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Julian's Stand-In Wife chapter 1161

Julian told himself that when he saw Diana again, he couldn't lose his temper. He couldn't get angry.

Diana was pregnant now, and she needed attention and care.

Since she was so eager to have another child, Julian would give in to her.

But...

Julian glanced at the various shops passing by on both sides of the road, finally focusing his gaze on baby and maternity

stores.

He instructed the driver, "Stop the car."

He had a lot of things to buy.

Julian arrived quickly.

Nina happened to be out buying snacks at the moment, leaving Diana alone. As soon as Julian entered, he immediately

hugged her.

"You've been naughty," he said with his eyes closed. He sighed, and pressed his head on top of hers.

His large hands rested on her belly. He added helplessly, "You're the one who damaged all those condoms, aren't you?"

He had said it before-how was it possible for accidents to happen so frequently? Even if the quality was subpar, it couldn't

be this bad. He should have realized it earlier. If he had, Diana wouldn't have succeeded.

Her petite frame... The thought of her going through pregnancy again made him deeply uncomfortable.

Hearing that his wife was pregnant was a cause for celebration. But after the initial joy, worry and frustration took over.

However, she was already pregnant. There was no turning back.

He couldn't do anything to make her sad anymore. He had to adjust his mindset to align with Diana's quickly. That was the

best way he could treat her.

Diana blushed, and admitted, "Yes, it was me..."

Even she couldn't believe she had done something so outrageous.

Still, she really wanted another little baby. It wasn't only to make up for the time that Julian had missed, but also because

being a mom made her truly happy.

It was a kind of happiness enough to overshadow all the pain and hardship of pregnancy and childbirth. It made her want

to experience the process of pregnancy, and raise a child all over again.

Unfortunately, despite all her efforts, she hadn't succeeded. She was about to explain the pregnancy test results to

Julian, when he suddenly scooped her up.

Her feet dangled in the air, and she exclaimed, "What are you doing?"

If Nina saw this, it would be so embarrassing!

Julian was quite displeased. "What do you mean by that? You're already pregnant, but you didn't tell me first. Instead, you

went to see Nina. Are you that afraid of me?"

He hadn't brought this up before. Now that it was mentioned, Julian remembered his past actions and felt a deep sense of

regret.

“Are you afraid that if you told me, I’d force you to get an abortion...?”

During her first pregnancy, he had done the most absurd thing. Even though he did it because he thought she was

carrying another man’s child, forcing a woman to give up on her own baby was a cruel thing, regardless of the

circumstances.

And so, this time...

Julian had already made up his mind on the way here. “Don’t worry. This time, I’ll respect your decision. I’ll take good care

of you during your pregnancy and childbirth. I’ll do my best to look after you. If you’re willing to resort to damaging the

condoms, it means you really want to keep the child.

“If you’re determined to have this child, then I’ll be your support. I’ll find the best obstetrician in the world for you, and

arrange for the most professional maternity nurse. Of course, I’ll also be a very professional dad. From now, until the child

is born and grows up, I’ll work hard to cooperate and make sure you suffer as little as possible.” Diana was speechl

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What Julian was saying sounded very appealing.

It was exactly what Diana wanted to hear.

Even his willingness to cooperate exceeded her expectations.

He never coerced her the entire time. The moment he entered, he treated her with concern. He acted as if she was

carrying a huge bomb, and that any slight mishap would leave her battered and bruised.

But...she wasn't pregnant.

She couldn't bear to let Julian look at her with such a pitiful and worried expression. "Actually, I..."

Julian stood up. "Stop talking about it. I already know. I've said it before-if you want to keep the baby, I won't force you to give it up."

Diana remained silent.

She was quite pleased right now. She thought that when Julian found out she was pregnant, he would oppose her

decision to keep the child.

She had considered what would happen if he acted as domineering and aloof as he had during her first pregnancy. That

was one of the reasons she had come to Nina first for the pregnancy test today.

She still hadn't figured out how to tell Julian about it.

Seeing her remain silent, Julian thought she had changed her mind again.

"If you think the pregnancy will be difficult and you're afraid of the pain of childbirth, or if you don't want the baby anymore,

I can take you to the hospital right now," he said.

Diana gently raised her hand, and tapped his lips.

"What nonsense are you on? Is having a child a joke to you? How could I change my mind so quickly, wanting it one

moment and not the next?"

Seeing Diana slightly annoyed, Julian realized he had misspoken again. He was thinking about how to make amends and

reassure the pregnant Diana, when she asked,” What about you? Do you want it or not?”

He sensed her inner conflict through her tone. “I...”

‘I want it, but I’m afraid you’ll suffer and be in pain. Deep down, I’m leaning more towards not wanting it.’

He didn’t have the courage to say it aloud, afraid that Diana would recall the pain from before. When he sent her into the

operating room, she must have been in great despair.

So, Julian said, “You’re already pregnant, and that’s a gift for us.”

He knew she wanted it. He decided not to mention his own feelings anymore.

“Don’t worry, I’ll take good care of you both. I’ll make sure what happened to Aster and Star doesn’t repeat itself.”

As he spoke, Julian became more and more resolute. “Let’s keep it.”

He looked at Diana, and solemnly knelt down. “As long as we prepare properly, I can make sure you suffer less.”

Saying that, he leaned in to listen to her belly. He hadn’t been able to accompany her through her pregnancies the

previous two times. Claiming not to regret it would be a lie.

“But...” Seeing Julian like this, Diana felt a bit embarrassed.” I actually... I’m not pregnant.”

Julian was momentarily stunned, but he quickly understood. “You don’t have to be afraid.”

He even raised his hand to swear to her. “Diana, I won’t insist on terminating your pregnancy this time. This is our baby.

Also, on the way here, I’ve already checked things.

With your current physical condition, a miscarriage would be equally harmful. Whether you give birth or not, it will be

detrimental to you.”

However, Julian still had to warn her. “From now on, I won’t keep any contraceptives at home. When we need them in the

future, I’ll get them from the office myself so you won’t tamper with them again.”

“I’m not afraid that you’ll make me have an abortion. I really am not pregnant,” Diana insisted.

“That’s impossible.” Julian still couldn’t believe it, and he felt even more guilty. “It seems I’ve left a trauma on you.”

He felt more and more like a monster.

“I shouldn’t have said that I didn’t want a child. As long as a child can come, it’s fate.” He kept comforting Diana. “This

time, I’ll definitely protect you both.” Diana believed hi

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Julian would be a dad who was more mature and outstanding than before.

Diana sat helplessly on the chair. She looked at Julian, whose contemplative eyes kept staring on her belly.

“I’m really not pregnant...” she said, feeling quite upset. “I’m serious.”

For some reason, no matter how many times they tried, she couldn’t get pregnant this time.

“Is there something wrong with my body? Julian, can you find a doctor to give me a check-up?” Diana asked worriedly.

“What about the vomiting and changes in appetite?” Julian asked.

“False pregnancy. Nina said I wanted to get pregnant so badly, I experienced false pregnancy symptoms,” Diana said.

Julian was stunned.

Right now, he couldn't quite figure out whether he was happy.

It seemed like something he hadn't been expecting suddenly happened, leaving him pleasantly surprised.

Yet this unexpected joy was suddenly taken away when he was informed that it was all a false alarm. So now, he felt like

his brain had exploded. His thoughts were sluggish.

He finally managed to ask, "So, Diana, are you pregnant or not?"

"...I'm not pregnant."

There was disappointment, for sure. Not just for Diana, but also for Julian.

To be honest, after hearing about her pregnancy, he had already pictured scenes of himself and Diana going out with their

three children.

All too quickly, happiness was overwhelmed with disappointment.

"It's a good thing you're not pregnant." Julian smiled, and hugged Diana tightly again. "Honestly, when I heard you say you

were pregnant again, I already imagined what our newborn would look like. At the same time..."

Talking about this, Julian's eyes welled up with tears. "I also thought about you lying on the hospital bed, waiting for the

surgery."

There would be another scar on her belly. And...

People say that a second cesarean section was more painful than the first. If, by any chance, something unexpected

happened to Diana during this process... The mere thought made Julian's heart ache terribly.

But now, that danger didn't exist.

Diana wasn't pregnant at all.

Diana looked at him in surprise. "You're not disappointed?"

She had seen him quite happy when he walked in just now.

"Well..." He hesitated for a moment. "I guess I'm a little disappointed."

In reality, he wanted to spare Diana from suffering and have another child together. Still, that was impossible.

"It's all my fault for not being able to bear children." Julian couldn't help but blame himself. "If I could, everything would be perfect."

He would be willing to endure the suffering she had experienced. The pain she felt, he would willingly share it too.

"Silly."

Diana was comforted by Julian's self-blaming rant over not being able to get pregnant.

"Where can you find men who can get pregnant?"

She pointed to something Julian was carrying when he came in. "What's that?"

He blushed slightly. "Ahem. Well... That's something I bought on my way here. I probably won't need it now."

"Why?" Diana asked.

She gently pushed herself out of his embrace and placed the items on the table. Then, she took out the contents one by one.

"Contraceptive suit, postpartum hat, prenatal vitamins, pregnant women's calcium tablets, iron supplements, and...?"

She stared at a particular item in her hand for a long time, but couldn't figure out what it was.

It was then that Julian, still red-faced, said one word: "Apro

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"That's a Dad Apron," he continued.

As soon as Diana heard the name, she couldn't help but laugh. 'What on earth is a Dad Apron?'

She had never heard of it when she was pregnant before. With that, she shook out the Dad Apron. It turned out to be a

pure cotton apron.

It was called a Dad Apron because the word "Dad" was printed on it. These two words were somewhat out of place when

compared to the tall and distinguished Julian. It seemed quite comical, no matter how you looked at it.

Diana couldn't hold back her laughter. "Why is this so funny?"

As she said that, she forcibly put the Dad Apron on Julian. Its pink color and amusing lettering softened Julian's rugged

features.

Julian saw her laugh, and bent over. His face grew darker." Is it that ugly?"

He originally intended to cook for Diana, since she was pregnant.

"You used to love the sandwiches I made for you. When you were staying at Nina's place before we moved here, you

used to have them for breakfast. I made them for you."

The smile on Diana's face gradually froze. "What did you say?"

Julian repeated, "You don't remember? It was when we had a conflict over Kayla."

Of course Diana remembered. How could she forget?

At that time, she didn't know where to go after leaving Collina Villa. In this vast city, aside from Julian, the only person she

could rely on was Nina.

So, she went to Nina.

Alas, the breakfast Nina made was truly unbearable.

At that time, Diana wasn't as skilled in cooking as she was now. She actually missed the sandwiches Julian used to make

for her. Even so, she didn't say anything about it.

Later on, Nina claimed she could make them.

Every morning, Diana would enjoy a warm breakfast right after she left her room. The sandwiches tasted just like the ones

Julian used to make. The only difference was that when Julian made them, he liked to mix a little honey mustard into the

salad dressing. Nina didn't.

Even though the taste was similar, Diana didn't really associate the sandwiches with Julian. They were still angry with

each other at that time.

How could a prodigy like him secretly make sandwiches for her?

"I suddenly feel that the kindergarten principal was right."

"The principal?"

Julian, dressed in that pink apron, looked momentarily stunned. He met so many people every day, and his thoughts were

often scattered. When Diana suddenly mentioned this, he couldn't even remember who that person was.

“The kindergarten principal,” Diana teased. “You send the twins to school every day, but it seems your mind is always elsewhere.”

She reminded him, “When we faced the kindergarten principal together, she said something.”

She had given him enough hints at this point.

Julian still couldn’t recall the specific scene. “What did she say?”

He hadn’t taken it to heart at all.

The less he took it to heart, the warmer Diana felt. She couldn’t help but hug him. “Thank you.”

Thank you for always silently caring for her, and doing things for her without ever mentioning it.

Julian smiled. “What’s there to thank me for? Isn’t it a husband’s duty to cook for his wife?”

Whether Diana ran off to Nina’s house or even to the ends of the earth, as long as he could find her, he would be willing to

prepare breakfast for her.

Not just breakfast, but also lunch, dinner, and supper-he could handle them all.

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Unfortunately, they missed three years of time.

During those three years, Julian could only wonder where Diana was, and whether she was still alive.

What did she eat for every meal? Did she ever think about his sandwiches?

As time passed and he still had no news of her, he would grit his teeth in resentment and blame her.

In the end, he loved her too much.

“The principal said you love me very much. She said that your love for me far exceeds my imagination.”

“Is that so?”

Julian couldn't quite remember. Suddenly, Diana hugged him tightly. The things she had said out of nowhere somehow

made him feel embarrassed.

The next moment, he could feel Diana crying.

She sobbed, “Julian, I love your sandwiches so much. Promise me you'll make me sandwiches for the rest of our lives.”

He smiled again, and replied gently, “Alright, I'll make them for the rest of our lives.”

As long as Diana didn't leave him, he would never give up on her. No-even if she wanted to leave, he would still search for

her to the ends of the earth.

There was only one thing, though...

“Please never forget me again.”

He couldn't bear it.

He thought back to when Diana stood in front of him, holding a gift, after three years apart Her first words were,” Hello,

Brother. I want to become your sister-in-law.”

Julian's face turned dark as he recalled that moment.

His words amused Diana. She knew what he was thinking, so she held his hand.

“Don't worry. I'll make sure you thoroughly leave your mark on me so I'll never forget.”

With those words, she ignited his passion. It was another conquest, making her feel like she had been run over by a car

when it was over.

“What if Nina comes back?”

Diana only remembered this after they were done. She truly valued romantic relationships over friendships, huh?

She mentally apologized to Nina a thousand times.

But... Julian's body was too alluring! When he turned to kiss her, Diana couldn't resist.

“She won't come back.”

Julian and Diana were in Diana's room at Nina's place. It was the same house they had rented together three years ago.

Over the years, Vans had been paying the rent on Julian's behalf—just in case Diana returned one day. Julian had been

afraid that Diana wouldn't have a place to stay if Nina moved, or if Diana didn't look for him.

The house was always rented, and Julian felt especially justified staying there.

“I changed the door code,” Julian said cunningly. “She can only go next door.”

Where Vans was staying at.

Diana couldn't help but gossip about Vans. “They're still arguing. Do you know what Vans did to Nina?”

As she spoke, she got so furious that she punched Julian in the chest.

Julian's face twitched slightly, but he dared not make a sound when his wife lost her temper.

He could only pretend to be unaware, and ask, “What did he do?”

Diana thought Julian was genuinely clueless, so she passionately explained Vans's behavior toward Nina.

"He basically started trouble, and then abandoned her!"

By the end, Diana had drawn her own conclusion about Vans. She was about to get up and see if Nina had really

returned. She couldn't leave her best friend in an undesirable situation.

Seeing that she was serious, Julian quickly grabbed her.

"Diana."

His deep and soothing voice immediately calmed Diana down. She looked at him with a slightly hurt expression; her eyes

shone brightly, a little moist.

Facing such a captivating appearance, Julian was hit with a wave of affection.

His throat bobbed as he swallo

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Nina had been out for a while now, and still hadn't returned.

It could only mean that she...had no intention of coming back.

Otherwise, Diana's phone would be blowing up by now.

Nina needed an opportunity. An opportunity to have a proper conversation with Vans, and Julian had provided her with

that.

Vans gazed at the woman standing in front of him. There was still a clear imprint on his face-it was from when he grabbed

Lina's hand and struck himself.

Lina, upon seeing the change in Vans's expression when she met his gaze, had frozen stiff and got too afraid to do

anything else.

Vans was usually low-key, and he deliberately hid his sharpness. He would have a hard time surviving to this day

otherwise, especially with how the Stanleys operated.

His persistence in studying medicine was also a part of it. The further he stayed away from the Stanley family's business,

the safer his mother was.

As for his character, the more foolish and unresponsive he appeared, the less likely the Stanleys would view him as

promising. No matter how close he was to Julian Fulcher, an unpromising individual like him could still be easily

manipulated by the Stanleys.

The Stanleys' arrogance continued to grow, and Vans becomes increasingly inconspicuous in their eyes. On the other

hand, his mother thrived within the family.

However, this didn't mean that he was truly incapable or weak.

When he was determined and had something he wanted to protect, he revealed the inherent radiance within him.

He wasn't the morning sun rising over the horizon, nor was he the blinding midday sun; he was the warmth that persisted

in the afternoon when no one paid attention.

Yet, Lina couldn't understand that.

She thought Vans was just her plaything-that he had no right to shout at her, especially with eyes filled with destructive

intent.

Who was he warning?

Was he warning her not to touch Nina, that little slut?!

Hah!

Her brother was now the one the Stanleys were eager to please. Why should Vans, the mere son of a mistress, be

allowed to swagger in front of her?

With that in mind, she followed Vans's forcefulness and delivered a heavy slap to his face.

She hated him.

She despised him.

She wanted to make him kneel before her, begging for mercy.

She wanted him to kneel and say to her, "Please marry me! I'm willing to be your lapdog!"

Yet, he didn't.

Even after taking her slap, he remained indifferent.

There was a trace of blood at the corner of his mouth, but he kept on smiling. His pale face and unsettling smile were fixed

on Lina as he said, "Very good."

This was the last and ultimate patience he could offer Lina. If she harmed even a single hair on Nina's head, he would

ensure that she experience true humiliation and heartbreak.

After saying that, Vans stood up. He summoned someone to clean the private room thoroughly, and left his contact

information behind.

“You can contact me for compensation.”

He spoke with consideration. Even though he was injured, he still considered the interests of the business.

Despite his mild appearance, he was still quite distant. He was akin to a passing figure through the woods; untouched by

the leaves, yet enough to drive the surrounding birds and flowers into madness.

Lina was one of those crazed birds and flowers.

She was now more determined than ever to make Vans hers.

A man like him could only belong to her!

Relying on herself might be a bit difficult, so she would have to ask her brother to intervene once again and exert pressure

on the Stanleys.

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Vans was just the son of a mistress. How could he be so arrogant in front of the Stanleys?

“Have I ever told you about my background?”

When Vans returned home, he found Nina standing at the door, struggling to enter the passcode.

She saw him approaching, and her heart ached in pain.

The marks on his face...

She really wanted to ask Vans what had happened.

Didn't he go and propose to Lina? Wasn't he done with Nina? He didn't want her to pester him anymore, did he?

Now, he appeared before her in such a sorry state, covered in fingerprints and dirty clothes. Who was he trying to

impress?

Tears welled up in Nina's eyes, but she quickly wiped them away.

She wasn't Diana; she couldn't match the latter's composure.

She knew how serious Vans's obsession with cleanliness, and choked back a sob. Yet he seemed wholly unperturbed,

even with soup stains on his shirt.

Vans looked at Nina with an apologetic gaze. "Don't cry."

Why should she cry?

Vans even managed to smile.

This was the woman he wanted to marry.

Even in his lowest moments, even when she saw the side of him he least wanted her to see... She would still cry for him.

After hearing those words, Nina couldn't hold back any longer.

Sobbing, she said tearfully, "No... I can't, I can't help it."

As soon as the words left her mouth, she burst into tears.

Vans couldn't help but chuckle. Ignoring the pain on his face, he patted her head. "Come home with me."

The home he referred to was his place.

Nina knew she should refuse now, but she couldn't bring herself to do it.

"I'm pretty masochistic, too," she muttered to herself.

Unable to resist any longer, she followed him into his house.

As soon as the door closed...

She found herself pinned against the door panel. Vans asked, "Do you want to hear about my background?"

Something stirred in the depths of her heart.

Nina had grown up in a comfortable household. While her family wasn't wealthy, her parents had done their utmost to

provide her with the best life possible. Her life had always been simple and stable.

There was only one thing-her decision to become an entertainment journalist in Richburgh. It had made her the

disobedient and unfilial daughter in her mother's eyes.

Nina and her mother would often have heated arguments over this.

Her mother always said, "Your job is nothing but intrusive paparazzi work! You have no shame, spying on people's privacy

like this! What kind of journalist are you? Don't pretend to be something you're not!"

Despite their arguments, her mother would still send her hometown's delicacies through her dad during holidays.

So, Nina couldn't understand why Diana's parents could be so cruel.

To abandon a child at an amusement park and pretend that the child had run away, all to make room for the mistress's

daughter?

Since that incident, Nina had actively avoided anyone with a mistress status, including their children.

She hadn't expected Vans's mother to be one as well, and the realization left her momentarily stunned. She felt like she

had been living in a deception all this time.

"Why didn't you tell me earlier?" she asked.

"Because to me, my mom has always been amazing," Vans replied.

When he spoke of his mother, his expression softened considerably. Even the frown lines on his face seemed milder.

Vans sensed that Nina was considering leaving, so he lifted her up and trapped her between his arms, and kept holding her that way.

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Vans held Nina as if she was a doll, and paced around as he continued calmly, 'My parents met before my dad took over the Stanley family.'

At that time, Lionel Stanley, who was now his father, was just an ordinary employee working in the Stanley family's business.

Vans's mother, Lillian Collins, was Lionel's superior due to her outstanding performance at work. For a woman to rise to

such a position in the company wasn't easy, but it also brought a lot of gossip and backbiting.

Most of it revolved around insinuations that a woman was in such a role. How else could a woman reach such heights and

be in charge of so many men?

Was it because of her professional skills?

Of course not.

It could only be because of her prowess in the bedroom!

Amidst all those rumors, Lionel was the only one who stepped up to defend her. Lillian began to develop a slight liking for

her colleague. She was more willing to have him along for business trips.

At that time, it was merely a fondness. Lillian had never considered quitting her job, or engage in an office romance with

her colleague. It was clearly stated in the company's rules that office romances were not allowed.

She had worked tirelessly to climb the corporate ladder to her current position as a division head, and she wasn't ready to

throw it all away. She certainly wouldn't do anything to jeopardize her future.

But one night, while on a business trip with Lionel, she was unwittingly dragged into the power struggle among the Stanley

family heirs.

Lionel was drugged by the eldest Stanley sibling.

His entire body trembled, and his face burned red. Yet, he tried his best to maintain his composure. He urged Lillian, who

had come to his room to discuss preparations for the upcoming business meeting, to leave his room quickly.

At that moment, Lionel's eyes were bloodshot from the effects of the drug.

He urged Lillian to leave as quickly as possible.

"If you stay any longer, I won't be able to control myself. I won't be able to resist using you as an outlet." Lionel struggled

to utter the words.

Lillian's face instantly turned crimson. She had noticed something was off with Lionel for a while, but she hadn't mustered

the courage to ask until now. "Lionel, what's wrong with you?"

Her voice was like the most refreshing popsicle on a scorching summer day, and Lionel felt the burning sensation inside

him reaching its peak.

He forcefully raised his head and pushed her out of the room. "Just go!"

The moment his hand touched her skin, however, he felt like he had touched an ice-cold natural freezer.

He longed for her. He craved her.

Lillian understood the look in his eyes, but she didn't want to stay and help him. Without hesitation, she opened the door

and left. 'Til get a doctor for you."

However, her words were cut off as Lionel dragged her back into the room.

That night, Lillian's world came crashing down.

In the many nights that followed, she kept replaying that night in her mind, trying to understand what had happened.

The man she trusted the most, the one she believed had the most sense of justice, had done something so cruel to her.

She felt so filthy.

She began to shower every day, scrubbing her skin until it was raw. However, she couldn't wash away the nightmare of

that night.

And then came another nightmare.

Lillian discovered she was pregnant.

She stared at the two lines on the pregnancy test, unable to believe she was carrying Lionel's child.

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Lillian's career, something she had always been proud of and never given up on, even after the breakdown following that

incident, came to a halt because of a single bout of vomiting during a company's high-level meeting.

Thanks to some scheming individuals, the news of her pregnancy spread rapidly throughout the Stanley Enterprise's headquarters.

Lionel was the one who stood up during this commotion. He held her hand in front of everyone and declared, Ms.

Collins, don't worry. I will take responsibility for this child."

The crowd erupted in shock.

On that day, Lillian also met the man in charge of Stanley Enterprise, Lionel's father. He was the chairman of the

company. That was when she learned that the seemingly ordinary man under her was actually the youngest son of the

Stanley family.

She felt like she had stepped into a web of deception, and her anger grew.

"I'll sue you!" she shouted in her office, on the verge of a breakdown. "I'll sue you for sexual harassment!"

"Go ahead," Lionel's father responded, his expression bored, akin to watching a poorly acted play. "I've seen plenty of

women like you. You probably knew my son's true identity all along, but chose to keep it a secret. You were simply waiting

to marry into our family after getting pregnant!"

With that, he handed her a dismissal letter that spelled the end of Lillian's career. Even if she tried to work elsewhere, the

letter would follow her, causing her to be regarded as unfit for any substantial role.

Her life was utterly ruined.

Meanwhile, Lionel, the mastermind behind it all, silently watched from the sidelines.

He didn't dare to make a sound.

His claims of taking responsibility were nothing but a farce.

Lillian had finally seen his true colors-he was nothing more than a hypocrite!

After Lillian was fired, Lionel's father arranged a lucrative marriage for Lionel. It was a marriage that would catapult his

social status among the many sons of the Stanley family, and secure his position as an heir to the Stanley family.

He was set to marry the daughter of the city's biggest jewelry magnate.

Nina was flabbergasted.

"People say others marry into riches, but it sounds like the Stanley family has a history of marrying off their sons for glory."

Vans didn't object.

He nodded. "That's true. That's how it worked. The daughter of the jewelry magnate back then was just like Lina is now.

She set her sights on me among the many descendants of the Stanley family."

Back then, the young lady from the jewelry magnate had set her sights on Lionel.

As for Lillian...

"Where's your mom?" Nina asked, feeling deeply empathetic for Lillian.

She was a woman who worked so hard, only to become the laughingstock of the entire company due to a ludicrous case

of sexual harassment. Because of that, she lost everything in the process.

If this had happened to Nina, could she have endured it?

She asked that to herself, but before finding an answer, tears welled up in her eyes again.

“What happened to her after that?” Nina asked again.

“The Stanley family said they didn’t want her, but they didn’t say they didn’t want me,” Vans explained, his eyes now

starting to turn red. They even bordered on a mad crimson that seemed like he wanted to tear the world apart.

Nina gently held his hand, and Vans gradually regained his composure. “They forced her to give birth to me.”

As an illegitimate child, Vans was forcibly taken away from Lillian shortly after Lionel’s marriage.

Lillian couldn’t bear it.

In just two years, she had gone from a confident career woman to becoming a deranged woman imprisoned underground

by the Stanley family.

“But I don’t think she’s really insane,” Vans continued. “My mom is just... If she doesn’t pretend to be crazy, if she doesn’t

brainwash herself, if she doesn’t convince herself that the person she loves most is that bastard Lionel, she might...”

She might not have not survived.

Nina couldn’t find words to respond after Vans finished.

Vans also remained in a daze for a while before he could continue.

“Since then, no matter what, she refused to leave the Stanley family,” he said.

Even before Vans came of age, Lillian had always lived in the basement of the Stanley family’s residence to appease

Lionel’s wife, Jessica Taylor.

She never took a single step away from the place.

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Vans grew up in an unremarkable manner, seemingly the weakest presence among Lionel's children. He even forsook the

Stanley family's business to become a doctor.

This seemingly worthless young man eased Jessica's anxiety.

She was determined to ensure that the next heir of the Stanley family was her own child. Only then could she bear the

anger she had been cheated by the Stanley family years ago.

After Vans came of age and demonstrated his unremarkable nature, his mother was finally allowed to move from the dark

and sunless basement into a normal house.

"I remember it very clearly," Vans said. "The day I moved her into a normal house, my mom didn't dare to even open her

eyes."

Compared to the underground basement, the rooms upstairs were too bright. It made her eyes tear up.

Nina cried—she felt deep sorrow for Lillian and Vans.

She didn't know where to put her hand, but she held him tightly and said, 'Vans, please, don't say anything more.'

But Vans continued, "I know she did it all for me."

For so many years, she brainwashed herself into believing she loved Lionel. She made herself believe that he was the

reason she couldn't leave the Stanley family.

But at the same time, she hated him deeply.

She hated that he embodied her deepest shame.

But she couldn't do anything.

She could only keep running from reality.

She loved her child fiercely. At the same time, she also convinced herself that she couldn't leave the Stanley family or

Vans.

Likewise, Vans couldn't abandon her.

"Fortunately," he took a deep breath, "she's living much better now."

At least now, she could live like a normal person. She had a house to live in and warm meals to eat. Because Vans was

obedient enough, Lionel sometimes even took her out shopping.

Lillian was happy.

Until now, even Vans himself couldn't quite figure out the feelings his mother had for Lionel.

"You're not a child of a mistress," Nina said after listening. "Your mom was pregnant with you because the Stanley family

was too despicable!"

That was what forced Lillian into being a mistress. The real mistress should be the current Mrs. Stanley, Jessica! That

jeweler's daughter was the one at fault!

But...

Nina's mood suddenly hit rock bottom.

She and Vans now... Weren't they also living under the shadow of his parents and Jessica Taylor?

The only difference was that Nina was luckier. Her beginning with Vans wasn't forced; it was a match of mutual affection.

Vans put her down on the table. He stood next to her, and said in a grave tone, "I shouldn't have gotten involved with you.

You can leave now, Nina. You...shouldn't appear in my world anymore."

When Enzo returned home, Lina was waiting for him.

"Enzo!"

Lina hurriedly took his coat the moment she saw him, slapping the servant who rushed to do so.

"Get lost! Can't you see I'm helping my brother with his coat? What are you doing here?" she screamed.

Enzo seemed accustomed to her behavior.