

## **Panicking 311**

Chapter 311: If You Keep Working Like This, Your Husband Will Starve

Sebastian Sinclair's arm tensed slightly under her grasp.

He looked into his wife's eyes, which were filled with a mix of desperation and faint hope, and his heart felt torn apart.

He wanted so much to tell her that the daughter they missed day and night was right in front of them—Juliana Jacobs, whose eyes were almost identical to hers when she was young.

But he couldn't, and he wouldn't gamble with Juliana's life.

Florence Sinclair was ruthless, and his wife was completely blinded by her, trusting her implicitly.

In wealthy families, it's a common tragedy for a biological child who returns after much hardship to be harmed again because the parents trust an adopted daughter too much. Sebastian Sinclair could not put his daughter in danger again.

So he composed himself and said, "Seeing the true colors of those around you is more important than seeking an answer."

After speaking, he maneuvered his electric wheelchair away.

Mrs. Sinclair stood frozen, her husband's insinuating words echoing in her blank mind, leaving her somewhat bewildered...

The cause of Juliana Jacobs' fatigue and vomiting was finally revealed—it was an allergy to a medicinal ingredient in her treatment plan.

Elias Langley took her to a traditional Chinese medicine clinic, and after adjusting her medication, the symptoms that plagued her quickly disappeared.

Although they both tacitly avoided the topic of "children," a hint of melancholy seemed to linger between them.

Juliana also wanted to be a mother, but her condition did not allow it.

Recently, Elias Langley has been spending noticeably more time at home, experimenting in the kitchen to make dishes she likes.

She noticed that the security team leader at the courtyard had changed, but she didn't ask anything about it.

In the evening, she was so busy at her computer that she lost track of time.

Elias Langley opened the door to come in, just as her phone rang.

Juliana answered the call, and Caleb Shaw's voice came through.

"I've been approached by Samuel Paxton, the new CEO of Rhyvion Group, three times, but I've found excuses to decline each time. However, it seems he's determined to get his hands on our technology, and it might not be long before he stops waiting."

Juliana understood the Paxton's ambition and persistence all too well.

"This is indeed a problem. I'll think of a solution, but in the meantime, please continue to keep him at bay. Neither directly reject nor make any promises, just help me stall."

Caleb Shaw chuckled over the phone, "I'm not just helping you; this is for our company. I also visited Vivacore Bio this morning, and my sister's heart cultivation progress is going well."

The thought of Summer Shaw still lying in a hospital bed brought a twinge to Juliana's nose.

"I appreciate your help during this time."

With that, she quickly hung up the phone.

The next second, the man beside her handed her a tissue.

Juliana rubbed her nose but didn't take it.

"What, do you think I'm going to cry?" she asked.

Elias Langley chuckled softly, placed the tissue aside, and naturally put his arm around her shoulder.

"Crying in front of your husband isn't a big deal."

Of course not!

Juliana lowered her head for a couple of seconds, "Do you like children?"

"You can have your own child. Your brother can, and so can you," she added.

Elias Langley pulled her closer, "If it's your child, I would love them. If not, it means nothing to me."

Juliana felt a pang in her heart and tried to push him away, "You know I can't have children."

Elias Langley leaned in and pecked her on the lips.

"Then I'll treat you like my daughter, love and spoil you for a lifetime, how about that?"

Juliana's heart was gently touched by his words, a slight sweetness mixed with bitterness.

Elias Langley picked her up horizontally, "Time to eat, Mrs. Langley. If you keep working like this, your husband is going to starve."

His double entendre left Juliana blushing.

On the other side, Sebastian Sinclair was still worried about Juliana's health and wanted to create an opportunity to mend the rift between her and her mother.

So, a week later, when he learned that the bandages on Juliana's face had been removed and she could go out, he called Elias Langley to invite them to a private villa in the suburbs of Kingsford for a medicinal spring bath.

To avoid seeming deliberate and to give the impression of recuperation, he invited Florence Sinclair to join as well.

Florence's previous uterine bleeding was not severe and stopped within two days. Upon hearing about the spring bath trip with her parents, she was more than willing to go.

However, recalling Juliana's "promise," she couldn't help but hold Mrs. Sinclair's hand tightly.

Mrs. Sinclair saw through her thoughts and patted her hand, comforting her, "Don't worry. Your father arranged this trip to the villa to clear up past misunderstandings among the family. Besides, as long as I'm around, I won't let you senselessly 'fall' again."

Feeling reassured, Florence turned to pick up her phone and sent a message.

"We're going to the hot springs this weekend. Does she know how to swim?"

The reply came quickly: "Do you want to drown her? Childish!"

Florence: "Keep telling me her weaknesses, and I'll find a way to deal with her."

The reply: "After all I've told you, have you succeeded even once? Did you manage to set up a meeting between Samuel Paxton and Juliana?"

Chastised by the other party, Florence fell silent.

Less than a minute later, another message arrived.

"Samuel Paxton once suffered at the hands of a little girl, leaving an old wound on half his head. Over the years, the women he's toyed with all bear some resemblance to that girl. I think Juliana fits his prey profile, so you must ensure he meets her. If you can't even achieve this, you are destined to be defeated by Juliana and eventually driven out of the Sinclair Family!"

Florence did not respond further.

She felt like her decade-long efforts in the Sinclair Family were slowly slipping away with Juliana's emergence.

But how was she going to lure Samuel Paxton to the villa?

During Juliana's recuperation, Old Mr. Sinclair's back had also improved. Upon hearing that his son was organizing a family trip to the medicinal spring, he insisted on going, wielding his seniority like a badge.

Sebastian Sinclair did not explicitly refuse him, only gently reminded him, "You can come if you like, but this trip is different from staying home. If there's another 'accident,' you'll bear all the consequences."

Old Mr. Sinclair, hearing this, immediately bristled, tapping his cane heavily on the floor.

"Ungrateful wretch! I'm your father! This kind of family reunion should naturally include me. Not inviting me is already a disrespect. Now you're cursing me? I see you've been bewitched by that woman and have no regard for me as your elder!"

The more he spoke, the more he felt he was in the right, and his voice rose a few decibels.

"I tell you, with such a good medicinal spring, the idea of you enjoying it without me is out of the question! You must take me and arrange the best room for me!"

With that, he hurried back to his room to pack his things.

Sebastian Sinclair, sitting in his wheelchair, stretched his legs, a subtle, meaningful look crossing his eyes.

He's good at making chips.

And even better at handling his father.

Chapter 312: Disciplining the Old Man

On Friday afternoon, after Elias Langley finished explaining his business, Juliana Jacobs set off with him to Quellmont Manor.

The Sinclairs used a business car, while Tyler Hughes had to work overtime and thus didn't go.

The two families finally met at the lobby of Quellmont Manor.

Strictly speaking, Juliana Jacobs and Elias Langley arrived first, and the two were handling check-in procedures when Sebastian Sinclair and his group also arrived.

From afar, Old Mr. Sinclair immediately recognized Juliana's silhouette.

He snorted a breath from his large, ox-like nostrils, "Isn't this supposed to be a top private manor? How can they let any old riffraff in?"

Sebastian Sinclair glanced at him, did not refute, but instead went along, saying, "Indeed, you see, among the people coming and going, there are quite a few with out-of-town accents. Sigh..."

He deliberately sighed lightly.

"I bet the depth and style of Kingsford still need 'pure-blooded' natives like you, born and bred, to maintain and oversee."

Mrs. Sinclair was surprised when she heard this and looked at him.

She was well aware that her husband never had regional biases, but she didn't know why he would go along with Old Mr. Sinclair today and say such things.

And indeed, his words had the weight of "praise and kill."

Old Mr. Sinclair felt an immense sense of responsibility to maintain the "purity of Kingsford," filled with pride and confidence, and rushed aggressively towards Juliana's direction, supported by his cane.

Juliana had just received the room card when she heard Old Mr. Sinclair's voice behind her.

"Juliana, you murderer who cost my granddaughter her life, what right do you have to be here?"

His voice was loud, drawing the attention of passersby and people resting in the lobby.

Elias Langley pulled Juliana beside him.

Not stepping forward to defend her, because Sebastian Sinclair was there, and his indulgence of Old Mr. Sinclair's behavior naturally had his own purpose.

He only needed to prevent Old Mr. Sinclair from laying a hand on Juliana.

Juliana looked puzzled, "Quellmont Manor opens its doors for business, and as long as you're a law-abiding citizen, you're welcome. I'm curious, according to your definition of 'qualification,' does it depend on age or the extent of... nonsensical behavior?"

Old Mr. Sinclair paused at her words, pointing at her nose, "Don't be arrogant, Isabelle's spirit will bless me with health and longevity, allowing me to witness your downfall, troublemaker."

At this moment, a waiter stepped forward to mediate.

Old Mr. Sinclair became even angrier,

Immediately, he pointed at the waiter's nose, asking fiercely, "Who are you? What do you do here? Are you a native of Kingsford? If not, why are you here in our Kingsford? You're such an ignorant thing, tainting the bloodline of Kingsford, consuming Kingsford's resources, get out!"

A guest nearby couldn't take it anymore, "Why is this old man talking like this? What's wrong with people from other places?"

Old Mr. Sinclair was used to being high and mighty all his life, unable to tolerate being criticized by others, and was already flushed with anger.

"You poor outsiders, country pigs, can't survive, coming to Kingsford to beg, you need to understand the situation, begging should look like begging, don't be half-hearted with me."

A guest was extremely dissatisfied and thus dialed the police.

Mrs. Sinclair nudged Sebastian Sinclair's arm, speaking softly, "Dad talking like this is too impolite, won't you go persuade him?"

Sebastian Sinclair raised his brow, "You go if you'd like, I can't afford such embarrassment."

Mrs. Sinclair turned to look at Florence Sinclair, only to see the adopted daughter keeping her head down, closely leaning next to Sebastian's wheelchair, obviously unwilling to persuade Old Mr. Sinclair either.

Naturally, Mrs. Sinclair wanted to save face too, instinctively taking two steps back.

Almost at the same time, Sebastian's wheelchair also rolled slightly backwards.

Within 5 minutes, the police arrived.

Old Mr. Sinclair's mouth was still blabbing away.

"Whose old man is this? Does he have some kind of mental problem?" a policeman scanned the lobby and raised his voice to ask.

"Who are you calling mentally ill!"

Old Mr. Sinclair was furious and pushed the policeman with his hand.

The policeman reacted swiftly, immediately gripping his wrist and deftly restraining him, his voice becoming more stern, "Please cooperate with law enforcement! Whose elderly member is this after all?"

The Sinclairs all turned their faces away, with no one responding.

Old Mr. Sinclair became even angrier, but was held firmly by the police, unable to move.

"I'm over seventy years old, I'm exempt under the law! My grandson-in-law is Liang..."

"Don't shout 'mom'!" Juliana interrupted him before he could say Elias Langley's name, "Assaulting a policeman is a serious crime, shouting 'dad' would be useless for you!"

"Your Isabelle is filial, now she'll bless you with a free police car ride for attacking a policeman, as we all witnessed, and you're looking at at least ten days," Juliana said.

Old Mr. Sinclair was immediately choked by her words.

The policeman said sternly, "At the law's front, everyone is equal, you need to come with us. Please comply!"

With that, they lifted the vigorous Old Mr. Sinclair onto the police car.

Sebastian Sinclair turned to the driver who had accompanied them, "The old man is likely to be detained for a while this time, go deliver the luggage he packed for himself to the police station."

The driver quickly went to do it.

Elias Langley carried the luggage with one hand and held Juliana by the shoulder with the other, about to go to their room.

Mrs. Sinclair saw this and stepped forward, asking warmly, "Elias, which room are you staying in? Sebastian booked three suites, but only one has a hot spring."

No sooner had she spoken than Florence Sinclair immediately stepped forward, looking at the room card in Juliana's hand marked with the hot spring emblem, saying, "Children should be filial, of course, the room with the hot spring should be for the parents."

She behaved cleverly and showed off her filial piety, while quietly putting Juliana in a difficult spot.

Mrs. Sinclair laughed briefly, just about to smooth things over by saying, "It's okay to let the young couple stay there," but Juliana icily said, "Save the big words and have Miss Sinclair learn them herself, we upgraded this room ourselves, how we occupy it has nothing to do with you."

Florence Sinclair's smile froze instantly, almost blurting out, "The hot spring suites here are always in high demand, requiring early reservation to be booked, there were none available when dad booked, he only got one through connections, how could you possibly upgrade on the spot?"

Juliana's lips curled into a very faint mockery, her gaze sweeping to Elias Langley beside her, with a touch of naturally proud tone in her voice.

"If my husband's face isn't useful in Kingsford, wouldn't that mean slapping the whole of Corinthium?"

Florence Sinclair stood there silent, like a clown.

"Mr. Sinclair, Juliana and I are going to drop off the luggage, let's meet at Vitaqua after dinner," Elias Langley said, then left with Juliana.

Eventually, Florence Sinclair was unsurprisingly given a regular suite without a hot spring.

But she did not care about this failed attempt.

As long as her good daughter persona remained, and Mrs. Sinclair continued to like her, she still had cards to play and opportunities to deal with Juliana.

Back in the room, she locked the door and stood before the dressing mirror, slowly removing her clothes.

In the mirror, the bruises from Juliana's beatings had all but faded.

With Samuel Paxton arriving soon, she still had lots to do.

Soaking in the hot spring presented a chance to show evidence of bullying by Juliana, stir Mrs. Sinclair's sympathy, and let Sebastian see Juliana's true side, but at the moment, her body was too "perfect".

Then the doorbell rang, it was the waiter delivering dinner.

She opened the door, seeing a young male waiter standing outside, her eyes flashed with a glint.

"Madam, your herbal meal is arranged, enjoy your meal."

The male waiter set up the dinner for her and was about to leave, but Florence Sinclair stopped him.

She handed him 200 bucks.

"You come hit me."

The waiter, who had never heard such a request in his life, opened his eyes wide, "I can cut open a durian barehanded, you mean it?"

Chapter 313: Honey, Why Are You Crying?

Florence Sinclair was in pain all over. Looking at the bruises on her skin in the mirror, she felt miserable, and she thought Mrs. Sinclair and Sebastian Sinclair would surely be upset.

After dinner she did a bit of embellishing on her injuries, then changed into a swimsuit and donned a bathrobe before heading out.

At the hot springs, Sebastian Sinclair and his wife were already soaking in the reserved pool.

Juliana Jacobs wore a bathrobe, but it was chilly at night, so Elias Langley draped a thick cloak over her before allowing her to go outside.

Just as the two of them arrived, they happened to encounter Florence Sinclair.

At the private hot spring area, each pool entrance had an attendant.

Florence Sinclair bowed gracefully to Elias Langley and was about to walk confidently into the pool, remove her bathrobe, and reveal her injuries to Sebastian Sinclair, his wife, and Elias Langley.

Just then, however, the attendant stopped her with a serious expression.

"I'm sorry, miss, but your face is unusually flushed, which makes us suspect you may have been drinking. According to the resort's regulations, to ensure the safety of our guests, anyone who has consumed alcohol is strictly prohibited from entering the hot springs."

Florence Sinclair was quite displeased with the attendant's sudden interruption, "I don't have a habit of needing to drink with meals, why are you talking nonsense?"

The attendant didn't argue with her, quickly checked the tablet in his hand, and his tone turned even more formal.

"There is 'Secret Recipe Drunken Immortal Duck' in your dinner set menu. This dish is cooked with a large amount of high-quality rice wine, and while the alcohol may not fully evaporate during the braising process. For your health and safety, please understand."

Florence Sinclair was greatly taken aback, "I ordered the set menu, I didn't ask for a dish containing alcohol, you did this on purpose, didn't you?"

She immediately suspected that these people might have been bribed by Juliana.

The attendant showed her the tablet, "Miss, our room service ordering has different room numbers and verification codes for each room, and the ordering code is only received on the phone that made the reservation. This set menu was indeed ordered by you, and there is a note under the dish, 'You need to wait four hours after eating this dish before entering the hot spring.'"

Florence Sinclair was dumbfounded as she read the small print.

Did this line exist when she ordered?

The Drunken Immortal Duck tasted great, and she didn't detect any alcohol flavor, but after eating it, she did feel her blood circulation accelerate.

"Florence..."

Mrs. Sinclair heard the commotion at the door, put on a bathrobe, and came out, seeing that she really looked like she'd been drinking, she said: "Since the resort has such regulations, it's for your own good, you should go back to the room and rest tonight, we have activities tomorrow, let's have fun then."

Florence Sinclair froze in place.

Was the beating she endured just going to become an unknown joke that no one would feel sorry for?

"Move aside, we haven't been drinking, if you keep blocking us here, it's on you if my wife catches a cold."

Elias Langley and Juliana Jacobs had been standing at the back watching because Florence Sinclair was going in first.

The outdoor fall air was quite chilly, he was worried that Juliana Jacobs couldn't bear it, and held her tightly.

Florence Sinclair was prompted to move, instinctively moving out of the way to let them through to the pool.

Elias Langley wrapped his arm around Juliana Jacobs and walked them in.

The attendant, seeing they were all in, closed the door behind them.

Mrs. Sinclair grumbled as she returned to the pool, "Florence is such a grown-up, how could she be so careless? Eating food cooked with rice wine before entering a hot spring, it's just like drinking alcohol."

Soaking in the pool all along, Sebastian Sinclair removed the towel from his face, glanced briefly outside, and said, "Adults must take responsibility for their actions."

In truth, he didn't want outsiders joining their family gathering, thus using this method to send Florence Sinclair off to bed.

Seeing Elias Langley and Juliana Jacobs approach, Sebastian Sinclair's face broke into a smile.

"Did you catch a chill outside? Come on down, it'll warm you right up soaking in the pool."

Mrs. Sinclair glanced at him, noticing his unabashed fondness for Juliana Jacobs.

Juliana Jacobs removed her cloak, loosened her robe, and just as she was about to step into the pool, the horrifying scar on her abdomen was exposed to the air, and Mrs. Sinclair, sitting in the pool, gasped unexpectedly and cried out, "Oh my..."

Juliana Jacobs stopped instantly, instinctively wanting to put her robe back on and leave.

"It's okay, it's okay."

Elias Langley reacted swiftly, immediately using his broad frame to shield her from Mrs. Sinclair, keeping her safely in his embrace.

Juliana Jacobs was filled with self-consciousness, "I told you we shouldn't wear this kind of swimsuit, and you said it won't scare anyone."

Elias Langley gently patted her back, "It really doesn't scare anyone, Mrs. Sinclair just overreacted, don't mind her."

At the same time, Sebastian Sinclair addressed his wife, softly saying, "Someone in the life-saving business like you has weathered tough situations, why are you losing composure in front of the children? Do you just hate her that much?"

Mrs. Sinclair was momentarily embarrassed by his words.

Under Elias Langley's protection, Juliana Jacobs stepped into the hot spring, but even so, she still frowned slightly and intentionally avoided looking at the couple sitting across.

Elias Langley cared for her feelings, too, faced her and leaned against the edge of the hot spring together.

Sebastian Sinclair felt distressed by Juliana Jacobs' timid demeanor.

"Can Juliana's scars be removed?" he asked.

Elias Langley replied, "We have been using scar removal ointment, her other scars aren't visible anymore, and this one... has faded a lot compared to before."

Which meant the scars were even more horrifying earlier.

Sebastian Sinclair's heart seized painfully, and he instinctively blurted out his question, "How did they happen?"

"Electric shocks." Juliana Jacobs softly spoke.

Both Sebastian and Mrs. Sinclair were stunned into silence upon hearing this.

Mrs. Sinclair, as an expert in genetic engineering, naturally knew that using abdominal electric shock on women is a very typical extreme method, leaving traces generally found in illegal places on the black market.

Even unrelated people end up feeling sympathetic upon learning about such an ordeal, and indeed Mrs. Sinclair's gaze towards Juliana Jacobs softened.

Elias Langley gently tucked loose strands of hair behind Juliana Jacobs' ear and quietly said, "You don't have to talk about it if you don't want to."

Juliana Jacobs lifted her eyes to him, a faint smile appearing at the corners of her mouth.

"It's alright, these scars make me feel weak, but I have to learn to overcome them. Thank goodness you arrived just in time that day, really, thank you."

Back then Elias Langley didn't know her identity, it was Summer Shaw who told him to look for her.

Indeed, at that time, his feelings for her were already not ordinary.

Because of her words, Elias Langley embraced her face and kissed her corner of the mouth, "I'm sorry."

Juliana Jacobs pursed her lips, averting her gaze from him.

Mrs. Sinclair felt like she'd eaten a mouthful of dog food, shifting her gaze back to her husband, only to find her husband's eyes reddened.

"Honey, why are you crying?"

Chapter 314: Juliana Jacobs, Your Retribution Has Come

Sebastian Sinclair wiped his face with a cloth, trying to stay calm as he defended himself, "How is this crying? It's the steam from the medicinal spring that's making my eyes water."

Mrs. Sinclair wasn't a three-year-old child who would believe anything she heard.

At this moment, she couldn't delve deeper into her suspicions, so she silently pushed them aside for now. However, her husband's overwhelming concern for Juliana Jacobs had already planted a heavy shadow of doubt in her heart.

About an hour later, after soaking in the medicinal spring, everyone got out of the pool one after another.

Just as Juliana Jacobs finished tying her bathrobe, Mrs. Sinclair picked up a nearby cloak ahead of Elias Langley, with some pity and an apology for her prior lack of composure, wishing to drape it over her.

However, Juliana sidestepped away.

"Mrs. Sinclair," she said in a distant tone, "everyone has their own difficulties. I face my scars not to gain anyone's sympathy but to overcome them myself."

As she spoke, her eyes gradually became mocking.

"Save your sympathy for your foster daughter; she seems to need your 'care' more than I do."

Mrs. Sinclair's face began to turn sour.

"Let me do it."

Elias Langley took the cloak from her hands and draped it over Juliana Jacobs. The two bid farewell to Sebastian Sinclair and left the pool.

Mrs. Sinclair was somewhat angry, "What kind of attitude is this!"

Sebastian Sinclair raised an eyebrow, "I think that attitude is quite normal. After spending so much time with Florence, your criteria for dealing with people have become more 'flexible.' You can't expect to make things difficult for the younger generation multiple times without expecting a cold shoulder in return, now, can you?"

With that, he sat in the wheelchair at the door and left, leaving Mrs. Sinclair standing there in a daze...

Florence Sinclair fumed in her room all night.

She had already bribed Samuel Paxton's assistant to find a way to bring him over. But even if it went smoothly, he wouldn't arrive until the next night.

The thought of how Juliana Jacobs had tampered with her food to prevent her from enjoying the hot springs with her parents made her furious.

By morning, she finally came up with an ingenious idea: if she could prove that Juliana Jacobs was indeed the missing Helena Sinclair, Samuel Paxton would certainly not spare her.

The next morning, Elias Langley took Juliana Jacobs hiking.

His intentions were clear: he didn't want Juliana to have too much interaction with Mrs. Sinclair.

Since it was rare for her to go out, he didn't want her to encounter any unnecessary annoyances.

To wait for them to return and have lunch together, Sebastian Sinclair deliberately postponed the meal until one o'clock in the afternoon.

However, the two didn't arrive at the restaurant until around one-thirty.

"Sorry, we worked up a sweat playing and went back for a shower."

Juliana Jacobs' cheeks were flushed, whether from the hike or being steamed by hot water during the shower was unclear.

After lightly explaining, she sat down in the chair Elias Langley had pulled out for her.

Sebastian Sinclair showed no anger and amiably asked, "No worries, was the scenery on the mountain beautiful?"

Hearing this, Juliana glanced at Elias Langley next to her, grumbling, "Ask him. He kept complaining that I was too slow or lacking stamina, turning a leisurely tour into a military drill."

The truth was, in places that were rugged and difficult to navigate, Elias Langley's hand steadily supported her.

Not only did he support her, but in secluded places, he wasn't so well-behaved.

He truly made her feel the undulating vastness of nature.

Elias Langley chuckled at her words, "You're either in the lab or sleeping at home. Isn't it good for you to get close to nature?"

Their seemingly mutual complaints and affectionate interaction made Florence Sinclair feel as if she had drunk a bowl of old vinegar, sour to the core.

Unable to resist, she softly commented with a hint of sarcasm, "Elias, seeing you and Juliana as a loving couple is truly enviable. However, making the elders wait with empty stomachs for so long isn't quite the best conduct."

Juliana Jacobs turned her gaze towards her, a smile that carried no warmth curling at the corners of her lips.

"Miss Sinclair, you speak well. But I hope you practice what you preach when holding others to account, and don't leave 'manners' just on the tip of your tongue."

Florence Sinclair's face turned white, speechless for a moment.

This time, Mrs. Sinclair did not speak up for her foster daughter, but calmly said to the nearby waiter, "Serve the food, please."

Sebastian Sinclair specifically ordered the mushroom stew here, one for each person, which was very delicious.

The final dish served was the soup shrimp balls, a specialty dish here.

Mrs. Sinclair, intending to ease the distance between her and Juliana Jacobs, served her a bowl.

"These are made from lake shrimp raised in medicinal spring water, said to be quite nourishing, give it a try."

Juliana lowered her eyes, fully aware.

It was likely Florence Sinclair stirring the pot behind the scenes, as usual.

Juliana calmly stirred the soup with a spoon, lifting a shrimp ball, contemplating how to spill this bowl of soup.

Meanwhile, Florence Sinclair was staring at her intently; if she didn't eat it, Florence would likely confirm her identity.

Just as Juliana was about to put the shrimp ball in her mouth, Elias Langley suddenly leaned in and whispered, "Feed me first."

Juliana accordingly brought the shrimp ball to his lips.

He ate it nonchalantly, nodding, "The taste is good, try it."

Juliana disdainfully placed the spoon back in the bowl, "You want me to eat after you? No way."

Elias Langley raised an eyebrow, amusement flickering in his eyes, "I never heard you complain when I shared your saliva."

His words made Juliana's face instantly flush red, lightly pinching him with a chiding whisper, "What nonsense are you talking..."

Amid their playful banter, the bowl of shrimp balls was ultimately left untouched on the table.

Another plan foiled!

Florence Sinclair silently stewed, drinking her mushroom stew clean.

In the afternoon, Sebastian Sinclair suggested continuing to soak in the health-enhancing medicinal springs, but Elias Langley changed the plan, saying another kind of herbal bath was better for Juliana Jacobs, and Sebastian, not knowing his intentions, agreed.

This time, they didn't send Florence Sinclair away.

However, after the hot spring, Florence Sinclair felt her head was a bit dizzy.

But the news of Samuel Paxton's arrival renewed her spirits.

In a while, she would bring Juliana Jacobs to face Samuel alone.

After tonight, that woman would be nothing more than a rag.

By then, every humiliation she had suffered would be repaid in full.

As night fell, Juliana Jacob, feeling a bit weary, bid the Sinclairs goodnight and went back to her room.

Florence Sinclair, with her head still spinning, saw Juliana leaving and also claimed she needed to return to her room.

Mrs. Sinclair, seeing her pale face, advised her to rest well.

But once out of the Sinclairs' sight, Florence picked up her pace, catching up to Elias Langley and Juliana Jacobs who were walking shoulder to shoulder.

She softly called "Elias" in a gentle tone, then appeared to trip over something, falling straight toward Elias Langley.

Elias Langley tried to step aside, but Florence grasped his waistcoat as she fell.

At first glance, it seemed like he had reached out to catch her.

Juliana Jacobs watched the scene unfold, her eyes instantly turning cold as she turned and walked away.

Elias Langley hurriedly left Florence and chased after her to explain, "She was trying to touch me; I didn't want to touch her."

Juliana laughed coldly, "Knowing she has ulterior motives towards you, why did you respond to her?"

Elias Langley frowned at her words, "Can you be reasonable? I've been avoiding her all the way here, what more do you want?"

Juliana raised an eyebrow, "Oh, so it sounds like I'm in the way of you both?"

Elias Langley stared at her for a moment, his gaze deep, then turned to leave.

Not returning to the room, but heading toward the parking lot, seemingly angry enough to leave.

The corridor leading to the guest rooms suddenly became quiet.

Juliana Jacobs stood watching the direction Elias left, a little frustrated inside.

At this moment, behind her, Florence Sinclair's triumphant laughter sounded, "Juliana, your retribution has come."

Juliana turned to see Florence leaning against a column, with a man who looked like an assistant standing beside her.

A strong sense of danger surged up her spine. Juliana decisively turned to leave, only to find a slightly plump man blocking her way.

The hallway's light cast shadows over Samuel Paxton's twisted face, especially the obvious indent in his skull on one side, resembling a rusty key that unlocked the nightmare of Juliana's 13-year-old self.

Chapter 315: Juliana, Don't Be Like This!

When she was 13, she was adopted by this man after only a few months at the children's home.

Back then, he wasn't yet known as Samuel Paxton; upon arrival at his "home," she was immediately locked in a dark room.

Several girls in the room, all his "adopted daughters," were covered in wounds; one was already on the verge of death.

It was then that Juliana realized this "foster father" had a secret penchant for young girls—many had withered away at his hands.

Her nightmare began that very night.

Juliana prefers not to recall how she escaped.

Narrowly escaping death, she walked or ran along the highway alone in the cold night, from dusk until dawn, eventually reaching Kenton, dozens of kilometers away...

Although many years have passed and she's learned to act like a normal person, that part of her past remains like a shadow lurking beneath an iceberg, always buried in her heart, never truly dissipating.

Samuel looked at her with a sinister smile, "This one fits the bill, take her away!"

Juliana was about to escape, but Samuel's assistant had already stepped forward, capturing her and taking her to a room.

Florence Sinclair followed with a face full of joy.

Because she wanted to ensure that Samuel abused Juliana.

"Is it you?"

Upon entering, Samuel grabbed Juliana by the neck.

"I've been looking for you for over a decade, and I never thought you'd be right under my nose!"

Juliana is renowned in the field of new energy, but Samuel refuses to believe that an orphan who once escaped him could achieve such success.

Therefore, even when hearing a name identical to that little girl's from years ago, it never crossed his mind to investigate.

This room is a suite, the cheapest model of the villa; even if the window were open, it faces a cliff. Escape for Juliana here is certainly impossible.

Upon entering, Florence Sinclair followed Samuel's assistant to the inner room.

At this moment, he was standing behind the door to the inner room, listening to the conversation outside, unable to be happier.

Juliana is Samuel's enemy, so she would certainly have a painful end tonight.

"Miss Sinclair, if you're feeling unsteady, you may want to find a chair to sit on," the assistant said.

"No need, no need."

Florence was so excited that, even though she was weak all over, she kneeled behind the door to listen to the commotion outside.

Juliana spat at Samuel without answering his question.

Samuel's eyes turned fierce, and he threw her violently to the floor.

With a dull thud, Juliana's bones nearly shattered, and the pain made it impossible to stand; yet Samuel approached her step by step.

"You bitch, tonight I'm going to ravage you until there's nothing left."

At this moment, a knock came at the door.

Samuel's rising excitement was interrupted, and somewhat impatient, he shouted outside, "Can't you see the 'Do Not Disturb' sign? Get lost!"

As his voice fell, the other party knocked on the door again.

The assistant hurried out from the inner room, and with Samuel's permission, stepped forward quickly to unlock the door.

As soon as the door opened, before he could speak, Elias Langley's long legs were already stepping in.

Step by step, forcing the assistant to keep retreating.

Elias Langley's gaze fixed on Juliana, who was curled up on the floor, and the atmosphere around him dropped to freezing point.

"Mr. Paxton," he began, his tone so calm it was unnerving, "Did you think about the consequences of laying hands on someone of mine in Kingsford?"

In Samuel's eyes, a hint of fear flickered and was then replaced by a cold smile.

Feigning ease, he rolled up his sleeves, "Oh, it's you, Elias. I'm just disciplining an unruly junior, how could I trouble you? This woman has an old grudge with me, even if it reaches my uncle, he has to ask a question first."

He deliberately brought up Dylan Paxton to establish rules for Elias.

Elias walked over to Juliana, helping her sit up, his gentle movements a stark contrast to his cold, hard profile.

Not looking at Samuel, he scoffed coldly, "Even your uncle has to respectfully call my wife Mrs. Langley. If it reaches him, so be it. If the entire Paxton Family operates under such rules, I wonder how much the Paxton Family's massive ship can bear?"

Samuel's eyelid twitched at his words.

Elias's attitude was clear; he didn't mind blowing things out of proportion. Recent years have tightened enforcement, and though his uncle still wielded power, he behaved more discreetly.

If he knew Samuel publicly fell out with Elias over a woman, surely, he would make Samuel pay dearly.

He might even call back that fool, Sean Paxton.

Having finally cleaned up his image and seated himself as Rhyvion's president, he couldn't let this happen.

In the face of interests, hobbies are nothing.

Samuel's normally gloomy face suddenly transformed into a sycophantic smile.

"Oh my, what a huge misunderstanding. If I had known this was your wife, even with ten times my courage, I wouldn't dare! See, it's... it's all because of Florence Sinclair misleading me. I was simply caught off guard by her."

"No, it's not like that."

Crawling out from behind the door, Florence Sinclair wanted to explain, but she was powerless; she could only slowly and desperately crawl out.

However, Elias, usually sharp-eared, seemed oblivious to her voice, cradling Juliana in his arms.

"This better be just a misunderstanding."

Elias knew now was not the right time to tangle with Samuel.

One concern was Juliana's injury, while another was deliberately ignoring Florence Sinclair's presence, leaving her behind, as he left unapologetically with Juliana.

Watching the prey slip away and forming a rift with Elias, nearly creating a mess with his uncle, a surge of wicked fire rose in Samuel's heart.

Conveniently, Florence crawled out, and before she could shout "Elias, don't leave me," Samuel's gaze was already fixed on her.

"Alright then, you bear some resemblance to her, and I've got a belly full of anger to vent, so I'll take it out on you. The taste of a noble Sinclair Family lady must be exquisite."

Florence never imagined that her intentionally altered face resembling Mrs. Sinclair—the best asset for gaining her favor—would now become her death warrant...

...

"Are you alright?"

Elias couldn't wait, asking as he carried her to the parking lot.

Juliana found it difficult to speak, clutching his neck, shaking her head.

"If you're scared, just hold me tighter."

As Elias's words fell, she buried her face into his neck.

The quarrel tonight was a tacit understanding formed after a glance of mutual understanding.

They had long sensed Florence's dubious intentions, so when she pursued them, they went along with it, forcing her true motives to the surface.

What surprised Juliana was that after Sean was transferred, Florence swiftly hitched up with Samuel.

And that Samuel turned out to be the pervert from back then.

Recalling Florence's every action in those days, it was as though she had a strategist familiar with all her weaknesses, orchestrating everything from behind the scenes.

The lingering doubts and psychological trauma blended together, turning her inner world into a chaotic mess.

Elias didn't take her to a room at the manor hotel but directly brought her home.

All the way, Juliana acted very calmly.

But the calmer she was, the more uneasy Elias felt.

As soon as the car stopped, Juliana pushed the door open, her steps unsteady, as she walked alone towards the bedroom.

Elias followed closely behind.

As soon as she stepped into the dim room, her foot accidentally tripped, and she fell to the ground.

Yet she didn't get up but instead retreated sitting to a corner, until her back was against the cold wall, curling up.

She began fervently yanking at her own hair.

"Juliana, don't do this!"

Elias rushed forward, holding her wrist in distress and urgency, trying to pull her hand away.

But as soon as he touched her wrist, Juliana scratched at him, shouting, "Don't touch me!"

Chapter 316: Then Remove It

After the roar, her eyes were filled with unfamiliar fear and resistance, as if the man before her was not her lover, but another presence intending to harm her.

"Please...don't touch me..."

She buried her face between her knees and sobbed softly.

Elias Langley's heart ached like a knife twist.

In the days they were together, she appeared normal on the surface, but whenever she was unexpectedly touched in dimly lit places, she would panic.

He never understood where these symptoms came from, until this moment, the puzzle finally had an answer.

Juliana soon calmed herself down and stood up slowly, controlling her emotions.

"I'm sorry, tonight...we have to...sleep in separate rooms, I need to be alone...to clear my mind."

After speaking, she almost ran into the bathroom as if fleeing.

Soon, the sound of rushing water came from inside,

while Elias Langley stood watching the closed bathroom door, not leaving.

At this moment, his phone rang; it was Zachary York calling.

"Sir, Samuel Paxton has returned to the city with Florence Sinclair and has taken her to one of his private houses. I'm afraid tonight doesn't bode well for Second Miss Sinclair."

Elias Langley's gaze sank momentarily, "You never called me, we don't know Florence Sinclair's situation tonight."

Zachary York on the other end of the line responded clearly, "Yes!"

A while later, Juliana emerged from the bathroom.

Her hair was wet, still dripping with water.

Her snug nightwear was worn like armor.

Seeing Elias Langley standing silently in the center of the bedroom, she didn't feel comforted at all; instead, it intensified her sense of shame and unease.

Juliana avoided his gaze, with her shoulders hunched, like a mouse panicked in bright light, slinking away to the wardrobe and slipping inside as she opened the wardrobe door.

"Juliana..."

"Don't worry about me, let me be alone, I beg you."

In the darkness, she hugged herself tight, her voice trembling.

Elias Langley feared she might suffocate herself, but didn't dare forcibly open the door, so he quietly placed a towel in the door gap to ensure she could breathe.

Juliana heard his departing footsteps and finally relaxed.

She curled up in the wardrobe, her wet hair covering her eyes.

Traumatic memories surged like a tide, bringing on uncontrollable tremors.

She was deeply trapped in a flashback of post-traumatic stress disorder, and this enclosed wardrobe became her only safe cocoon at the moment.

In the dark, Juliana took a deep breath, telling herself: she must break free, become invincible, and sever all ties that could become weaknesses...

Elias Langley, still worried about her, didn't stay long in the study before returning to the bedroom.

There was no more sound from inside the wardrobe.

He gently opened the wardrobe door and found she had fallen asleep.

So he carefully carried her out, her haggard appearance pricked his heart.

Elias Langley settled her on the bed and brought out a hairdryer to dry her hair.

Juliana was deeply asleep and wasn't woken by the faint noise of the hairdryer, but even in dreams, her brow furrowed slightly, her body occasionally twitching as if startled.

Elias Langley checked her injuries, finding two bruises.

She must have been in great pain when tossed to the ground.

Elias Langley's heart felt gripped by a cold hand, even breathing felt oppressive.

In the study, Caleb Donovan was already waiting there.

He couldn't be found in Elias Langley's contacts, yet he was truly the "outside brain."

"Here's everything on Samuel Paxton." He handed over the files, "This man is Declan Prescott's illegitimate son, unacknowledged by the Paxton family before, so he roamed The Zenthian Sea, dealing in shady business. He believes in the superstition that young girls' bodies bring him luck, and for over twenty years, he's harmed many young girls..."

Perhaps Samuel Paxton's methods were too vile; Caleb Donovan paused, refraining from further description.

"Before he was recognized by the Paxton family, he was known as Damien Nash. For years, he entered orphanages as a 'charitable businessman,' selecting and adopting girls. These girls later vanished, as if evaporated from earth. Mrs. Sinclair might be the only survivor who escaped from him..."

Listening to this, Elias Langley's eyes grew so dark water could be wrung from them.

"Damien Nash acts extremely cautiously, never leaving direct evidence. Nowadays, when he exploits women with savage methods, he silences victims with bribes and threats after causing lethal injuries, so he's never capsized. But what I don't understand is why Old Mr. Paxton, knowing all of Samuel's misdeeds, would bring him back to run the family's company."

Elias Langley let out a cold laugh, "Sean Paxton is shrewd, but his scholarly tactics are uninspiring, so the old man, in desperation, sought alternatives."

Elias Langley quickly skimmed through Samuel Paxton's files, setting them aside.

"If we are to take action against Samuel Paxton, a lot of work must be done with Old Mr. Paxton. We can't strain relations prematurely since our plans aren't yet ripe."

Elias Langley chuckled softly, not replying.

The next day, Juliana awoke, feeling much better.

Especially as the warm morning sunlight warmed her body, dispelling much of the gloom in her heart.

Elias Langley stood by the window, back to her, on the phone.

"Last night Juliana was unwell, so I brought her home."

"Is she alright?"

The voice on the phone belonged to Sebastian Sinclair.

Upon hearing movement behind him, Elias Langley turned back towards the bed and asked, "Are you feeling better today?"

Juliana gestured for him to hand her the phone.

In a lazy voice from just waking up, she said into the phone, "Dad, I'm fine."

Hearing this, Sebastian Sinclair finally felt reassured.

"Florence was found at dawn on the northern mountains of Kingsford, her body was covered in injuries, she was violated, and she's undergoing emergency surgery for a uterine hemorrhage. The police are still

investigating how she got there from the mansion. When I found out you and Elias had checked out this morning, I got worried and called."

Hearing of Florence's ordeal, Juliana gritted her teeth, "She had it coming."

Sebastian Sinclair suddenly understood, "I see. You rest well; don't worry about coming to the hospital. Pass the phone to Elias."

Elias Langley took the phone.

"This cannot be let go," Sebastian Sinclair said.

"I won't," Elias Langley replied.

Hanging up, he saw Juliana sitting on the bed, head down, lost in thought. He raised her chin with two fingers, leaning in.

A warm, dry kiss brushed her lips.

It was brief.

Juliana instinctively covered her mouth, her ears flushing red, and mumbled through her fingers, "You're not clean...I haven't brushed my teeth..."

Elias Langley chuckled lowly, tenderly rubbing the spot he'd kissed, eyes full of warmth.

"I have to see if our little hedgehog here can be approached today."

Juliana remembered how she'd yelled fiercely at him yesterday, her face now turning even redder.

Taking a deep breath, she suppressed the swirling embarrassment and lifted the quilt to get out of bed.

"But, I still need to visit the hospital."

Elias Langley frowned slightly, reaching to stop her.

"Going now, aren't you afraid of hitting a wall?"

Florence's current state would turn Mrs. Sinclair into a protective lioness, unleashing her wrath on anyone close to Juliana. Especially if Juliana herself went.

But Juliana grabbed his arm, insisting, "I understand, but I suspect that the mastermind behind Florence might be Stella Windsor."

Elias Langley's gaze suddenly darkened.

That woman, missing for months since the river incident, remained uncaught despite a police warrant, resurfaced in Kingsford?

Recalling Florence's recent actions against Juliana, it was indeed quite possible.

"Alright," Elias Langley lifted her from the bed, "we'll have breakfast first, then go."

At the hospital, outside the emergency room.

A doctor, with traces of blood still on his gown, rushed out of the operating room.

"The patient's uterine damage is much worse than last time, hemorrhage is uncontrollable. We have two choices: attempt conservative surgery to retain the uterus, but even if successful, its reproductive function is virtually lost; or proceed with a full hysterectomy immediately, which is currently the most effective and safest option to stop the bleeding. The family must decide quickly."

Removing the uterus would be a huge blow to Florence.

Mrs. Sinclair was pale, hesitating.

Expressionless, Sebastian Sinclair told the doctor, "Then remove it."

...

Chapter 317: Florence Sinclair Reaps What She Sowed, Tasting the Bitter Consequences

The tone was as indifferent as discussing cutting off a wilted vegetable leaf.

Mrs. Sinclair was very surprised, "Husband, if Florence can't have children, the Hughes Family will despise her. If the engagement is broken in the future, how will she hold her head high in front of her friends?"

Sebastian Sinclair's reaction was even colder, "There are plenty of women who can't bear children. Whether she's affected in the future depends entirely on what kind of life she chooses for herself."

Considering his wife's current ability to cope, Sebastian Sinclair didn't say anything harsher.

When his daughter lost the right to be a mother, no one felt sorry for her like this. Florence Sinclair brought this upon herself. Should she be put on a pedestal?

In the end, he made the decision and signed the consent form for the surgery.

When Juliana Jacobs and Elias Langley arrived at the hospital, Florence Sinclair was just being wheeled into the intensive care unit.

Mrs. Sinclair saw them and immediately burst out, "Tell me, was it you..."

"Madam," Sebastian Sinclair interrupted her, his voice carrying an unmistakable warning, "you're out of line again!"

Mrs. Sinclair was taken aback by his rare sternness and promptly noticed the almost protective and partial look in her husband's eyes when he gazed at Juliana.

The question she had deliberately suppressed resurfaced once more.

Her gaze involuntarily fell on Juliana's face.

This face... it did bear some familiar features.

Over the past decade, they had seen many children with similar features, hopes rising and falling repeatedly, making her almost numb.

Moreover, Juliana had previously clearly denied she was their daughter.

But at this moment, her husband's attitude deepened her suspicions once more.

Juliana ignored Mrs. Sinclair's probing gaze and said to Sebastian Sinclair, "I'd like to see Florence's phone."

Sebastian Sinclair handed over Florence's phone without hesitation.

Juliana took the phone and went into the ICU.

Unlocking it with Florence's fingerprint, her fingers swiftly slid across the screen, searching for clues amidst the jumble of messages.

While focused, a shadow loomed over her from the side.

Elias Langley leaned in, also trying to view the screen.

Juliana quickly turned the phone screen aside and raised a hand to press against his chest, "Don't look. Wait for me over there; you don't know about today's matter."

Given his identity and status, the act of secretly checking someone's phone would surely give people leverage if it got out.

She was protecting him.

Elias Langley's eyes flickered slightly, understanding her intention, and he obligingly stepped aside.

Mrs. Sinclair stood by, observing this scene, seeming to slightly understand why Elias Langley was so fond of her.

Not long after, Juliana found the highly suspicious account.

She called over Raine Kane, "Quickly check the IP and registration info of this number."

Raine Kane accepted the task, giving Elias Langley a knowing smile as he passed by and hurried off.

The investigation results were quickly reported back: the IP address was in Kingsford, but the registration information was stolen; beyond deducing that the user was a woman, there were no further clues.

However, this was enough for Juliana to be more certain in her heart that the person behind everything was the long-missing Stella Windsor.

She returned the phone to Sebastian Sinclair and said in a very light voice, "Mr. Sinclair, we're leaving now."

Sebastian Sinclair nodded, "Go, you probably didn't sleep well last night, rest well."

Watching by Mrs. Sinclair, her lips moved slightly as if she wanted to say something, but Juliana had already turned straight away, linking arms with Elias Langley as they left.

From start to finish, she didn't spare her a glance.

A feeling of emptiness welled up in Mrs. Sinclair's heart.

At this moment, Sebastian Sinclair indifferently asked, "Madam, how do you plan to explain today's events to Florence once she wakes up?"

Mrs. Sinclair was slightly taken aback.

She understood the profound meaning in his words and said, "From the beginning to the end, whatever you intend to do, I've always stood by you unconditionally. Although I don't understand your actions now, I trust you."

The relationship they shared from childhood sweethearts to now, the trust accumulated over decades, made everything else in the world seem as light as dust.

Sebastian Sinclair's expression softened, and he held her hand.

"I'm very pleased you're thinking this way. You see, if a plant's roots have rotted, no matter how good the support, or no matter how much effort is put into nurturing it, it can't bloom as expected, and it will drag down the entire garden. Curtailing the loss in time is the best choice for everyone."

Mrs. Sinclair could understand the implication in his words, but is Florence really that irredeemable?

She was silent for a moment, ultimately just holding his hand more tightly, whispering, "I understand."

Florence Sinclair woke up again seven or eight hours later.

Sebastian Sinclair promptly informed the police, determined to bring the person who harmed her to justice.

However, Florence, weak as she was, claimed that she felt drowsy after lunch the previous day and remembered nothing that happened afterward, nor knew who assaulted her.

After speaking, she began to sob softly.

Seeing this, Mrs. Sinclair was heartbroken and comforted her gently.

The police followed procedures and tested her blood, the results showing everything normal, with no traces of hallucinogens found.

In response, Sebastian Sinclair continued to cooperate with the police investigation without interference.

Because he knew full well: during the last meal at the villa, the bowl of poison mushroom soup Florence drank was Juliana's doing. Following this, Elias Langley, wanting to avoid Florence's continued entanglement, temporarily adjusted their booked hot spring therapy.

That afternoon, the medicinal spring they all soaked in reacted strongly with the toxin in her body, causing her to weaken increasingly over the course of twelve hours.

This bizarre mishap resulted in Florence tasting the consequences of her own actions.

Sebastian Sinclair couldn't muster a hint of sympathy for her.

If she weren't still useful, he would have dealt with her long ago.

Florence was transferred to a regular ward two to three days later.

Aside from Mrs. Sinclair continuing to visit daily for comfort, no one else came to see her, not even someone from the Hughes Family.

Florence was well aware that her engagement with Auden Hughes was on the brink of collapse.

Even though she didn't love Auden Hughes, that engagement was extremely important to her.

Being the "future daughter-in-law of the Hughes Family" was a prestigious badge that allowed her to stand firm in elite circles, gaining reverence and respect from others.

More importantly, this respectable engagement was her best cover, allowing her to discreetly mask her unsavory thoughts and tactics towards Elias Langley under the guise of the engagement.

But now, that most crucial facade seemed unlikely to hold, which left her feeling a bit frustrated.

Simultaneously, Juliana buried that secret trauma deep in her heart, gradually returning to the norm of life and work.

Elias Langley, seeing her emotions had stabilized, finally put his mind at ease, allowing him to fully immerse himself in his vigorously progressing plans.

Due to Samuel Paxton's thorough actions and flawless handling of the scene, the police investigation showed no progress for several days, and there was no sign of implicating him at all.

Furthermore, Elias Langley's actions hadn't escalated to Dylan Paxton's attention, so, after observing several times, he concluded that the matter had passed.

Therefore, upon receiving the "Closed-Door Summit for New Energy Entrepreneurs" invitation from the Helios Energy Council, he gladly accepted the invitation.

Chapter 318: I'll Be Clean and Wait for You

The conference was held on the top floor of the Kingsford International Conference Center.

The attendees were all prominent business leaders in the industry.

In the past, when Sean Paxton was in power, the Paxton Family's company never received an invitation.

Now, just as Samuel Paxton took over, he received an invitation, which seemed to be a signal from Elias Langley extending an olive branch to him.

Samuel Paxton was particularly ostentatious at the venue, actively greeting every important person present.

Elias Langley took all of this in, a faint smile playing at the corner of his lips.

During a break in the meeting, Samuel Paxton seized the opportunity to chat and laugh with a few executives eager to ingratiate themselves with Dylan Paxton.

At this moment, a conference attendant brought over a delicate, exotically-styled metal cigar box and approached him directly.

"Mr. Paxton," the attendant said in a voice neither too loud nor too soft, just enough for those nearby to hear clearly, "a gentleman from The Zenthian Sea asked me to give this to you. He said it was a gift from the 'General' to thank you for providing that special logistics channel last time, hoping for a pleasant cooperation in the future."

Not only was Samuel Paxton stunned, but the smiles froze on the faces of those flattering him.

The "General" mentioned by the attendant was Samuel's biggest partner in The Zenthian Sea, where all his illicit business was concentrated.

It was believed that this out-of-place illegitimate child of the Paxton Family had been acknowledged by Old Mr. Paxton and entrusted with important responsibilities. It seemed he had somehow cleaned up his act, but unexpectedly, he was still involved in such activities.

The few executives who had just surrounded him immediately stepped back two paces.

Seeing this, Samuel Paxton immediately asked sharply: "What nonsense are you spouting? I don't know any General!"

Instinctively, he wanted to pocket the box and cover up everything.

"What's going on?"

Elias Langley walked over just in time.

He seemed attracted by the commotion, purposefully coming over in his capacity as the meeting chairman to express concern.

"Mr. Paxton, are you in any trouble?"

He looked at the box with great curiosity.

Everyone's eyes followed suit, focusing on it.

Fearing he might enthusiastically ask him to open the box and show its contents, Samuel Paxton, in a panic, attempted to place the box back on the attendant's tray.

"Take it away, it's not mine!"

However, the attendant stepped back, and the metal cigar box fell from Samuel's grasp, hitting the ground with a "clang."

The box's intricate clasp popped open, revealing several expensive cigars, along with a transparent sealed bag.

The bag did not contain tobacco but a pile of large crystals, resembling premium bath salts, varying from milky white to a slight yellowish tinge.

Among the crowd, a well-informed executive was the first to cry out, his voice filled with fear.

"It's zombie drugs! They're illegal!"

In an instant, everyone, including Elias Langley, backed away.

Samuel Paxton immediately realized he was finished.

The "General" was cautious by nature and would never send a gift in such a setting; clearly, someone was deliberately framing him.

An epiphany, he looked toward Elias Langley.

Though outwardly shocked, the other party's eyes held an almost imperceptible hint of amusement.

"It was..."

He was about to point to Elias Langley when a group of policemen in body armor rushed in from outside the venue.

"Freeze! Hands up!"

The police arrived so quickly, what else could it be if not a trap set by Elias Langley?

Although protected by Dylan Paxton, Samuel knew he had committed heinous crimes against Harlan citizens in The Zenthian Sea and would face death if captured.

Trusting no one, he immediately fled.

"Chase him!"

Thus, a chase ensued in the hall.

Samuel Paxton dashed into the fire escape, sprinting downward, but the sound of surrounding footsteps came from below, blocking him on a platform between two levels.

"Samuel Paxton! You're surrounded! Put your hands on your head and surrender immediately!"

With armed officers above and below, Samuel, cornered, showed a glint of insane ferocity in his eyes.

Instinctively, he reached for his waist, drawing a compact pistol he had long kept for self-defense.

Just as his finger pressed the trigger, a shot rang out, and his body fell stiffly to the ground.

A sharpshooter among the police ended his life with a single bullet.

Elias Langley then emerged from the conference room's back door.

The lead officer approached and saluted him.

"Mr. Langley, the suspect refused to surrender while armed and was lawfully shot dead by our forces."

Elias Langley's gaze swept over the bullet hole in Samuel Paxton's forehead, nodding slightly, "It's been tough, proceed by the protocol."

Police on the scene immediately began orderly evidence gathering and cleanup.

Elias Langley turned to Zachary York beside him, "Inform all media to release the article. The headline should read 'New Energy Association Meeting Surprised by Turn of Events: Illegal Businessman Samuel Paxton Shot Dead for Resisting Arrest Involving Drugs'."

"Yes, sir!"

Zachary York immediately turned to make contact.

Elias Langley took one last look at Samuel Paxton's body, the long-standing ailment in Juliana Jacobs' heart finally eradicated at this moment.

And it was done openly, legitimately, and without trace of future threat.

Hours later, the news of Samuel Paxton being shot dead at the conference for "carrying dangerous goods" spread like a hurricane across all circles of Kingsford.

Dylan Paxton was caught off guard by Elias Langley's move, quickly distancing himself from Samuel Paxton, claiming deception, while secretly using all connections to pin all blame on the deceased Samuel, containing the impact strictly within Samuel Paxton's domain.

Outwardly, he managed to stabilize the situation temporarily. However, keen observers could see that the Paxton Family's deep-rooted tree had been shaken.

Elias Langley's coup not only eliminated Juliana's long-standing nightmare but also created an irremediable crack in the foundation of Dylan Paxton's power.

Having handled the subsequent procedures in the office, he relaxed back in his chair. The first thing he did was pick up his phone, sending a cartoon wolf emoji, wagging its tail and shining starry eyes, seeking affection, to Juliana Jacobs.

Followed immediately by a text message: "Honey, is my 'probation period' seeing the dawn?"

Juliana had been busy all afternoon, but she was aware of the seismic shake in Corinthium, undoubtedly Elias Langley's handiwork.

Seeing the man's message on the screen, her lips unconsciously turned up in a slight smile. Countless words welled up in her heart, but ultimately only one simple, direct reply formed: "Mm"

Elias Langley looked at the lonely "Mm" and could almost imagine her suppressing excitement, trying to maintain an outward calm.

He then pushed his advantage, sending another message: "So, it's settled then, no more talk of divorce. Besides, you think a single 'Mm' is enough? Not nearly! I want to hear your voice."

Yes, he wanted to hear that kind of voice.

Juliana rubbed her nose, replying: "We'll talk at home. There's some data I need to rush through tonight, I'll be back by ten."

Elias Langley could almost picture her blushing on the other end of the phone, responding: "I'll be clean and waiting for you."

That evening, Elias Langley returned home early, making sure to cleanse himself thoroughly in anticipation.

As it got close to 10, the sound of a car engine came from the yard.

Yet he waited in the bedroom for five or six minutes without anyone coming in.

Elias Langley changed into informal clothes, quickly heading to the front porch.

Steward Fay immediately came up to him.

Before he could ask, Fay hurriedly explained: "The madam came back but left again after taking a call. From her conversation with Raine Kane, it seemed Florence Sinclair has let the caretakers off tonight, possibly meeting someone important at the hospital. So, madam rushed over."

Elias Langley's brows knitted: Could Florence Sinclair be meeting Stella Windsor tonight?

At the hospital, Juliana, with Raine Kane, quickly walked through the corridor.

As they reached the entrance to Florence Sinclair's ward, they overheard her familiar soft yet stubborn voice.

"Thank you for caring for me like this, I'm really okay. Once I'm better... what are these setbacks... I still need to... need to..."

Planning to continue opposing me once she's better?

Who else could she be pledging loyalty to, if not Stella Windsor!

Juliana furrowed her brows and pushed open the ward door...

Chapter 319: Leave One Hand, I Won't Ask for More

The scene in the hospital room froze instantly.

Standing with his back to the door was not Stella Windsor, but a man.

He wasn't tall and was quite slender. When he turned to look at Juliana Jacobs, his facial skin was stretched tight.

"Juliana!" Florence Sinclair was the first to react, her tone sharp, "Didn't your mother teach you to knock before entering?"

Although Juliana realized she had been reckless, she knew dealing with Florence Sinclair required intimidating tactics.

"Knock if there's a person inside; when there's an animal, why bother knocking?"

Florence Sinclair was so angered by her words that her chest hurt, "In the middle of the night, what are you doing barging into my hospital room?"

Juliana walked in casually, a cold smile on her face, "Nothing much, is there a wrong time to deal with animals?"

Florence Sinclair was stunned by her words, her face turning pale.

Just then, Auden Hughes's gentle yet surprised voice came from the door, "Juliana, why are you here?"

Juliana turned her head and saw him holding a plate of cut fruits.

She narrowed her eyes, her voice emotionless, "Coming to care for her at such a late hour, truly a dedicated fiancé."

Auden Hughes knew they were at odds, so he walked in with a smile to explain, "President Carter and I were nearby for a late-night snack. We mentioned Florence being hospitalized here, so Mr. Carter came to visit her."

Then, he began to introduce them.

"Oh, right, I haven't introduced you. This is Nathan Carter of Goldsummit Corporation, the third son of The Zenthian Sea Carter Family, a leading biotech company. We're currently in talks, and Mr. Carter might become a partner of Vivacore Bio."

Juliana glanced at Nathan Carter but didn't greet him.

Auden Hughes's gaze, however, remained fixed on Juliana the whole time, never glancing at Florence Sinclair.

"Juliana, it's been a few days, and you've lost a bit of weight, but you look alright. How are your eyes? Any better?" he asked.

On the hospital bed, Florence Sinclair's face instantly darkened.

At that moment, Elias Langley's figure appeared at the hospital room door, catching Auden Hughes's words clearly.

"My wife is fine, thank you for your concern, Mr. Hughes."

As he spoke, he entered the room, naturally wrapping his arm around Juliana's waist, even lightly pressing his fingertips to her side.

Juliana, ticklish, shrank into his embrace at once.

Elias Langley curled his lips.

Others not aware of their actions would naturally think they were deeply in love.

Auden Hughes was briefly embarrassed but forced a smile, "So Mr. Langley is here too."

Elias Langley did not continue talking to him, turning his gaze to Nathan Carter.

Auden Hughes was about to introduce him again, only for Nathan Carter to nod at Elias Langley, "Mr. Langley, we meet again."

Elias Langley nodded, his voice very soft, "Pleasure."

Nathan Carter smiled, "Your wife is truly unique."

Elias Langley, hearing this, simply gave a faint smile, his eyes carrying an unmistakable arrogance, "My wife, Juliana, is naturally exceptional in vision and capability. Despite The Zenthian Sea being vast, you should travel more, Mr. Carter."

Nathan Carter was not angered by his words and instead smiled at Auden Hughes, "Then I must trouble Mr. Hughes to show me around Kingsford for some insight."

Auden Hughes quickly nodded with a smile.

Elias Langley dismissed them, asking Juliana, "Shall we go home?"

"Alright." Juliana leaned against him.

"Then we won't disturb everyone. Goodbye."

Elias Langley left the hospital room with Juliana, never once giving Florence Sinclair a glance.

Florence Sinclair felt chest pain again, from the anger.

She had been assaulted by Samuel Paxton and lost her womb, suffering greatly, clearly the victim, yet they all only cared about Juliana.

Why!

...

Juliana sat in the passenger seat, rubbing her hands together for warmth.

Elias Langley buckled her seatbelt, asking, "Why the unhappy look?"

Juliana looked at him, "Do you know Nathan Carter?"

Elias Langley started the car, "We've met."

He didn't say where.

"He gave me an uncomfortable feeling; I don't like him," said Juliana.

Especially his eyes, there was a sense of familiarity.

"Then I'll investigate him," Elias Langley said.

Juliana pursed her lips, "Stella Windsor should have been there last night — something's off."

The car stopped at a red light, Elias Langley took a hand to stroke her head, "Don't rush, it's right to be suspicious. Let's take it slow."

Juliana, calmed by his words, felt quite relaxed.

Yet she noticed in her calmness, the man driving was slightly frowning.

"Is there something bothering you?"

His smile came at her question, "If you're happy, I am too."

He wouldn't say, so Juliana didn't ask further.

The next day, Raine Kane delivered Nathan Carter's information.

"So little?" Juliana was surprised.

Raine Kane nodded, "The Zenthian Sea Carter Family does have a third son named Nathan Carter, but he's been frail and sickly since childhood, never seen publicly, so there's no photos of him. His father recently died suddenly, and sibling rivalry is intense, so he's been pushed to work, handling business in Harlan, actually being sidelined."

Juliana skimmed through the file and pushed it aside.

After a moment of reflection, she shook her head.

"I have a hunch Stella Windsor is back; she must be the strategist behind Florence Sinclair."

Last night's affair lingered as a cloud of suspicion for her.

Juliana composed herself, looking at Raine Kane, "And nothing's wrong with my husband?"

Raine Kane hesitated briefly, "No, but Samuel Paxton's removal, Old Mr. Paxton hasn't openly reacted, though he's bound to retaliate. Could Mr. Langley be busy with this?"

No wonder he wasn't focused even when sleeping last night.

Juliana lowered her eyes, "Keep tabs on his whereabouts for me."

Raine Kane, "..."

At night, Elias Langley messaged her about returning late.

Juliana replied with "Okay," asking nothing more.

Elias Langley looked at the word for a while before putting down his phone, heading towards the Cardinal Arts Club Building.

Zachary York withheld him fretfully, "Sir, is there really nothing we need to prepare?"

Elias Langley chuckled, "Samuel Paxton is dead, and Old Mr. Paxton will surely vent his anger. If it's not excessive, I'll endure it."

He knew very well that Dylan Paxton's invitation tonight was a trap.

Though removing Samuel Paxton had stirred the snake, now the old fox must be lulled into thinking he's in control. Only then will he stay near the bait, stepping into their net.

At the club's top floor.

Old Mr. Paxton was making tea.

This time, it wasn't ordinary tea.

As the elevator doors open, Elias Langley was greeted by a strong scent of jasmine.

He walked out of the elevator, his voice soft, "You've taken a liking to this fragrant tea now, Old Mr. Paxton?"

Dylan Paxton ignored him, making himself a cup of tea.

"Old age makes the nose delicate, unable to bear the scent of blood. Fortunately, the tea's aroma is rich enough to mask unpleasant odors."

Elias Langley calmly sat opposite him, silent.

"Elias," Dylan Paxton's shrewd eyes finally fixed on him, "I elevated you, aware of your skills. But the Paxton family has lost someone, right under my watch. You're familiar with the rules, leave a hand behind, and I won't ask for more."

Chapter 320: Elias Langley Kept a Woman in Athenor

Elias Langley smiled faintly, "Why, does Old Mr. Paxton think I'm here to apologize?"

Dylan Paxton half-closed his eyes, his gaze deep.

Elias Langley spoke unhurriedly, "What Samuel Paxton did in The Zenthian Sea, I'm afraid even a lifetime of achievements from you wouldn't be enough to clean it up. If Old Mr. Paxton wishes to abandon the Paxton Family's ship for the sake of Samuel, I have nothing to say. However, there's still a blood debt involving the Sinclair Family from over a decade ago that remains unresolved. Who knows, once the waters are clear, whether justice can be served for the Sinclairs."

Dylan Paxton's eyelids twitched slightly, anger swelling in his chest, but he had to suppress it.

"Fine, since you mentioned old matters, let's discuss something new. Hand over the core technology of 'Genesis' from your wife's team. Use this to exchange for everyone's 'peace'."

"Old Mr. Paxton," Elias Langley's tone remained courteous, "Bluespark Technologies is indeed a key supported enterprise by the New Energy Industry Incubation Fund of the association. The agreement we signed is the Strategic Cooperation and Financial Support Agreement. But as per the agreement, I have no right to interfere with Bluespark's autonomy."

Old Mr. Paxton laughed profoundly, "Then just leave a hand behind, as a token of gratitude for my support."

Downstairs, the Unveils LX7. slowly stopped at the steps of the club.

Zachary York walked over in surprise, "Madam, how come you're here? Mr. Langley, he..."

"He didn't want me to come, thinking he could bear all this on his own. Foolish boss, and you let him. Throughout history, loyal ministers and valiant generals are prized for their counsel, yet you, as his secretary, have failed in your duties."

Zachary York was choked by her words and lowered his head.

Juliana Jacobs got out of the car but didn't go in; instead, she leaned against the car door and started tapping on her tablet.

Within two minutes, Dylan Paxton's secretary approached proactively.

"Mrs. Langley, this late, are you here to find Mr. Langley?"

This secretary was Dylan Paxton's confidant. During their last meeting on the top floor, he addressed her as "Miss Jacobs," but now his form of address had changed again.

Juliana Jacobs's eyelashes fluttered. She didn't look at him but instead focused on her tablet, speaking in a lukewarm tone, "Last week, your building replaced its new energy power system, which isn't a product of Bluespark."

The secretary was taken aback, "A major domestic brand. Is there a problem?"

Juliana Jacobs didn't lift her head, "Bluespark's products have a built-in fortress firewall reaching level 3 safety protection. The product you're using prides itself on power density in its promotions but actually relies on massive physical dimensions to stack performance, with its core protection remaining at a fragile level one. Additionally, such flattering sponsored things are less practical. Your building's large battery pack..."

She paused here, letting out a laugh.

"I can instantly turn the top floor, where Old Mr. Paxton is, into a sealed furnace with temperatures exceeding three hundred degrees, rendering the fire protection system useless."

The secretary's eyes twitched, "Mrs. Langley, Old Mr. Paxton and Mr. Langley are merely having a conversation upstairs."

Juliana Jacobs continued looking at her tablet, "Regardless, I cherish Elias Langley's perfection; if he loses a single strand of hair, I won't forgive it. But Old Mr. Paxton takes away what I love, and this vendetta must be settled on the spot! Tell him I'm waiting here for my husband to come home."

The secretary drew a sharp breath and hurried upstairs.

In the study on the top floor.

The secretary hurriedly approached Old Mr. Paxton, whispering in his ear.

Suddenly, the lights across the floor flickered momentarily.

Dylan Paxton's face became tightly drawn with every crease.

When he looked again at Elias Langley, his gaze was filled with scrutiny and danger.

"Who exactly is the woman downstairs?"

The secretary, fearing Elias Langley might not understand, added, "Miss Jacobs is here."

Elias Langley understood instantly, raising his chin, "That's my wife, Juliana Jacobs."

Dylan Paxton squinted his eyes, poured away the jasmine tea before him, but soon there was a sinister smile on his face.

"Matters in this world are interesting. Some things you think will rot away in the dirt, yet one day they might sprout and see the light, and by then, no one can remain unscathed."

Elias Langley stood up, adjusting his cuffs, "Thank you for the reminder, Old Mr. Paxton. In this world, there's nothing truly secret. It's just a matter of time before it's exposed."

Just like the case of Sebastian Sinclair's attack back in the day, it will eventually be unveiled.

"Regarding Samuel Paxton's matters, consider today my explanation to you. Goodbye."

Elias Langley, after speaking, turned and left.

Watching the elevator doors slowly close, Dylan Paxton angrily smashed the cobalt-blue double-sword-crest porcelain cup in his hand.

"Take down the entire new energy power system of this building!"

The secretary was shocked, "The traditional power grid in the building was already fully stripped and discarded during the last overhaul. If you take everything down, we'll have to rely on candles."

Dylan Paxton was at a loss for words.

Taking several deep breaths, he still couldn't control the Parkinson-like tremor in his body.

"Go..." he ordered with great effort, "Go investigate if Juliana Jacobs is actually the daughter of Sebastian Sinclair who drowned in the river all those years ago!"

...

Elias Langley left The Cardinal Art Club and immediately saw Juliana Jacobs standing by the car.

The night breeze gently stirred the hem of her dress and the tips of her hair, making her resemble a cool and resilient bamboo against the backdrop of twinkling lights.

He called out, "Juliana!"

Juliana Jacobs turned, and in that moment their eyes met, a gentle warmth, unique for him, rippled through her clear gaze.

Elias Langley swiftly descended the steps and took her into his arms.

Juliana lifted her hand, wrapping it tightly under his arm.

They held each other in silence for more than half a minute.

Elias Langley took a deep breath amidst her hair before letting her go, "Are you alright?"

Juliana smiled, "Are you alright?"

Elias Langley opened the car door behind her, his voice charged with the urgency that's hard to suppress in moments of passion, "Let's go home."

That night, his kiss was heavier than before, and his embrace tighter, as if wanting to merge her into his very bones and blood.

The next day, Elias Langley accompanied Juliana Jacobs for a follow-up eye examination at the hospital.

Her impaired vision was still recovering, and the next three critical months would be crucial for her chance to return to previous levels.

The doctor gave numerous instructions, and Elias Langley noted them all.

After finishing the follow-up, the two walked to the hospital lobby and ran into Sean Paxton and his wife, Felicity.

Sean Paxton wore his usual slightly insincere smile and took the initiative to greet, "Elias, long time no see, what a coincidence."

With Juliana in his arms, Elias Langley's smile was faint, "Back in Kingsford, and the first stop is the hospital to celebrate?"

Although he picked up the sarcasm, Sean Paxton still chuckled.

"You haven't lost your humor. I'm just here to get some medication, you see..."

He rolled up his sleeve.

"The humidity in Glimmerfall was too much. I was there only for a few days and got eczema. Fortunately, thanks to you resolving Samuel's matter, I could return from that place. I must find some time to properly thank you."

Elias Langley remained unchanged in expression, maintaining a faint smile at the corners of his lips.

"No need to be polite. Compared to Samuel, I do find you a bit more amusing."

With that, he led Juliana away.

Felicity tugged at Sean Paxton's sleeve, "Let's go. The bond between them seems strong; no small tricks can shake it."

"Their bond might just be a facade for outsiders to see."

Nathan Carter walked out from around the corner.

Felicity looked at him with displeasure, "Eavesdropping on others' conversations is unethical. Is this the upbringing taught by President Carter?"

She wasn't fond of Nathan Carter because he always gave off a sinister vibe.

Sean Paxton, however, asked Nathan Carter, "Why do you say that?"

Nathan Carter glanced at the departing figures of Elias Langley and Juliana Jacobs, a sinister smile forming at his lips.

"What if Juliana knew Elias Langley is keeping a woman in 'Athenor'?"