

Panicking 281

Chapter 281: From Now On, Through Every Lifetime, I Never Want to See You Again

At this suffocating moment of confrontation, Isabelle Sinclair slowly regained consciousness.

The kidnapper's last words reached her ears, and she was instantly overcome with panic.

"Brother-in-law, Elias, save me, I don't want to wear that, I don't want to die."

She shouted loudly, her body trembling violently from extreme fear,

Juliana Jacobs seemed to return to when she was 12 years old, she and her father were chased near Zarith, and almost every way were blocked. Elias Langley didn't think twice, choosing to throw her out.

Right before getting in the car, Elias Langley grabbed her arms and asked if she trusted him?

At that time, Juliana already had a premonition about her future, but still nodded.

Her trust in him exceeded herself.

But until her car rolled into the river, she never waited for him.

And this time, Isabelle Sinclair was Mrs. Sinclair's heart and soul.

Whether she deserves it is completely unimportant.

The important thing is, if Elias Langley lets Isabelle Sinclair get into trouble here today, he won't be able to explain to the Sinclair Family, and all the relationships and balance he maintains will collapse.

Memories and reality like cold lake water instantly drowned Juliana.

She was somewhat unstable, fortunately, the kidnapper roughly grabbed her arm, this temporary support barely concealed her current shaky fragility.

Juliana no longer looked at Elias Langley, just slowly, and resignedly closed her eyes.

Elias Langley's gaze paused on her briefly, then ultimately made that undisputed choice.

"Release Isabelle Sinclair."

The last glimmer of hope in Juliana's heart was completely extinguished, a smile appeared on the corner of her mouth.

The leading kidnapper didn't say a word, put the explosive vest on Juliana.

The complex lock clicked shut, the electronic screen instantly lit up, and the red numbers began to leap.

Her life entered a five-minute countdown.

"Looks like you really aren't Helena Sinclair."

The leading kidnapper sneered grimly, releasing Juliana.

Juliana weakly fell to the ground.

But next, he fiercely kicked the side of Isabelle Sinclair's waist, sending her towards Elias Langley.

As Isabelle Sinclair flew towards Elias Langley, surrounding smoke bombs "bang, bang, bang" exploded one after another, and thick smoke instantly filled the entire space.

But at the same time, several figures in camouflage uniforms swiftly swung in using ropes from the high windows, even directly from the large openings where there were no walls.

The scene descended into chaos.

In the dense fog and flying bullets, several resisting kidnapers were hit and fell one after another.

While that leading kidnapper used this brief chaos and hostages as a shield, and with a flash, disappeared deep down the unfinished stairwell.

In just one or two minutes, the smoke gradually thinned, Raine Kane saw Juliana's position clearly, shouted "Juliana!" and was about to run over.

But Juliana forcefully raised her hand, "Don't... come over."

Raine Kane paused his steps.

The timer on Juliana beeped twice, showing the countdown had entered two minutes.

"All personnel on site, evacuate now!" Elias Langley ordered.

No time was left for them to compete with him.

Raine Kane left behind a toolbox and carried the wounded Isabelle Sinclair down.

Elias Langley rushed to Juliana's side, quickly assessing the explosive vest on her.

The situation was worse than he imagined.

The timer was fully sealed with no line to cut. The lock was a special device, once locked, it couldn't be conventionally removed.

He tried several times but all failed.

"It's useless, you should leave."

Juliana's voice was light, carrying a kind of hopeless exhaustion.

"Elias Langley, in future lives, I don't want to ever see you again."

Elias Langley's hands didn't stop moving, fine beads of sweat appeared on his forehead, but his voice was exceptionally calm.

"Don't say foolish things. This time, I can save you."

"Why are you doing this? My life is lonely and unanchored, ending might not be a bad thing, but you are different."

No response came, Juliana turned her face away, no longer looking at him.

Time ticked away second by second, the numbers mercilessly leaping towards the end.

Just at this critical moment, a "click" was heard, and the whole structure of the explosive vest loosened.

But only three seconds remained for Elias Langley.

Patrick Langley forcefully peeled the vest off Juliana, then with all his might, threw it out towards the large opening with no walls.

Immediately after, he shielded Juliana with his body, unable to move.

With a loud "boom", scorching shockwaves mixed with broken bricks and stones surged in from the opening.

Elias Langley's body shook violently, taking all the impact and damage on his own back.

Everything returned to calm.

In the thick smell of gunpowder, Juliana struggled to push the man protecting her with his entire body.

"Elias Langley?"

There was no response.

"Elias Langley..."

She called again, her voice carrying a rasp and tremble she hadn't noticed.

But in the next second, dizziness and nausea hit, Juliana's vision went black, and she too lost consciousness.

...

She didn't know how long she was unconscious.

Juliana regained consciousness amidst sharp noisy sounds.

"Let go of me, I want to see Elias! How can you arrest me? Accused of kidnapping, where's the evidence?"

From outside the hospital room came Isabelle Sinclair's hysterical voice.

Juliana struggled to open her eyes and found herself already in a hospital.

Just as she was about to observe her surroundings, from the corner of her eye she noticed another hospital bed beside her.

She slowly turned her head, only to see Elias Langley quietly lying there, his face pale, his back wrapped in thick bandages, still unconscious.

"Juliana, you're awake!" Raine Kane said happily.

Looking at the glaring white on Elias Langley's back, Juliana's heart was a mix of flavors.

She looked back at Raine Kane who was already standing by her bed.

"What's happening outside?"

"Isabelle Sinclair is suspected of multiple crimes, her bail has been revoked, she wants to see Mr. Langley."

She actually wants to cling again to the life-saving straw that is Elias Langley.

Juliana closed her eyes to steady herself, struggled to sit up.

Raine Kane immediately stepped forward, delicately adjusted her bed's angle.

"Where's my husband's phone?"

Raine Kane took the phone from under Elias Langley's pillow, handed it over, while reminding, "Mr. Langley's phone has a password, except for him..."

Before he finished speaking, the moment Juliana turned the phone screen towards herself, facial recognition succeeded, and the phone unlocked.

Raine Kane touched his nose, swallowed back the second half of his sentence.

"Please let Isabelle Sinclair and the officers come in." Juliana said.

Chapter 282: This Looks Just Like They're About to Divorce

The door to the hospital room opened, and even Mrs. Sinclair and Florence Sinclair standing outside were stunned.

Isabelle Sinclair seized the opportunity, broke free from the police, and rushed into the patient room.

"Elias, you must have heard my cries for help, right? You must..."

Before she finished speaking, she realized that Elias Langley was still unconscious.

But this man was her last hope; she had to wake him up to save herself.

So, she recklessly threw herself towards Elias Langley's hospital bed.

Raine Kane stepped forward, causing her to fall to the ground empty-handed.

"Third Miss Sinclair, please have some respect."

Her hope was blocked. Isabelle Sinclair, disregarding all shame, turned her anger towards Juliana Jacobs, who was leaning on another hospital bed.

She directed all her fear and insane hatred towards her.

"It was you! You malicious woman, you wanted me dead. The kidnapping was clearly your orchestration to frame me, hurting Elias like this, are you satisfied?"

Juliana Jacobs was unfazed by her words, not even bothering to say a word in return, and instead picked up Elias Langley's phone and lightly touched it.

A familiar panicked voice immediately came out from the phone.

"...it was I who hired you! I've already paid half the money. We agreed it was just a show, to pin the kidnapping charge on Juliana. Are you double-crossing me now?"

It was indeed Isabelle Sinclair's own voice.

The color drained instantly from Isabelle Sinclair's face.

She hadn't expected that the real-time transmission device on Juliana's inconspicuous hairpin was directly connected to Elias Langley's phone.

This explained why, after the incident, Elias Langley was able to so accurately and quickly locate her position.

He had heard everything from the beginning.

"No, that's not my voice. Juliana used AI to synthesize it to frame me!"

Isabelle Sinclair went limp, slumped on the ground.

It's over, her life was over.

Mrs. Sinclair closed her eyes, the last glimmer of hope on her face disappearing entirely. When she opened them again, they were filled with determination.

She instructed Susan, "Contact Attorney Holt, and cancel my adoption relationship with Isabelle Sinclair. And in my name, issue a statement that from today, the Sinclair Family will sever all ties with Isabelle Sinclair."

"Mom, you can't do this to me, Mom..."

Isabelle Sinclair completely broke down. She frantically tried to stand up to run towards Mrs. Sinclair, but the police subdued her with greater force.

The once arrogant and spoiled face now was left with nothing but tears and despair.

In the end, she was forcibly taken away.

Standing behind Mrs. Sinclair, Florence Sinclair, who had remained silent, dug her nails into her palms.

She feared that in an extreme breakdown, Isabelle Sinclair would indiscriminately implicate her, making her heart race with anxiety.

Fortunately, she had advised Isabelle Sinclair beforehand, in case of failure, never to involve her. Only if she remained outside could she find a way to save her.

Although impulsive, Isabelle Sinclair was smart enough not to cut off her last retreat.

So, until she was taken away, Florence Sinclair breathed a sigh of relief.

Mrs. Sinclair didn't notice her. After instructing Susan, she turned to look at Juliana in the hospital room.

As she was about to take a step forward, Raine Kane stood at the door.

"Mrs. Sinclair, Mr. Langley hasn't woken up yet. When he does, I will notify your assistant."

In fact, Mrs. Sinclair not only wanted to see Elias Langley, she also wanted to see Juliana.

But Juliana was already leaning against the bed with her eyes closed, seemingly not needing a bit of her concern.

Suppressing the bitterness in her heart, Mrs. Sinclair said, "Alright, notify me when Elias wakes up, I will come to see them then."

After saying that, she left with Susan.

As soon as Mrs. Sinclair left, the sickly look faded from Juliana's face.

She got out of bed, and a wave of dizziness almost caused her to stumble.

Raine Kane quickly supported her.

"Your concussion hasn't healed, be careful. Mr. Langley mainly has severe injuries on his back, but it's less serious than the wounds he's had during missions before, so he's fine, don't worry."

Juliana put on her slippers, walked to Elias Langley's bedside, and examined the wounds on his back, asking, "Then why isn't he awake yet?"

Well, waking up depends on his mood.

"Juliana, don't you hate Mr. Langley for choosing Isabelle?"

Juliana quietly looked at the unconscious man, pursed her lips, and replied, "Of course I hate him, I'll remember it for the rest of my life."

Elias Langley's eyelids twitched.

Raine Kane secretly broke into a sweat for him.

"Actually, Mr. Langley's intention might be that on one hand, he was confident he could save you, and on the other, that he wanted Isabelle to face a fair trial. You see, now Mrs. Sinclair is completely disappointed in her, and she has to face jail time. Isn't living worse than dying for her now?"

Juliana turned her gaze towards her, "Even with assurance, it was still a gamble! Would you bet something you value more than life?"

Raine Kane couldn't answer, scratching her head.

"Uh... I'll go ask the doctor why Mr. Langley hasn't woken up yet."

Having said that, she quickly ran out of the patient room.

Here, the patient room suddenly fell into silence.

Several minutes passed before Elias Langley couldn't help but slowly open his eyes to find Juliana looking at him.

"Was it fun?" Juliana asked.

Elias Langley's heart tightened, he forced a smile, "Can't deceive you even a bit."

He tried to get up, but as soon as he moved, the pain from the stitches on his back made him wince.

Juliana frowned and pressed him back down.

"Haven't you suffered more serious injuries during missions? Can't bear a little pain?"

Elias Langley lay back down.

"Not fearing injury on a mission is courage, feeling pain is instinct."

Juliana released him and sat back on her own bed.

"So your weighing of pros and cons is also instinct. By keeping Isabelle, you'd account to Mrs. Sinclair, stay with me through life and death, and also show true love for me, it's simply the perfect choice, right?"

"Is that what you think?" Elias Langley turned his head to look at her.

Juliana looked at her own slippers, "What I think doesn't matter. When you were defusing the bomb, everything I said was serious, anyway... it's all over."

Because of her words, Elias Langley shot up from his bed.

"What's over? Explain it clearly!"

At that moment, Raine Kane knocked on the door, bringing the doctor in.

Seeing him sitting up, the doctor quickly went over to check.

"Mr. Langley, how could you get up? Your back is bleeding again. Forget about wanting to be discharged tomorrow, you won't be out in a week at this rate, quickly lie back down."

Unwillingly, Elias Langley lay back down, the wound tore at the bandage, and the pain made him wince again, but Juliana remained unmoved.

The doctor changed his bandage again and sternly instructed, "Mr. Langley, if you keep moving around, causing repeated infections, we will have to double your antibiotics."

Juliana cut in, "Go ahead, use it. You're so good at weighing pros and cons, and this injury is an important 'resource' for you to gain sympathy. If I didn't happen to have a brain, I almost fell for it."

Saying this, Raine Kane lowered her head.

Lying on the bed, Elias Langley's gaze remained locked on Juliana.

Juliana avoided his gaze, calmly asking the doctor, "Can I be discharged?"

The doctor thought it over carefully, "You've passed the observation period, so technically you can be discharged, but you still have a mild concussion and need plenty of rest."

"Thank you."

Juliana didn't bother to change out of her hospital gown, merely threw on a coat and walked straight out of the patient room without looking back.

Raine Kane felt a storm surge in her heart.

This stance, it looked just like she was going to get a divorce!

Chapter 283: Mr. Langley, Your Wife Doesn't Want You Anymore

"Juliana, let me take you."

Raine Kane quickly ran after her.

The hospital room door closed, Elias Langley's fingers clenched. The burning pain on his back was unbearable, yet it was nothing compared to the emptiness and piercing pain in his heart.

In the elevator, Juliana Jacobs allowed Raine Kane to follow her, but she just stared at the changing numbers in silence.

Raine Kane tried to speak multiple times but was silenced by the oppressive quiet.

The elevator reached the first floor, and as soon as the doors opened, Juliana walked straight out.

Raine Kane was just about to speak when he saw Auden Hughes coming towards them with gifts in his hands.

Seeing Juliana, Auden paused for a moment, then approached with concern.

"You're getting discharged so soon?"

Juliana's face remained calm and indifferent, her tone distant, "I wasn't really hurt, so there's no need to be hospitalized."

Auden's expression relaxed a bit, "I was just about to go up to see you..."

Juliana's gaze grew colder.

"Mr. Hughes seems to have plenty of free time, it looks like your company's troubles aren't significant enough."

Auden knew well that the recent inability of Vivacore to conduct business, and even the rejection of subsidy applications, all had something to do with her.

Suppressing his emotions, he conceded, "Regarding your friend's application, regardless of what Florence Sinclair decides, I've approved it on my end. But I must go to Kenton myself to check on the patient's condition. If her current state is the same as or better than expected, she'll need to be brought to Kingsford for treatment."

His words carried a hint, hoping she would accompany him.

Juliana, however, showed no interest in responding and said plainly, "Contact Caleb Shaw, he'll arrange your itinerary accordingly."

With that, she didn't give him another chance to speak and walked away.

Returning to Number 17 Darroway Street, Juliana thought she would have trouble sleeping after napping for so long at the hospital. Surprisingly, she had a good night's rest.

Waking up the next morning, she felt no headache or dizziness and had a decent amount of energy.

She washed up and glanced at the empty medicine box.

The medicine Elias Langley had prepared for her was finished, but she didn't feel like taking more.

Lately, she felt as if living alone for too long became quite dull.

She tossed the box into the trash and left her room.

When she reached the dining area, Steward Fay had already prepared breakfast for her.

Raine Kane approached her as soon as she saw her.

"Juliana, are you going to The Innovation Hub today as well?"

Juliana responded coldly, stopping short when she saw the kitchen preparing a boxed breakfast.

Steward Fay quickly explained, "This is breakfast being sent to Mr. Langley."

"Was last night's also delivered?" Juliana asked.

Steward Fay nodded, "Not a single meal missed. Mr. Langley even asked if you had been eating well at home."

Juliana was silent for a moment and eventually softened her heart, instructing, "I'll take it to him later."

Worried he might go hungry, Juliana quickly finished her breakfast and hurried to the hospital.

Upon reaching the hospital room door, a guard was about to salute her but she stopped him.

From inside, she heard Florence Sinclair's voice.

"Elias, my mom made this personally over two hours. She said you need to nourish yourself well with your injury. Since you can't move easily, let me feed you."

Saying that, Florence moved the spoon to Elias Langley's mouth.

Standing outside, Juliana looked at the thermal container in her hands, suddenly feeling like a fool.

She handed the thermal container to Raine Kane, "Get rid of it."

Then turned around and left.

Raine Kane, burdened with the task, was unsure whether to dump it down a drain or into Mr. Langley's stomach.

Inside, Elias Langley lay prone, avoiding Florence Sinclair as if she were a viper.

He turned his head away, his tone cold and hard.

"Just leave it on the side. She should be bringing me breakfast soon."

Florence's hand holding the spoon froze in midair, a hint of embarrassment crossing her face.

She forced a smile, putting the bowl down.

"I see. Mom didn't know Miss Jacobs was discharged too, so she made two portions. When Miss Jacobs arrives, you can eat together."

Just then, the room door was lightly pushed open, and Raine Kane peeked in cautiously.

Elias Langley, sensitive to the commotion at the door, turned his head immediately. Seeing only her there, his brow furrowed tightly.

"Where is she?"

Raine Kane, took a deep breath and entered, shaking the thermal container she held.

"Juliana was here. She said you probably wouldn't be able to eat the breakfast she brought, so she... left."

Elias Langley closed his eyes and took a long breath, the rise and fall of his chest pulling on his back injury, causing sharp pain.

"Bring it in."

After instructing Raine Kane, he looked at Florence Sinclair, his face clearly showing impatience.

"You should go too, and take all these things with you. In the future, there's no need to come anymore."

Florence's face turned pale, tears almost spilling out.

"Elias, just because Miss Jacobs is unhappy, you're going to cut ties with the Sinclair Family? My parents have treated you like their own for so many years, and you can disregard that just like this?"

"Leave!" Elias snapped, repressing his displeasure.

Knowing his determination, Florence realized it wasn't worth saying more. She packed up the food and left with a heartbroken expression.

Once the door closed, Elias bore through his back pain and gritting his teeth, asked, "Where did she go?"

"Juliana asked me to bring it in... I'll, I'll go after her now!"

Raine Kane hurriedly ran out.

Juliana sat in the car, feeling suffocated and couldn't help recalling what Auden Hughes said the previous day.

She picked up her phone and dialed out.

"Have the plans for Kenton been decided?"

Auden chuckled on the other end, "Rest assured, I wouldn't lie to you. The flight is booked for 11:10 AM, so lunch will have to be resolved on the plane."

Juliana replied casually, "Upgrade to business class. I'll go with you."

Auden's voice immediately filled with surprise, "Juliana, you..."

"See you at the airport."

Without waiting for him to finish, Juliana hung up.

By the time Raine Kane caught up to the car, Juliana had already fastened her seatbelt.

"Juliana, you're going to Kenton?"

"Yes, I'm going alone. Please take extra care of the company matters."

Raine Kane immediately grew concerned, "But if you're alone, what if something happens..."

Juliana let out a light laugh, her eyes showing no warmth.

"My safety isn't something Mr. Langley contemplates as a matter needing deliberation. If he doesn't want me to be in danger again, he'll naturally find a way."

No one had told her about the kidnappers' identities in the recent kidnapping incident, but Juliana could guess.

"Juliana," Raine hesitantly ventured, "actually, it wasn't just blind cooperation with Mr. Langley yesterday. I just felt... at the time..."

At a loss for words, she anxiously scratched her head.

But Juliana calmly picked up the conversation.

"You're trying to say that his suggestion to let Isabelle Sinclair go first was a rational, objective choice and that it can be understood. I don't deny understanding it, but I can't forgive. I'm not a pawn on his board, and when he places so-called rationality in front of me, I realize in his heart, I'm still just an option to be sacrificed at any time."

"Raine," Juliana held back her stinging nose, "Why am I always the one who deserves to be abandoned? Why?"

Her question left Raine speechless.

Juliana calmed herself down.

"I can't figure it out. It just makes me feel cold. The mindset of men and women is different, so I have to leave here, get some quiet, and sort things out."

Needing to catch her flight, Juliana drove off alone.

Raine Kane quickly returned to the hospital room.

She burst through the door, not even pausing for breath, and spoke to the man bedridden due to back injuries, "Mr. Langley, your wife has left you."

Elias Langley struggled but couldn't move, enduring the pain in his back, he frowned, "Say that again!"

Chapter 284: I Want to Be the One Who Accompanies You for the Rest of Your Life

An hour later, Juliana's figure appeared in the airport terminal.

She only carried a handbag, as if she were just stepping out for a brief errand.

Auden Hughes was surprised to see her outfit.

"Are you coming back tonight?"

Juliana replied indifferently, "The apartment in Kenton has everything."

Auden smiled and said, "Great, then I don't even need to book a hotel."

Juliana looked at him calmly, "The Shaw Family has already arranged accommodations for you."

Auden felt slightly awkward under her gaze and pretended to be helpless, "Just joking, can't you lighten up a bit?"

Juliana ignored him and followed the flight attendant to board the plane.

The business class on this flight was exceptionally quiet, with only the two of them as passengers.

After Juliana sat down by the window, she put on her headphones to listen to music, clearly not wanting to communicate with him.

Auden, understanding the situation, sat in a seat slightly behind her.

He was also very tall, but unlike the stately figure of Elias Langley, he had a more slender build.

The composed aura that belonged to a scholar and entrepreneur, however, was very attention-grabbing.

Shortly after takeoff, a beautiful flight attendant approached with a smile, using the opportunity of asking if he needed a drink to discreetly slip a note with her phone number close to him.

Auden was slightly taken aback, then a wry smile appeared on his lips. He looked towards Juliana, and said to the flight attendant in a gentle but clear voice, "Doing this will upset my girlfriend."

The smile on the flight attendant's face immediately froze. She apologized awkwardly and quickly left.

Auden then got up and sat in the empty seat next to Juliana.

Juliana thought he needed something, so she took off her headphones and looked at him.

"Thanks for just now." Auden pointed in the direction where the flight attendant left, "I used you as a shield."

Juliana put her headphones back on, a hint of sarcasm in her tone that was hard to detect.

"No problem, I'm used to being someone else's shield."

After saying that, she closed her eyes again.

Auden watched her for a while, then suddenly put away his joking demeanor, leaned slightly closer, and said seriously, "Juliana, if things don't work out with Elias Langley, be with me."

Juliana's eyes flew open, turning to look at him,

Auden met her gaze with an unprecedented seriousness in his tone.

"You don't need to worry about my engagement with Florence Sinclair. If the Hughes Family knows I'm marrying you, they would agree a thousand times over."

Juliana was silent for a moment, then suddenly started laughing...

After the plane landed, they headed straight to the hospital.

The Shaw Family parents were already waiting at their daughter's hospital room door.

Because prior arrangements had been discussed with the hospital, Auden immediately donned a white coat and entered the ward to conduct a clinical assessment of Summer Shaw's condition.

The Shaw Family parents waited outside the ward, expressing immense gratitude to Juliana, but the more they did, the more guilt Juliana felt.

At that moment, a figure suddenly rushed over and grabbed her arm.

She turned back in pain and met a pair of cloudy, excited eyes.

It was Leona Sheridan!

Her hair was disheveled, and her hospital gown was crumpled, a stark contrast to the dignified chairwoman she once was.

"Juliana! It's you, it's all your fault, you ruined everything I had! How dare you come to see me, watch what I'll do to you..."

"What are you all standing there for? Quickly restrain your boss's ex-wife, don't let her hurt anyone again."

Leona's words were interrupted by the arrival of Ms. Linton.

Several men who looked like bodyguards hurried up to restrain Leona and escort her away.

Ms. Linton stepped forward to apologize, and upon seeing Juliana, her eyes were full of surprise.

"When did you come back? Why didn't you tell me?"

Juliana smiled faintly, "It was something urgent, a last-minute decision to return."

This was Summer Shaw's ward, and Ms. Linton could guess roughly what it was about.

"What happened to Lenora Sheridan?" Juliana asked, looking at the nail marks on her arm.

Ms. Linton sighed.

"The divorce from Victor Langley hit her hard. She thought Jared Langley and the Sheridan Family would support her, but neither side cared. She lost it and went mad, babbling every day that she's the chairwoman, attacking anyone who looks a bit like you. If it weren't for Victor Langley trying to save face for Jared Langley, he wouldn't bother with her. You see, in the end, it's me who has to deal with the mess."

Juliana noticed Ms. Linton was dressed head-to-toe in Dior and smiled lightly, "Ms. Linton has quite a responsibility now."

Ms. Linton, avoiding the bodyguards who followed, pulled her aside and whispered, "You have no idea how fiercely Adrian and Jared Langley are battling in the company. Victor Langley is already exhausted. Our wedding is being arranged. Once he marries me, I'll take his money and the company; it's my retribution for a scumbag."

Juliana remained noncommittal about her ambitions, staying silent for a moment before saying, "Leave some room when dealing with matters. Some 'enemies' may just be temporary. Instead of turning the table, consider how to stay firmly seated at it, because all you want is to replace the dealer."

Ms. Linton was slightly taken aback, "Do you mean..."

Juliana lowered her gaze, "You and Jared Langley didn't have any conflict initially. A stepmother should have the capacity of a stepmother, so it won't be criticized."

Ms. Linton fell into thought.

Just then, the bodyguard who had taken Leona to the treatment room returned to report, "Ms. Linton, the doctor is looking for you."

Ms. Linton immediately patted Juliana's hand, "If you have time tomorrow, come to Celestial Vista for a meal, Adrian misses you."

After saying that, she quickly walked towards the doctor's office.

Coincidentally, Auden finished his examination and came out just in time to hear this.

Summer Shaw's condition was not too bad, but some data wouldn't be ready until the next day, so it was not yet possible to say if a medical plane could be arranged to take her to Kingsford.

After declining the Shaw Family parents' generous dinner invitation, Auden suggested to Juliana, "We've wrapped up business for now. I know a great seaside restaurant with good food and views. Care to join me?"

Juliana looked at her unusually silent phone.

Elias Langley had known about her departure for a long time, yet he hadn't reached out.

Perhaps he also thought it was best for them to be apart for a few days.

So, she nodded slightly.

However, when they reached the seaside, she realized he had booked not a restaurant, but a yacht.

Juliana stopped, standing at the dock, refusing to move further.

Auden, acting naturally, said, "I've set up the table, and the gourmet meal is ready. Won't you join me?"

Juliana remained silent.

Auden raised an eyebrow, "All of Summer Shaw's test data is expected around dinner time. Don't you want to know my assessment results right away?"

Juliana gave him a cold glance, "Threatening me, you're quite capable now."

After saying that, she boarded the yacht.

Auden had gone to great lengths for this dinner, not only renting the yacht but also preparing a sumptuous feast.

Yet none of this could melt Juliana's cold demeanor.

She ate quietly, responding indifferently to all of his topics, at most tasting the dishes he recommended with courteous detachment throughout.

Ultimately, the dinner ended in an atmosphere that bordered on stagnant.

As the test results had not yet arrived, Juliana got up and left the table, walking to the side of the ship to look up at the sky.

Auden picked up two glasses of wine and walked towards her, "I remember in high school we talked about secretly renting a boat on graduation day to watch the stars all night on the river, but... it never happened."

The memory briefly brought a smile to Juliana's face, but it quickly faded.

"So, what's the purpose of inviting me on a yacht to watch stars?"

At her worldly wise remark, Auden was at a loss for words, and without further delay, he put down the wine and took out a jewelry box.

Inside was a valuable necklace.

"Juliana, we've known each other for so long. Long enough that I've seen your proud moments, and witnessed all your pain. I don't care if you're currently with the wrong person, but I want to be the one to spend the rest of your life with."

Juliana turned her head away to avoid his intense gaze, "You don't have to do this."

However, Auden approached her, pinning her against the ship's railing.

"Two choices, either put this on, or... jump from here."

Chapter 285: Because She Is My Wife

Juliana's pupils contracted slightly. The sea breeze howled, and below was the pitch-black churning sea. Jumping down, even if a lifebuoy was thrown immediately, the hope of survival was extremely slim.

"I'm not joking, Juliana."

As Auden Hughes' voice fell, the distant sound of a speedboat's engine suddenly echoed...

The speedboat approached, and the strong light dissipated. Evan Grant's tall silhouette stood at the bow.

Seeing Auden Hughes so close to her, his face darkened.

"Juliana, come here."

Juliana's eyes darkened for a moment, responding, "I don't like making choices from options given by others."

Being forced like this, she still refused to compromise.

Evan Grant was amused by her stubbornness and boarded the yacht.

Auden Hughes immediately stepped forward, blocking him in front of Juliana.

"Chairman Grant is also a figure of significance. Forcing someone at sea, is this appropriate?"

Evan Grant sneered lightly, "Bringing someone out to sea, and threatening to jump if they don't agree, do you think that's romantic?"

Auden Hughes' eyelid twitched, but the embarrassment was fleeting.

"You two are already divorced. I won't let you touch her again."

Evan Grant chuckled lightly, not even bothering to respond to him.

The bodyguards who boarded the yacht surrounded Auden Hughes swiftly, restraining him.

"Touch me, and think about the consequences!"

Auden Hughes couldn't break free, his eyes were nearly spitting fire.

Evan Grant ignored him completely, walking directly to Juliana.

"Are you coming with me, or should I carry you?"

Juliana was about to speak when a hand chopped down from behind her.

Instinctively, Evan Grant caught her, looking coldly at the person standing behind Juliana.

Ethan Carter shook his arm, explaining, "Boss, do I even need to ask? She won't go with you, nor allow you to carry her. I... I didn't strike hard."

Evan Grant withdrew his icy gaze, picked her up, and walked away.

...

Kingsford.

The night was deep.

Elias Langley's figure appeared on the top floor of The Cardinal Art Club.

Dylan Paxton sat in his chair, looking at the few yellow body bags on the expensive carpet, his cunning eyes showing no emotion.

"Elias, what is the meaning of this?"

Elias Langley sat straight in the chair, but his tone was as calm as discussing the weather.

"Old Mr. Paxton likes artwork, so I specially brought a few items for you to appreciate."

Dylan Paxton slowly poured himself a cup of tea.

"These 'things' have tastes that are too crude to be seen here."

Elias Langley's lips curled into a slight smile.

"The 'H-SP' pulse pistol, professionals are yet to use it. These people went astray, so I thought it'd be more appropriate for you to discipline them. After all, rules mustn't be broken."

Dylan Paxton set down his teacup, leaned back in his chair, with his hands folded in front of him.

"You're still too young. Some things, which appear pleasing, may not last when held for long. Be careful, or you'll find them scorching."

Elias Langley's smile did not fade.

"I have a bad short memory. She was startled, and this grudge, I've remembered. The person who escaped along with those behind, from now on, will have no peace. Although Old Mr. Paxton is honorable in both age and experience, you've also suffered losses at Mr. Sinclair's hands. You should be very clear about what can be done and what shouldn't even be thought about."

Dylan Paxton's face froze for an instant, then returned to normal.

"Elias, don't speak recklessly about things that lack evidence. Slander entails legal responsibility."

Elias Langley rose.

"Apologies, it's been so long that perhaps I remembered incorrectly. It wasn't you who pursued Mr. Sinclair back then. But please keep these 'artifacts' well. Sorry for disturbing you so late."

Saying this, he turned and headed towards the elevators.

Just as the faint sound signaling the elevator door's impending opening approached, Dylan Paxton's voice sounded from behind.

"Elias!"

Elias Langley paused his steps but did not turn around.

Dylan Paxton slowly said, "You've gone to such lengths to come here... I'm curious, what makes that woman so special that you'd go so far?"

Elias Langley turned his head back, meeting Dylan Paxton's probing gaze without a hint of evasion.

"Because she is my wife."

Dylan Paxton laughed, "Is that so? Then you should be more mindful. The 'Genesis' technology and Sebastian's past research results attract much attention alike. The principle that one is guilty of holding a treasure, you understand better than I do."

At this moment, the elevator door opened.

Elias Langley did not respond and stepped directly into the elevator,

No matter how hard, I must protect her.

This thought weighed heavily in his heart.

Walking out of the club, Raine Kane approached.

"Did Evan Grant take Juliana away?"

Elias Langley frowned, his back suddenly aching as if it was burning.

His steps faltered briefly, and Raine Kane caught him.

"Sir, let's go back to the hospital to deal with the wound first, your back has definitely started bleeding again."

Elias Langley's forehead dripped with sweat, his face cold like ice.

...

As dawn broke, Juliana awoke.

She found herself in an elegant room.

She sprang out of bed with a start.

For this was Evan Grant's villa in Kenton.

The scenes from the previous night flooded her mind. She hurriedly checked her clothes, which were intact, but she felt a strange unease.

What happened while she was asleep?

"Do you hope something happens between us, or not?"

Evan Grant's voice suddenly rang out, startling her completely.

Looking towards the sound, he was standing by the window, leisurely holding a cup of coffee.

Juliana got out of bed quickly and questioned warily, "What did you do to me?"

Evan Grant placed his half-drunk coffee on the windowsill, leisurely saying, "If Elias Langley knew you spent the night in my villa, what do you think he would think?"

"Despicable."

Juliana ruffled her hair, turning to leave.

Evan Grant's eyes darkened, he said indifferently, "Why don't we test how much he trusts you?"

Juliana paused her steps, gazed back at him, "The matters between us as a couple do not require outside intervention, nor does it need such a boring test."

With that, she reached for the door.

But the door was locked, not budging at all.

"Open the door!"

Juliana turned, glaring angrily at Evan Grant.

Yet, Evan Grant walked up to her slowly, saying, "The temperature outside is low this season. If you go out now, you'll catch a cold."

Unaccustomed to confronting him so closely, Juliana turned her face away, saying, "I don't need you to care!"

Evan Grant wasn't angered; he asked leisurely, "Do you have to keep so hostile against me?"

"What else?" Juliana retorted.

Unexpectedly, Evan Grant chuckled, a self-mocking tone in his laughter.

"So in your heart, I'm destined to be a villain for life."

"Enough talk, let me out!"

Juliana raised her voice, unwilling to deal with him any longer.

At this moment, a commotion vaguely sounded outside the courtyard.

The next second, Ethan Carter's call came in.

"Chairman Grant, Mr. Langley is here."

Chapter 286: I'm Not Getting Divorced

"You came quite quickly."

Evan sighed, found a shawl, and forcefully draped it over her before opening the door.

Juliana Jacobs hurried to the front yard, and the first thing she saw was a "Warrior" assault vehicle crushing the lawn.

Though the car door didn't have any specific markings, its unique hardcore aura indicated that it came from a formidable special department.

As she appeared, the door of the "Warrior" suddenly opened.

Elias Langley stepped out of the car.

The man's figure remained tall and straight, showing no signs of illness, and his gaze scrutinized her from head to toe.

Juliana's veneer of calm seemed to crack a little; her lips moved slightly, but she said nothing. She directly threw off the shawl and ran towards him.

But halfway there she stopped.

What was she nervous about?

Nothing should have happened between her and Evan, yet the reality was hard to refute.

If he didn't believe her, should she swear an oath, even desperately beg him to trust her?

Endlessly explaining was no different from humiliating herself.

Her innocence didn't need to be proven to anyone.

Seeing her pause, Elias furrowed his brow slightly and took a few steps toward her.

Just as he was about to speak, a cold wind blew.

Without a word, he took off his coat and draped it over her.

"Are you alright?"

Perhaps afraid of startling her, he made sure his voice was soft.

Juliana opened her mouth, the decisive "No" stuck in her throat.

Her intuition said no, but during her sleep, she couldn't be entirely sure.

She wrapped herself tighter in his coat, whispering, "I feel like I'm alright."

Elias instantly understood her hesitation, his gaze suddenly cold as he sharply looked at Evan.

"An ex-husband should know his boundaries."

Evan stood under the porch, his gaze playful.

"Since you say I'm her ex-husband, my relationship with her isn't ordinary."

The air seemed to solidify.

Elias held Juliana's hand tightly, sending her into the car, then turned to face Evan, his presence radiating a low pressure.

"Let's find a place to talk."

Evan seemed to have anticipated this moment for a long time.

He raised his chin slightly, pointing toward the direction of the backyard, and uttered one word, "Please."

The two men walked one behind the other to the empty backyard garden.

By now, the skies had brightened, but the chill of dawn couldn't calm the tension between them.

Without any wasteful words, Elias's fist, carried by the cold wind, dashed straight for Evan's face.

Expecting it, Evan sidestepped while swinging a swift kick at Elias's lower body.

Their skills were remarkable; the clash of fists and feet was a battle of strength and technique.

In the end, Elias delivered a heavy punch to Evan's abdomen, and as he bent over in pain, another elbow slashed across his back, pinning him hard onto the stone bench.

However, Elias didn't intend to beat him to death; he relented once the point was made, sparing Evan.

Evan coughed heavily several times, sitting heavily by the stone bench, and chuckled lowly, "To lose to you isn't shameful."

Elias, enduring the pain in his back, also found a stone bench to sit on.

Yet his posture was upright, allowing no one to suspect his real condition.

"I don't think you have the guts to touch her, but I dislike how you brought her here."

"Elias," Evan wiped the blood from the corner of his lips, "I'm a normal man, and I deeply love my ex-wife."

Elias's hand on his lap instantly clenched into a fist.

Just as he was about to move, he saw Evan gesture to the side, and Ethan Carter walked over with a folder.

"Mr. Langley, this is Miss Jacobs' health report."

He paused before adding, "It's a non-invasive examination."

Elias took out the report and scanned it quickly.

Evan's eyes darkened as he said, "Her health isn't optimistic; you'd better have some trustworthy specialists take a closer look at her."

"There's no need for you to worry about my wife's issues."

Elias shoved the report back into the file pouch.

Evan let out a soft chuckle and looked elsewhere.

"After the miscarriage and falling into the sea, then being locked in the cold basement by me, she sustained permanent physical damage, making it hard for her to be a mother. I'm remorseful for the harm I caused her, and if you mind that she can't bear children..."

"What matters to me is her as a person, not whether she can bear children," Elias interrupted him firmly, "I care more about her health than anyone else. You're an outsider, and have no right to meddle in issues between my wife and me."

After speaking, he stood up and walked toward the front yard with the folder.

Raine Kane waited at the yard gate.

This place was some distance from the front yard; none of the fighting sounds earlier could be heard outside.

Elias handed her the folder, "Destroy it."

Raine took it, "Yes!"

When they reached the front yard, he immediately saw Juliana standing by the car.

Out of concern for him, she didn't comfortably wait inside the car.

Elias hurried over with a furrowed brow.

"Who told you to come down? Waiting somewhere is still waiting; so disobedient."

His tone wasn't pleasant, making Juliana swallow all the words of concern she had prepared.

Elias pushed her into the car, following inside as well.

The car slowly backed out of the estate and then drove away.

Evan stood quietly at the yard gate, and only when the taillights vanished completely did he find the early morning chill unbearably cold.

Her decisiveness made him acutely aware that he had completely lost her.

This realization brought Evan profound pain.

However, inside the car, the atmosphere was stifling and silent.

Juliana didn't want to explain, and couldn't discern Elias's thoughts at the moment, so she simply kept quiet.

Meanwhile, Elias's mind was tumultuous.

What bothered him most was how long her resentment towards him for yet again "abandoning" her would linger.

He didn't dare speak to her, fearing she'd turn cold or mention separation.

The silence between them was suffocating.

Just as Juliana felt she was being driven mad by the silence and was about to speak, Elias took the initiative, "I won't divorce."

"...What?"

Juliana's eyes were full of surprise.

"I said, I won't divorce."

Elias's voice resounded, and Raine silently raised the partition.

Juliana paused slightly, suddenly understanding.

So his cold attitude wasn't because he cared that she spent the night at Evan's estate but because he feared she'd ask for a divorce.

This man...

Juliana's heart was a mix of emotions, angry yet amused.

She deliberately put on a stern face, "What makes you think I can't divorce you?"

Elias raised an eyebrow, confidently leaning in closer to her.

"Because I'm top-notch in every way, attentive service, not clingy. Where else are you going to find such a satisfying man?"

Juliana was speechless by his reasoning, ultimately unable to hold it in, bursting into laughter.

"What does your laughter mean?"

Elias took the opportunity to pull her into his embrace.

The words that nearly slipped from Juliana's mouth were, "I've never even thought of divorce," but at the last moment, she held them back.

A hint of mischief flickered in her eyes, "Do you truly not want a divorce?"

Elias solemnly nodded.

Juliana looked at him seriously, "Those kidnappers not only pressed me if I was Helena Sinclair but also demanded something from me. So tell me... what exactly are you and they searching for?"

Chapter 287: Elias Langley Is Willing but Unable

Elias Langley's inquisitive gaze fell upon her face.

Hasn't she already regained her memory?

Why doesn't she remember what Sebastian gave her?

Seeing her expression, which didn't seem feigned, he pondered for a moment before asking back, "Didn't they tell you?"

Juliana Jacobs pursed her lips, trying to pull away from his embrace.

Elias held her even tighter.

"It's a result of his research. If you don't know, then don't ask. After all, you're not Helena, knowing this will only add unnecessary worries."

Juliana blinked, "So you know who harmed him back then, right?"

"Juliana," Elias' eyes darkened, "The roots of a big tree have already entangled the entire forest. To shake the trunk now will only bury you in leaves."

Juliana turned her head to look out the window, silent.

Elias thought she was dissatisfied with his answer and still considering a divorce. He immediately turned her face back to him, refusing to let her evade.

"You can't just... I chose Isabelle because I was confident I could save you. It was my greed, I chose the best of both worlds. I... I thought at the time, no matter the outcome, this time, I would stay with you."

Perhaps he was too agitated, stumbling over his words, his thoughts incoherent.

Juliana had analyzed it calmly later; if he had chosen her, the kidnappers might not have released her easily, and both of them being held back could have hindered Elias.

"Juliana, no matter what you say, I won't divorce, even if you abuse me, I won't leave."

This side of Elias, she had never seen before.

Juliana paused slightly, unable to maintain the forced indifference in her eyes. The corners of her mouth curved, and she couldn't help but laugh again.

"I never thought about divorce. Why do you keep bringing it up?"

Elias was stunned for a moment, realizing instantly.

"... You were teasing me?"

A mixture of immense relief and the embarrassment of being teased enveloped him instantly.

He looked at her smiling face so close to him, those bright and charming eyes mischievous yet captivating.

Elias' eyes deepened, capturing Juliana's chin, bowing his head to kiss her still-smiling lips.

The kiss bore a hint of punishment, yet at the touch of her lips, it transformed into an irresistible indulgence.

As their breaths intertwined, Juliana's hand around his neck felt his change, her emotions surging.

Was he going to take it further here?

But suddenly, his ardor ceased abruptly.

Juliana opened her eyes to see Elias, sweating profusely, and his face slightly pale.

Elias suppressed his heavy breathing, saying, "I want to satisfy my wife, but today, I really lack the strength."

"You..."

Juliana suddenly remembered his injured back, wondering if he should even be discharged at this time?

"Take off your clothes, let me see."

She said, reaching to unbutton him.

Elias hurriedly stopped her, "No, it's stuck."

Juliana, angered, wanted to hit him but felt too sorry to do it. She turned her head and shouted to the driver's seat, "Raine, to the hospital."

...

Elias' burns on his back were appallingly serious; during the doctor's treatment, he wouldn't let Juliana see.

Juliana didn't insist, waiting outside the treatment room.

This kidnapping incident couldn't just end in her heart because Isabelle Sinclair was captured and four kidnappers were shot dead.

The events of fourteen years ago must be linked with the person named Pang.

And what her father gave her was very important to Pang.

But she genuinely couldn't recall those memories, couldn't remember where it was.

Thinking of this, Juliana tapped her head.

"Juliana, are you not feeling well?" Raine asked.

Juliana looked up at her and suddenly asked, "Do you know Sebastian's current condition?"

Raine was momentarily stunned.

"Mr. Sinclair's whereabouts are always top secret. Even those two adopted daughters of the Sinclair family haven't seen him for years; all matters are personally handled by Elias' most trusted secretary, and even Quinn and Zachary as secondary secretaries aren't in contact with him."

This answer was within Juliana's expectations. Given her father's status, Elias Langley would naturally protect him impeccably.

Besides him, the only other person likely in the know would be Mrs. Sinclair.

Juliana walked to the window, gazing at the fountain in front of the outpatient building.

"You work by my side, but Elias Langley is like half your boss too. If one day, there's a conflict of interest between him and me, whose side will you stand on?"

This question instantly made Raine feel as though she'd been asked, "If your parents divorced, who would you choose?"

She curled her lips into a smile, "Juliana, both you and Mr. Langley have been incredibly kind to me, but you... are closer to my heart."

Juliana's eyes held a smile, her tone slightly admonishing, "Who taught you to be so slick?"

Raine laughed, rubbing the back of her head.

Juliana then drew back her smile, lowering her voice, "Help me find out about Mr. Sinclair's situation, but don't let anyone know."

Raine was momentarily surprised but nodded, "Okay, wait for my news."

As soon as she finished speaking, the treatment room door opened.

The doctor emerged first.

"The patient's back burns are significant; strictly speaking, he should be hospitalized for anti-infection, rehydration, and standardized wound dressing treatment. However, he insists on returning to Kingsford today, so I can only strongly advise at least an intravenous infusion of antibiotics and electrolyte solution to stabilize his condition before traveling."

Juliana didn't hesitate, "Okay, please arrange it."

Thinking about how he insisted on being discharged with such injuries to find her, enduring for so long, her heart was filled with both annoyance and bitterness.

"Additionally," the doctor added, "it's crucial to minimize back movement and friction to prevent the wounds from tearing again."

"Understood, I'll take care of it." Juliana vowed solemnly.

The infusion was arranged in a private ward.

Elias lay on his stomach on the hospital bed, the most comfortable position for him.

Juliana held his IV drip, hoping the liquid might be warmer through the heat of her palm.

Elias looked at her, his face brimming with smiles.

"Wifey..."

"Shut up!"

"...Okay."

At that moment, Juliana's phone rang; it was Rosalind Linton calling.

"Juliana, come to Celestial Vista for lunch. Where are you? I'll have Adrian pick you up."

Juliana glanced at Elias on the bed, agreeing, "I'll head over myself later."

"Great, I'll make a few dishes waiting for you," Rosalind joyfully ended the call.

Juliana put her phone into her bag and stood up.

Elias looked up, "Take me with you."

Juliana gazed at him coldly, "The doctor advised you not to move; Raine will stay with you."

With that, she was about to leave.

Elias pulled her hand, "I'm your husband. When not in Kenton, fine, but I'm here, and I wasn't invited. That's impolite."

What a ridiculous logic.

But facing his imploring eyes, Juliana softened.

"Alright, after you finish the drip, we'll go together."

Elias' lips curved slightly upward.

Just as they were about to set off, Juliana's phone rang again, this time from an unknown number.

Juliana deliberately delayed for about ten seconds before answering.

It was Florence Sinclair's voice that came through the phone.

Chapter 288: Pressure from Elias's In-Laws

"Hello, Miss Jacobs, I'm Florence Sinclair."

Juliana grabbed Elias Langley's clothes.

The man was buttoning his shirt, the clothes pulling at the bandage on his back, and he hissed lightly.

Juliana didn't care about him and responded solemnly on the phone, "What's up?"

"Here's the thing," Florence's voice was much lighter, "your friend Summer Shaw meets the requirements to apply for the cell-based heart transplant surgery, and her current physical condition is good. Please transfer her to Kingsford as soon as possible."

"Okay, I got it."

Juliana hung up the phone.

After last night, Auden Hughes probably felt guilty and didn't even have the courage to speak to her.

But Florence's sudden change in attitude... was somewhat intriguing.

"Honey," Elias Langley's voice was full of grievance, "you hurt me."

Juliana looked up at him, "I did it on purpose."

Elias Langley raised an eyebrow, seemingly surprised by her straightforwardness with a touch of playful reprimand.

Juliana gently tapped his nose, her tone half warning, half serious.

"Summer Shaw is my bottom line. If those troublemakers you attract dare to involve her again, I won't let it go."

Elias Langley grasped her fingers, chuckling softly, "I can't stop what others want to do, but if anyone wants to harm you, I will never let her off."

Juliana fetched a coat and carefully helped him put it on.

"Go back to Kingsford and stay hospitalized. Whenever the doctor nods, then you can be discharged."

This signified the end of the couple's current conflict.

"Okay, I'll do as you say." Elias Langley readily agreed, immediately arranging everything, "I'll arrange a medical charter and return to Kingsford with Summer this afternoon."

Juliana nodded.

By noon, the two arrived at Celestial Vista.

As soon as they entered, they saw Adrian Langley bringing out dishes from the kitchen.

He was evidently coming straight from the company, having only removed his suit jacket, his crisp white shirt with a meticulously knotted tie, sleeves rolled neatly to the forearms, exposing a strong, slender wrist.

After a month or two, his whole aura had changed significantly.

While helping his mother serve the dishes, his demeanor was gentle and reserved, yet the calm and authority of a high-ranking executive had quietly merged into his every move.

Seeing Juliana, he quickly came forward.

He respectfully called, "Uncle," and then smiled at Juliana, saying, "When did you arrive yesterday? Why didn't you say a word when you came back? If mom hadn't run into you, were you planning to leave quietly again?"

Juliana smiled faintly, "I came back for Summer Shaw, but I have to leave this afternoon."

Hearing that there had been progress in Summer Shaw's case, Adrian felt a little relieved from the worry that had been plaguing him.

Rosalind Linton walked out of the kitchen, taking off her apron, "Why are we still standing and talking? Aren't any of you hungry? Come on, take a seat."

The dining table at Celestial Vista was round, and Juliana sat down beside Rosalind Linton.

"Aidan, go fetch the jewelry box I left in the safe."

Adrian didn't expect his mother to have bought Juliana jewelry behind his back and fetched it, puzzled.

Rosalind Linton placed the jewelry box in Juliana's hands.

"You've been with the Linton Family for quite some time now. During your first marriage, the old man was seriously ill, and the family was having a hard time, so nothing was prepared for you. Although there's no wedding with Mr. Langley this time, I should still give you a modest gift."

Juliana opened the jewelry box to find a set of three gold ornaments.

She was slightly surprised.

According to wedding customs, the three gold pieces should have been prepared by the groom's family.

Elias Langley's eyes landed on the gold jewelry, instantly understanding Rosalind Linton's intentions.

"This is my fault, many things are not yet settled, so our wedding date has to be postponed, but I promise to give her a grand wedding."

Rosalind Linton smiled meaningfully at his words.

"Mr. Langley might not know, but before Juliana came to us at thirteen, she escaped from a pervert, walked dozens of kilometers to Kenton, and survived by scavenging for half a year."

She pursed her lips.

"I say this not for you to pity her. I want you to know what she's been through. The path she's walked, I'm not sure even my son could have managed."

She looked at Elias Langley as if entrusting her precious child to him.

"But Mr. Langley is an understanding person; I'm confident if you genuinely care for her, I'll be at ease."

Elias Langley nodded, "Auntie Linton, I will treat her well for a lifetime."

Adrian stood aside, like a statue that had lost its warmth.

The girl taken in at thirteen, whom he convinced his mother and grandfather to keep; the one for whom he'd rather fake his death to return to the Langleys, fighting through the bloody internal strife just to secure a foothold, all for giving her a better life... At this moment, she was being handed over to another man by his mother.

She had, ultimately, moved far away from his world, and that last bit of humble hope had now turned into an everlasting, unreturned longing.

With Elias Langley's promise, Rosalind Linton nodded contentedly and turned her attention to inviting, "Aidan, don't just stand there, come sit down. This whole table was prepared by me especially for Juliana and her husband; let's dig in."

"Thank you, Auntie Linton," Juliana said.

She understood the significance of Rosalind Linton insisting she come for this meal.

The "three gold pieces" in her hands were more than just a gift; they were a way for her "family" to exert pressure on Elias Langley.

Elias Langley hadn't contacted the Langleys on this trip to Kenton, and after lunch, he and Juliana took a medical charter back to Kingsford.

At Kingsford hospital, Caleb Shaw had arranged everything, and as soon as Summer Shaw's medical jet landed, she was seamlessly transferred to the already prepared cardiac surgery ICU.

Juliana urged Elias Langley to go to the ward immediately, but he insisted on waiting to see Summer in safe condition before accompanying Juliana back.

Juliana was a bit helpless and was about to persuade him when she spotted the approaching Mrs. Sinclair. As their gazes crossed, Juliana averted her eyes first.

Mrs. Sinclair felt an inexplicable ache in her heart.

She had heard that Elias Langley went to Kenton against medical advice and had rushed over as soon as he returned.

"Elias, ignoring the doctor's orders, do you even care about your life anymore?"

The anxiety in her words was evident.

Elias Langley was about to speak when Florence arrived.

"Mom, why are you here?"

Mrs. Sinclair's gaze shifted to her, "To see Elias. And what about you?"

Florence gestured toward Summer's ward, "To check the patient's condition."

She was here to inspect it?

Juliana slightly furrowed her brows.

Florence didn't say much more and entered the ICU with the doctors.

She analyzed the data professionally and emphasized to the doctors steadily, "Summer Shaw's cell activity is key to heart cultivation, and we must ensure her physical condition remains optimal..."

Before she could finish, the monitor suddenly emitted a sharp alarm.

The nurse cried out in panic, "The patient's oxygen saturation is dropping rapidly! Blood pressure is unmeasurable!"

Juliana and Caleb Shaw both rushed to the ward door, only to see Florence calmly stopping the doctor from administering epinephrine.

"Don't use it yet; it will affect her cell structure."

Her face was full of professionalism and composure.

"It might be a reaction from the monitoring implant parameters causing electrical anomalies in the heart; let me adjust the core frequency."

After her operation, Summer Shaw narrowly avoided danger.

The attending doctor praised, "Thanks to Director Sinclair's timely and professional handling."

At that moment, a slight pride appeared on Mrs. Sinclair's face.

Florence humbly wiped her sweat and walked out of the ward.

No one noticed that the thrilling "critical condition" Summer just experienced was orchestrated by her.

She had to orchestrate this "heroic rescue" in front of Juliana, making sure the latter remembered this favor.

Just like how the Grant Family manipulated Juliana back then, this "favor" would become a tool to control her.

Simultaneously, she could perfectly showcase her poised professional skills in front of her mother and Elias Langley, enhancing her personal image.

It was a perfect plan, yielding twice the results with half the effort.

Yet right as Florence was suppressing her triumphant glee and ready to receive Juliana's gratitude after leaving the ward...

"Smack!"

A sudden slap landed hard on her face, catching her completely off guard!

The force of it left her utterly stunned.

Chapter 289: Mrs. Sinclair Truly Excels at Raising Daughters

However, Juliana didn't give Florence any chance to react. She grabbed her collar and dragged her into the empty hospital room next to them under the watchful eyes of everyone.

The door slammed shut with a "bang."

Mrs. Sinclair wanted to step forward, but Elias Langley stood in front of her.

"Elias..." Mrs. Sinclair frowned tightly.

Elias Langley remained calm, "Let them have a private conversation."

Seeing his intention to side with Juliana, Mrs. Sinclair nervously clenched her fingers...

Inside the room, Florence was so intimidated by Juliana's sudden aggression that she lost all her confidence.

She forced herself to remain calm, "I just saved your friend, you owe me..."

Slap!

Before she could finish her sentence, another slap landed on her face.

"A weasel paying New Year's greetings to a chicken, should I thank you?" Juliana said coldly.

Florence was bewildered.

Could it be that Juliana had figured something out?

Even Caleb Shaw hadn't noticed, how could she know?

With this thought, she regained some confidence and said with grievance, "Caleb was there, he didn't say anything..."

Juliana gave her another slap, "I'm not here to reason with you!"

Her unpredictable behavior left Florence too scared to retaliate and she trembled as she said, "My mom is right outside, Elias is too, and you're still daring to hit me?"

Juliana laughed fiercely, "If I dared to drag you in front of them, I don't care what others think!"

Florence was rendered speechless by her imposing manner.

Juliana looked down at her, "Listen up, from here on out, if Summer Shaw's condition fluctuates for any reason, I'm holding you responsible!"

Florence seemed out of options, only tremblingly saying, "You... you can't falsely accuse the innocent."

"You're innocent?"

Juliana's lips curled into a mocking smile.

"You used Isabelle as a pawn, and I used her too. Now that pawn is in prison, don't you see that's my warning to you?"

Florence's face turned pale instantly.

Looking at Juliana's cold gaze, fear gripped her for the first time.

She lowered her head, her voice weak, "Isabelle got where she is because of her bad character, she brought it on herself. I'm not like her."

Juliana laughed without warmth,

"You're just a little smarter than her, you know to use a brush to clean toilets."

With that, she opened the door and walked out.

Mrs. Sinclair's worried gaze fell into the room, only to see Florence standing up shakily from the ground, her face full of red marks.

She called out feeling sorry for her, "Florence," then turned to Juliana, her tone full of reproach.

"How could you hit her like that!"

Juliana paused, turning her gaze towards her, her eyes full of distant frost.

"You feel sorry for your precious foster daughter being hit?"

Mrs. Sinclair was taken aback by her words.

Juliana raised an eyebrow and continued, "When Isabelle was causing trouble for me, why didn't I hear you say a just word? It seems Mrs. Sinclair is quite adept at teaching daughters, each of your foster daughters turned out so 'excellent'."

Susan could not stand it any longer, stepping forward to defend Mrs. Sinclair, "How presumptuous of you as a junior to rebuke an elder like this?"

Juliana gave her a light glance and sarcastically laughed.

"Now that I think about it, it's lucky the Sinclair Family's precious daughter didn't grow up by Mrs. Sinclair's side. Otherwise, she'd have learned the same crooked ways, wouldn't that be disgraceful."

"You're too much!"

Susan couldn't tolerate it any longer.

But as soon as she raised her hand, Elias Langley stepped forward and embraced Juliana.

"Mrs. Sinclair, I need to return to the ward, excuse us."

With that, he began to walk away with Juliana.

Juliana didn't resist this time, instead supporting him.

Seeing the thin sweat on his forehead, she knew he was holding up with effort.

"Does it hurt?" she asked while helping him back to the ward.

Elias Langley laughed, "If my wife feels sorry for me, it doesn't hurt anymore."

"You're just being a pain," Juliana said, holding back a smile.

Watching them leave, tears welled in Florence's eyes as she clung to her mother's arm.

"Mom, I didn't..."

Mrs. Sinclair wiped her tears without saying anything more about accountability, just spoke with concern, "Let's have a doctor take a look at you."

Florence was secretly amazed, no one intended to seek justice for her, nor did her mother retort despite being insulted like that.

Who exactly is Juliana?

Florence's gaze subtly darkened, and she meekly nodded.

The mother and daughter headed towards the doctor's office.

On the way, they passed Caleb Shaw.

Caleb gave Florence a sharp look, "I'll remember you."

Although he didn't notice any foul play by Florence during the emergency treatment for Summer Shaw, Caleb just believed Juliana.

If Juliana decided Florence was problematic, she must be involved somehow.

Florence was startled, and under his hostile gaze, she hurriedly clutched Mrs. Sinclair's arm tighter and quickened her pace to leave.

Mrs. Sinclair noticed her unease and patted her hand, "It's okay, I'm here."

...

Back in the ward, Elias Langley was reluctantly made to change into a hospital gown and lay face down on the bed.

The doctor treated his wound again and sighed, "If you hadn't snuck out of the hospital, it would have scabbed over by now."

Hearing this, Juliana immediately said to Raine Kane, "Get the strongest chain possible, one that can lock him securely to the hospital bed."

Elias Langley turned his head in surprise, looking at his wife who had a serious expression, his arguments lacked the courage to come out, and he softened his tone, "Juliana, I promise, without the doctor's and your permission, I won't leave this room, don't lock me up."

Juliana looked at him lightly, her gaze repeatedly saying, "Your bail isn't worth much."

Elias Langley's face took on a pleading smile, "Really, as long as you're here watching me, I'm not going anywhere."

Juliana stopped looking at him and gestured to Raine Kane to let it go.

Elias Langley's demeanor changed instantly, directing his annoyance towards the blunt doctor.

"Were you a husky in your past life? Specializing in disrupting couple's harmony and ward peace?"

"Elias Langley!"

Juliana scolded him.

The man closed his mouth.

The doctor smiled awkwardly and found an excuse to slip away.

Juliana watched this man regain his 'ground' quickly, showing a hint of an almost imperceptible smile.

She didn't expect such a childish side from Elias Langley.

"Raine, you can step out," Elias Langley instructed.

Raine Kane immediately closed the door for them.

"Juliana," Elias Langley lay on the hospital bed, raising an eyebrow, a hint of coaxing in his voice.

"Come over and give me a kiss."

"Stop it."

This side of Elias Langley made her somewhat unaccustomed.

"My back hurts, a kiss from you works better than an anesthetic."

In the end, Juliana couldn't resist his antics and walked over to the bedside with resignation.

Seeing this, Elias Langley immediately wanted to turn his body.

"Don't move."

Juliana was afraid he'd strain his wound and hurriedly leaned down to press on him.

In that instant, the man lifted his head, and his warm lips came up insistently...

Elias Langley, immersed in the joy of success, when the door was suddenly pushed open from outside.

Chapter 290: You Must Be Familiar with Sinclair Family's Second Miss Too, Right?

"Juliana!"

Raine Kane stood at the doorway.

Seeing the situation inside, she immediately closed her eyes wanting to sneak away.

However, Juliana Jacobs called out, "Come back!"

Raine Kane swallowed hard as she saw Elias Langley's gaze gradually darken.

"Uh... should I knock before coming in?"

"What's going on? Speak!" Juliana Jacobs said.

Raine Kane steadied herself, "I just received news, Isabelle Sinclair had a sudden illness in prison. They're currently applying for medical parole for her."

The expression on Juliana Jacobs' face became even darker than Elias Langley's.

"Is it Mrs. Sinclair who's not giving up, or is there someone else?"

Raine Kane hadn't investigated, so she couldn't make a judgment.

"Since Isabelle Sinclair went inside, she's been staying in a single-person cell. Besides not being able to move or go online freely, her daily life is more regular than outside."

Raine Kane chose her words carefully, but the meaning was clear: Isabelle Sinclair's days inside haven't been too bad.

Juliana Jacobs sneered, looking at Elias Langley.

The man closed his eyes and wrapped Juliana's cool hand in his warm palm.

"I will ensure this matter is dealt with justly."

Juliana Jacobs half-squinted her eyes.

"I don't want procedural justice, I want Isabelle Sinclair to be treated as a felon."

Elias Langley raised an eyebrow slightly at her words, falling into brief silence.

Raine Kane, standing aside, was a bit shocked. She knew Elias Langley was at a high post, always adhering to rules, respecting boundaries, and never using power for personal gain lightly.

She was about to smooth things over with a few words when she saw Elias Langley looking up, gazing deeply at Juliana Jacobs, and said sincerely, "Alright."

Juliana Jacobs moved her lips but did not respond.

In the evening, she and Raine Kane went downstairs together, intending to go to the courtyard house to change their clothes before coming back.

Belle Kane several times wanted to speak but hesitated.

Juliana Jacobs watched the descending numbers of the elevator, saying, "If you have something to say, go ahead."

Raine Kane took a deep breath, "Mr. Langley is in this position, acting too directly, he'll inevitably garner criticism. Over the years, he's had many people watching eagle-eyed. He has always remained steady because every step is exceptionally cautious."

Juliana Jacobs lowered her eyes, "You mean I'm dragging him down?"

"Of course not."

As soon as Raine Kane finished speaking, the elevator doors opened.

At the door of the inpatient department hall, Sean Paxton's figure appeared at the glass door.

He was dressed in a dark suit, followed by a bodyguard, striding briskly towards the elevator.

Juliana Jacobs had considered the downsides of having Elias Langley intervene, so she did not request immediate action.

Seeing the approaching person, her eyes showed a hint of delight, and she hummed lightly.

"Look, my best option has arrived."

Raine Kane glanced in confusion along her line of sight...

"President Jacobs, what a coincidence?"

With more than ten meters remaining, Sean Paxton started greeting her.

Juliana Jacobs smiled lightly, "It is quite a coincidence, didn't expect to meet the very busy Mr. Paxton here."

Sean Paxton clearly enjoyed this statement, subtly straightened his spine, his tone carrying a hint of deliberately conveyed busyness.

"Ah, entangled in public and family affairs, it's truly beyond my control."

Juliana Jacobs nodded understandingly, "I'm heading home, so I won't disturb you."

After saying this, she left with Raine Kane.

Actually, Sean Paxton was there to visit Elias Langley, but he was more interested in Juliana Jacobs.

Watching her leave, Sean Paxton paused for two seconds, called out "President Jacobs," and caught up.

"Do you have time for a drink?"

Juliana Jacobs smiled slightly, "I only drink juice."

Sean Paxton smiled meaningfully, "If you're willing to honor me, anything will do."

Sean Paxton chose a tea room far away from the hospital, membership only.

Raine Kane checked the surroundings, wondering: choosing such a distant place, how much does this guy fear Mr. Langley knowing about meeting someone else's wife in private?

Although a private room was initially booked, Juliana Jacobs insisted on staying in the lobby.

She chose a seat by the window, saying she wanted to view the streets of Kingsford.

Sean Paxton half-jokingly probed, "Are you afraid Elias Langley might suddenly check in, and can't explain?"

Juliana Jacobs gazed at him, a polite smile on her lips.

"An already married person should have basic boundaries, right?"

Sean Paxton was momentarily choked by her words, laughed awkwardly twice, "President Jacobs really likes joking."

Then, he compromised by sitting opposite Juliana Jacobs, appearing slightly helpless.

"I'm sure President Jacobs has learned about us. The Paxton Family is a major player in Kingsford, and maybe that's not such a good thing; look at me, waking up every day to over 100 matters demanding my attention, and my uncle values me immensely, cultivating me diligently, this burden... is heavy."

Juliana Jacobs sipped her chrysanthemum tea, smiled lightly, "A so-called burden isn't it something assumed willingly? With Mr. Paxton's current status, if seeking ease, one can choose to lie flat at any time."

"That's not quite right, people must bear their responsibilities. Despite the Paxton Family's business empire, many depend on us. After my uncle's conversation with you, he deeply reflected, like you dedicated to technology development, if we still employ industry tricks for cooperation, it indeed lacks sincerity and respect."

Sean Paxton humbled himself markedly.

"I know pure profit is hard to move you. But I still hope you see our Paxton enterprise's commitment to driving domestic technological progress. And, on cooperation conditions and respect, we'll provide absolute assurances."

Juliana Jacobs gently swirled the chrysanthemum in her cup, her eyes calm and undisturbed,

"Mr. Paxton made a good impression on me, I won't beat around the bush. Right now, there are too many matters, so I cannot attend to the cooperation issues. Just like now, that Isabelle Sinclair, she should be reflecting well in prison, enjoying the treatment given to felons, but inside she's well-fed and even wants out to annoy me."

She sighed lightly, shook her head.

"Even a detained criminal can be 'cared' for in this manner, such environment, makes it difficult to have expectations for future collaborations."

Sean Paxton's hand holding the tea cup paused almost imperceptibly.

He didn't miss the implication in her words, but Isabelle Sinclair... he just made arrangements to have her parole approved.

Juliana Jacobs' words conveyed a sense of 'want cooperation, first clean the house'.

He was considering his words, trying to balance all, when a group passed by their seats.

"Sean!"

Old Mr. Hughes stopped, somewhat surprised.

But as his gaze fell upon Juliana Jacobs, his face turned somewhat disapproving.

Sean Paxton stood up, "Old Mr. Hughes, long time no see."

"What are you two...?"

Old Mr. Hughes held reservations towards Juliana Jacobs.

Sean Paxton quickly introduced, "This is the Vice President of Technology at Aetherflame Dynamics, Ms. Juliana Jacobs. We are talking about some work matters."

"Aetherflame Dynamics? Vice President?"

Old Mr. Hughes' eyes flashed a barely detectable astonishment.

His earlier understanding of Juliana Jacobs was limited to somewhat partial impressions. Despite Auden Hughes telling him Juliana was highly capable, he never believed it.

An orphan without a good education, what achievements could she possibly have?

However, seeing even Sean Paxton treating her humbly, she must have some real skills.

"Auden says he hasn't seen you in some days, whenever you're free, you two should have a drink."

After saying this, Old Mr. Hughes hastily left to cover his discomfort.

Juliana Jacobs gently glanced at Old Mr. Hughes' retreating figure, softly picked up her tea cup, seemingly curiously asking, "Mr. Paxton has vast connections, not only with the Sinclair Family but also with the Hughes Family... you must know Second Miss Sinclair too well?"

Sean Paxton felt a slight panic, immediately denied.

"Not well at all. I just happen to have necessary interactions with the Sinclair Family over the past few years. With Second Miss Sinclair personally, we barely exchange two words in a year."

Juliana Jacobs was about to sip her tea when his words drew her focus sharply.

Fragmented clues in her mind connected, sending chills down her spine.