she do? Her eyes were about to well up...

Seeing Alana's reddened eyes, Stephan assumed she was still resisting his repeated mentions of marriage.

He just wanted to tell her that he wanted to marry her on her own terms, not to put pressure on her.

"All right, let's not talk about this anymore. We rarely get to go on a date like this. Let's have fun...don't cry."

"If you cry in the mall, people who don't know us might think I'm mistreating you."

Alana shook her head. "I wasn't crying."

Stephan chuckled, "Your eyes are all red like that, and you say you weren't crying."

Alana bit her lip. "I really wasn't crying."

Stephan continued to soothe her patiently, "Alright, you didn't cry. Whatever you say goes...I'll do whatever you want."

Alana's tears turned to a smile.

The two held hands and continued strolling.

Alana noticed a couple holding a few freshly printed photo booth pictures, chatting and laughing.

On a whim, she looked at Stephan. "Stephan, shall we go take some photos?"

"What kind of photos?"

"Polaroid photos!"

"What are photo booth pictures?"

"Just come with me and you'll find out!"

There was a photo booth in the mall.

Alana dragged Stephan inside.

They'd been together for so long, yet they hadn't taken many photos together.

wanted to have a good time and take some great photos.

They were like newbies trying out a game for the first time, fiddling with the machine for ages before they finally figured out the trick to taking the photos.

At first, they stood together properly.

Stephan had his arm around Alana's shoulders, and she was leaning close against his shoulder.

With perfect harmony, they both smiled at the camera.

The scene was absolutely beautiful.

The camera captured that moment.

Alana was very pleased with this shot, it was absolutely stunning.

When someone was naturally beautiful, they look good no matter how they're photographed.

Stephan snatched it from her hand. "I like this one...I'll take it!"

Alana couldn't help but tease him, "I like this one too...give it to me!"

Stephan smirked. "Then let's take a few more."

Perhaps because they'd gotten the hang of it, their subsequent shots grew increasingly bold.

Time and again, the photos captured Stephan kissing her cheek, her forehead, and her lips.

Held in his arms, she blushed like a budding flower, shy yet radiant, her beauty almost overwhelming.

Alana blushed as she looked at them, then stuffed the photos of the kisses into the man's arms.

"I don't want these...I want some proper ones."

Stephan curved his lips, picked up the photos she'd shoved at him, looked at each one several times, then carefully tucked them into his pants pocket.

From now on, these photos would be his treasured possessions.

Alana felt they'd done enough shopping for the day and had come away with plenty of good finds.

“Is there anything else we need to buy? If we’re not buying anything, should we head back?”

Stephan took her soft little hand in his, his dark eyes fixed on her, a hidden meaning in his gaze.

“Sweetheart, I want to buy you some sexy lingerie.”

Alana blinked.

Wait, this was a rare proper date, and he’s actually thinking about that?

She felt too embarrassed to go into a store like that with him. “Let’s go home. We’ll buy it next time.”

She’d just go buy it secretly next time she went out.

Stephan curved his lips. “It’s rare for me to go out with you. I don’t want to wait until next time. Next time is for next time, and this time is for this time. We can’t waste a single opportunity.”

Alana pouted.

He really doesn’t waste a single chance to reward himself.

With a man like this, her slim waist was doomed sooner or later!

Alana wanted to slip away, but with the man holding her hand, where could she possibly go?

He practically dragged her into a sex shop. It had everything one could possibly want.

The content was so explicit that she couldn’t belong to describe them.

Stephan leaned down, bringing his face close to the girl’s flushed, alluring cheeks, his voice low and husky. “Last time, when you were with your best friend, what kind of ‘good stuff’ did you two look at, hmm?”

Alana was too embarrassed to say, “Nothing... nothing good...”

Stephan’s lips curled into a mischievous smile. “Then today, you’ll stay with me and take a good look. We’ll pick out some real goodies.”

Alana warned him in a low voice, “Don’t go too far. Rein it in a bit.”

“A man can’t hold back even a little when it comes to this sort of thing.”

Alana felt like fleeing.

Just then, a sales clerk approached them enthusiastically.

“Hello, may I help you?”

Alana immediately replied, “Nothing, we’re just passing by...”

Before she could say much more, Stephan interrupted in a calm voice, “Pick out some nice nightgowns for my girlfriend...lightweight, sheer ones. White lace, black lace, nude lace, all kinds of styles. Get one of each.”

Alana swallowed hard. The feeling of social embarrassment hit her so suddenly and intensely. What should she do?

Was there a crack in the floor she could crawl into?

The sales clerk shot Alana a look that was both suggestive and envious.

This lady’s man really knows how to have fun.

“Oh, absolutely! I guarantee your girlfriend will be satisfied!”

Before long, the clerk brought out dozens, even hundreds, of nightgowns in all sorts of styles.

Every single one was incredibly... revealing.

Alana couldn’t bear to look.

Stephan merely glanced at the nightgowns and immediately imagined Alana wearing them, lying in bed, seducing him with her alluring, flirtatious manner. His Adam’s apple bobbed. “Wrap them all up for me.”

Alana gasped. “Huh?!”

What? This many?!

How long would it take her to wear them all?

She tugged at the man’s belt with her small hand and whispered shyly, “Maybe... we shouldn’t buy them all? There’s too much. I’ll never get through it all...”

Stephan chuckled softly, leaning close to her ear and saying, “How can we not finish them? You don’t really think I’d be satisfied with just one pair for the whole night, do you?”

Her eyes widened.

What did that mean?

One wasn't enough to satisfy him...does he actually want her to change into several different ones one after another all night long just to seduce him?!

What a pervert!

In the end, Alana watched helplessly as Stephan waved his hand and bought over a hundred sheer, revealing nightgowns...

The sales clerk, thrilled to land such a big order, eagerly tried to upsell her target.

"Sir, would you like to buy anything else? We have plenty of other fun items in the store to spice things up! If you'd rather not carry all this around, we can pack it up and have it discreetly delivered to your door!"

Stephan cocked an eyebrow. "In that case..."

Alana couldn't bear to stay any longer. She tugged hard on the man's arm. "Enough, enough! That's enough. Let's go, let's go!"

She was still young, she certainly didn't want to die in his bed.

Stephan smiled, glanced back at the clerk, and gave a nod, then gave his address.

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Home Chapter 248 Something extra

"Pack it up and deliver it to that door."

The clerk blinked. Was he asking them to sneak something extra into the delivery?!

Alana successfully dragged Stephan out of the store.

Stephan casually hooked his arm around her slender waist, feeling inexplicably excited.

“Let’s go home.” Alana glanced at the man, not missing the restless emotion overflowing in his eyes. Add to that his large hand pressed against her waist, pressing against her delicate skin, unconsciously generating heat through friction.

The implication was clear.

Her legs went weak, and she bit her lip.

“Let’s not go back so soon. Let’s find a place to eat.”

Stephan lowered his head, a smirk playing at the corners of his mouth, a hint of mischief glinting in his eyes.

“Sweetheart, we can eat at home too. I’ll let you have every inch of me.”

Alana glared at him.

He was being so flirtatious...he was completely out of line!

She pushed him gently with her small hand, a bit stubborn. “I just want to eat out today.”

Stephan raised an eyebrow and gave her soft waist a gentle pinch with his long fingers.

“Fine. We’ve got plenty of time tonight anyway. No rush.” He sensed the girl in his arms blushing, struggling slightly, showing signs of wanting to make a hasty escape.

He chuckled softly, “Sweetheart, don’t even think about running away...you’re destined to stay.”

Alana sighed.

What should she do?

Who was going to save her?

The two found a nearby restaurant to eat at.

Although Alana deliberately ate slowly, she finished her meal in less than an hour.

Stephan had just received a message from the staff that the “items” had been delivered, and he was already eager to see her in them.

Seeing that Alana’s plate was nearly empty, he stood up and took her hand.

“Come on, let’s go home.”

Alana deliberately tried to delay their return home. “Um, I’d like to stroll through the night market and buy some snacks or something...”

Stephan asked with a chuckle, “After eating all that, do you really have room for more tonight?”

Her face flushed involuntarily, and she pretended not to understand. “I don’t know what you’re talking about. Anyway, I’m not quite full yet.”

“We’ll keep eating at home until you’re full.”

Alana’s face turned bright red.

Seriously, this flirtatious man...he never stops!

Stephan walked out of the restaurant with Alana and practically shoved her into the car.

He glanced at her and said with a straight face, “Actually, I didn’t get full either.”

A flicker of delight crossed Alana’s eyes. “Then let’s keep...”

Stephan raised an eyebrow and cut her off. “I did that on purpose. I’m saving room to devour my wife when we get home.”

Her heartbeat accelerated.

Stephan was just about to start the car.

Suddenly, his phone rang.

Who on earth would be calling at a time like this?

He picked up his phone, glanced at the screen, and tapped to answer.

“What is it?”

Gary clicked his tongue “Tsk! You sound so annoyed...did I interrupt something fun?”

“You know the answer, so why ask?”

“Where are you right now?”

“At home.”

Gary snorted with a laugh, "Don't give me that. One of the guys just saw you...saw you walk into a sex shop with a woman."

Stephan's and Alana's eyes widened at the same time.

Gary's tone was laced with amusement.

"That woman must be your girlfriend,

huh? Tsk, strutting around a sex shop like that. I never would've guessed that our Mr. Hudson...who's known for being aloof, ascetic, and averse to women...would be such a wild one in private!"

Stephan gave a forced smile, "That's none of your business."

Gary laughed. "Don't keep her hidden away. I just happened to organize a gathering tonight. Bring her over so everyone can finally meet her."

With a rare chance to show off in front of his buddies, Stephan certainly didn't want to miss it.

Besides, he'd recently boasted to his buddies that he'd bring his girlfriend along for them to check out.

He looked at Alana, who was already blushing bright red, and raised an eyebrow slightly. "Sweetheart, do you want to go?"

Alana's ears were burning. "It's just you guys hanging out. It'd be so awkward for a girl like me to tag along."

Gary, listening on the phone, chuckled softly. "Sister-in-law, we've got more than just men here...there are women, too. Don't be shy. We won't pick on you."

Alana swallowed.

Stephan laughed in exasperation, "Get lost. My woman isn't someone any of you can dare make uncomfortable...in fact...you lots has to be on your best behaviors."

"Tsk, man...you're smitten."

"I'm serious, except you have a death wish..."

"I'm at Morzi. Hurry up and come over here and kill me!"

Stephan hung up the phone immediately.

Alana felt sick to her stomach hearing that.

Stephan and his friend...two grown men acting like this...could there be something going on between them? Like a quarrel or something.

Noticing the look on her face, he couldn't help but explain, "Don't get any crazy ideas. That's how we are...nothing serious...just playful banter."

Alana blinked. She'd only thought it in her head...and he knew?

Was he a mind reader?

Stephan's dark gaze swept over her. "Your expression was so obvious. If I couldn't figure it out, what would make me any different from an idiot?"

Expression?

What expression did she have?

Shock, excitement, fear?

Stephan reached out and pinched her delicate little cheek. "Are you going? If you don't want to go, we'll head home. To be honest, I'd much rather go home with you and spend a wild, thrilling night together than go to some party."

Alana, who had been hesitating, immediately replied upon hearing his words, "I'll go."

She'd already met Darla what was the big deal about meeting his friends? When it came to dating, you should be open and straightforward.

If you're timid about it, you'll just end up feeling stifled.

Stephan raised an eyebrow. "Alright, let's go."

Morzi, a high-end entertainment club.

Gary and the group of friends would throw wild parties there every few days.

Stephan used to hang out with them all the time...eating, drinking, and chatting to pass the time on boring nights.

But ever since he'd gotten a girlfriend, his nightlife had practically nothing to do with them anymore. Not only was he immersed in the lap of luxury every day, but he'd also pop up from time to time to flaunt his affection and make everyone jealous.

His friends could barely stand him since he got into a relationship.

Still, everyone was curious about his girlfriend. Upon hearing he might bring her along later, they all started speculating about who she could be.

“Guess...could she be someone from our circle?”

“Why don’t you just ask her directly...is she someone we know?”

“Gary knows this better than anyone. If he doesn’t know, we certainly won’t.”

“Gary, say something!”

Gary smiled nonchalantly. “I’m not sure either. If I knew, I wouldn’t have asked him to bring his girlfriend out.”

The guys were surprised.

“What? Even you don’t know Stephan’s girlfriend?”

“Young Master Hudson is really keeping this under wraps. Is he planning to keep his sweetheart hidden away in a golden nest?”

“Though I wonder if Young Master Hudson is serious about this girlfriend, or if he’s just playing around.”

“It’s not up to us to decide...it’s entirely up to Young Master Hudson.”

“But I seem to have heard that Gary has a cousin who’s interested in Young Master Hudson, and the two families are even planning an alliance. I wonder if that’s true.”

Gary’s cousin is Darla.

She is the eldest daughter of Gary’s second uncle’s first wife.

His second uncle’s first wife died in a car

accident, leaving only Darla behind.

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Chapter 249 Ignore them

Chapter 249 Ignore them

Later, the man remarried.

The new wife was from the countryside and had no social standing.

But she was extremely kind to Gary's second uncle's daughter, Darla, and even bore him a son.

Having a son in his old age, the Uncle doted on that woman even more.

However, Gary had never heard anything about the two families planning to form an alliance through marriage.

Mainly because he didn't pay much attention to such matters.

But alliances between wealthy families were commonplace. If the Hudson family were to form an alliance with the Gordon family, it would be a powerful union, strengthening the ties between the two families.

Someone asked, "Gary, if your cousin asked you to help her pursue Stephan, would you choose to help her, or..."

Gary interrupted calmly, "I don't want to help anyone. Stephan is bringing his girlfriend over later, don't bring this up in front of them. It'll ruin the mood."

No sooner had he spoken than the door to the private room swung open.

Hearing the commotion, everyone turned to look in unison.

A man and a woman, dressed in matching blue outfits, appeared before everyone, hand in hand, acting completely at ease.

Stephan was an old acquaintance so everyone instinctively looked past him to the girl by his side.

Standing beside him, she looked exceptionally petite against the backdrop of his towering, imposing figure.

She wore a blue strapless dress with a cinched waist that hugged her slender figure, her legs long and fair.

Then there was her face, delicate as jade, with eyes and brows like a painting, and a gaze as gentle as flowing water.

Her delicate, straight nose and soft, crimson lips were a beauty one could never forget.

Especially her eyes, clear and pure, moist and shimmering, radiating innocence with a hint of allure.

One couldn't help but be utterly captivated. Everyone was stunned by her beauty and let out a collective gasp of admiration.

Gary saw the girl beside Stephan, but showed no surprise, it seemed he had already guessed as much.

Alana hadn't expected so many people in the private room, at a glance, there were over a dozen.

With so many eyes fixed on her, she couldn't help but feel a bit nervous.

Stephan noticed the sudden sweat on her palms and couldn't help but chuckle.

"Don't just stare at my girlfriend...she gets shy easily."

Alana had almost managed to calm her nerves.

But now that Stephan had called her out, her cheeks flushed involuntarily. She secretly pinched his thigh, scolding him for speaking so carelessly.

Stephan chuckled as he pinched her mischievous hand, then led her over to the group.

"Let me introduce you to my girlfriend, Alana."

The crowd snapped out of their daze and let out a collective "Wow!"

Then, as if they'd rehearsed it beforehand, they all shouted in unison,

"Sister-in-law!"

Hearing them call her "Sister-in-law," Alana blushed even more.

But she managed to keep her composure and greet them.

"Hello, everyone. Just call me Alana."

Someone teased, "Sister-in-law, Stephan's here so we wouldn't dare call you by your first name."

Alana blushed and was too embarrassed to speak.

Stephan chuckled and wrapped his arm around her waist. "Ignore them. Let's go sit over there."

Stephan led Alana to an empty table and sit down.

Someone asked eagerly, "Sis, would you like a drink? Let me pour you a glass!"

Before Alana could say a word, Stephan declined on her behalf.

"She doesn't drink. Pour her some juice."

"Sure thing!"

A glass of orange juice was placed in front of Alana.

Alana took the juice and thanked him politely.

Another person asked curiously, "Sis, you're so beautiful. How did you end up with Stephan?"

Alana took a sip of juice and nearly choked when she heard the question.

Stephan immediately patted her on the back to help her clear her throat.

He shot the young man a glance. "Mind your business!"

The man laughed awkwardly. "Sorry, we're just really curious!"

Stephan replied calmly, "We met at a restaurant. It was love at first sight, and I made the first move. Is there a problem with that?"

The crowd was surprised; they really hadn't expected Stephan to be the type of man who would actively pursue a woman.

Gary asked with a smile, "How did you pursue her? You didn't just muscle in as a homewrecker, did you?"

He was really laying into him right to his face.

Upon hearing this, Alana began to choke even more.

Stephan gave her a forced smile. "Sorry to disappoint you, but I'm my girlfriend's first love."

Cole doesn't count!

He lowered his gaze to look at Alana, his smile full of affection. "Sweetheart, am I right?"

Alana mumbled, "Mm-hmm."

Gary clicked his tongue.

This guy...that wasn't what he told him back then.

He'd claimed the girl was already taken and Gary warned him not to pursue her if he didn't want to make a fool of himself.

Stephan, worried Alana might feel uncomfortable, brought her a plate of fruit and fed her a piece himself.

He took a toothpick, skewered a piece of cantaloupe, and held it to her lips. "Have some fruit."

Alana opened her mouth obediently.

The honeydew was juicy and sweet enough.

After feeding her one piece, he offered another.

Everyone watching was treated to a full mouthful of their lovey-dovey display.

There were quite a few men in the

private room who had brought their girlfriends along. Seeing Stephan actively serving his girlfriend food and drinks, the women couldn't help but feel envious.

Their own boyfriends, on the other hand, were born to be waited on; getting them to wait on their girlfriends was harder than climbing Mount Everest.

Fred, surrounded by women on both sides, fixed his gaze on Alana and suddenly blurted out, "Looking at you, sis-in-law, you seem kind of familiar."

When Alana saw Fred, she coughed several times, caught off guard.

She remembered: that night, her colleague Vets had tricked her into working as a waitress at a bar, and it was this man who had specifically asked her to stay.

Fred remembered too. He stood up in disbelief. "You... you're the waitress from that night at the bar?"

Hearing this, everyone turned to look at Alana.

What?

Their sister-in-law was actually a bar waitress?!

The esteemed Stephan Hudson actually chose a bar waitress as his girlfriend?

If this... got out, what kind of reputation would that bring?!

Alana's breath caught in her throat; the calm she'd just regained instantly gave way to anxiety.

Could it be that his friends are looking down on her?!

Upon hearing this, Stephan shot a withering glare at the tactless Fred. Noticing Alana's anxiety, he took her hand without hesitation.

"So what if she's a waitress? What I love is Alana as a person, not any other title. Any job she chooses is her own decision. I'm willing to respect her and support her."

After speaking, Stephan looked deeply into Alana's eyes, his gaze earnest and resolute.

Alana bit her lip, deeply moved.

That sense of anxiety and unease vanished instantly, swept away by his warm protection.

Moreover, he said he didn't care about her status, even if he'd known she'd been abandoned by her parents, would he still love her just as much?

After reassuring Alana, Stephan turned to face the crowd and defended her without hesitation, "She's my girlfriend, and I'll protect her. Anyone who bullies her is deliberately picking a fight with me."

After saying this, he deliberately shot Fred a meaningful glance.

Fred realized he had said the wrong thing and immediately slapped himself hard across the face.

"Stephan, I'm deeply sorry. Sister-in-law, I'm sorry...I spoke without thinking! Here's a toast to you...to make amends!" Fred quickly poured himself a full glass of liquor, raised it to Alana, and downed it in one gulp.

He then bowed ninety degrees to Alana, begging for forgiveness.

Alana wasn't the type to make a big deal out of nothing. Seeing his sincere apology,

she graciously accepted it.

After this little incident, everyone realized how protective Stephan was of Alana, and they treated her with even greater respect.

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Chapter 250 Was over

Chapter 250 Was over

Once the incident was over, the group quickly forgot most of the unpleasantness and began chatting animatedly.

The atmosphere grew lively, and they started shouting and playing games.

Stephan led Alana to play mahjong with Gary and a few of his friends. They played several rounds, and Stephan won every single one.

“Damn, man, your luck tonight is just too good!” He also noticed that Stephan was deliberately holding back against him.

Every time he was about to win, Stephan would beat him to it.

After this happened once or twice, Gary began to suspect that Stephan was deliberately taking revenge on him.

Stephan raised an eyebrow and smiled nonchalantly, “Well, the goddess of luck is on my side tonight.”

He took Alana’s hand and leaned down to kiss the back of it.

Alana blinked.

He was at it again!

Gary and his friends were forced to watch the lovey-dovey display again.

Gary looked at Alana and asked casually, “Sis-in-law, do you know how to play mahjong? Why don’t you take Stephan place for a few rounds?”

Alana was slightly shy. “I’m not very good at it.”

Gary laughed. “No problem. You’ll pick it up in no time. It’s really simple.”

It’s better if she doesn’t. He’d just been thoroughly beaten by Stephan, and in a moment, he’d be beating Stephan’s woman to let off some steam.

Alana hesitated; she really didn’t know how to play very well.

She’d only watched Stephan play a few rounds with them earlier and picked it up on the fly. If she didn’t play well, would she embarrass Stephan?

Stephan patted her on the shoulder to encourage her. “It’s fine. Just play. If you lose, I’ll cover it.”

Alana blinked. “If I lose money for you, you can’t blame it on me.”

Stephan ruffled her hair, utterly doting on her. “Don’t worry, I’m all yours. No matter how much you lose, I’ll cover it all!”

Alana blushed; he was being silly again.

Gary and the others couldn’t bear to watch. Is this really the aloof, woman shunning Stephan they knew?!

He was practically a walking flirt!

Sure enough, the colder and more aloof a man appears, the more secretly flirtatious he was in private.

Alana, feeling at ease, took Stephan’s place and began drawing tiles.

After just a few rounds, she wasn’t quite getting the hang of it. Stephan, wanting her to have a good time, didn’t offer much guidance, which led to her losing consistently.

Before long, she had lost all the money she’d won from Stephan.

Gary won several hands in a row, grinning

so widely his teeth were practically spilling out of his mouth.

“Thanks for your generosity, sister-in-law...you’ve just gifted me another round!”

The other two men had also won quite a bit and were in high spirits; none of them wanted Alana to leave the table.

If they kept playing, Stephan would probably end up leaving his last penny on the table.

Alana, however, showed no reaction, calmly continuing to draw cards.

She'd just been warming up, getting a feel for the game.

After a few rounds, she'd figured out how the game worked.

Plus, she had a good memory; she could keep track of every card the others played and was sharp at guessing how many of each card they still held.

At first, she was being outplayed by the other three at the table, but gradually, she began to turn the tide.

Gary and the others gradually began to feel the pressure.

Before long, Alana turned the tables, called a pair of Eights of Bamboo, and went out. It was her first win, and she felt a little excited.

She couldn't help but glance at Stephan, her almond-shaped eyes sparkling as if seeking his praise.

Stephan smiled, finding her utterly adorable, and couldn't resist leaning down to kiss her cheek. "Good girl, you're amazing."

Alana blushed and quickly turned her face away.

"Oh my, 'sweetheart' and 'you're so great'? That's so cheesy!" Stephan shot Gary a glance. "Why the sour tone? Are you jealous?"

From then on, Alana gradually took control of the game, playing methodically and almost completely dominating Gary and the other two.

In no time, she not only recouped her losses but actually won back several times what she had lost.

One of the rich kids lost his cool: "Holy crap, this is killing me! Stephan and his woman...one's even more badass than the other!"

Stephan curled the corners of his lips.

"Well, just look at whose woman she is."

Seeing this, another man immediately started sucking up to Alana. “No wonder Stephan set his sights on you, Sister-in-law. You’re truly a cut above the rest!”

Alana blinked.

That was an exaggeration.

Stephan’s smile widened even further.

Gary shot Stephan a glance, the kid was positively glowing with pride.

Just look at that smug, boastful attitude, it was written all over his face.

He pushed the mahjong tiles aside. “I’m done. If I keep playing, I’ll end up losing my last penny.”

It wasn’t just a few million, he’d lost several hundred million. He’d lost nearly half a month’s worth of the company’s revenue.

It hurt like hell.

Stephan raised an eyebrow, clearly in high spirits. “What’s the matter? Can’t handle losing?”

The woman he loved had beaten his best friend so soundly, it was even more impressive than if he’d won himself.

He really hadn’t expected Alana to be this good, she’d truly surprised him.

“Yes, I can’t handle losing.”

Gary looked at Alana and graciously

conceded defeat. “Sis-in-law, you’re amazing. I’m completely impressed by you tonight!”

Alana gave a shy smile. “I just had good luck.”

She really did have good luck, she kept drawing great cards.

That was why she won so easily.

Stephan grabbed Alana’s wrist, pulling her into his embrace. His strong arms wrapped around her slender waist, holding her close.

He brought his handsome face close to hers, his nose gently brushing against her delicate neck, his voice low and husky.

“You’ve won so many rounds for me tonight. When we get back, how should I reward you?” The man’s nose brushed against the tender skin at the base of Alana’s neck, sending a shiver through her body.

That area he was rubbing against was already very sensitive for her, and she could barely stand it.

Alana blushed and pushed gently against his chest with her small hand, offering a slight resistance.

“Stop fooling around. There are people around here. Be careful.”

Besides, how could he be holding her like this, completely oblivious to those around them?

She didn’t even dare to look up at anyone.

Stephan gazed intently at her visibly flushed face, his eyes burning with intensity.

“Then let’s go back? Let’s go home. We can have some alone time, with no one to disturb us. We can fool around all we want.”

He’d brought Alana here simply to show off his girlfriend to his friends.

Now that he’d achieved his goal, it was time to get down to business for the night.

Even a fool could guess what he meant by “alone together.”

His head is full of dirty thoughts!

Stephan was eager to get back to her, so he immediately wrapped his arm around Alana and stood up.

“My girlfriend and I are heading home first. You guys carry on.”

Gary glanced up at Stephan. As a man himself, he could easily guess why Stephan was in such a hurry to take his girlfriend home.

He smiled and said deliberately, “Don’t go back so soon. It’s still early, stay and keep playing games with us.”

Stephan replied indifferently, “No thanks. If I get back too late, it’ll be hard to get things done.”

Gary raised an eyebrow. “It’s no problem. If need be, I’ll book a hotel room for you two later so you can spend the night in peace.” The others chimed in as well.

“Exactly! Don’t go back so early!”

“Sis, come play Truth or Dare with us!”

Alana was at a loss for what to do, so she looked to Stephan, waiting for his decision.

“No need. We’ll play another time.”

Without giving Gary a chance to respond, he wrapped his arm around Alana’s waist and walked out of the private room. They came and went in a flash.

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