

Read Novel Julian's Stand-In Wife chapter 431-440

Julian's Stand-In Wife chapter 431

Julian wanted to hear things like Kayla asking for forgiveness even less!

Because only Diana had the right to decide to forgive her or not!

His serious and chilling look shocked Kayla.

"J-Julian... 1-1 won't talk about it anymore, okay? Don't be angry. Actually, I was just confused recently. I know I was wrong, I..."

"Hmm."

Julian kept the materials in his hand and said, 'Keep it up and stop having any bad intentions toward Diana. Otherwise, I'll deal with you permanently next time.'

Obviously, Kayla still remembered what had happened to Luke.

She also knew how much the Pabian family suffered as a result.

Yet she didn't think Julian, who had already taken away her fertility, would still think badly of her...

She was extremely lucky today, too!

Even today, when she took the initiative to show her goodwill toward Diana, he was still reprimanding her and telling her not to have any bad intentions toward Diana.

Julian...

Kayla gritted her teeth and hung her head down, looking at the ground with reddened eyes. She blinked rapidly as she fixed her gaze on her ankle, trying to stop the tears from flowing out. She vowed silently in her mind that one day, she would make it so Julian would be on his knees and begging her!

She would make him say he loved her! She would make sure he treated Diana a hundred times worse than how he treated Kayla today!

When she looked up, none of these thoughts showed on her face. She only smiled and said, "Okay, Julian. Don't worry. From now on, I'll be good to Diana and try to make up for my mistake."

In the end, Kayla shouldn't have bothered about this incident with Marvin. It had all just been a waste of effort.

Julian had been in the business world for many years, and he knew when to reward or punish others.

"You did well this time."

Obviously, his attitude toward Kayla had improved.

Kayla nodded. "Thanks, Julian."

Julian had a better impression of her after seeing her obedient response." Keep it up.'

Kayla nodded again. "Okay!"

At least it seemed Julian wasn't completely repulsed by her now, and that was a good turn of events.

When Diana returned home, she took a hot bath to relax. However, the image of Kayla smiling at Julian kept popping in her mind.

When Julian turned around, it was obvious there was also a bright smile on his face.

If the two were meeting for a date, why had they agreed to meet before the tea house that she had to go for business?

And that disinfectant...

The more Diana thought about it, the angrier she felt. She wished the water in her bathtub was Julian's face so she could beat it up as much as possible!

As she splashed the water violently with her hands, she heard the doorbell ringing in the distance.

It was already so late in the night. Who would come to the hospital to look for her?

Also, the security here was active twenty-four hours a day, so there was no need to worry about her safety. Had her nutritionist come to deliver her meal?

But at this hour, that was unlikely.

Diana wrapped her towel around herself and walked to the door, wondering who it was.

But, as a result...

There was no one at the door.

Instead, there was a document wrapped in brown paper.

Diana bent down to pick it up, finding that it contained all the evidence of Marvin's attempt at manipulating her.

This would be enough to thoroughly ruin his reputation, even if she couldn't send him to jail.

However, that was only on the assumption that she could confront Marvin. After the setback she had experienced, Diana had the self-awareness not to act recklessly before she established herself in Richburgh under the name "B".

So... She immediately gave this file to Marvin's wife. Perhaps it would be better for women to deal with their men's misconduct.

With this, the crisis Marvin caused was resolved, and Diana no longer needed to worry about the consequences of not going to the hotel the following day.

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And yet, who had given Diana this document?

Diana stood on her tiptoes and looked out several times, but couldn't see anyone nearby.

Was it Julian?

Diana shuddered at the thought.

How could that be? Perhaps. Madam Fulcher was helping her in secret. It couldn't possibly be Julian, her scumbag ex-husband who only had eyes for Kayla, as well as the man who sent her disinfectant when he saw her being molested.

If it wasn't Madam Fulcher, then she would only worry if Diana mentioned it to her.

Whoever sent her the documents, the person meant no harm and managed to get past the security in the hospital. It shouldn't be a bad person.

In that case, Diana would keep this matter a secret for now.

She was relieved to know that her current situation was not a result of her own mismanagement, but rather someone's deliberate mischief.

She opened the window and took a breath of fresh air, suddenly feeling like the fighting spirit in her had been ignited.

Now, she felt more confident about contacting Mr. Crawford.

She should just do it!

It wasn't too late, so Diana logged into her old account under the name D& J, found Mr. Crawford's information, and sent him a message.

[Are you sleeping?]

The reply came quickly.

[No. I'm thinking about my sweetheart.]

Diana couldn't help but snort. Despite being an old man, Mr. Crawford always spoke in a witty and romantic manner. She couldn't resist asking, [Who's your sweetheart?]

[The woman I can't have,] Mr. Crawford replied.

[You mean the woman you can't have because of your age...?]

[Of course!] Mr. Crawford replied extremely quickly. [You've never seen her, so you don't know how magnificent she is. She's kind and understanding, and she also has a rational and gentle personality...]

The next paragraph of words were filled with compliments.

Diana burst out laughing and found herself becoming teary-eyed. The last time she felt envy was when she admired her grandparent's love.

[That's nice. Your sweetheart must be very happy if she knows that you miss her so much.]

This time, Mr. Crawford took a longer time to reply.

[No, she doesn't like me. She didn't like me when we were younger, and she still doesn't like me now. Her husband was better than me and died before me, so he became her unreachable love in her heart. There's no place for me in her heart.]

Diana didn't expect Mr. Crawford to have such a history.

[So, you've loved her for many years without expecting anything in return?]

[I do expect something,] Mr. Crawford replied with a smug emoticon.

[What is it?]

[I only ask to be able to keep up with her and receive news about her. That's enough to make me happy,] Mr. Crawford replied.

At this point, Diana was curious about Mr. Crawford's sweetheart. She wished to meet said sweetheart once, at least to see what kind of woman would make a man like Mr. Crawford be captivated for life.

[Girl... Diana,] Mr. Crawford saw that she was slow to reply and asked, [Tell me why you were looking for me. Is there something wrong?]

When she noted the tone of address, Diana couldn't help but recall Madam Fulcher.

[How did you know my name?]

The dialog box on the other end showed that the man was typing, and it took a while before it was sent.

[Last time, the plaque you mentioned was for your father... He was from the Winnington family, wasn't he? Besides, he only has two daughters.]

Diana instantly replied, [Oh, I see. I thought you knew me in real life.]

Mr. Crawford didn't answer her statement and simply said, [So tell me, what do you need my help with this time?]

The process was as quick and smooth as it could be.

Having just gone through the encounter with Marvin, Diana had to think long and hard before replying, [Do you have some time tomorrow? Could we meet?]

It was hard to tell what the person on the other side was thinking about just through texting.

She wanted investments, but she also needed to ensure that the person injecting the fund had a good character so she could guarantee Fanny's interest as the first investor.

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[Not tomorrow,] Mr. Crawford said. [But I'm free the day after.]

Diana thought about it and replied, [Okay. Let's meet up at Eastside Teahouse, then.]

She had personal reasons for wanting to meet at the same place again.

After all, she had never met Mr. Crawford in person. All her knowledge of him was limited to their chats. Since Julian seemed to like monitoring her, she decided to use it to her advantage and let him watch her at the teahouse.

If anything happened, she shouldn't have any trouble escaping.

After deciding that, Diana returned to bed and rested. Thinking about it for a while, she decided to wash the red dress that same night. She wanted to wear the red dress again when she met Mr. Crawford the day after tomorrow. Not because it looked good, but because the color and style were different from her usual style.

She hoped that wearing the dress would give her confidence for a fresh start.

Soon, the day to meet Mr. Crawford arrived.

It was the first time Diana was meeting her former customer, so she was a little nervous. She even checked her appearance one last time before entering the tea house.

When the receptionist saw her, she immediately contacted Julian.

“Mr. Fulcher, she’s here again.”

On the other side, Julian hadn’t expected to actually catch her.

Julian knew Diana wouldn’t easily give up on looking for an investment. However, the way she dealt Marvin without mercy after receiving the document by dumping the evidence on his wife made Julian feel a little better about it.

Only, he hadn’t expected that she would still be up for seeing someone else in the next few days.

“Who’s she meeting?’ Julian told the receptionist to take a photo. It turned out that Diana’s appointment this time was not only with a man, but an old one at that...

With a head full of white hair, this new man looked to be Madam Fulcher’s age. Logically speaking, he must be someone wealthy and influential in Richburgh for Diana to talk about investments.

Strangely enough, Julian had no memory of this person.

Julian pondered this fact for a while before calling Noel into his office and saying, “Find out who this man is.”

Noel carried out his task immediately, and soon came back with the old man’s background.

An adult male and a native of Jacroaof. Male, seventy-nine years old, and unmarried throughout his life, though he enjoyed many romantic relationships with several girlfriends. A well-known local tycoon and a legendary playboy back in his time.

The accompanying pictures attached to the file were a compilation of all of his ex-girlfriends.

The more Julian read, the more he felt that Diana was an idiot.

The old man was obviously there because of her appearance, but she seemed completely unaware. To make it worse, she looked even more pleased than the time she was meeting Marvin!

Slamming his phone on the table, Julian sent Noel to the tea house to keep an eye on things in case anything unexpected happened again.

As for Julian himself, he went to SK Mall.

Last time, he hadn't been able to find the right clothes for Diana. This time, he went to L.

He recalled that Diana had bought clothes from this store before, and found their aesthetics to be quite similar. Although he didn't want to get clothes from this store because of Kayla, he had little choice as he was in a hurry.

"This one. That one, and that one," Julian said as he pointed to several pieces of clothes and asked the store manager to pack them all up. The clothes he picked were ones that wouldn't accentuate one's figure too much, but also wouldn't be too loose to hide every curve. They were suitable for Diana's gentle and elegant style.

"Have you packed them all?" Julian asked, and the store manager nodded.

"Deliver them directly to this address," Julian said, writing Diana's address at the hospital. "Room 8088 in the Rehabilitation Ward."

The store manager immediately knew that this was a very important customer, and didn't delegate the task to anyone else and made the delivery herself.

Once she deposited the clothes at the hospital's reception, she sent Julian a message that she had delivered the package before she left.

When Diana returned, the hospital receptionist quickly called out to her." Miss Winnington."

There was obvious envy in the eyes of the girls at the reception desk as they brought out a bunch of large paper bags.

"These are your clothes. Please sign for it."

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“Mine?” Diana asked as she pointed to herself. She was a little stunned.

“It’s from L...?”

Diana was no longer the owner of L, even just in name. Why was she being given new products?

“Perhaps it’s a mistake,” Diana said as she fished out her phone to call the store manager about it.

But the receptionist was firm and said, “Miss Winnington, we’re almost about to get off work. Please sign it. I’m sure these clothes are for you.’

Diana couldn’t bear to trouble the staff, so she said, ‘Please send it to my room, then.”

Just as she entered her room, she didn’t have time to turn on the lights or take off her shoes before a chime from her computer announced that she had an email.

It was already so late. Who could it be?

Was it Mr. Crawford wanting to confirm the details of the investment?

During their meeting in person today, they chatted more than when they did online. Diana felt that the woman in Mr. Crawford’s heart wasn’t a lie, as she could feel his sincerity every time he spoke.

Especially when he called her name. The look in his eyes was exactly the same as when Madam Fulcher said it. The level of kindness and gentleness was hard to fake.

Only when they parted did Mr. Crawford mention that he needed to consider some of the investment details, and that he would get back to her via email. He didn’t finalize anything on the spot.

Rather than disappointment, his words reassured Diana. She felt that he was serious about investing and had no intention of playing tricks on her.

When she heard the email chime, she almost flew to her computer in her haste to check.

In the end...

The one who sent the email was Julian.

Why was he looking for her at this time?

Diana clicked on it, and the first thing that caught her eye was a picture of her and Mr. Crawford sitting together, laughing and having tea.

Diana had already guessed that Julian had sent someone to keep watch on her, so she wasn't surprised to see the picture. She took off her shoes and sat down on the chair before slowly scrolling down.

Below the picture were some words in bold, [Does Oliver know you're always wearing this red dress out to meet other men, and even an old man? Will he be unhappy to know about this?]

Was he implying she was a fickle woman? That she was being unfaithful to Oliver?

But there was nothing going on between her and Oliver!

Also, Diana had paid for this dress. Besides, why did she have to tell anyone what she was wearing, or who she was meeting to make them happy?

What right does Julian have to ask her such a stupid question in such a condescending tone?!

As usual, this man was still so arrogant!

[Don't wear this red dress in the future. You look really ugly in it.]

This sentence was followed by a picture of Diana's face being doodled on, meant to give her graphic proof of how ugly she was.

Diana was so angry when she saw the picture that she clenched her fists tightly. If Julian were before her, she would've definitely punched him.

But that was not all that was in the email.

She held in her anger and continued scrolling downward.

His attitude had softened significantly as the font had reverted to normal.

[Wear the dresses I picked for you. They're from L, and they're in the style you like.]

She didn't like it... She never did. Not a single bit!

She hadn't wanted to wear dresses from L ever since Kayla bought that dress with Julian, okay?!

Was this man doing it intentionally?!

Why does it feel like he won't stop until he infuriates her to death?!

But... She sensed that something was off.

She quickly replied to the email, [Did you buy those clothes?]

[Yes,] Julian replied almost instantly with a smug tone. [Didn't you receive them? The store manager personally delivered them.]

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Diana did receive the clothes.

But now, she felt even more disgusted with Julian.

It turned out that the clothes hadn't been sent wrongly by L's staff.

It was Julian who had sent them on purpose, all to piss her off!

Diana looked at the clothes, and was sorely tempted to throw them out of the window. But on second thought, she called the three girls from the reception who had yet to get off work to her room.

"Take three pieces each,' Diana said as she counted the clothes. "Take them all. Free of charge."

She would wear her own red dress, and not the dresses that Julian gave her!

The girls were overjoyed, as if they had hit the jackpot.

"These are new products from L! We can't even afford a single dress from there, even if we saved up months of our salary!"

The girls covered their chests and gave Diana a disbelieving look.

“Are you sure you want to give it to us?”

Diana nodded firmly. “Yes.”

She moved to the side and let them enter her room to take the clothes that had been brought in not long ago.

“Don’t leave a single one for me. Take them all.”

“Oh my god! All hail Miss Winnington!”

With that, Diana had made the girls extremely happy. She looked at their bright, smiling faces and couldn’t help but feel the depression in her heart dissipate a little. Suddenly, she thought of something and asked, “Someone delivered some documents to me the day before yesterday. Do you know who it was?”

It was the document pertaining to evidence against Marvin.

Diana now had a strong hunch that the person behind it was Julian.

Sure enough, one of the girls nodded and said, “It was Mr. Fulcher. He came the day before yesterday, but he left quickly.”

It really was him!

Diana rolled her eyes. When the girls had left, she cracked her hands and typed away on the keyboard to reply to the email.

[Do you have so much time on your hands that you have to cause trouble? Aren’t you afraid I’ll tell Kayla and anger you both?]

Julian hadn’t had the chance to talk to Diana for a long time, and the only medium of communication that she hadn’t blocked him was email. Now that he could talk to her, there was a glint of excitement in his eyes.

[Then, aren’t you afraid that I’ll tell Oliver you’ve been meeting other men in clothes he bought for you recently?]

Diana was speechless at his retort.

Damn.

[What?] Julian was unwilling to let go of this hard-won chance he had gotten to chat and was still desperately sending emails at high speed to Diana.

[Don't think I don't know that although you call Oliver 'darling' and always cling to him when I see you two together, but in fact...]

Diana's heart skipped a beat when she read this part.

Had Julian discovered that she was only using Oliver to avoid him, and that there was nothing going on between them?

[But in fact, you still haven't managed to snagged him.]

Diana was speechless at his next email.

Julian initially wanted to tell her that even though she couldn't grab Oliver's heart, she didn't need to be afraid as Julian would be willing to help her; she'd soon have Oliver for good.

When the words came to mind, however, annoyance gnawed at his heart. The memory of Diana calling Oliver 'darling' in front of the Winnington residence kept replaying in his mind, over and over again.

Jealous.

Julian felt really jealous.

It was to the point he couldn't bring himself to say any words of blessing or assurance right now, even if he would soon reach out to help her get together with Oliver in earnest.

Diana's computer chimed again, indicating she had received a new email. She clicked on it. It was from Julian again; he was practically using email as WhatsApp right now.

She pursed her lips and read through it.

[Since you like Oliver so much, you should properly stick to him. Why do you meet up with old geezers every day? That greasy pig, Marvin, was even worse. If you need investment or money, come to me. I have plenty of money.]

Diana was so angry at his words and immediately shot back, [Get lost! Who cares about your filthy money?!]

Right after, a call came from Mr. Crawford.

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"Diana," Mr. Crawford sounded a little awkward from the other end. "I didn't invest in your studio because I didn't think it a good fit after some consideration. It's quite normal in business, right? There was no need to curse me like that, was there?"

Diana was stunned. "You're not going to invest?"

"Yes. I just sent you an email explaining my reasons," the old man replied, still awkwardly. "But your reply..."

Oh crap!

Diana hurriedly glanced at her email and blanched. 'Sorry! I'm so sorry!'

She felt so guilty. "I didn't mean to send you that! I replied to the wrong email... I'm so sorry! It's okay if you're not investing."

She held back the loss and disappointment washing over her, and hurried to assure the old man. "Please don't feel bad because of my email. I sent it by mistake."

"Did you really send it by mistake?" the old man asked. "Or were you upset about it and were blinded for a moment?"

"No!" Diana said. "You've also ordered a lot of clothes from me before. Do you think I'm such a petty person?"

Mr. Crawford shook his head. "No, of course not."

That's why he called Diana immediately after receiving the email to clear things up.

"So, who was the email intended for?"

"Uh..." Diana was afraid that Mr. Crawford might misunderstand, so she replied honestly after a few moments. "My ex-husband."

At that, the old man didn't press further and said, "Okay. Let's keep in contact if there's anything else apart from the investment, okay?"

Diana nodded. "Of course. I was happy to be able to meet you the other day."

Mr. Crawford smiled, the brilliance of an old fox in his eyes as he said, "I hope we'll have many more chances to meet in the future.'

Diana assumed he was only being polite. After all, even the relationship of being an investor and working together hadn't been established. Even if the older man ordered clothes from her, he didn't need to meet her in person to do so.

So, she didn't take his words to heart and simply replied politely, ' I hope so too."

The two hung up amicably, but Diana felt increasingly sad and uneasy as she continued to think about it. So far, all the channels she could turn to for investments had been cut off.

Although she had dealt with Marvin, the mess he caused for Diana hadn't been resolved. The studio still needed a large amount of funding to overcome this crisis.

Should she really talk to Fanny again?

Fanny had helped Diana a lot, but it was all because of Oliver. Diana couldn't rely on them forever, or she would lose confidence in herself.

But... What should she do about her studio?

Diana's head throbbed painfully, and she slumped in her chair without moving for a long time.

Her computer kept chiming all the while, reminding her she had new emails. A number of messages kept popping up, and she sighed and placed her chin on her hand before clicking into it. As she had expected, it was all from Julian.

Now that he had been blocked in WhatsApp and everything else she could, he was using his email as WhatsApp.

[Why aren't you replying to me?]

[Are you crying?]

[Are you angry?]

[I know I didn't do a good job regarding the incident with our babies, and I'm not good enough of a husband for you, but you have to believe me this time. I'll definitely help you with your love for Oliver! I'll be a competent ex-husband!]

The more she read, the more outrageous Julian seemed to become.

Why did he keep associating Oliver with her? Diana rolled her eyes as she continued to read.

There were several other emails in between that she didn't bother clicking into, and she jumped straight to the last one to open it.

[Be honest with me. Do you need me to pitch in or not?]

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No!

Sending the email telling Julian off mistakenly to Mr. Crawford was Diana's biggest regret.

After thinking about it, she replied curtly, [I don't need your money. Please don't contact me again. A competent ex-husband should be as good as dead, not blathering on and on like this and laughing at others when they're in trouble!]

Julian was dumbfounded.

He really wasn't laughing at her.

He sincerely wanted to help her.

But now, he was sure that Diana was indeed furious.

Because now, even through email...

His address was blocked.

The following morning, Diana first went to the studio to take stock of the still available fabric before talking to the landlord once again.

But she was once again too naive.

The landlord, who had already gotten a sweet deal from Marvin, was unwilling to relent and didn't believe Diana's words, insisting on the rent increase.

Once the rent was raised, the loss wasn't just for this month, but would be an unjustified long-term loss. It would force Diana to pay rent that was several times more than the other nearby merchants each month.

After some thought, Diana decided she would no longer be easygoing and negotiate. Instead, she sharpened her tone and straightened up, instantly becoming capable and powerful. Even her tone had a hint of steel beneath it as she said, "Let me make it clear. I don't agree with the rent increase. If you insist on raising the rent, I'll move out."

The landlord's face changed immediately, his nervousness clear.

During this conversation, Diana clearly had turned the tables and now had the upper hand as she continued, "I know who was behind you and causing trouble for me. There's no need to say who it was. Has he promised you other benefits which you have yet to receive? But those promises will not be honored. The odds are that he's in a miserable situation right now."

The documents Julian sent her about Marvin mentioned that his wife was like a tigress, and she was responsible for his success. However, after a few short years, Marvin started to keep mistresses.

With his wife's attitude, it was unlikely she would let him off easily.

It was a much better punishment than sending him to jail.

The landlord's eyes widened. Obviously, her words had hit home.

"Is that true?"

"Of course," Diana said, pulling out her phone. "Or you can try and see if you can reach him right now."

When the landlord saw this, she knew Diana was telling the truth. Instantly, she deflated and said, "Fine. Then tell me... How do you want to settle this? H

“I’ll let you increase the rent by double.”

When Diana said that, it was like a slap to the landlord’s face, but also a sweet deal.

The landlord had thought there was no hope for her to benefit this time, but Diana was still willing to give her more money! Her expression instantly became better, and the smile on her face was infinitely bright. She was clearly open to discussing more with Diana.

“But you have to sign an agreement,” Diana added. ‘For five years, you’re not allowed to increase the rent.’”

Diana knew the rent in this area would increase sooner or later, and she had calculated all the rent costs in the vicinity. Even if her rent was double right now, she wouldn’t be losing out if it stayed the same for five years.

Of course, the landlord was willing.

After all, people who agreed to join forces with people like Marvin to screw over their tenants were undeniably greedy.

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The fact that the landlord was able to collect rent here relied solely on her ancestors’ legacy. Now that she could profit more, she wouldn’t easily let go. If others raised the rent significantly in the future, she could always resort to underhanded tactics.

Either way, she wouldn’t let go of this sweet deal before her.

Diana understood the landlord’s mindset, which was why she dared to negotiate. However, Diana was careful and meticulous when she wrote out the contract, leaving no loopholes for the future.

After all, when one started a business, one had to be as frugal as possible. Moreover, the money saved here was not as simple as a few hundred thousand a year.

She dared to propose a five-year term because she wasn’t afraid of the landlord eventually turning on her.

“Sign here,” Diana said with a smile, pulling out a pen and contract she had prepared in advance and placing it in the landlord’s hand.

The landlord looked at her smile, and faltered for a moment.

“You’re so beautiful...” the landlord muttered before snapping out of her daze. ‘You’re beautiful. Is this a trick?’

“...It’s black and white on paper. If you don’t agree, I’ll move out right away.

I don’t think the next tenant will offer as high of a rent as I am.”

The landlord was afraid to lose the benefits right before her, and she hurriedly waved her hand. “No! No.”

She quickly read through the contract, and seeing that everything was fine, she quickly signed it.

“Done.”

Diana felt relieved when she saw the landlord’s name on the contract.

Now, she could save a lot of money every year. For her newly established studio, this could alleviate short-term financial pressures and increase profits and cost saving in the long run.

Since Fanny had invested a lot of money in her, Diana had to do her best to protect Fanny’s interest as best as possible.

“When the next batch of rent is due, I’ll pay you according to the price in the contract,” Diana said. “But this quarter, we’ll continue with the previous price, so please don’t contact me anymore for now.”

Diana still needed to look for investments, so she didn’t want to waste any precious time on this landlord.

“Alright,” the landlord replied, looking happy too.

The two quickly agreed, but by that afternoon, the landlord contacted Diana again and asked, “Is the studio of yours making money?”

A lot of stores opened in this area, but there were also equally many that went out of business.

But the landlord's question simply rendered Diana speechless, especially because Diana had been contacting potential investors all morning. Yet, no one was willing to talk to her.

Some people even hung up the moment they heard her name.

Some even dropped hints that they would be in trouble if they interfered with her affairs.

Diana wondered about that for a long time, and thought about what Julian had said in his email last night. She felt that it wouldn't be a simple matter to get investments, but...

Was Julian deliberately getting in her way and waiting for her to go begging him?!

Was he really that awful a person?!

As Diana's heart was in turmoil, and the landlord had asked such a rude question, Diana immediately responded sharply with a warning tone, "If you keep being nosy, I'd rather pay the penalty than rent from you!"

"That's not what I meant," the landlord said placatingly. Her attitude this time was surprisingly good, and she even laughed good-naturedly at the misunderstanding. "I have a distant cousin who has more money than he can spend, or knows what to do with. He wants to invest in others. When I met you this morning, I thought you weren't only good-looking, but you also seemed to have a good head on you. So I thought, why not get him to invest some money in you, and you give him dividends every year?"

Diana was stunned.

The next thing she knew, a wave of joy crashed over her.

Was this what it meant to have a step in the right direction and a stroke of luck?

"But you have to guarantee that you'll profit. Otherwise, I would've cheated my cousin." The landlord was still talking, but Diana didn't really process the words anymore.

“Yes! I can promise my business will profit! If you can, please arrange a meeting as soon as possible.” “A meeting, huh?” the landlord was obviously hesitant.

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Diana paused at the hesitant tone and asked, ‘What’s wrong? Will it be inconvenient for your cousin?’

“That’s not it,” the landlord replied. “It’s just... My cousin lives off of collecting rent. While he does have a lot of money, he doesn’t usually meet people, especially beautiful women. He gets tongue-tied when he does. Still, meeting in person is needed to talk about the terms of investment. Are you willing to have a screen between you two when you meet him?”

“That won’t be difficult,” Diana said, understanding an introvert’s behavior.” It’s good enough that he has an interest in investing. You can set the time and place.”

The landlord was silent for a while. Then, she quickly replied, “We can meet at the restaurant near your studio. We’ll make the reservations and meet tonight, is that okay?”

“That soon?” Diana felt that this was going surprisingly well.

There was still some doubt in her mind.

“Yes,” the landlord replied. “I don’t have any reason to lie to you anyway, and I’m still waiting to collect rent from you. If you’re doubtful, you can bring someone with you.”

“I didn’t mean it that way.” Diana hurried to explain. “For a moment, I find your cousin’s sudden appearance a bit too coincidental...”

Basically, this stranger came when Diana was near the end of her rope.

And then a socially awkward, wealthy landlord suddenly appeared.

The kind of person she wouldn’t have had contact with if she wasn’t a landlord herself.

Even if Julian didn’t want others to invest in her, he wouldn’t have been able to imitate someone like this, right?

The landlord chuckled awkwardly. "It's not like I can do anything. He just has too much money..."

Hearing this familiar phrase, Diana thought for a moment and wondered if Julian had possessed her landlord.

On second thought, perhaps the essence of wealthy people was all the same; having too much money would always be trouble. They always had to find ways to spend or make more money and earn interest from it. Only then would they feel at ease.

In comparison, she was a dirt-poor entrepreneur.

Diana covered her chest and said, "Please tell him I'll see him tonight."

After she hung up, she thought there was something fishy about it the more she thought about it.

After all, how could a landlord who was only interested in profits and liked to take advantage of things suddenly be so kind as to introduce her to an investor?

Even if the landlord had a rich relative who didn't know where to spend his money, they wouldn't just come to her out of the blue like this.

For safety's sake, Diana called Nina to accompany her. Fortunately, Nina got off work early today and drove over to wait for Diana to finish work so they could go together.

The restaurant across the street was a traditional restaurant. It was mostly decorated with redwood, and the walls and ceilings were mostly decorated with simple yellow lines.

When they walked in, it felt like they had entered an ancient palace.

At the same time...

It also could potentially be a nouveau riche residence.

Regardless, it wasn't the kind of place Julian or Oliver would like. However, it did fit the image of the landlord's portrayal of her wealthy, distant cousin who lived off of rent.

Diana gave the receptionist her name. She and Nina were quickly shown to a private room.

As expected, there were screens at the entrance and in the middle of the room.

The man was sitting behind the screen; from Diana's point of view, it was obvious he was treating Diana like a predator and had barricaded himself within a tight wall.

Nina looked at the situation before them and exchanged a look with Diana, indicating it was safe. This person wasn't a danger.

Diana nodded, and called out to the person behind the screen.

"Hello, I'm Diana, the owner of B Studio. How should I address you?"

"Whatever."

Diana hesitated before asking, "Mr. Whatever, sir?"

"Whatever," the wealthy landlord, actually Julian, replied.

The man sounded quite easygoing, but he sounded a little strange.

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The man's voice sounded like a mix of a man and woman. It was a little gruff and sharp, and there was also a slightly robotic quality to it.

Nina was aware of this, so her paparazzi tendencies reared their head. She pulled out her camera and tried to see if she could get a picture of the man to see what he looked like, but Diana stopped her.

"He's socially awkward," Diana mouthed. "He's no threat to us anyway, so we don't have to know what he looks like."

"Fine," Nina grumbled as she kept her camera away, slightly disappointed. "I was hoping to catch a glimpse of a rich and eligible bachelor for you, but oh well. Let's eat!"

Nina pointed to the table filled with food, her eyes shining brightly.

Diana saw the hungry look in Nina's eyes and didn't pursue her best friend's strange thoughts. Still, Diana shot Nina a glare to remind the latter to be careful of her words while they were before a stranger.

Nina stuck out her tongue, then followed Diana and sat down at the table.

When they sat down, both their faces changed.

The dishes before them...

Nina whispered suspiciously, "Diana... Are you close with your landlord? How does her cousin know what you like?"

The table was filled with Diana's favorite dishes.

Diana was also stunned as she stared at the food before her. She looked up quickly at the figure behind the screen; but there were too many layers in between them, almost as if the screens were wrapped around the man to conceal him from her.

Squinting hard, she tried with all her might to see what the man looked like. Yet, she could only see a little of his outline. However, Diana found him quite familiar.

From the moment she first entered the private room, she sensed a familiar aura.

"Mr. Whatever?" Diana tried calling out to him, hoping to hear his voice again.

"Hmm?"

It was still the same mixed-gender, robotic voice, which didn't sound anything like Julian or Oliver.

Diana relaxed a little at that. "We're going to start eating. Are you sure you want to eat alone there?"

"Yes. I'm socially awkward, and I don't like to see others."

Diana's landlord had explained this to her, but Diana hadn't expected the man's fear to be this extreme.

"Is the airflow on your side alright?" Nina couldn't help but chime in jokingly.

“Yes, it’s fine. We can talk about the investment contract once you’re done eating.”

Whoa!

He was going straight for the contract?

Diana’s eyes widened. “Are you really going to invest in my studio? Don’t you need me to tell you a little about it?”

“No need.”

It was already dinner time, and Julian was in a hurry to get Diana to eat. In the past few days, it was obvious to Julian how haggard Diana looked. He feared she wasn’t taking care of her body after her miscarriage, which may lead to long-term side effects later on.

However, there was no way to supervise all her meals during the day, much less have any chance to eat with her under the same roof.

To have a chance like this today was already good enough for Julian.

“My cousin has already briefed me about it, and you gave her your word that you’ll guarantee a profit. That’s enough for me, and I’ll invest.”

“But I have an investor that came before you, so the conditions for your investment will be more stringent. Can you really accept it?”

“Don’t be so long-winded,” Julian shot back.

He was in such a hurry to have her eat that he unconsciously reverted back to his usual manner of speech.

As always, he spoke in an authoritative and unquestionable tone.

Although his voice was different, the familiar tone and atmosphere in the room immediately caused Diana to jump up to her feet.

“Julian!”