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Julian's Stand-In Wife chapter 1341

Oliver didn't take her to the hospital. Instead, he brought her to a suburban villa under his name, a place he rarely visited.

Fanny remembered that next to this villa, there used to be another house. But last year, Oliver said that he had sold that house.

He considered selling this villa too, but never found a suitable buyer. Since he wasn't short of money, he kept it.

And this villa... Apart from Fanny, it was empty.

Even Oliver disappeared from here after dumping her here.

It wasn't until the following morning that she heard the doorbell ring. He came with a doctor.

"I conducted a gynecological examination on you yesterday while you were unconscious," Oliver said, looking at Fanny.

The scene of him examining her was vivid in his mind. Fanny felt an overwhelming sense of humiliation, but she couldn't do anything.

She was too weak now. She could only lie on the bed, looking at him with helplessness and resentment.

Oliver no longer cared about her feelings. "You need a dilation and curettage.

My former colleague will perform the surgery on you today." The instruments were already prepared.

He hadn't slept the entire night. He had been busy with this matter.

Fanny didn't trust him. She despised him.

"I want to go to the hospital," she insisted, "I want to go to the hospital for the surgery!" "This is the top obstetrician-gynecologist from the hospital. Even if you go to the hospital, he will be the one performing the surgery," Oliver said, watching as Fanny lay powerless in bed.

Looking at the state she was in, Oliver finally felt a bit of satisfaction in his heart.

He looked at Fanny and, explained to her with mock kindness, "It's the same here. Oh, right..." He paused momentarily, a hint of apology appearing on his face, "I forgot to tell you. Before giving birth to my child, you can't take a step out of here." Fanny thought she had misheard.

Full of grief and anger, she looked at him incredulously. She had wanted to retorted, but... "What... What did you say?" Seeing that she didn't hear him, Oliver repeated, "I said, before you give birth to my child, you can't leave here. I'll take care of your TV drama project. After all... That's your hard work, Fanny." He held her hand. "Cooperate with the doctor." Cooperate with the doctor?!

Fanny felt nauseous.

She slapped away his hand. "Oliver, you don't love me at all! Even in our marriage, you use the term maintain, and it's only out of guilt! Why can't you, out of guilt, let me go? Let me choose how I want the surgery to be done!" She was trapped here.

Forget about revenge! She couldn't even control her own personal freedom.

What revenge could she do?

"Because... You killed my child." It had to be said that Fanny's revenge was quite successful.

That night, he was in excruciating pain.

Just thinking that there could have been a child, someone who could call him Daddy, with the same innocence as Sean and Betty... It made his heart ache unbearably!

Fanny...!

How dare she?

How could she?!

She laid a hand on his child!

Oliver was trembling all over. His rationality still hadn't returned. Even his lips were quivering.

He glanced at her, then stood. He started walking out, making it easier for the doctor to come in.

"My wife is a bit mentally unstable. You can administer anesthesia to her right now." He closed his eyes. A clear tear rolled down from the corner of his eye, quickly falling to the ground and disappearing.

As if genuinely concerned about Fanny, he went on calmly, "Use a high dosage.

Let her rest well." Yes, she needed to rest well so she could conceive successfully.

Julian's Stand-In Wife chapter 1342-Throughout the entire dilation and curettage process, Fanny felt almost nothing.

It was precisely because of the lack of sensation that the pain came belatedly.

She felt as if a knife was slowly penetrating her heart, and the pain was unbearable.

In the end, her tears dried up along with the pain of the procedure.

When Oliver came to see her, she lay on the bed, her long black hair contrasting against her snow-white skin. She looked almost ethereally pale, exuding a haunting, broken beauty.

Oliver entered without a word. Holding a towel, he dried her off and then took her hand. Then, he slowly wiped her fingers clean, one at a time.

Fanny didn't resist. She wasn't compliant, either.

She simply had no strength left and was unwilling to talk to this cruel man.

However, her eyes remained fixed on him until he stood up and attempted to leave.

That was when she spoke, asking, "When are you going to let me go?" He had already made it clear. When she became pregnant again and gave birth to his child, he would release her.

“Do you want to get out as soon as possible?” Oliver asked.

Fanny nodded. Of course she wanted to!

She still wanted to stand in front of Oliver’s father, and inquire about the truth behind her parents’ deaths.

She wanted to sue him. She wanted to sue the entire Channing family! She wanted every member of the Channings to pay the price!

But now... She was trapped here by the son of her parents’ enemy. She couldn’t do anything. She couldn’t even pay respects to her own parents, let alone find out their names and surnames.

And... She had just lost her own child.

A bitter smile tugged at the corners of Fanny’s mouth. She had truly failed as a mother and as a daughter!

The more she thought about it, the more it hurt. She had to force herself to stop dwelling on these matters and focus on the present.

“Well?” She let out a painful groan, waiting for Oliver to continue.

“If you want to leave as soon as possible, recover quickly, and let me stay overnight,” Oliver said.

This statement was like a blow to the head. Fanny found it both absurd and amusing. Beyond amusement, she felt a piercing pain in her heart.

“Am I just a birthing tool to you?” she asked.

“Yes.” Since she had already given up on their child, he saw no reason to leave her any illusions. Neither did he need to consider her feelings.

Oliver’s words became increasingly cutting, “Diana refused to marry me. She has always liked Julian. Since I couldn’t have her, I could only have you.

Originally...” He turned around, and the more painful the expression on Fanny’s face became, the happier he seemed.

A bloodthirsty smile blossomed on his lips as he continued, "Originally, you didn't even qualify to give birth to my child. All of this is your own doing. I didn't force you to marry me back then, either." Yes, it was all her own doing!

Even when the Channings were declining and Oliver needed the most help, she tirelessly worked in the entertainment industry, filming and accumulating wealth.

Whenever a substantial payment came in, she would immediately call Oliver.

She would assist him in smoothly navigating his succession within the Channings, and refilling the necessary funds.

It could be said that whether it was Oliver or the Channing family, their current glory was entirely due to her assistance.

After all, during her peak popularity, her salary in the entertainment industry was the craziest.

Even actresses without acting skills could confidently tell reporters, "I earned ten million from this movie." And there was Fanny, with both looks and acting talent, and a strong fan base.

It wasn't an exaggeration that her salary over those two years was easily over eight hundred million.

If they were to include her contributions from her company...

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She was also a large-scale female entrepreneur.

Unfortunately, all that money had been given to Oliver.

Oliver had given her shares in the Channing family in exchange. However, Fanny felt nauseous when she thought about it. It was as if she had eaten something vile, and it left a disgusting taste in her mouth.

The Channings were unforgivable.

Yet, she had actually... She had actually saved them!

How could she accept this?

How could she justify this to her deceased parents?

And all of this was Oliver's fault!

He knew the truth, but still wanted to hide it from her forever!

Just because... "So you never loved me." The person he loved was always Diana.

He never changed his mind. He never gave up on Diana, and he never fell in love with Fanny!

She had always been his backup plan. She was the one he didn't love... The one he could treat like garbage at any time!

Unable to restrain herself, she cursed at him again, "You're disgusting!" She would never reconcile with him in this lifetime!

And she would never give birth to his child!

After hearing Fanny's curses... Oliver didn't get angry, but started laughing at her suffering. The more she suffered, the happier he was.

"I'm leaving," Oliver said with a smile. "Once your body has recovered, I'll come see you." The word "see" had a deep meaning in his statement.

Fanny didn't need to ponder; she could understand the implications. The next time he came, it would be the moment she must be intimate with him.

If that day truly came, she would rather die!

Every day afterward, she would try to find ways to leave this place.

Unexpectedly, Oliver hadn't left her alone.

In the spacious villa, she was the only one.

The windows were all sealed with iron bars. The front door was secured with the tightest and oldest iron lock.

The high wall around the yard was covered with glass shards. Anyone with the idea of climbing over would bleed from the tall, sharp glass.

Not to mention, after overcoming all the difficulties and finally climbing over, there would be the challenge of dealing with the iron clamps.

Those were traps used to catch mice, repurposed by Oliver to become tools to keep Fanny confined.

Having just undergone a dilation and curettage procedure, her body was already weak.

With her hands, feet, and legs entangled to varying degrees in the glass, she was bleeding everywhere.

The pain was unbearable.

Looking at the traps scattered outside the courtyard wall, she hardly needed to think.

If she dared to jump down, she would be caught and torn apart by the clamps.

If Oliver ignored her, she would be trapped in these clamps. She would be helpless and filled with wounds. She would be unable to do anything but wait for death.

Unfortunately, she couldn't die.

There were still too many things she needed to investigate and clarify about the truth behind her parents' incident.

But how could she investigate while being trapped here?

How could she investigate at all?

Determined, she gritted her teeth.

Crack!

The iron clamp opened its mouth, quickly biting into the flesh around her ankle, creating a bloody hole.

Fortunately, as she had hoped, the clamp was mobile, and she could move with it.

The excruciating pain was endured solely by her revenge-driven willpower. In just a few steps, she walked a distance of hundreds of kilometers, each step causing intense pain.

Oliver didn't expect her to be so resolute. She actually reacted so quickly after he left.

She not only struggled to climb the wall with great effort, scraping her arms in the process, but even when faced with the glass shards, she didn't back down.

She had gritted her teeth, and went straight through!

Julian's Stand-In Wife chapter 1344-In the surveillance footage, it was evident that her shoes had been pierced by the glass as blood seeped from the soles.

Despite the discomfort and her wounds, she resolutely jumped down towards the iron clamps!

But it didn't matter.

Watching a resilient person despair brought more joy and a sense of accomplishment than watching an ordinary person despair.

Oliver wanted to destroy Fanny gradually, making her experience the same despair as his unborn child!

At the thought of his unborn child, the child he hadn't had the chance to place his hand on Fanny's belly to greet, his heart throbbed in pain.

He would never let Fanny leave this villa, nor would he allow her to seek revenge on his father.

He wanted to slowly grind away all her determination, all her resilience, and make her truly understand how foolish it was to get rid of that child.

Dragging her injured body, Fanny gradually moved forward. If she endured a bit more, she could push open the door before her.

If she pushed open that door and took a few more steps forward, she would find a dog hole in the villa. She could crawl out from there and then leave.

At that moment, she would be free from Oliver's captivity.

Then, she would never look back!

It had rained last night, and the sun was shining brightly today. With wounds and sweat on her body, she tensed from the pain, almost crying out loud.

However, she endured it.

Slowly, gradually, she crawled out through the dog hole.

Finally, she was about to see the light.

Her entire head emerged from the dog hole, a smile on her face. The pain on her body lightened with this happiness.

When she was about to drag her entire body out of the dog hole, a dark shadow suddenly descended in front of her, almost completely enveloping her.

Fanny's heart skipped a beat as she looked up.

It was Oliver!

He had been waiting for her here. In his hands, he held a tablet. When he saw her look up, he turned the tablet's screen towards her.

He let her see the contents on the screen. The scene that appeared made her widen her eyes, and she shot him a disbelieving look!

Oliver...had been monitoring her all along!

He had watched her get pierced by the glass, witnessed her failed attempts to climb the wall, and watched her crawl out from the dog hole, dragging a foot with a bloodied hole from the iron clamp.

He had been waiting like a predator at the hole's entrance, looking down at her with a cruel smile.

"Fanny." In her entire life, she had never seen such a cruel smile on anyone's face.

This smile seemed to crush all their past into powder. It rendered Fanny unable to even utter a word of pain.

He leaned over, looking at the numerous wounds on her body and examining the bloody hole on her ankle.

“Do you want to leave me that much?” he asked.

Even after turning her body into this state, even risking her life, she still resolutely chose to leave him.

There was an indescribable bitterness in his heart, coupled with a strong hatred that surged throughout her body.

It almost made Oliver’s jaw tremble.

Fanny remained silent.

She was exhausted. She couldn’t escape today, and had used up all her strength.

It might be better to lie here and wait for Oliver to find someone to bring her back to the villa.

She closed her eyes, trying not to let her heart ache more than her body.

After all... He didn’t care about her.

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He treated her as a spare tire—even worse, just a tool for reproduction.

After all, the one he loved was still Diana. Why should she continue to feel heartache for him? From now on, they were just a couple carrying the burden of an ancient feud.

Perhaps, soon enough, they wouldn’t even be a couple anymore.

Fanny didn’t believe it.

This time, she couldn’t escape. She wouldn’t be able to escape in the future.

But, one day... She would definitely escape.

Fanny closed her eyes, holding back the tears that threatened to fall. Snot seemed to have formed in her throat.

The discomfort gradually made her forget the pain in her body, but the blood was still flowing freely.

“Fanny,” Oliver said. His eyes showed some reluctance, but it quickly disappeared. “Since you want to leave me so much, I’ll grant your wish.” He bent down, and lifted her into his arms. He walked slowly towards the villa that was about to be reinforced and completely sealed.

This used to be the embrace she craved the most.

When she was young, Fanny couldn’t adapt to the life of the Channings. Seeing some beautiful and delicate dishes, she was afraid of breaking them and dared not touch anything during meals.

She would just pick up the utensils, not taking any food, claiming she was already full.

This continued for a long time, and she eventually made herself suffer from hypoglycemia and fainted at the Channings’ dining table.

Although Kenneth didn’t say much, it was evident that he was displeased. After all, everyone knew he brought an adopted daughter from outside. And now, she was suffering from malnutrition in his family!

At that moment, Kenneth harbored thoughts of getting rid of this girl and sending her back with her parents.

It was Oliver who, at that time, lifted the unconscious Fanny from the ground. He gave her the strongest support.

But now, this embrace had become a prison that confined her. His voice extinguished the hope that had just ignited in her.

“Within the next month, I will make you pregnant as soon as possible.” Pregnancy meant intimacy.

Intimacy meant... He would once again possess her body.

It would be an insult to her parents.

Fanny felt humiliated, and almost bit her lips until they bled. “Oliver, I’ll never...” Before she could finish her sentence, he lowered his head and

kissed her fiercely. No matter how she struggled and fought back, he refused to adjust the angle even a little.

In the end, her lips were swollen. Any movement brought pain, entwining her in a tight web of agony. After the pain came deeper humiliation, but she couldn't push him away.

"Cooperate, and get a medical check-up." Finally standing up, he looked at her with a familiar gaze. In the past, that look was part of their marital playfulness. Now, it was disgust, insult, and agony—a profound lack of understanding.

"Cooperate for a medical check-up? Then you also want me to cooperate with you to get pregnant?" He touched on the sensitive subject.

"If your father knew about our current relationship, knew that I harbored murderous intent towards him, would he still be willing to keep me as his daughter-in-law?" Wouldn't the most rational and calm decision be to divorce her now?

Leaving her here would mean having a potential threat to the Channings.

Oliver, who had been in the position of the Channings' head for three years, couldn't possibly be ignorant of this logic.

To the Channings, Fanny was a lurking wolf, ready to pounce from the shadows and bite off the family's neck at any moment. She knew too much about the Channings' business.

"He doesn't have the final say," Oliver said, his response catching Fanny off guard. "Because he'll soon receive news of your death." Oliver intended to permanently conceal Fanny's existence. He wanted to turn a living person into a dead one in everyone's minds.

He aimed to cut off all of Fanny's escape routes, so she would peacefully stay in this villa as his prisoner!

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The news of Fanny's sudden death spread throughout Richburgh.

Previously, many regretted that Fanny had given up the opportunity to become the top female star to marry Oliver.

When they learned that she was the Channings' adopted daughter and childhood friends with Oliver, and considered each other as siblings, the marriage took on an ambiguous tone.

No one expected more than three years later, the initially underestimated couple had walked together to the present. Those who had seen them together claimed that the two treated each other with respect, and seemed genuinely happy.

Some even joked that Kenneth had arranged a perfect match for Oliver since his childhood, leading to this fortunate union.

In summary, their marriage was considered a beautiful story. What no one foresaw was that Fanny would die at the peak of this seemingly blissful marriage.

When Diana heard the news, she struggled to remain standing. Fanny had extended a helping hand to her during her most difficult and helpless times.

Although they hadn't been in frequent contact over the years, Diana attributed much of her current success in the fashion industry and the growth of her personal brand to Fanny's initial financial support.

Fanny had played a significant role in helping her establish her studio and launching her brand worldwide.

Apart from the financial relationship, Diana and Fanny had maintained a good friendship. Recently, they had even met occasionally.

"I always feel like it was just the other day when the three of us, Fanny, Cecilia, and I, sat at the same table for dinner," Diana reminisced.

Fanny's image, her laughter, everything was vivid in her mind.

"This is just so odd! How could she just die like this?!" Standing in the funeral procession, Diana's emotions were complex.

Julian noticed the tears in her eyes, and was at a loss. Seeing her so distraught, he thought about telling Oliver that they were leaving early to spare her further distress.

“We can’t stay until the funeral is over,” Julian said, when he found Oliver.

“Diana’s belly is getting bigger. If she gets too upset, it might not be good for the babies.” If the babies faced complications, it would also affect Diana. If anything happened to either of them, Julian wouldn’t be able to bear it. He had to ensure Diana’s well-being during this pregnancy.

“I understand.” Oliver came over to see them off. The entire process was excessively calm, and there wasn’t much sadness on his face.

Looking at him, Diana couldn’t shake the feeling that this wasn’t the expression of a grieving widower.

“What if Fanny didn’t really die?” Diana suddenly muttered, as Julian bundled her into the car. She glanced out the window at the funeral scene that was getting farther away.

Julian was getting a bit angry. “What are you talking about?” From his perspective, Diana was behaving unusually today. She wasn’t usually someone who lacked discretion, and she certainly wouldn’t repeatedly say such absurd things.

But today, she seemed a bit out of her mind.

“Would Oliver joke about his wife’s death? If a person is perfectly fine but insists on saying she’s dead, arranging a funeral for her, that’s...” The thought sent shivers down his spine.

“It’s impossible,” he denied. “Oliver loves Fanny very much. When I sent Sean to the training camp before, I talked to him about him and Fanny. I could sense that he was looking forward to them having a good life together. Fate just didn’t go as planned, and Fanny lost her life at such a young age.” “No, something’s wrong.” Diana still felt something was off. “Fanny had a baby.

Why didn’t Oliver mention that?” Last night, Diana had already contacted Fanny’s manager.

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Fanny's manager had personally told Diana about Fanny's pregnancy and subsequent miscarriage.

At that time, she even claimed she couldn't find Fanny, and that the latter had been taken away by Oliver.

What happened afterward? How could a miscarriage lead to losing one's life?!

Diana's thoughts grew more uneasy. She couldn't shake the feeling that this matter wasn't so simple.

Besides, Oliver lost both his wife and child simultaneously.

How could he remain so calm?

When they were sent off, he calmly and thoughtfully considered opening the car door for Diana.

"It's because they had a child between them. Even though it was an accident, it existed nonetheless. Oliver is even less likely to do anything to a woman who has just miscarried. Miscarriages...they can also be life-threatening," Julian said.

Moreover, it was raining heavily last night. When Oliver took Fanny to the hospital, the weather might have delayed them. Anything could have happened during that time.

Diana wanted to argue, but when she thought about the dangers involved in a woman's pregnancy and childbirth, she realized that anything was indeed possible.

Pregnancy... It sounded nice when spoken of as the hope of nurturing a family and of bearing one's own descendants. In reality, it was like nurturing a parasite.

From the moment of birth, a fetus continuously absorbed all the mother's nutrients to sustain its growth. The mother herself could be sacrificed for the sake of the fetus.

This was the essence of reproduction.

The decreasing number of women dying during childbirth in modern times was due to the progress of science and medicine, not because fetuses had become harmless.

Nonetheless, many people willingly accepted the risks of giving birth to the next generation.

Diana was one of them. She had a fear of childbirth, yet she couldn't resist the desire to have more adorable children.

"Poor Fanny..." She had automatically concluded that Fanny's sudden death was caused by a miscarriage, just like what Julian assumed.

What exactly happened for Fanny to meet such a fate because of a miscarriage could only be explored later. Even if they asked Oliver now, he likely wouldn't be in the mood to share the details of Fanny's incident.

Besides, it would be like rubbing salt into the wounds.

Diana couldn't bring herself to do that.

Seeing tears welling up in her eyes again, Julian couldn't quite figure out when their relationship had become so close.

Diana was visibly hurt about Fanny's passing. Sitting in the car, her eyes would redden occasionally.

Concerned about her well-being, Julian took Diana's head in his hands and gently massaged her temples. He urged her to rest and relax a bit.

However, Diana still couldn't find peace. Her head in Julian's hands kept moving restlessly.

Julian understood her. "Can't let it go, can you?" If Diana had something on her mind, she wasn't one to easily let it go.

"I know Oliver's character to some extent. He wouldn't lie about his wife's death." Julian's touch seemed almost magical. Once he started massaging, Diana felt incredibly comfortable. Her head quickly cleared up.

"You're right," she said. Reminded by Julian of Oliver's character, Diana started to see things more clearly. "Oliver wouldn't joke about something like this. He's naturally considerate and gentle."

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Even in the depths of despair, Oliver had a habitual consideration for others.

Opening the car door for her just now was likely a result of this ingrained habit.

"It's a pity," Diana sighed. "Oliver is such a good man! If Fanny hadn't met with this tragedy and had given birth to their little baby smoothly, she would have undoubtedly lived a very happy life." "Yeah," Julian sighed, agreeing. "Even the longstanding family feud couldn't affect their relationship. Unexpectedly...death was the thing that caused their separation." As he said that, Diana's calmed heart started to stir again.

"I can't help it," Diana said.

Considering her unborn child, she didn't want to cry again. But the thought of Fanny, who was suddenly gone despite being alive only a while ago, overwhelmed her. The thought of the little baby in her belly and how Oliver would be alone from now on distressed her deeply.

Tears welled up in her eyes, and slowly slid down her cheek. Her tears were a tribute to the departed.

Julian didn't press her too hard. He simply massaged her more attentively, occasionally giving her a comforting hug and a pat on the back, hoping to make Diana feel a little more at ease.

Even when they returned home, her mood didn't improve much.

Julian quickly called Nina over, thinking that having a friend over might help distract Diana from the tragedy of Fanny's death.

Nina had been busy with work recently, and it had been quite a while since she last saw Diana.

Seeing her belly starting to show, and noticing her she involuntarily spread her arms and legs while walking, Nina couldn't help but be fascinated.

"You've changed your walking posture this month. It's quite unexpected."
"More than you think," Diana replied. "Wait until the late stages of pregnancy."

That's when the real change in walking posture happens." By then, even walking would become a challenge for her. She would likely be hobbling along.

Diana imitated her future walking posture for Nina, saying, "I'll look like a clumsy duck." Nina couldn't help but laugh at Diana's demonstration.

However, Diana's expression suddenly dimmed. "Although walking like this is ugly and challenging, it's actually a rare experience." Fanny could have had the chance to experience it too. She was so thin. She was also accustomed to being a star and well-versed in body management. If she had been pregnant, she would have been the typical person with a large belly but a slim body.

Diana originally had the opportunity to share pregnancy tips and experiences with Fanny. She could have talked about the nuances of pregnancy, and shared parenting experiences.

However, before she could do any of that, Fanny was gone.

"The last time we had dinner, I should have talked to her more." At that time, Fanny hadn't confirmed her pregnancy, but had been paying attention to her diet. She must have been looking forward to becoming a mother, to giving birth to a baby with Oliver.

Seeing Diana's mood starting to dip again, Nina held her hand. "Don't think too much. None of us can predict the future, and nobody knows what unexpected events life might throw at us." Nina had heard a bit about Fanny's situation. "Last night, Fanny shouldn't have gone to the film set when the rain started." She wouldn't have fallen if she hadn't gone to the film set. She wouldn't have lost her life along with the unborn child.

"Oliver is really something," Nina lamented for her. "His wife was pregnant. Why didn't he stop her from working?" Why did Fanny insist on going to work?

"She's a workaholic," Diana said, understanding Fanny's trait. "If Fanny wanted to go, Oliver couldn't have stopped her." Moreover, he was there with her at the time.

Yet, Fanny still miscarried.

And... It resulted in two deaths.

"You have to relax," Nina advised, as she saw Diana getting lost in thought about the situation. "I know you're sad, but you have to think about the babies in your belly." Diana was already carrying twins, and was planning for a second cesarean section. It would be much more challenging than a typical pregnancy.

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"I know." Diana had already restrained her emotions, and was trying to think of some happy things.

"This time, I might not be able to endure until the full term. I might need a cesarean section." In other words, the time for the cesarean section hadn't been determined yet.

Nina was cautious in this regard. "Just follow the doctor's advice, okay? When necessary, I'll bring Vans and stay with you." When Nina mentioned Vans with such familiarity, Diana asked with delight, "Have you two reconciled?" Perhaps Jim had taken care of it when she mentioned the Jenningses to him? If that was the case, she needed to call and thank him.

However, Nina didn't answer. She just smiled. It was a bashful smile, and she obviously didn't want Diana to inquire further.

Ignoring Nina's expression, Diana said seriously, "Nina." She held Nina's hand, and asked solemnly, "Has the Jenningses taken the initiative to draw a clear line with Vans?" "How is that possible?" Nina smiled bitterly. "Lina likes Vans more than ever!

She's anxious to marry him." That meant Jim didn't handle the problem. Diana thought that she would call him in the evening to ask.

But now, she had more important questions to ask Nina. "Did Vans agree?" Nina tightened her grip on the bedsheet, involuntarily wrinkling it. "He agreed." "But." She tightened and then loosened her grip on the bedsheet periodically.

"He doesn't love her." Diana almost laughed at the way Nina downplayed the seriousness of her words.

"So what? He doesn't love her, but he still wants to marry her. He loves you, but can't marry you." Hearing the urgency in Diana's tone, Nina also became anxious. "It's not his fault. He's done a lot already. I just need to give him

some time.” She held Diana’s hand, and continued, “As long as I endure for a year or two, Vans can give me a future.” “And during these two years, are you going to stay by his side as his mistress?” Nina became even more anxious. This wasn’t the first time they discussed this issue. Last time, though, Diana was more subtle in her words. It had never been explicitly addressed before.

But today, Diana spoke with particular sharpness.

“Nina! Wake up! If Vans demands this of you, he doesn’t deserve your love!” He wasn’t worthy of Nina! She deserved better!

“I’m not the mistress,” Nina said, taking a deep breath. She glanced at Diana’s belly, and finally suppressed the anger. “He said that no matter how much pressure the Jenningses and Stanleys put on him, he won’t get married.” Diana was almost amused. “Even if he doesn’t get married, isn’t it still a fact that he’s engaged? Isn’t it a fact that he meets and dines with Lina regularly?” That was indeed a fact.

Nina couldn’t find words to respond to that.

Something seemed to be clawing at her heart.

“Diana.” The anger surged in her again. She looked up to see Diana’s face.

“Stop talking.” However, Diana was angry.

She really didn’t want Nina to continue like this. “Nina. Vans’s actions show a lack of responsibility. You must—” “What about Julian?” Nina’s retort left Diana momentarily stunned. For a moment, she couldn’t react.

“Huh?” She raised her head, looking at Nina with confusion.

Nina’s lips curled into a mocking expression that Diana had never seen before.

She reminded Diana, “Stand-in.” She looked at Diana, arms crossed and adopting a defensive posture

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Diana had never seen Nina like this before.

Her heart felt constricted, as if there was a heavy stone on her chest. The feeling was so suffocating that she couldn't speak for a while.

She just stared blankly at Nina.

The words were at the tip of her tongue. If she hadn't said them, even Nina wouldn't know how to bring this conversation to a close.

She was afraid Diana would keep harping on her and Vans, so she had to steel herself and continue to watch Diana coldly, forcing herself to say those words.

"Before, Julian..." she paused, raised an eyebrow at Diana, and continued, "Didn't he treat you as a stand-in?"

Essentially, Julian was just as scummy as Vans.

Diana's own marriage wasn't that smooth. Her love went through many hardships before reaching today's harvest.

Nina didn't think there was any difference between her and Vans and the past Diana and Julian. She couldn't tolerate Diana constantly picking at Vans and calling her a mistress.

It was a stain on her and Vans' relationship, a stab of a knife into Nina's heart.

At the same time, the curiosity and anticipation on Diana's face all crumbled.

Even shock flashed for a moment. What followed was an extreme heartbreak.

She was sorrowful not because Nina mentioned her past role as a substitute in Julian's heart, and not because of Nina's expression when she said those words.

It was because... After showing her best friend all of her vulnerabilities and exposing all the unpleasant aspects without hesitation... Nina had actually used the thing that had affected Diana the most in her life to cause Diana pain.

"Nina." Diana almost couldn't speak. Her voice was hoarse.

"You..." She couldn't bring herself to utter words of reproach.

However, she also couldn't pretend that nothing had happened at that moment and to continue talking to her normally.

"You should leave." She led Nina downstairs, instructing Julian to escort her back.

Seeing that the mood between the two friends wasn't quite right, Julian tactfully agreed and called for a driver.

However, Diana insisted that Julian personally send Nina home. Having had her heart practically torn open by Nina, Diana didn't even want to see Julian.

So, she told him to go.

It would also provide Diana with a bit of quiet space.

Nina got into the car, and Julian wanted to ask her what had happened.

However, Nina remained silent. She started crying as soon as she left the villa.

Throughout the journey, she repeatedly asked Julian to apologize to Diana.

This made Julian even more uncomfortable. As soon as he dropped Nina off, he hurried back to Diana.

Diana had closed the door.

Standing outside the bedroom, he could faintly hear her muffled sobs. He was anxious, eager to know what had happened between Diana and Nina. Just as he was about to knock on the door, the crying inside abruptly stopped.

"I'm tired," Diana told him, "let me rest alone." Since hearing Nina mention the stand-in, Diana's painful memories seemed to be dragged up continuously against her will.

Yes, their current happiness with Julian didn't mean they had always been happy in the past. They had experienced divorce, and moments when they wished the other dead.

Diana understood she had no reason to judge Nina's emotional state.

She had done something wrong.

It seemed she had crossed a boundary.

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