

Panicking 161

Chapter 161: There's Something I Need to Tell You in Person

A few minutes later, Evan led her downstairs, holding her hand.

He deliberately parked his car by the roadside outside.

He carefully helped her into the front passenger seat before walking around to the driver's side.

In the distance, Elias watched their car slowly drive away, lowering his gaze without a word.

Quinn waited for a moment without hearing any instructions from him, so he said, "They didn't have an argument. Judging by the dew on Evan's car, it seems it was parked here all night. They probably made up."

In other words, their boss was out of the running.

Elias slowly raised his eyes, his gaze very calm.

"Take her car to Aetherflame. Once we're done here, we'll head back to Kingsford."

Quinn nodded.

Two hours later, Evan's car stopped at the entrance of Aetherflame Dynamics.

Juliana unbuckled her seatbelt to get out, but the door wouldn't open.

She turned back, frowning at him, "What else do you want?"

"No goodbye kiss?" Evan asked.

Juliana's good mood was instantly dispelled by his words.

"You're sick!"

Evan laughed, "Juliana, I haven't betrayed you. You won't have to wait long to know that."

With that, he unlocked the central lock.

Juliana gave him no extra glance and got out of the car without looking back.

As she walked into the company, Summer approached and handed her car keys, "Quinn sent it over, didn't say a word before leaving."

Juliana felt a chill in her heart.

Elias must have misunderstood.

She immediately took out her phone to call him, and it rang for a long time before he picked up.

"What is it?"

The man's voice was distant and indifferent, clearly angry.

"I..." Juliana suppressed her excitement, "I have something to tell you in person."

"I'm busy."

Elias looked at the truck loading equipment nearby.

"Don't you want to know the reason for this morning's incident?" Juliana asked.

Elias was silent.

Did she want to tell him in person that she had reconciled with her husband and that he should stop bothering her?

"Not really."

"Elias!"

The man checked the time, "If you can make it to the North City Special Equipment Station in half an hour, I'll wait for you."

Juliana hung up the phone, took the keys from Summer, and was about to leave.

At that moment, the jewelry store manager personally came to find her.

"Miss Jacobs, President Langley bought the most expensive diamond necklace in our store and specifically instructed me to deliver it to you."

A staff member wearing white gloves stepped forward and carefully opened the black gift box.

On the velvet lining, a diamond necklace lay quietly, exuding a dazzling brilliance.

The onlookers couldn't help but utter "Wow" in admiration.

Juliana was momentarily stunned, then remembered she was in a rush, so she didn't say much. She swiftly closed the box and accepted it.

The other party felt relieved when she accepted it and left with a broad smile.

"I'm heading out."

Juliana held the jewelry box tightly and quickly walked out.

She planned to see Elias first and then Jared.

Just as she started the car, her phone rang again.

The screen lit up, showing Mrs. Young's call.

Juliana immediately answered.

"Madam, I'm at the airport. The plane departs in an hour," Mrs. Young said.

Juliana was surprised, "Have you recovered?"

"Yes, Madam. Thank you for your help during this time. I have something I want to give you. Could you come to get it?"

Juliana hesitated for a moment.

If she went to see Elias first, she wouldn't be able to make it to the airport in forty minutes.

But what Mrs. Young had might be very important.

After a moment of thought, Juliana said, "Okay, I'll come right away."

After hanging up, she messaged Elias, saying she had urgent business and would contact him next time, then hurried to the airport.

The traffic was congested, and by the time she finally arrived, there were only ten minutes left before Mrs. Young's boarding closed.

"Madam..."

Mrs. Young was anxious too. On seeing her, she immediately ran over.

"Turn on Bluetooth quickly; I'll send you a recording."

Juliana hurriedly turned on Bluetooth.

It was a recording of Wynter making a call to Isaac.

"The idea to kill Juliana in the village was mine and Angus's. The old man's death was deserved. But the bakery and studio explosions? Juliana was assassinated several times. Wasn't it you who instructed Angus to do it?"

On the other end, there was an unknown reply. Then Wynter added, "You made that pervert Wayne notice Juliana. You also stirred Chase to retaliate against her, leaving a record of their conflict for Angus to exploit. If Evan finds out about all of this, do you think he'd let you go?"

Isaac said something inaudible, but Wynter was furious.

"Yes, you killed Old Mr. Grant, and the Grant Family didn't do anything to you. Of course, Juliana isn't as important as Old Mr. Grant, but I have evidence of you instructing Angus, and calls with your 'backer' detailing the entire bribery process. If you dare touch everything I have now, I'll make sure we all go down together."

This brief recording shook Juliana to her core.

"Madam, I secretly recorded this when Wynter was on the phone. I wasn't sure if it would be useful to you, but I didn't trust anyone else and had to hand it to you personally to feel assured."

"It's very useful, thank you."

Juliana suppressed her turbulent emotions as she responded.

Although it couldn't be used as direct evidence, it could corroborate Wynter and Isaac's involvement in the murders.

In front of her, Mrs. Young deleted the recording entirely from her phone.

"Wynter is currently placed by President Grant at Dreamfall Manor, but please believe that President Grant isn't keeping her around for good. I'm not defending anyone, just..." She hesitated for a moment, "I can tell President Grant still cares about you."

About her?

Juliana's lips curled into a bitter smile.

She quickly gathered her emotions. "Flights don't wait for anyone. You should go. Don't come back once you leave. Do you have enough money to settle abroad?"

"It's enough; President Grant gave me a lot. Madam, take care."

With eyes red, Mrs. Young hurriedly pulled her suitcase and headed for the gate.

Watching her leave, Juliana, feeling sorrowful, picked up her phone and called the police.

"Hello, I know Wynter Windsor's whereabouts..."

After seeing off Mrs. Young, Juliana went to Blackstar Dynamics.

Jared was in a meeting but had Ben bring her to his office.

"Miss Jacobs, please have a seat. President Langley will be with you shortly. He specifically instructed me to prepare a cappuccino for you. I hope you like it?"

Juliana took the coffee and sipped it lightly, a faint smile on her face.

"Even the coffee is brewed so well. It seems Assistant Hayes really understands President Langley's mind. The tasks he assigns you, you handle comprehensively. No wonder he relies on you so heavily and can't do without you."

Ben used to handle some of the less glamorous tasks for Jared behind the scenes, efficiently and cleanly, which Jared indeed appreciated.

If it hadn't been for Lynn's abrupt dismissal, he would have continued being the man behind Jared's back.

Ben slightly nodded and responded flawlessly, "It's my duty to ease President Langley's burdens. President Langley always takes good care of those around him, especially when it comes to matters concerning Miss Jacobs. He gives detailed instructions, so I naturally dare not slack. It's my honor that Miss Jacobs enjoys my coffee."

Adrian had mentioned Jared's close relationship with Ben; now it seemed accurate.

A talented man like Ben, who caused him no worries, Jared had every reason to favor.

But if he liked men, why use her as a cover?

Juliana's eyes darkened, she smiled, saying no more.

Soon after, Jared returned from his meeting.

In a well-tailored dark suit without a single crease, his brow exuded a calm readiness, showcasing his composed charm in controlling a situation.

This was Jared at work.

Seeing Juliana, he laughed and asked, "Got impatient waiting?"

Juliana pushed the black gift box in front of him, "President Langley's gift is too expensive for me to accept."

Jared lightly tapped the table with his fingers, his gaze falling on her face, still smiling, "Gifts for someone special aren't about the cost, just the sincerity."

"Really?" Juliana propped her chin on her hand, looking at him with emotions unreadable in her eyes, "What exactly does President Langley like about me?"

Chapter 162: The Sinclair Family's Precious Daughter

"I want the truth," she added.

Jared Langley smiled slightly and was silent for two seconds.

"I just like your straightforward nature. Talking to you really doesn't require too much effort."

Juliana Jacobs raised her eyebrows without speaking.

Jared Langley propped his elbow on the desk, looking serious, "You're someone who knows what you want, lives clearly, acts decisively, never dithers, but also knows when to show and when to hide. You have principles and tactics. You're undoubtedly the perfect choice for my wife."

Jared Langley glanced around the office and continued, "You should have some understanding of the Langley Family's situation. I will be the heir of the Langley Family in the future, so I'm very cautious in choosing a wife, but I don't like my parents making decisions for me."

Juliana Jacobs laughed at his words, "Aren't you thinking a bit ahead? Adrian Langley may not be an easy opponent, and your uncle doesn't even have children yet. They'll all be your competitors."

Jared Langley smiled meaningfully, "My uncle won't have children."

Juliana Jacobs was taken aback, "Why?"

Jared Langley lowered his gaze for a moment, "It's a physical issue of the Langley men. If you marry me, you'll know later."

Juliana Jacobs's eyelashes fluttered, and she didn't press for more details. Instead, she pushed an agreement in front of him.

This was a technical cooperation agreement for the overall energy storage system of a smart home gallery.

Jared Langley quickly flipped through it and looked up, "What does this mean?"

Juliana Jacobs smiled lightly, "It's a repayment for you saving my life last time. This energy storage system is more stable, with greater capacity, lower cost, and more safety. Using it in your smart home solution will completely solve your current backup power issue."

Jared Langley realized something, "So, what you mean is..."

Juliana Jacobs pursed her lips, "We owe each other nothing."

Jared Langley leaned back into his chair, his gaze toward her deepening.

"If you marry me, you'll become part of the Langley Family, and I'll protect you thoroughly. And I can guarantee to you that after we get married, there will be no other women around me. What Evan Grant can't do, I can. What he can give you, I can give even more."

Juliana Jacobs wore a polite smile on her face and responded earnestly, "President Langley's capabilities are unquestionable, but what I want, you surely can't give."

In a family like the Langley Family, especially with someone like Jared Langley, the wife will always come last.

This is the fatal flaw of both Evan Grant and Jared Langley.

Having already experienced an unequal high-society marriage, Juliana Jacobs wants respect and equality, which is precisely what they can't offer.

"Think about it?" Jared Langley frowned when he saw her so resolute.

Juliana Jacobs stood up, "Even if you wait a year, you'll get the same answer."

"If you are interested, sign the agreement, President Langley. I actually hope to become business partners with you."

After speaking, she ignored Jared Langley's solemn expression and turned to leave.

Just after leaving his office, she hadn't walked far when she ran into Leona Sheridan coming out of the chairman's office.

Leona Sheridan liked to make an entrance everywhere she went, always surrounded by a large entourage.

Seeing Juliana Jacobs coming out of Jared Langley's office, she instantly showed displeasure.

"Mrs. Grant, I don't care if you're busy maneuvering between men, but you can't bring the Grant Family's dirty business to our Langley Family's territory. No matter how clever your tactics are with men, you shouldn't try to fool my son."

Her words immediately drew odd looks toward Juliana Jacobs.

Juliana Jacobs wasn't annoyed, maintaining a light smile on her face.

"Mrs. Langley's acting skills are a pity not to be on stage. But performing baseless accusations and stirring up trouble too long will not only bore the audience but also replace the actors sooner or later."

"Are you saying my husband will tire of me?"

Leona Sheridan was surprised that she would target what she cared about most.

Juliana Jacobs's smile widened, "I didn't say that, but Mrs. Langley's sixth sense is sharp."

Leona Sheridan was infuriated.

"You, a woman who flaunts her charms and still finds no favor, dare scream at me on the Langley premises, if I don't teach you a lesson today, you won't know your place."

After finishing, she looked toward her assistant, ordering sternly, "Tie this woman up and throw her on the street, let everyone see how shameless Evan Grant's woman is."

At that moment, Jared Langley heard the commotion outside and came out of his office.

He stood between Leona Sheridan and Juliana Jacobs, frowning at his mother, "Mom, this is a company, and the Langley Family's dignity needs you to uphold it."

Leona Sheridan was shocked looking at her son, "Are you accusing me of losing my composure for that woman?"

"Let her leave," Jared Langley said expressionlessly.

"Fine, fine, very well. Today, I'll personally teach this vixen a lesson and see who dares to stop me."

As she raised her hand to slap Juliana Jacobs, Jared Langley stopped her.

Mrs. Langley grew even angrier, "Even when her man doesn't like her, and her ex-brother-in-law avoids her, why does a worthless woman catch your eye..."

Juliana Jacobs couldn't stand her harsh words any longer, interrupting, "Mrs. Langley's actions today truly reflect the upbringing of the Langley Family."

"Did you hear that, she insulted our whole family, and you still protect her!"

Leona Sheridan was persistent to break free from her son and attack Juliana Jacobs, even instructing her assistants and secretaries to take action.

The scene became chaotic for a while.

At that moment, two men emerged from the chairman's office.

"During office hours, it's chaos like a marketplace, what kind of behavior is this!"

Victor Langley's voice quickly silenced the scene.

Juliana Jacobs was stunned to see Elias Langley beside him.

Wasn't he supposed to be busy with something important and had to make her wait for half an hour?

"Husband..." Leona Sheridan walked quickly to Victor Langley's side, looking deeply aggrieved, "This married woman came to the office to seduce your son and even insulted me, predicting the breakup of our relationship..."

Elias Langley and Juliana Jacobs locked eyes for two seconds before he calmly looked away.

Having been humiliated and stood up that morning, she probably wouldn't want his help.

Thus, he stood indifferently aside, like an uninvolved bystander.

Juliana Jacobs felt a tug on her heart, wanting to explain what happened that morning right away, but with the Langley Family present, she couldn't open her mouth.

Meanwhile, Leona Sheridan had successfully provoked Victor Langley's anger.

But the moment Victor Langley's gaze fell on Juliana Jacobs, a look of great astonishment flashed in his eyes.

How can it be her?

No, it's not her.

But she looks too much like her when she was young...

Victor Langley's thoughts almost got scrambled.

With her husband supporting her presence, Leona Sheridan was about to erupt again, intending to have Juliana Jacobs thrown out by her secretaries.

Then, from beside her, the man spoke in a slightly reluctant tone as he returned to his senses, "This isn't a place Mrs. Grant should be. However, my wife's behavior was also inappropriate earlier, and I extend my apologies. Perhaps you should leave for today, and I will ensure you receive an explanation later."

As the voice fell, Leona Sheridan almost couldn't believe her ears, shocked as she looked at her husband.

Even Elias Langley instinctively glanced at his elder brother.

Victor Langley was reasonable, so Juliana Jacobs was easy to deal with.

She nodded, "Please don't call me Mrs. Grant, my last name is Jacobs, and I'm Aetherflame's technical director. I came today to deliver an agreement to President Langley. But now, it seems, Blackstar and Aetherflame should not cooperate."

Having said that, she turned and left.

The crowd dispersed immediately.

"Husband, if you let that wench go just like this, where's the face of the Langley Family?" Leona Sheridan said unwillingly.

Victor Langley collected his thoughts, looked down at her, "How powerful can she be to make Mrs. Langley act so indelicately?"

One sentence left Leona Sheridan at a loss for words.

Subsequently, Victor Langley looked at Elias Langley, "Didn't you say the Sinclair Family's precious daughter's blood test materials appeared in Kenton. How'd your investigation go?"

Chapter 163: My Husband's Name Is Elias Langley

"She's dead," Elias Langley said.

Admitting Dorian Lowell's identity, this conclusion was also relayed back to the Sinclair Family.

Now he said the same to everyone.

Victor Langley was slightly surprised, "But you've taken her position as your wife; we have demands from the Sinclair Family, and we must not offend them. The three-year agreement still needs to be honored."

Elias Langley pressed his lips, "I know."

Victor Langley softened his tone, "I understand you're just a normal man. If you really find it necessary, discreetly arranging for someone on the side is not out of the question."

Elias Langley gave a faint, emotionless twitch of his lips, saying, "I'm in a hurry; I'll be off now."

...

Juliana Jacobs walked out of Blackstar Tower, and Leona Sheridan's words stabbed at her heart like thorns. It would be false to say she wasn't upset.

At some point, it began to rain. Her car was parked at the far end of the open parking lot; running there would get her soaked through.

While hesitating, a large black umbrella silently appeared over her head.

She turned back and saw Quinn Shepherd.

"Miss Jacobs, the rain is quite heavy; please use this umbrella first."

Juliana accepted the umbrella but didn't express thanks and instead directly asked, "Where is Elias Langley? Doesn't he have time now?"

Quinn Shepherd looked troubled, "Mr. Langley is here today for important business talks. We must head to the base immediately; the car is already waiting over there."

Juliana finally couldn't suppress her anger, "He took the initiative to provoke me; now he's suddenly distant and indifferent. What is this? Even if you want to draw a line, at least say it clearly before we become strangers again?"

"Uh..." Quinn Shepherd gave an awkward smile, "Miss Jacobs, please don't be upset. We'll only be gone for three days. Once we return, I'll contact you immediately."

This finally sounded reasonable.

Juliana pressed her lips, saying no more, and walked alone into the rain.

...

Chairman office of Blackstar Dynamics.

Leona Sheridan had left, leaving Victor Langley sitting alone at the desk.

The assistant served him a pot of freshly brewed Biluochun tea, but he didn't drink, just stared at the heavy rain outside the window.

"Have I been too indifferent to matters in Kenton these past few years?" he suddenly asked.

The assistant didn't understand why he was asking and didn't reply immediately.

"I didn't expect Evan Grant's wife to look so much like her. Do you think the second son checked into it?"

The assistant, having been with him for twenty years, understood the context straight away.

"The second son operates methodically; he probably checked. Since they've officially admitted to 'deceased,' that person most likely is no longer alive."

Victor Langley nodded, "What he admits to is definitely certain. I heard Evan Grant and his wife don't get along."

"Yes, they're going through a divorce," the assistant replied in a low voice.

Victor Langley lowered his head, touching his face, "Do you think she would like more mature men?"

The assistant was stunned for quite a while before giving a strained caution, "Chairman Langley, if you indeed have such intentions, you must keep it well hidden from your wife. Otherwise, like the previous ones, they might vanish without a trace."

Victor Langley took a sip of tea, his gaze deep and unreadable, yet his tone was calm and unruffled.

"The tea today is brewed well; you'll get extra performance bonuses this month."

...

The police were too late.

By the time they reached Dreamfall Manor, Stella Windsor had already fled.

However, the fingerprints obtained at the scene matched the half-print left on the sneakers, which also corresponded to the ones retrieved from Platinum Bay.

As a result, her suspicion level in Chase Miller's murder had significantly increased, officially making her a wanted person by the police.

In just three days, Cortexa Group also experienced sudden upheaval.

Ryan Warner strived to secure investment for the lab with a "self-developed" project, seemingly steering the main business out of trouble. However, at the board meeting, Isaac Grant strongly opposed the funding, and soon the group shockingly revealed a broken financial chain.

Investigation revealed that apart from the lab having already consumed a significant portion of the company's investments, Isaac Grant had secretly diverted massive funds for bribery support, plunging Cortexa into a financial crisis.

The Grant father and son, who once had almost full control, suddenly became the target for everyone's blame. Meanwhile, Evan Grant, who was already marginalized, was unable to turn the tides, and Cortexa Group officially faced a bankruptcy crisis.

Abyssal Reach.

In rage, Isaac Grant smashed everything in the room.

George Grant couldn't stand it, advising, "He says he doesn't care about you anymore, thinking Cortexa is about to go bankrupt and we have no money for him. But haven't we hit rock bottom yet? There's still hope!"

Isaac Grant grabbed him by the collar, eyes bloodshot, questioning, "Weren't you always saying Cortexa had plenty of money? How long has it been before the funds broke? The Grant Family is the richest in Kenton, so where's the money?"

"Of course there's money!" George Grant struggled to pull back his collar, "I'm afraid most of it is still in the old lady's hands, not even put into the company!"

He took a breath, then said sinisterly, "This matter is not simple, there must be a mole in the company!"

"A mole?" Isaac Grant snorted coldly, pressing a button on the remote, "I've already found him."

The door to the secret room opened, revealing Ryan Warner suspended in mid-air below a beam, covered in injuries, barely alive.

George Grant was startled, "How could it be him?"

"Since we took over Cortexa, he's kept asking the company to invest in his lab. He used up half of the company's cash flow. If he's not the mole, who else could it be?"

After speaking, he looked at Ryan Warner, "Tell me, who made you do this?"

"It was... it was Juliana Jacobs," Ryan Warner said weakly.

"What does she want?"

"To bankrupt Dawn."

Isaac Grant angrily shouted at George Grant, "Did you hear that? We've been played by her from start to finish!"

George Grant's face turned ashen, "This woman cannot be kept, we should have never gone soft on her in the beginning."

Isaac Grant sneered, "Do you really think she could do it alone? She and Evan Grant are merely acting in discord; they've been playing us like fools!"

George Grant was surprised, "Weren't they always in a deadlock?"

"That was all for us to see!" Isaac Grant said through gritted teeth, "They don't even need to discuss it; just a glance and they know the next step. Their tacit understanding is terrifying!"

He clenched his fist, eyes filled with a fierce determination.

"I'm going to get the Grant family's money. And that woman, I won't let her go either. Since they want to play dirty, don't blame me for playing all the way with my methods."

...

Meanwhile, Juliana Jacobs was just coming out of the lab.

She shivered, rubbing her neck, thinking she was catching a cold.

At this moment, her phone rang.

It was Quinn Shepherd calling as agreed.

"Mr. Langley has a dinner meeting soon, are you available now?" Quinn Shepherd asked.

Juliana Jacobs looked at the time, it was almost half-past five. Just as she was about to say "yes," Adrian Langley's figure appeared at the company entrance.

"Can it be later?" Juliana said into the phone.

Quinn Shepherd hesitated for a moment, glanced at his boss, whose face flashed with disappointment, and said into the phone, "Then... let's get in touch again."

After hanging up, Juliana looked at Adrian Langley, "You better have something important."

"There's progress on what you asked me to investigate about Isaac Grant. Four years ago, he was suddenly sent abroad by Old Mr. Grant, and his citizenship was canceled, so he could never return. A few months after he left, Old Mr. Grant mysteriously passed away."

This matched what Stella Windsor mentioned in her call.

"For him to come back smoothly this time, he borrowed the identity of Largo Miller, an overseas Chinese from a small country in Aethel. No one is chasing him domestically, all thanks to the support he's receiving behind the scenes. Isaac Grant also controls many gray and black industries in Valtara, he's quite influential."

After hearing this, a cold light flashed in Juliana's eyes, "Since we can't shake him abroad, then we'll make him rot on this land."

Adrian Langley nodded, "I heard a rumor that Cortexa's cash flow was completely used up by him."

Juliana was slightly stunned, "Then we have to hurry and make preparations."

Adrian patted her hand, "Take care of yourself."

With that, he was about to leave but was called back by Juliana.

"Does your uncle usually live at the Langley Residence?"

Adrian Langley didn't understand why she suddenly asked about Elias Langley but still replied, "He doesn't like living at home, most of the time he stays at The Apex Hotel."

So that's how it is.

After parting with Adrian, Juliana returned to her apartment to personally make a serving of sugar-steamed crisp cheese, calculating the time Elias Langley would return from socializing, and headed to the hotel.

She had been to his room before and remembered it.

She pressed the doorbell.

After a moment, the door opened.

A woman, wearing a silky strap nightgown, with a charming figure, appeared at the door.

"Who are you looking for?" The woman had a Kingsford accent, her voice a bit coy.

Juliana was immediately taken aback, unwilling to believe the suspicion in her mind, she subconsciously took a half-step back.

"Sorry, I might have the wrong room..."

The woman leaned against the door, giving a lazy smile, "Or maybe you don't. This is my husband's room, and my husband's name is Elias Langley."

Chapter 164: Isaac Grant's Last Frenzy

Juliana was initially a bit flustered.

But after she stated her name, she calmed down instead.

Knowing he had a family, but still willing to wait for him to handle it, was a choice on the moral edge.

Since she chose it, she must face it.

Juliana turned her gaze to her, her eyes unusually calm, "Is that so? Then I didn't come to the wrong place. Are you the woman he rightfully married?"

The other woman looked only twenty-one or twenty-two, yet her figure was perfectly proportional, the silk nightdress outlining curves that men couldn't look away from.

She laughed, "How is there still a reason in this world where the mistress questions the legitimate wife's status?"

Juliana was not annoyed, "There are plenty of unreasonable things in this world. How many years have you been married?"

The woman's face froze for a moment and then she looked at the ceiling and said, "It doesn't matter how many years we've been married, you don't stand a chance because Elias and our Sinclair Family have an engagement. He must marry a Sinclair woman, or he'll be ruined forever."

Juliana curled her lips, nodding, "Then Miss Sinclair better hold on tight, because... a man bound by coercion, who knows how long he can stay."

The woman's expression suddenly changed, her sense of superiority was instantly replaced by anger.

"You're just a tool for him to have fun outside, like a roadside meal, not even a mistress, how do you have the face to consider yourself human?"

Juliana's eyes glanced over the woman's slightly twisted face from anger, smiling faintly, "I never thought Elias Langley had such poor taste, so his liking for roadside meals is understandable."

After saying this, she lifted her foot and left.

Passing the front desk, she walked a few steps and then returned.

"Hello, I'd like to leave something here; could you please hand it over to the customer on this side?"

The attendant nodded, "Of course."

Juliana handed over the sugar steamed cheese she had been holding without taking out.

"Please find a fridge for it and give it to the owner of this room tomorrow morning."

She wrote down Elias Langley's room number.

Leaving the hotel, Juliana didn't feel good inside.

The night wind greeted her, though it was just early autumn. It gave her an intense chill.

Words like "tool for fun," "roadside meal," "mistress" crazily echoed in her mind, crushing her proud self-esteem.

She had once resented Stella Windsor, always priding herself on her sense and clarity, but never imagined she'd end up in this despised position just after her divorce.

The feeling of self-loathing suddenly surged, covering all the sadness, leaving only contempt for her foolish choice.

Then she took out her phone and blocked all contact with Elias Langley.

In the middle of the night, Elias Langley returned to the hotel and immediately saw Isabelle Sinclair using a computer by the window.

She was wearing cotton pajamas, and when she saw him returning, she immediately got up to greet him.

But Elias Langley frowned.

"Why are you here?"

"Grandpa asked me to come."

Elias Langley's eyes darkened for a moment.

He had drunk a lot at the social event, took off his coat, and Isabelle reached out to take it, but Elias avoided her.

Isabelle pouted, "Brother-in-law, the identification center said that the ashes you admitted to were not Dorian Lowell's. Grandpa is so angry, he thinks you're brushing him off."

Elias himself hung up his coat, speaking coldly, "If he thinks it's easy, let him find it himself."

Isabelle was choked by his words for a moment, then smiled, "Mom and Dad didn't dare talk to him like that; you should go say it yourself."

Elias averted his gaze, "Did anyone come looking for me tonight?"

"Yes," Isabelle nodded, "Someone claiming to be a company president wants you to look at their products. I've put the document on your desk."

She didn't come to find him?

Elias was silent for two seconds, "Don't touch my stuff again."

"Brother-in-law..." She sidled up to him, "Isn't it because I came to Kenton without notice? Grandpa got really mad, saying you're deliberately fooling him, I came to give you a heads up."

Elias's gaze softened a bit, "You wanted to come play yourself, don't use me as an excuse. When do you plan to leave?"

"We just met and you're already driving me away?"

"Aren't you going to school?"

Isabelle pouted, "It's a research exchange, I have to be here for a few days."

Elias ignored her, "Go to sleep, if I'm late, don't wait for me."

Then he went to his room.

Closing the door, he tried to call Juliana but found he'd been blocked...

At five in the morning, the sky was still dark as ink.

But the old Grant Residence suddenly lit up.

Old Mrs. Grant was dragged from her bed to the living room.

Seeing her loyal Peter Dawson with a broken hand, the old lady firmly rolled her Buddhist beads, looking at the two men on the sofa.

"Are you two planning to change the feng shui of the Grant Residence?"

George was a bit uncomfortable sitting, while Isaac smiled, "Grandmother understands me; I do have such an idea."

Mrs. Grant's silver hair was slightly messy, but her eyes were incredibly calm.

"Even if you kill this old lady, you won't get what you want."

Isaac was not in a hurry, "Didn't you make thorough plans, leaving everything in Evan Grant's hands? Just wait, he'll be here soon."

The old lady's face darkened, "The most imprudent thing the old man did was keep you; he shouldn't have made Evan vow before he died not to harm you. You living is..."

"Mom," George couldn't listen anymore, "Isaac is your grandson, too. If you and dad were fair, would he be forced into this? I'm just not like you..."

"You're indeed different from us," the old lady interrupted him, "The Grants' intelligence, you haven't inherited a bit. Instead, you've learned incompetence and arrogance, your eyes haven't even developed well. You either married a foot-washer or spoiled a wastrel son. If it weren't for Evan's talents, I'd regret giving birth to you."

George was rendered speechless by the old lady's words.

Isaac grew impatient and ordered someone to tie up the old lady.

However, the old lady charged straight at the coffee table.

Fortunately, George reacted quickly, rushing to cushion her, failing her attempt at suicide.

That was his own mother, George got a bit scared and persuaded, "Mom, it's nothing serious, as long as Evan cooperates, I'll ensure you live in comfort."

Even with her hands tied behind her back, Old Mrs. Grant spat at him, "I have no son like you!"

At this moment, Evan came.

And he came alone.

Isaac raised his chin contemptuously at him, "Coming alone, trying to show courage? Think I don't dare touch you?"

He gestured to two tattooed men beside him, who immediately approached Evan.

Evan just smiled faintly, "If we're comparing capabilities, you can't beat me. Haven't you noticed you haven't been growing facial hair?"

Isaac was caught off guard, ordering the two to halt, asking, "What did you do to me?"

Evan raised an eyebrow, "I added a little chemical to the anti-inflammatory medication you use; I think you might be more suited as a eunuch."

George was furious, "How can you make your brother childless?"

Isaac was furious too, about to order them to beat Evan to death.

Evan remained composed, "Are you sure you want to waste time here?"

Reminded by Evan, Isaac gestured for the men to step back.

Then he tossed at Evan a will.

"Sign it, and later I'll break your limbs and take care of you until you're thirty-five. Now, you still have to call your wife over to trade her life for grandmother's."

The reason for keeping Evan until he turned thirty-five was that the old Mr. Grant's will stated: If Evan died before thirty-five, all the family assets would be donated to charities.

And as long as Juliana was removed, Evan would have no direct family, stabilizing everything under Isaac's control.

But Evan laughed, "Brother, you're behind on the news. I've completed my divorce with her; she's not a Grant anymore, no need to find her."

Both Isaac and George were taken aback.

The plan was disrupted, Isaac instantly flew into a rage.

"You think distancing yourself protects her? Evan Grant, you're all bluster and no power, you can't protect anyone!"

Chapter 165: "Brother-in-law, Who Is Juliana?"

Evan Grant glanced at the person next to Isaac Grant, and the relaxed expression on his face showed a slight crack.

His most trusted assistant, Angus Slade, was not here.

Isaac Grant gave him a look as if this was an "unexpected" discovery, finally managing to laugh in triumph.

"I don't like that woman, whether she's your wife or not, she won't live this time."

Evan Grant's eyes grew deep, "Let's talk when you succeed, I need to save Grandma's life, I won't sign this will."

...

Over there, Juliana Jacobs spent the entire night trying to calm herself and only slept for two hours before dawn.

She used light makeup to hide her fatigue and was about to leave when Jared Langley's call came in.

She hesitated for two seconds and then answered.

"Are you up?" he asked.

"I'm about to head out, what's up?"

Jared Langley chuckled, "I'm in the parking lot downstairs waiting to have breakfast with you."

Juliana Jacobs put down the phone, pondering how to make him understand her determination to refuse as she hurried to the parking lot.

Jared Langley stood alone by the Jaguar, dressed in a sharp suit and looking quite suave.

Seeing Juliana Jacobs approaching, he smiled, "Director Jacobs really is..."

Jared Langley was halfway through his sentence when he heard a man speaking in Valtaran nearby: "That woman usually leaves here for work at 7:30 AM, have you seen her?"

Juliana Jacobs' expression changed instantly, covering Jared Langley's mouth, but the other party had already sensed the commotion, sweeping his sharp gaze over.

Jared Langley reacted swiftly, yanking open the car door and shoving her into the passenger seat while he quickly circled around to the driver's seat.

But a group of tattooed brutes ambushing near Juliana Jacobs' car had already rushed over, intercepting Jared Langley halfway.

Jared Langley wasn't bad at fighting, but these men were all bigger than him, specially trained, and vicious in their coordinated attacks, numbering seven or eight.

Soon, they had Jared Langley subdued.

Meanwhile, on the other side, a tattooed brute rudely yanked open the car door, attempting to drag Juliana Jacobs out.

Just then, Ethan Carter arrived with a dozen bodyguards, quickly joining the fray.

Evan Grant's men were formidable fighters, but these foreign "Black Wolf" were extremely difficult to deal with.

In the chaos, Ethan Carter desperately fended off a few attackers, shouting hoarsely at Jared Langley, "Can't hold on, get Miss Jacobs out of here fast!"

Jared Langley seized the opportunity, swiftly returning to the car, and in a few moves, beat back the tattooed brute pulling Juliana Jacobs, slipping into the car.

He floored the gas pedal, the vehicle sped out, instantly bursting out of the parking lot.

Ethan Carter took a punch, spitting blood, grabbed his phone and sent a voice message, "President Grant, the opponent's too strong, the police aren't here yet, Miss Jacobs, she..."

Before he could finish speaking, he took a blow to the head, his phone knocked from his hand, and he fainted.

At the Grant Family's old residence, a standoff was underway.

The old lady couldn't hold on due to her age, clamped down, her body began to sway.

"Evan, don't worry about me, leave here, protect yourself."

Isaac Grant sneered, "Since he's here, he can't leave whether he signs the will or not."

Just as the words fell, the Grant Family's gate was suddenly smashed open by a police armored vehicle, and over ten SWAT officers swiftly stormed in.

Seeing this, several of Isaac Grant's henchmen immediately threw down the old lady and fiercely resisted.

Isaac Grant's face turned ashen, glaring at Evan Grant, who remained calm throughout, "You actually called the police, do you think the police can touch me?"

Evan Grant smirked coolly, "Once you're inside, you might want to see if your backer is still useful."

Isaac Grant's expression changed drastically.

Beside him, George Grant couldn't help but speak up in reproach, "Evan, family scandals shouldn't be exposed, how could you..."

Before he could finish his sentence, in the chaos, a tattooed brute kicked away by the police staggered and helplessly swung his knife towards Isaac Grant.

Caught off-guard, Isaac Grant surprisingly grabbed his father, who was speaking for him, pulling him in front.

The blade sank into George Grant's chest.

Even the old lady was shocked, while Evan Grant only coldly averted his gaze.

George Grant gazed in disbelief at his son, whom he'd spoiled since childhood, shock and despair filling his eyes.

Seeing that Isaac Grant and his men were about to be subdued, Evan Grant's phone beeped.

Reading Ethan Carter's voice message, he walked out to the yard grimly.

After briefly contemplating, he picked up his phone and dialed a number...

The Apex Hotel.

Elias Langley was about to head out when Isabelle Sinclair grabbed him.

"Brother-in-law, have breakfast with me."

Elias Langley wanted to go to Aetherflame to clarify things with that woman, so he replied indifferently, "No time, if you're angry, you can starve yourself."

Isabelle Sinclair pouted; the whole family spoiled her, except him.

She grabbed his car keys, "If you won't have breakfast with me, don't think about leaving."

Elias Langley was about to speak when his phone rang.

It was an unfamiliar number.

Normally, he wouldn't answer such calls, but a strong instinct compelled him to pick up.

"Put the keys back."

He ordered, then walked to the window to answer.

"Mr. Langley."

Evan Grant's voice came from the phone.

Elias Langley pressed his lips together, his tone detached, "President Grant, you managed to get my number, quite the skill you have."

Evan Grant didn't waste time, "Regarding my wife, I'd like to make a deal with you."

At this moment, Elias Langley's phone beeped with a call waiting signal.

He glanced at the name, his gaze sharp, "Sorry, I don't trade her."

He promptly hung up on Evan Grant and answered Jared Langley's call.

Jared Langley sounded urgent, hardly giving him time to speak.

"Uncle, Juliana and I are being pushed onto the mountain road by a group of desperate criminals, they're determined, we can't escape."

Elias Langley's heart tightened, he spoke gravely, "Find a way to stall them, send me your location."

Then, he turned around, picked up his car keys, and walked towards the door.

"Brother-in-law, who's Juliana?" Isabelle Sinclair asked.

"Don't ask what you shouldn't be meddling in."

Isabelle Sinclair stamped her foot in frustration.

Elias Langley opened the door just as a server was about to ring the bell, holding a plate of sweet steamed custard.

Seeing him, the server hurriedly said, "Sir, this was left at the front desk last night by a lady, she asked us to deliver it to you at this time today."

Elias Langley froze suddenly, instantly understanding, and turned his gaze to Isabelle Sinclair.

Isabelle Sinclair panicked, "Aren't you averse to women? I was helping you fend off bad romances, what's wrong?"

Urgent matters awaited, Elias Langley shot her a cold glance, leaving a "I'll deal with you later" and rushed away.

As they emerged from the apartment's underground parking, Jared Langley's car was closely pursued by two black SUVs.

Jared Langley sped along, from the city center, was forced all the way to the suburban roads.

Just like when Juliana Jacobs' car had been forced toward the seaside.

After sending Elias Langley the location share from Jared Langley's phone, Juliana Jacobs calmly instructed him to wreck one of the SUVs.

Yet ultimately, only the remaining SUV forced them to halt at a spot near a cliff.

Plants grew densely on the steep slope below, the river rushed past.

"I'll distract them, find an opportunity to leave."

Jared Langley said, unbuckling the seatbelt and expertly getting out, tossing his suit jacket back onto the seat casually.

The shirt outlined tense shoulder and back lines, he took a few steady steps toward the opposing vehicle's hood and halted.

At this moment, the driver's door of the SUV opened, Angus Slade stepped out.

The other side's door simultaneously opened, and out came Stella Windsor.

Chapter 166: The Grant Family Tower Collapses

Juliana quickly opened the door and got out of the car, standing by Jared Langley's side.

Stella Windsor looked at her and said with a smile, "Sister-in-law, I'm here to send you off for the last time today. You don't mind, do you?"

She paused, not waiting for Juliana to respond, and continued, "Even if you do mind, it's no use. I insist on giving to you, and you have to accept it."

Juliana gave a very faint smile, "About to face death without realizing it, fool. Only you, Stella Windsor, could be such an idiot."

Hearing this, Stella immediately snapped angrily, "Do you think working with Ryan Warner will help you turn the tables? Let me tell you, soon I'll be pregnant with my brother's child. Your marriage with him is

doomed to fail. I will rightfully marry him, and every year during Qingming Festival, we will lovingly visit your grave together."

Juliana raised an eyebrow, "Are you saying that even now Evan Grant hasn't said he wants to marry you?"

Stella couldn't understand why she said that, so she glared at her, not speaking.

Juliana said lightly, "Evan Grant and I finalized the divorce paperwork a few days ago. If he hasn't said he wants to marry you, then he just wants to treat you as a plaything."

These words instantly pierced Stella's heart.

She shrieked, "Once you're dead, he'll only love me! Angus Slade, do it!"

"Don't worry about me; take care of yourself."

After saying this to Jared Langley, Juliana grabbed Stella's hand reaching for her hair and twisted it backward.

Meanwhile, Angus, on his way to attack Juliana, was intercepted by Jared. The two men engaged in a fierce confrontation.

Stella initially wanted to help Angus sneak attack Jared but was almost having her hand broken by Juliana.

In fury, Stella pushed Juliana towards the edge of the cliff. Juliana swiftly dodged and instead flung her over.

Just as she was about to stagger back to a safe distance from the cliff's edge, Jared, retreating swiftly to block Angus's heavy strike, accidentally crashed into the off-balance Stella!

Stella lost her balance and fell backward but managed to grab Jared's clothing.

Juliana rushed to grab Jared but was knocked unconscious by Angus's punch.

Unable to stop their momentum, Jared and Stella both fell off the steep cliff in an instant...

When Elias Langley arrived, neither of the two cars had anyone inside.

However, the Jaguar's dashcam recorded the entire incident.

He immediately arranged for personnel to search for Jared's whereabouts and then calmly dialed Evan Grant's phone number.

"Where's Isaac Grant?"

"Still at the old mansion," Evan Grant replied.

Elias hung up and turned to Quinn Shepherd, "Go to the Grant Family's old mansion and use any means necessary to find out his next plan and the whereabouts of the hostage."

Quinn hurriedly took his leave.

Elias gazed calmly in the direction of the cliff, loosened his tie forcefully.

Forty minutes later, Quinn returned.

"Isaac confessed everything. He plans to kidnap Miss Jacobs and sell her to the neighboring Valtara."

Elias's eyes suddenly darkened.

Valtara is a place riddled with black market activities.

If Juliana were sold there, she would likely face humiliation and torture until death.

"Stay here, ensure you find Jared!"

With that, he led a team quickly southwest.

Grant Family's old mansion.

The tattooed men had all been subdued.

Isaac, delirious, was shackled hand and foot and taken away.

The doctor provided emergency treatment for George Grant but shook his head to Evan.

"Your father's injuries are too severe. He can't be moved at all. Any slight disturbance could hasten his death," the doctor said quietly.

The implication was that George Grant did not have much time left.

Evan walked up to him, staring expressionlessly.

Perhaps realizing his end was near, George raised his eyes to his son, wanting to say something to ease the relationship, but Evan spoke first.

"I've already transferred the shares of the Cortexa Group to you yesterday."

George was taken aback.

Evan said coldly, "Cortexa Group seems powerful, but in reality, its foundation is fragile, unable to withstand the slightest wave. Should the cash flow misuse lead to a broken capital chain, it could collapse instantly. I've struggled to maintain it for years and am already overwhelmed. Now it's yours and Isaac's."

In that instant, George understood everything and was left speechless with shock.

This unfilial son had clearly pushed all the debts and aftermath onto him, making him bear everything underground.

However, if his death could contribute to the Grant Family, so be it.

George spoke with difficulty, "Evan Grant, I've always backed the wrong horse in life. But I don't think I'm mediocre. You all look down on me, except Lily Windsor... only she regarded me as someone important."

Old Mrs. Grant was not seriously hurt, wanting to look at her son one last time, but gave up on hearing these words.

George's lips had lost their color, gasping for air, he continued, "I have nothing to ask of you, since you are divorced, just marry Stella. Treat her well for a lifetime. This is my only request, you must agree!"

Evan snorted coldly, "Because I'm the Grant Family heir, I have to cover up your disgraceful affairs and constantly clean up after your one-night romances. To protect the family's reputation, I was harsh to my wife, even unable to keep my own child, and you? You colluded with Isaac to scheme against me, even forcefully saddling me with a woman you violated. Are you fit to be a father?"

George felt cold all over, unable to speak.

Evan's tone grew increasingly icy, "Since you're barely alive, let's sever our father-son relationship here."

With that, he turned away, never looking at him again.

Old Mrs. Grant felt both hatred and heartbreak toward George.

"The son you desperately supported ultimately took your life. Faced with no one to bury you, you turn to curry favor with the son who has endured humiliation for you. Oh, God, what sort of being have I given birth to? How did you end up something that is neither human nor ghost? George, you disgrace the title of father..."

Under Old Mrs. Grant's harsh reprimands, George exhaled his last breath, unable to inhale again, sinking into complete silence...

Juliana didn't know how long she had been asleep. When she woke again, she was inside an old, foul-smelling van.

The van bounced along a rough mountain road.

She quickly regained consciousness, realizing her hands and feet were bound, unable to move.

After observing her surroundings, there was only her and Angus in the vehicle.

"Where are we going?" she asked, struggling to sit up.

Angus glanced at the rearview mirror without speaking.

"Are you being pursued, forced to retreat to the dense forest? Your boss Isaac must be useless. If you let me go, I can plead for leniency for you. Or, if you want a cellmate with Isaac, I can arrange..."

Angus suddenly braked sharply, pulling the van to the roadside.

Due to the inertia, Juliana was thrown violently forward and couldn't help but say angrily, "Couldn't you have warned before braking?"

Angus turned from the front, saying nothing while sealing her mouth with tape.

Juliana was speechless.

Having probed to no avail, she could only wait and see.

After a few hours, the van reached a village that appeared extremely remote.

The road narrowed, upon which Angus roughly pulled her out, covered the van with banana leaves, and carried her towards the village.

Amidst the jostling, Juliana's stomach felt extremely uncomfortable under his shoulder.

Fortunately, the journey was not long.

Angus tossed her onto a stack of hay in a rural courtyard and started speaking with a local man in Valtaran.

The man mentioned it would rain soon, making crossing the river unsafe tonight.

But Angus insisted someone was pursuing him, needing to travel overnight.

Juliana's heart sank at the thought of being taken across the border illegally!

It was getting dark, and judging by his words, her rescuer might not arrive this evening.

Just as she was contemplating how to stall for time, the local man turned and scooped a ladle of water from a nearby tank, approaching her.

The man tore the tape off her mouth and handed the ladle of water to her.

Was he offering her water?

Indeed, Juliana was parched, yet as she took the ladle in her bound hands, she saw three small words written with a pencil on the inside of the ladle: "Do Not Drink".

Chapter 167: A Man and a Woman Alone in a Room

Her heart was almost leaping out of her chest!

Was it an illusion?

No, that was definitely Elias Langley's handwriting!

"What are you dawdling for? Drink up!"

The contact man urged her in Chinese.

Angus Slade stared intently at her hand holding the ladle, his mouth a tight line.

Juliana Jacobs understood; he didn't trust the contact at all and was using her to test if the water was safe.

She trembled as she brought the water ladle to her lips, about to pretend to drink, but deliberately let her hand go limp.

With a "splash," the ladle fell to the ground, water splattering everywhere.

"S-Sorry... my hand slipped," she said in a trembling voice, "Can I have another ladle, please?"

"Useless! If you don't drink, you can die of thirst. I don't have time to serve you."

The local man cursed, then turned to invite Angus Slade inside for food.

Seeing everything was normal, Angus Slade's expression relaxed slightly. He casually used another ladle to scoop water and drank it down in big gulps.

The man watched him drink, an unnatural expression fleeting past his face.

"You're playing tricks!"

Angus Slade keenly caught that subtle flaw. He immediately dropped the ladle, his right hand swiftly pulling out a dagger from his waist, and flung it towards the man's chest.

The man was stabbed in the heart. As he turned, he lunged at Juliana Jacobs on the haystack, aiming to take her hostage.

Everything happened in a flash.

Just as he flew towards her, a green figure suddenly emerged from behind the haystack, directly knocking him away.

Angus Slade slammed against the earthen wall at the corner of the courtyard with a dull thud.

But he reacted quickly, immediately flipping up and swiftly assuming a defensive stance.

Elias Langley, in his sharp jungle camouflage combat gear, stood tall and exuded the swiftness and strength of years of training in his movements.

From Angus Slade's shocked expression, it was clear he never expected Elias Langley to know his smuggling route and ambush him there, laying the trap for him.

"You can't catch me!"

As soon as he spoke, he intended to attack Elias Langley.

But just as he took a step, his whole body went limp as if he had no bones.

Soon after, four combat personnel dressed like Elias Langley surged in from outside the courtyard, quickly binding Angus Slade.

Meanwhile, Elias Langley turned around, squatted in front of Juliana Jacobs, and untied the ropes on her hands and feet.

"Were you scared?" he asked softly.

Juliana shook her head at first, then nodded.

Elias Langley was amused by her frightened appearance and pulled her into his arms, gently comforting her, "Don't be afraid, I'm here."

Juliana quickly gathered herself and was about to break free from his arms when he firmly held her back.

"Why?" she looked up and asked.

"Just five more minutes," he said solemnly, "This is a mandatory psychological intervention process required by the authorities, just go along with it."

"..." Juliana paused, "What kind of process is that, needing to manually hold onto someone?"

"Langley Group's soothing process," he replied with an unwavering face, "Final interpretation rights belong to me."

"You're a married man, aren't you ashamed to hold me for so long?"

Juliana tried to push him away.

Elias Langley did not release her.

By then, the four team members had securely tied up Angus Slade.

The leading team member quickly stepped forward to report, and as soon as he saw Elias Langley holding a hostage in a forced embrace, while the hostage was trying to "escape" with all her might, the scene was quite "ambiguous."

The team member was immediately stunned, his face turning bright red. He quickly closed his eyes and looked up, shouting with a drill-like voice:

"Reporting to Mr. Langley!"

Juliana flinched in shock, shrinking back into Elias Langley's embrace and not moving.

Elias Langley took a deep breath and glanced back at the newcomer, who then started to report, "Yiliu is dead, Angus Slade has been subdued. We confiscated all dangerous items on him. The support vehicle won't arrive for another hour. Should we stand by here for now?"

Juliana secretly looked up and found the team member with the loud voice was a girl with a tall build and determined eyes.

Elias Langley nodded, "Deal with the bodies first, then prepare some food."

"Yes!"

The team member lowered her head slightly and got busy.

Seeing the bewildered look on Juliana's face, Elias Langley casually introduced, "Her name is Raine Kane, she's our... formidable warrior."

Juliana broke free from his embrace, "Aren't you ashamed? Help me up."

This time, Elias Langley did not insist. He obediently extended his hand and helped her up.

Juliana tried to take a step forward, only then realizing she'd been tied up for so long that her legs were numb, making it hard to walk steadily.

"I'm here, no need to act tough."

Elias Langley's lips curled upward in a "helpless" smile as he lifted her into his arms.

Juliana wrapped her arms around his neck, feeling that his performance was a bit over the top.

Angus Slade was locked in another earthen house, guarded by two members.

Raine Kane and another team member set up an iron pot over the fire pit in the main room and started cooking instant noodles, cracking in a few eggs they had just bought from nearby farmers.

Before long, rain began to fall outside, and the scent of noodles wafted indoors.

Raine Kane served Juliana's portion in a lunchbox and handed it over. Elias Langley took it, blew on it a couple of times, and asked, "Do you want me to feed you?"

Juliana glared at him, "Put it down."

Elias Langley chuckled, "This is VIP service not everyone gets to enjoy."

Sitting across from them, Raine Kane couldn't hold back a giggle.

With a sideways glance from Elias Langley, she quickly composed herself, solemnly saying, "Miss Jacobs, we initially had military rations, but Mr. Langley was concerned you wouldn't like them, so he specially instructed us to cook noodles."

Juliana felt a bit embarrassed, "I didn't say I wouldn't eat. I just have hands and feet and am not used to being fed by others."

Having said that, she snatched the lunchbox from Elias Langley's hand when he wasn't paying attention.

When Elias Langley looked at her, he had a gentle smile on his face, "Hold on to it tight. If it drops, you'll have to eat mine."

Juliana immediately tightened her grip on the lunchbox.

Actually, from the time they left Kenton to get here, she had been hungry for over thirty hours, only unaware due to being knocked out.

As Juliana was wolfing down her food, Raine Kane received a call and came over with a serious expression to report.

"Mr. Langley, the rain is too heavy, and it's night. There's a risk of landslides on the mountain road, and the vehicle meant to pick us up can't make it for now."

Elias Langley thought for two seconds, "Then pack up and have everyone prepare to stay overnight. Arrange shifts to guard Angus Slade."

Raine Kane nodded and went off to make arrangements.

This farmhouse had a total of three rooms, including the main room.

Angus Slade was already occupying one room, and another was given to Juliana, while the rest stayed in the main room.

The light in the room wasn't bright, Elias Langley touched the bed lined with a straw mat, "You'll sleep here tonight, and I'll sit there with you."

Thinking of a man and a woman alone in a room, Juliana immediately refused, "No way!"

Elias Langley frowned, "This is a critical period. Except for going to the restroom, you can't leave my sight."

Raine Kane happened to enter with a basin of hot water. Juliana quickly said to her, "Raine, could I sleep here with you tonight?"

Raine Kane paused, her gaze quickly scanning over Elias Langley's expressionless face. Straightening her back, she loudly replied, "Reporting to Miss Jacobs! I... I'm not used to sleeping with women!"

After speaking, she awkwardly retreated at an almost comical pace, "considerately" closing the door behind her.

Juliana deflated like a punctured balloon.

The next moment, Elias Langley extended two fingers, pinched her chin, and made her look at him.

"Juliana, whether or not you divorce Evan Grant, I'm willing to be your lover. What are you holding back for?"

Chapter 168: Thin Doors Don't Block Sound—Are You Going to Be Loud?

The fact that I'm already divorced, I never had the chance to tell him.

But now, it's fine. He surrendered himself and actively applied to be the man who remains in the shadows by her side.

Alright then, since he's worked so hard for the position, how can I not award him the title of 'lover'?

Juliana lowered her eyes, "I've met your wife. She's very pretty. We both have constraints. You may not care about yourself, but I can't ignore my reputation."

Elias Langley was momentarily stunned, then his tone softened, "I'm not married."

Juliana lifted her gaze to him, "A woman who walks around in a semi-transparent nightgown in your room, what kind of relationship is that?"

Elias Langley was taken aback.

Had Isabelle ever done that?

No matter, he trusted Juliana.

"Listen, in a certain sense, Isabelle Sinclair is considered my sister-in-law. But the so-called 'marriage' with her sister isn't what you understand it to be. I have my reasons, but I would never put you in an unethical situation."

Juliana still found it all confusing and unclear.

After a moment of silence, she pushed away his hand.

"Anyway, you're not single in name. I don't want a married man to be my third wheel."

Elias Langley was rejected like that, a surge of indescribable frustration welling up inside.

Juliana went about her routine on her own and lay directly on the bed.

Without a blanket, she had to make do fully dressed.

She turned over, then suddenly turned back, looking at the man sitting silently on the chair, "Do you plan to just sit there all night?"

Elias Langley wasn't in a good mood, but he didn't take it out on her and remained silent.

Juliana changed to lying on her back, closed her eyes, and said, "I'm worried that staying up all night would hurt your old back and delay tomorrow's plans..."

Before she finished speaking, her chin was grasped, and Elias Langley's warm lips covered hers.

Juliana initially wanted to push him away, but the sudden kiss was unexpectedly tender and lingering, causing her to momentarily lose strength, falling involuntarily into its embrace.

Only when Elias Langley could no longer contain himself did he pull away, gasping.

"If this mouth keeps blabbering and angers me, I won't spare you tonight."

Juliana's cheeks were hot, but she still earnestly whispered, "The walls aren't soundproof; are you loud?"

Elias Langley's escalating mood was provoked once more, surging into his eyes like a tidal wave.

Juliana covered her mouth and started to laugh.

Elias Langley realized he'd been teased, both irritated and helpless, suppressing the heat within, he lightly tapped her nose with his finger, "You're cheeky."

Juliana bit her lip and smilingly said, "You seem like you've kissed many people."

Elias Langley's finger lightly traced the line of her lips, "Could it be that my first practice made you reluctant to call it off?"

"Stop it," her ears turned even redder, "Who would believe I took an old man's first kiss?"

Elias Langley chuckled softly, his breath brushing past her ear, "At thirty-something, this is when a man is most capable; stamina, strength, patience, all can satisfy you. Want to try?"

Juliana was so flustered by his flirtation that she couldn't respond, turning her face away in silence.

Elias Langley embraced her, calming his mood before speaking earnestly, "Let's sleep, and when we get back, you should have a thorough check-up to see if you're hurt."

At the mention of serious matters, Juliana looked up and asked, "How's Jared Langley?"

Elias Langley frowned, "The last I heard before coming here was that he was being resuscitated, and Stella Windsor... is still searching."

Juliana fell silent, and the two remained wordless, with only the sound of the pouring rain outside.

It was unknown how long passed when, in the middle of the silence, Elias Langley suddenly opened his eyes, holding Juliana as they rolled off the bed.

Almost simultaneously, a figure broke through the window, rushing in.

The intruder was pitch-black all over, his face covered in strange patterns.

Elias Langley swiftly shielded Juliana behind him, and the figure stood on the bed, shouting something in Valtaran before lunging forward.

"Be careful! He said anyone who stops him must die!" Juliana yelled in urgency.

However, with a few swift moves, Elias Langley twisted the man's neck, saying coldly, "In front of me, he doesn't have the right to decide anyone's fate."

Just as he finished speaking, the wooden door was slammed open with a "bang," and Raine Kane stumbled in.

"Dare kick me, and I'll send you to hell," she cursed, charging back into the main room.

It was only then that Juliana noticed that outside, it was even more chaotic.

On a stormy night, Angus Slade's accomplices came to rescue him but were discovered by the guards.

The two sides were locked in a life-and-death struggle.

At some unknown point, Angus Slade had already broken free of his restraints, the sound of knives, fists, and hoarse shouts mingling with the thunder and rain, turning the cramped dirt house into a battlefield.

"Protect yourself."

Elias Langley leapt out, engaging Angus Slade, who had just tossed aside two of his teammates.

In the chaos, a bandit seized the chance to raise a knife and strike at Elias Langley's head from behind.

Juliana panicked, grabbing a slender wooden stick nearby and swung it down forcefully.

Smack!

A crisp sound!

Hmm... something felt off?

She opened her eyes to find the attacker had already been suppressed by Raine Kane, while Elias Langley, clutching his arm, turned around to look at her, his gaze complex beyond words.

She had hit him...

"Sorry!" Juliana fumbled, flustered and embarrassed, "I was aiming for him, why did you have to get in the way?"

Who was really in the way?

Elias Langley was speechless and choked up.

What could he do?

The woman he chose, he had to put up with.

In that distracted moment, Angus Slade knocked Raine Kane down again and lunged at Elias Langley.

This time, Juliana could see clearly. As Elias Langley engaged him, she precisely drove the wooden stick into Angus Slade's eye.

Angus Slade let out a blood-curdling scream, and Elias Langley immediately went for the throat, only for Angus Slade to pull a mini-bomb from his pocket.

Raine Kane reacted quickly, twisting his wrist and shoving the bomb directly into his mouth, shouting, "Scatter!"

...

The fighting ended before dawn, with not a single enemy left alive.

Because none of them wanted to live.

A metallic scent permeated the main room, and Elias Langley led Juliana outside under the eaves, stopping her from looking in.

"They were all from Valtara, all here to rescue Angus Slade," Raine Kane said.

Elias Langley's expression was grave, "Angus Slade was Isaac Grant's hitman. Now that he's dead, it's going to be hard to convict Isaac Grant of anything."

Juliana quietly asked, "Are we in Oakhaven's territory?"

"Yes."

The wind blew strong, and when he held her hand, finding it warm, he felt a bit relieved.

Juliana continued to ask, "I have an address, possibly of Isaac Grant's lab. The remnants from the explosions I experienced all came from there. Can his crimes be compounded to convict him?"

Elias Langley smiled, pulling her into his arms, "Tell me, what reward do you want?"

...

The rain stopped after dawn, and the rescue vehicle arrived.

The group split into two routes.

Elias Langley and Juliana returned to Kenton, while Raine Kane led her team to the lab Juliana had provided to gather evidence.

Upon learning that Jared Langley was still unconscious, Juliana insisted on going straight to the hospital as soon as she returned to Kenton.

After all, it was to protect her that he fell off the cliff.

Elias Langley respected her decision and parked the car at the intersection.

Despite his displeasure, having accepted the role of 'the other man,' he could only endure it.

Quinn Shepherd parked the car, and just as Juliana was about to get off, her newly purchased phone rang.

It was Summer Shaw calling.

First, she asked if Juliana was hurt, then focused on confirming whether the divorce with Evan Grant was true.

Juliana had fulfilled what she'd promised Evan Grant. Now that Isaac Grant had been caught and Stella Windsor's whereabouts were unknown, there was nothing more to keep secret. She replied calmly, "It's true, the divorce certificate is still locked in the drawer."

Beside her, Elias Langley suddenly froze, his eyes instantly burning with an intense light.

Chapter 169: Go Along With Him for Now, Admit That Juliana Jacobs Is His Fiancée

Without caring that she was still on the phone with Summer, he pulled her into his arms and kissed her deeply.

After a long time, the call was quietly hung up. He let go of her, suppressing his turbulent emotions, and said in a low voice, "Wait for me for three years, three years later I'll marry you."

Juliana frowned, "Why wait three years?"

Elias regulated his breathing before saying, "I have a three-year marriage contract with the Sinclair Family's deceased daughter."

Juliana recalled the incident when they took Summer's hair and raised an eyebrow, "Is it the person you've been looking for all along?"

Elias nodded.

Juliana looked straight into his eyes and sharply asked, "If she comes back to life, will your marriage contract still only last three years?"

Elias's gaze slightly dimmed. After a moment of silence, he softly countered, "Do you think my promise to you was said lightly?"

But no matter how firm he was, what did it matter?

The Sinclair Family could force him to marry a deceased person, proving they held his weakness.

Just like how Evan was caught by his weakness, choosing to abandon her every time.

Besides, whether he could even dissolve the marriage contract at that time was uncertain.

Juliana had no certainty about the unforeseeable future.

After all, in a second choice, she had learned to be cautious in matters of the heart.

The light in her eyes gradually dimmed, "Then wait for me for five years."

Elias, "?"

"My relationship with Evan lasted only four years, so after five years, if you've freed yourself from the Sinclair Family's marriage contract, and our feelings haven't changed, then we'll be together."

After saying this, she got out of the car without looking back.

Elias felt stifled and puzzled.

Quinn slowly lowered the partition, turned to him, and said, "I think Miss Jacobs's worries are quite reasonable. After the identification center results came out, Dorian's mother changed her tune, admitting she lied to us with the whole village to deceive us for money, and now the Sinclair elder is more convinced that his real granddaughter is not dead."

However, listening to Quinn, Elias thought of another layer of meaning in the whole incident.

His eyes darkened slightly.

"Do you think Dorian's mother has the capability to get the entire village to lie with her?"

His words left Quinn at a loss for a response.

"Initially, they wanted me to believe Dorian was the person I was looking for. Everything matched, the bracelet, the time of encounter. Since she was declared dead, I no longer needed to search. But then something changed, and they wanted me to believe Dorian wasn't who we were seeking, and that the person I was looking for was still alive."

Elias paused.

"Do you know what could have caused such a change in the plan?"

His words left Quinn speechless.

Quinn pondered deeply for a moment, realizing his boss was only watching Juliana's departing figure, understood.

"Is it because you fell in love with Miss Jacobs, so whoever dislikes you being with other women is deceiving you?"

Quinn could hardly believe his own analysis.

But Elias saw further than he did.

"If they have the power to manipulate DNA test results, our years of searching have been in vain."

Upon hearing this, Quinn felt a chill all over his body.

"The Sinclair Family's Third Miss clings to you the most and doesn't want you to have any women by your side, but she doesn't have that capability, does she? The Second Miss Sinclair has the means, but she doesn't cling to you, she even has a boyfriend—so, who exactly is preventing us from finding the rightful Miss Sinclair?"

"Hold the line for now, head to the hospital immediately," Elias instructed.

...

When Juliana reached the hospital on foot, Elias was already there.

Jared and Stella had both fallen from a cliff.

Jared was caught by a branch mid-fall, sustaining only a head injury without any major harm.

Stella, however, fell straight into the river.

The rescue team had been searching continuously for three days, to no avail.

At this moment, Jared was placed in an intensive care unit, showing no signs of waking up.

As soon as Leona saw Juliana, she rushed over with red eyes, pointing at her nose and cursing, "You jinx! How dare you show your face? My son got hurt protecting you—if he doesn't wake up, you'll never have peace in this life!"

Juliana had expected Leona to say many unpleasant things, but since Jared was injured saving her,

just for this reason alone, today she would have to endure the accusation.

She lowered her eyelids, without defending herself.

Just when she was ready for even harsher scolding, Elias stepped forward in one swift move, shielding her, "It was an accident; no one wanted it to happen, please calm down, sister-in-law."

"Elias," Leona said with immense sorrow, "he's my only son, my only hope. Now he's lying here for this woman; how can you ask me to calm down?"

"Leona," Victor said steadily from the side, "remember where you are and don't lose your composure in front of outsiders."

Seeing him also not allowing her to scold Juliana, Leona became even more agitated.

"Composure? My son is like this, why bother with composure! This woman brings misfortune, she's a temptress..."

Just then, a weak voice came from the hospital room, "Mom, how can you speak like that about my fiancée?"

Everyone was immediately stunned and looked towards the bed.

Nobody knew when Jared had woken up, and was now slightly turning his head, displeased, looking at his own mother.

"Son, you're finally awake!"

Leona couldn't care about anything else, rushing to the bedside excitedly.

But Jared sat up by himself, even took off his oxygen mask.

He even wanted to pull out the IV, but considering it might squirt blood and scare Juliana, he gave up.

This whole operation left everyone momentarily stunned.

"Son, you've been badly hurt, lie down, I'll call a doctor immediately." Leona said.

Jared looked at her calmly, "Mom, I'm fine, but you shouldn't speak so harshly to my fiancée."

Leona was stunned again.

Victor stepped forward in shock, "Jared, do you know what you're saying? When did you... How long have you been together?"

Jared recalled carefully and confidently said, "That day on the mountain, I set off fireworks just for her. At that moment, I proposed to her and she agreed."

Juliana couldn't hold back and softly refuted, "No, you only suggested dating, I didn't agree to you."

After her words, Jared's peaceful expression suddenly changed.

"You're lying! You agreed then, why not admit it now? Is it because you're afraid of my mom? But we clearly agreed."

He seemed like a different person, sweeping everything off the bed and nightstand to the ground, even pulling out the IV.

Leona hurriedly tried to stop him, "Son, what's wrong? Stop hurting yourself!"

But Jared didn't listen.

Fortunately, doctors rushed into the room in time to help Leona control Jared.

But under great restraint, Jared didn't stop struggling; after a few jolts, he suddenly stiffened and fell down.

The doctors immediately began resuscitation.

Leona was so frightened she cried hysterically, losing her composure.

After a thorough examination, the doctor's expression was grave, "The patient has a memory disorder caused by a hematoma pressing on the nerves, leading to an obsessive cognition of Miss Jacobs—this is a psychological defense mechanism after the trauma. Forcing corrections may cause an increase in intracranial pressure, and in severe cases, can be life-threatening. He must absolutely avoid stimulation."

"How long will this condition last?" Leona asked.

"Recovery can be swift, in a few days, but it could also take months, or even longer," the doctor said.

Victor was silent for a moment, frowning, "So you're suggesting we play along for now, acknowledging Juliana as his fiancée?"

"No way!"

Elias's face remained as usual, but his voice was slightly lower than normal.

Chapter 170: Juliana Jacobs Wrapped Her Arms Around His Neck

"This is not child's play. Establishing a caregiving relationship based on a false perception is detrimental to Jared Langley's recovery. We cannot go along with his illusions."

Victor Langley immediately nodded in agreement, "Yes, how does that make sense."

The moment he finished speaking, the heart monitor sounded an alarm.

"Don't discuss this here, find another place to consider it."

The doctor rushed back to the bedside.

The four of them moved to a corner in the hallway, and Leona Sheridan grew anxious.

"Honey, listen, as long as you deny it, our son can't take it. Are you just going to stand by and watch something happen to him?"

Victor Langley said, "But our Langley Family is quite reputable here; having an 'unofficial fiancée' suddenly appear out of nowhere, especially a divorced woman, how will the public see that? If such rumors spread, it will damage the Langley Family's reputation."

Juliana glanced at Victor Langley, her gaze inadvertently swept past the tense profile of Elias Langley, a barely noticeable smile flitting across her face.

But Leona Sheridan became agitated, "Didn't you hear the doctor? My son is lying in a hospital bed now, his life is more important than reputation or face!"

"Sister-in-law, this is not the right way to solve the problem." Elias Langley countered,

"Then what is the right way? Watching him get so agitated that he faints again or even worse?"

Leona Sheridan finished speaking and suddenly froze, coming back to her senses as her gaze moved back and forth between the two men in front of her.

"Something's off between you two," she said.

The two brothers rarely aligned, yet today, they unexpectedly sided against her twice.

The air was thick with a strange tension.

Victor Langley cleared his throat, "Who among us is qualified to discuss agreeing or not? This should be Miss Jacobs' decision."

As soon as he finished speaking, everyone's gaze finally turned to Juliana, who had been ignored.

Leona Sheridan immediately grabbed Juliana's hand, righteously declaring, "You can't shirk responsibility! My son ended up like this because of you..."

"Protecting her was Jared's own choice; don't morally coerce her," Elias Langley interrupted Leona Sheridan's words.

Juliana's gaze lingered on his face for a moment, recalling that absurd three-year pact, and suddenly, she smiled, nodding crisply, "Alright."

Leona Sheridan immediately breathed a sigh of relief.

Elias Langley's face darkened further, like a cat that had its treat taken away but had to maintain poise.

Juliana casually withdrew her gaze, deliberately avoiding looking at him.

"If that's the case, then we will cooperate. Once Jared wakes, it'll be hard work for Miss Jacobs. As soon as he's recovered, this relationship will immediately end." Victor Langley stated.

"Does a unilateral claim also count as a relationship? Are you going to pick up another woman at the entrance to the civil affairs bureau and call her a second wife?" Elias Langley coldly corrected him.

"How could you say something like that, second brother?"

Leona Sheridan was touched on a sore spot.

If she hadn't kept a tight watch all these years, who knows how many sisters-in-law she'd have by now.

If they hadn't been able to find Adrian Langley's mother, she would've been cut out too.

Victor Langley was stumped, "Yes, yes, they have no relation."

Elias Langley turned his face away without expression, feeling displeased inside.

Just then, a nurse rushed over, saying, "The patient is awake and keeps asking where his fiancée is."

In the hospital room, Jared Langley once again sat up on his own.

As soon as he saw Juliana, he reached out his hands eagerly, "Juliana, where did you go?"

Elias Langley appeared nonchalant, but his lips pressed into a straight line.

Juliana stepped forward. Jared, full of anticipation, thought she would hold his hands, but she simply clasped his wrists, placing his hands back on the bed cover.

"Juliana..." Jared frowned.

"You're not fully recovered, you're not allowed to touch me."

"I can be discharged now."

"I mean until your memory returns to normal."

Jared, "..."

Just then, Victor Langley received a call from Adrian Langley and hurried back to the company.

In the hospital room, only four people remained, and the atmosphere became subtly strange.

"Why are you just standing there? Go get a basin of water for Jared to wash his face," Leona Sheridan ordered imperiously.

Juliana turned her eyes to her, "Am I a caretaker?"

Leona Sheridan immediately adopted the demeanor of a mother-in-law, "You must serve your fiancé well."

Juliana raised an eyebrow, "Do you kneel and serve Chairman Langley at home?"

Leona Sheridan was struck speechless.

Seeing this, Jared suddenly said, "Juliana, I want to eat an apple."

"Hurry and peel an apple for him!" Leona Sheridan finally vented her frustration.

However, before Juliana could turn around, Elias Langley had already picked up the knife and an apple from the fruit platter, skillfully peeling it.

Leona Sheridan, despite having a mind full of critical remarks like "Peel it thin" and "Cut it into small strips," swallowed all her words as the gloomy uncle took action, not daring to utter a single word.

Elias Langley's method of peeling the apple was so skillful it was almost fierce.

Jared looked into the unreadable eyes of his uncle, inexplicably feeling a chill on his neck.

It felt as if his uncle wasn't peeling an apple but his own neck.

In less than a minute, an apple was reduced to evenly sized pieces, lying in the plate.

Elias Langley placed the plate on the small table in front of him, his tightly pressed lips letting out a single word, "Eat!"

Jared shivered, looking toward Juliana, ambitiously wanting her to feed him.

Elias Langley softly stuck the fruit knife into the bedside cupboard beside Jared, the handle slightly vibrating.

"Want me to feed you?" he asked.

Jared shook his head, quickly grabbing an apple and stuffing it into his mouth.

Elias Langley glanced at him emotionlessly and turned to leave the room.

As soon as he left, Leona Sheridan exhaled a breath of relief, still shaky with fear, and in frustration and anger, she vented it all on Juliana.

She ordered unhappily, "What are you still standing there for? Jared just woke up, now hurry and find a doctor to understand the precautions and take good care of him."

Juliana gave her a look, said nothing, and turned to leave.

Jared rubbed his forehead, "Mom, weren't you two close? When did it become like this?"

Leona Sheridan, "..."

Were we ever close?

Juliana had barely stepped out of the room when someone grabbed her wrist and pulled her into an equipment room.

The door clicked shut.

In the dim light, Elias Langley pinned her against the wall, eyes flooded with restrained possessiveness.

"Let's talk."

"No talk."

Juliana turned her face away.

"Then I'll kiss you."

Juliana turned her face back to look at him, "Don't be a rogue."

Elias Langley gritted his teeth, "You agreed to be his 'fiancée', then what am I?"

Juliana suddenly laughed, reaching out to wrap her arms around his neck.

"Aren't you going to have me wait for you for three years? Doing something else doesn't affect my waiting for you."