

A Man with Nerves of Steel

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“Jerome Young, male, 35 years old. Heart disease, high blood pressure, high blood sugar, high cholesterol, liver cirrhosis...”

Joseph continued reviewing the patient’s medical records and examination results. The data he had was far from optimistic. Thinking back to the grim expression on the head of the surgery department’s face earlier, he realized the situation was even more serious than he had imagined.

Still, that just meant Jerome’s chances weren’t as high as he’d like. Even if he couldn’t guarantee success, he just needed to give it his all. As long as he performed at his usual standard and avoided any major mistakes, he could still guarantee a 90 percent

success rate.

Joseph was already 40 years old now. His wife's affair, his collapsing marriage, and the scandal that he faced at the hospital had all forced him to mature.

So, when speaking to the department heads, he played it modestly and claimed he only had a 60 percent chance of success.

Unexpectedly, his words immediately displeased them. The heads of departments themselves felt they had only a 40 percent chance of success, while Joseph claimed a full 20 percent more. It was such a large gap that they assumed that Joseph was just bragging.

"Dr. Hart, no need to be so modest. You're the only one who can do this surgery."

Hearing that, Joseph politely declined a few times out of courtesy. After all, this was their workplace, not his. Then, after showing enough reluctance, he agreed and entered the preparation stage for the operation.

It was an extremely difficult surgery, and Joseph was operating until three in the morning. He didn't even have time to return to the hotel. Instead, he slept on the couch in the director's office for three hours.

Only after Jerome woke up and safely passed the critical post-surgery observation period did Joseph finally leave and head to the hospital to clock in..

As usual, Joseph spent the day organizing documents. Then, someone knocked on the door and entered the room.

It was the woman from the hotel, the one who cheated on her husband two nights ago.

“Dr. Hart, thank you for saving Jerome. I didn’t know how else to thank you, so I brought you some breakfast. You should eat it while it’s still warm.”

Joseph replied, “No need. I already had breakfast.”

Joseph disliked the woman so much that he didn’t even look up.

But the woman was showing no intention of leaving. Shamelessly, she sat across from Joseph. “How is Jerome doing?”

Joseph said, “I’ve already done the surgery, and it was quite successful. All that’s left is recovery treatment, which isn’t my responsibility. If you want to know more, you should visit the Traditional Medicine Center and check for yourself.

“There’s no need to ask me. If there’s nothing else, you should leave.”

Although Joseph was only sorting files, doctors and nurses were constantly passing by outside the hallway. They might not gossip about him openly, but there was definitely no shortage of rumors behind his back.

After dressing up, the cheating woman looked far more attractive than she had at the hotel. If the doctors and nurses saw Joseph sitting together with her, people would definitely start talking again.

Sure enough, he heard a cough from the doorway.

It was Bill.

When she saw that someone was here for Joseph, the woman finally stood up to leave.

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But when she brushed past Bill, she could clearly feel the lust-filled look in his eyes as he stared at her body. Combined with his ugly appearance, it utterly disgusted her.

Bill shut the door behind him and turned to Joseph. "Joseph, you've got some nerve. Were you chatting up a patient's family member without even closing the door? Aren't you afraid someone might see?"

Joseph replied calmly, "Why should I close the door? And why should I be afraid? What are you even here for, Bill?"

Bill said, “There’s a class reunion in a few days. Family members are welcome, too. Bring your wife and let’s go together.”

Joseph scoffed. “My scandal’s already being discussed in the class group chat. If I go, I’ll die of embarrassment. But since you’re here, Bill, there’s something I want to ask you.

“We’ve been classmates for so many years. I’ve helped you plenty of times and never treated you poorly. So why did you repay my kindness with betrayal and report me?”

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Bill refused to admit that he had reported Joseph, swearing that he didn’t do it. However, he kept avoiding Joseph’s gaze the whole time. He quickly changed the subject back to the class reunion, urging Joseph to bring Cora along before hurriedly leaving.

So everyone had found out about how hat she was from the photos. Now, they were trying to meet her to get a chance with her.

Joseph couldn't help but use the worst assumptions to judge the filthy thoughts of men like Jerome. To men like them, it was always the same thing. Another man's wife was always more desirable

Joseph scoffed. "Even my wife could betray me. These classmates who barely have anything to do with me will be capable of betraying me, too."

Things gradually became clearer to Joseph.

That afternoon, Joseph received a call from Cora. When he answered, Cora angrily demanded, "Joseph, what exactly is wrong with you? First, you don't go to Selena's parent-teacher meeting. And you're ignoring her even though she's sick?"

Joseph replied, "Can't your mom take care of her? How serious could her sickness be? Besides, you should take her to a doctor or the hospital if she's sick. What are you yelling at me for?"

Since Joseph did not attend the meeting, the teacher had to contact Helen. After the meeting, Helen brought Selena back to her house. Joseph never even heard about Selena being sick.

And now, even after hearing it, Joseph felt strangely calm. In fact, he even felt a sense of detachment.

In the past, if one of his daughters so much as sneezed, he would worry endlessly. He'd cherished them like they were his precious treasures. But after learning that they weren't his, and were instead products of Cora's affair, his heart was broken. They weren't even his, so why should he care about them?

Cora said, "Selena has never been to the hospital before. You've always treated her yourself every time you got sick. You need to head home and take care of her now."

Joseph replied, "I'm busy. I can't head back. Just have your mother bring her to the hospital instead. Oh, but don't come here. Thanks to you, even if I'm at the hospital now, I'm not allowed to treat patients anymore."

Joseph hung up right after that. Since Selena belonged to Cora and another man, Cora should be the one to worry and care for

Selena.

Cora called him again right after, but Joseph declined the call and turned off his phone.

When Joseph got off work, he was surprised to see people protesting outside the hospital. After asking around, he learned it was for a dispute involving Gregory.

He sneered inwardly, though he also felt a little disheartened. A doctor without any skills was bound to cause trouble sooner or later. Still, he acted as if it had nothing to do with him and left.

Joseph first went to Dolly's sanatorium. There, Dolly showed him her phone, which had some scandalous photos on it. 1

She said, "Your hospital's becoming famous. Someone posted everything online. Look, this is all about your hospital. The deputy director of the ICU, Gregory Barlow, failed a surgery and caused someone to die. The family's furious and demanding an explanation."

Joseph glanced over the posts. From the information exposed online, it was obvious that the patient's family had some influence and power.

He thought to himself that Gregory would definitely pay a price this time, whether it was through legal action or a private settlement.

Joseph said, "That's what it's like being a doctor. We're only allowed to succeed. Because once we fail, it's a human life lost, and the family can't accept that. The pressure doctors face is enormous."

Chapte

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Dolly agreed completely. She felt that she and Joseph truly understood each other.

Joseph had no interest in the affairs of the hospital. After dinner, he continued doing private consultations with Dolly. Later that night, when he returned to the hotel, Fiona unexpectedly appeared behind him and entered the elevator with him.

Joseph let Fiona into his room before asking, "Don't tell me this hotel also belongs to Cora."

Fiona laughed. "Not yet, but it could someday. Joseph, why're you staying at a hotel again? Did you have another fight with your wife?"

Joseph scoffed. "If you're here to persuade me to go home, you can leave now. But if you want to sleep with me, then go take a shower."

As he spoke, Joseph started taking off his clothes right in front of Fiona.

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Cora was in a car not far away Fiona came out of the hotel much quicker than Cora expected. After Fiona got in the car, Cora asked, “What happened? Did he kick you out?”

Fiona thought to herself that she might not have made it out at all if she’d stayed any longer. Joseph was such a rogue that he actually stripped right in front of her.

But she couldn’t say that to Cora. Otherwise, it would be impossible for her to explain things clearly, and Cora would definitely get suspicious of her.

Fiona said, “Joseph will go home eventually, but he really does seem like he needs money. As for everything else, he didn’t want to talk about it. He said he was exhausted after working the whole day and kicked me out.”

Then, Fiona added, “Cora, why don’t you go up and keep him company?”

Cora sighed. “If he’s tired, he should just go home and rest. It’s so much more comfortable at home. Whatever. If he’s tired, I’ll just let him rest.”

Naturally, Cora had no intention of going upstairs. If she did, it would be a show of weakness. She’d lose any leverage she had over Joseph if Joseph continued causing trouble.

She said, “Fiona, you said Joseph needs 20 million dollars. What does he even need it for? Should I give it to him?”

Fiona replied, “I didn’t get the chance to ask. But I didn’t see anything unusual in his room either. I can’t tell what he’s planning.

“Since you decided from the start that you wouldn’t give him the money, you should stick to your decision. Otherwise, what will you do if he keeps asking for money?”

Cora said, “See? This is why you should stay unmarried. Men are impossible to understand. You never know what they’re thinking! Joseph wasn’t like this before, but lately he’s changed.”

Fiona said softly, “I don’t think Joseph is a bad person. He just has some misunderstandings.”

Cora scoffed. “Did he bring up the DNA test and divorce again?”

Fiona nodded. “He mentioned it before I left, but honestly, it didn’t sound like he’d really thought it through. I think he just said it impulsively to kick me out.”

Cora replied, “See? I treat him so well, but he still wants a divorce. He’s not even acting like a proper man! I should have let my dad beat him harder to teach him a proper lesson.”

Cora suddenly felt a headache coming on. After Joseph returned home last time, she’d thought that the divorce crisis had already passed. After all, they’d had a good time together. Yet now it seemed that Joseph could bring up divorce again at any

moment.

She coldly thought to herself that Joseph just wanted money so he could leave. He’d just take tens of millions and leave Jenton, hiding somewhere far away, never to be found again. She definitely couldn’t give Joseph the money. Joseph couldn’t be allowed to leave her.

The next morning, Joseph first went to the hospital to clock in. He saw that the dispute involving Gregory was still ongoing. However, he didn’t bother to get involved or help resolve it. Instead, he headed to the Traditional Medicine Center.

Jerome’s surgery had been extremely successful. His post-operation treatment was also progressing smoothly. Many of Jerome’s relatives were there that day, especially his parents and younger brother, who had traveled from far away.

Jerome’s wife was overseas, having been living separately from Jerome. Yet, Jerome cheated on her the moment he met his first love. It was obvious Jerome wasn’t a good person.

Joseph suddenly felt like he had saved the wrong person. However, he reminded himself that he was a doctor. It didn't matter if someone was good or bad. Once they got sick, they became patients. As long as he remained a doctor, it was his job to treat

+15 Bonus

patients

When he returned to the hospital, he saw even more police cars outside.

After asking around curiously, he learned that the family members causing trouble had started going out of control. Not only did they seize data from doctors' computers, but they had even assaulted doctors and nurses.

The hospital was in complete chaos, yet the main person responsible, Gregory, still hadn't shown himself. Instead, he hid himself at home.

Walt summoned Joseph over to his office. Marvin was present as well.

Joseph recalled that Marvin had personally promoted Gregory, so he said, "The surgery that Gregory performed was not difficult at all. Yet, it still ended in an accident.

“We can’t let him escape responsibility. I suggest revoking his medical license, making him pay compensation, and then firing him from the hospital. Dr. Pierce, what do you think?”

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Naturally, Marvin disagreed. After all, Gregory was Marvin’s protege. According to Marvin’s plans, once he became the hospital director, he intended to promote Gregory to department chief, or perhaps even associate director. That way, he could gain proper control of the hospital.

But this scandal had thrown a fatal wrench into those plans.

Marvin said, “Joseph, know your place. The staffing decisions in this hospital are none of your business. You should worry about your own problems first.”

Joseph sneered. “Are you getting nervous? You’ve been investigating me for days and still haven’t found any dirt on me. Chances are, I was falsely accused from the start. When the truth comes out, all of you will owe me an apology.”

Marvin gritted his teeth. “We’ll talk after the investigation is over!”

The two men clashed head-on, both refusing to back down.

“Dr. Pierce, go handle your own work. I have some medical matters I need to discuss with Joseph alone.”

Walt had no choice but to send Marvin away. Then, he handed Joseph a file containing two sets of medical records.

After that, Walt said, “Joseph, you shouldn’t provoke Marvin so much. You’ll have to work with him in the future, after all. Honestly, you know better than anyone that the investigation probably won’t lead anywhere. Most likely, it’ll just fade away quietly.”

Joseph didn’t respond. Instead, he reviewed the documents. Both cases involved deceased patients. It was obvious that Walt wanted Joseph’s professional opinion on whether the deaths counted as medical malpractice or were simply caused by the patients’ own conditions.

The difference between those conclusions would have a huge impact on the hospital.

Joseph said, “Dr. Loughlin, there wasn’t much wrong with Gregory’s surgical procedure itself. It was just a minor operation, but he made mistakes during diagnosis and failed to realize the patient might have other hidden illnesses.

“That means the problem started the moment before he even decided to operate. So, when it comes to this case, he should be held responsible for it.

“As for the second case, it was a severe heart condition. Surgeries like this naturally carry major risks. There probably aren’t many doctors in the entire country who would dare claim a one-hundred percent success rate.

“The patient’s family should have understood that. If they’re making a scene now, they probably have other motives. Maybe you should try talking to them.”

Walt nodded. “Then how about you handle negotiations with the heart patient’s widow?”

Joseph shook his head. “I’m not the right person for that. The patient is clearly from an influential family. The moment I show up, they’ll dig into my issues at the hospital and use them against me. That would only put me in a worse position, and my involvement might backfire instead.

“There are plenty of talented people in the hospital. You should get someone else to do it.”

Walt sighed. “Cora really complicated things for you. She’s put you in a very difficult position now.”

Even Walt felt helpless. No one could have predicted the chaos Cora caused.

He added, “Right, Selena is sick, but you’re refusing to go home. Don’t you think you’re going a bit too far? Cora even complained to me and asked me to give you a long leave.”

Joseph replied, “I was already planning to go back today, so there’s no need for leave. This is just a minor family matter that I can handle myself.”

Chapte: \$4

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Joseph had already told Walt that Natalie wasn’t biologically his daughter. But since Walt hadn’t been able to help with the divorce situation, Joseph had no intention of revealing the truth about Selera as well.

When it was time to get off work, Joseph once again went to Dolly's place for a meal then continued doing private consultations. After he was done, he headed to Bernard and Helen's house. Recently, all three of his children had been staying

there.

Helen opened the door for him, though her expression was far from welcoming.

Kimberly, still innocent and pure-hearted, happily hugged and clung to Joseph.

Meanwhile, Selena lay in bed with a cooling patch on her forehead. She didn't greet Joseph at all. Instead, she glanced at him coldly before turning away to face the wall.

Joseph's heart ached terribly, but he forced himself to endure it. "It's just a cold and a fever. It's not that serious. You're already a teenager. Do you need to act so fragile?"

Selena cried out, "You're playing favorites! You always attend Natalie's school events, so why didn't you come to mine this time?"

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As she spoke, tears rolled down her cheeks.

Hearing that, Joseph thought bitterly to himself that it was because she wasn't his. She was another man's bastard child.

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Joseph knew Selena's personality very well. She was extremely competitive, especially when it came to Natalie. It wasn't just with material things, grades, and accomplishments, but even Joseph's love and affection.

Joseph said, "I was too busy to attend it. But if it were Natalie, she wouldn't be as weak as you, getting sick so easily and crying about it. Remember the book you were reading recently? Natalie's the powerful queen, while you're the wealt princess. I think the powerful queen is better." (

Selena gasped. “I definitely won’t lose to Natalie! I’m the rival queen who always stays above her!”

Joseph chuckled lightly. “I’ve been very busy lately, so try not to disturb me. From now on, whatever happens, find your mother instead.”

After calming Selena down, Joseph left the room. Then, he told Kimberly, “Selena is sick, so don’t go into her room unless you need to. Otherwise, you might catch the virus from her.”

He glanced toward the study. Bernard never came out the entire time, while Helen busied herself nearby with a scowl.

Without saying anything more, he left and returned home.

Joseph handed all his dirty clothes to Mary, asking her to wash and dry them. After taking a shower, she walked into the master bedroom wearing only a bathrobe.

Cora was leaning against the headboard in a sexy nightgown. The moment Joseph entered, she immediately pulled the blanket over her legs and looked at him coldly.

Joseph walked over and tried to pull the blanket away, but Cora grabbed the other end, turning it into a tug-of-war.

Joseph said, “If I’m not welcome, then I’ll leave.”

Cora retorted, “Get lost then! And if you leave, don’t bother coming back!”

Cora picked up pillows and started throwing them at him.

Joseph didn’t bother dodging the pillows. Instead, he removed his bathrobe and reached for the blanket again. This time, Cora stopped resisting. He grabbed her foot and pulled her to the edge of the bed before taking her right there..

This time, whether it was because of physical desire or a way of venting his anger toward Cora, Joseph seemed to possess endless passion and strength.

Cora eventually passed out from sheer exhaustion and pleasure. When she woke up again, she felt refreshed and radiant, but it was already past 8:00 am. The spot beside her had long gone cold, and Joseph was nowhere to be seen.

After washing up, she went downstairs for breakfast.

As Mary served Cora food, she said, “Mr. Hart left early this morning. He took all his belongings and another eight sets of clothes. He said he won’t be back tonight. I think he won’t return for a few days, just like last time.”

Cora scoffed. “Forget about him.”

She felt rather exasperated. After all, they’d just enjoyed such a passionate night together. She had thought Joseph would stay because of her, but now it seemed he was still just as stubborn as ever.

His defiant attitude was something Cora both loved and hated.

Still, after being thoroughly satisfied the night before, she felt she wouldn’t have any needs for the next few days anyway. Since Joseph wasn’t coming home, she could take the opportunity to rest.

After breakfast, she went to visit her parents’ house. Bernard had already gone to the company, and the two children had gone to school, leaving only Helen at home.

Chapter b

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Gora said, “Mom, Selena hasn’t fully recovered yet. Why did you let her go to school?”

Helen shrugged “She insisted on going! It’s all that ungrateful brat’s fault. Last night, he came over and didn’t even treat Selena properly. He just said a few words about not being a weak princess. Then, early this morning, Selena suddenly seemed filled with energy.

“After taking her cold medicine, she kept insisting on going to school. She said she’d walk there herself if we refused to send her.”

Cora smiled. “Selena sure is hardworking. So what exactly did Joseph say to her?”

Helen scoffed. “He was in and out of the room in less than two minutes. How would I know what he said? I couldn’t be bothered to listen. Cora, if I’d known that ungrateful brat would turn out like this, I never would’ve agreed to let you marry him back then.

Cora laughed softly. “Mom, even if you’d opposed it back then, I still would’ve rparried him anyway.”

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Helen couldn't agree with Cora's words, but there was nothing she could do. After all, now that Cora had grown up, she was in many ways more influential than both her parents.

Cora said, "Mom, honestly, Joseph has done very well all these years. He's never done anything to disappoint you or Dad, and you've both always approved of him.

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"He's just been acting strangely recently, insisting on fighting with me for whatever reason. Once I figure out the problem, there won't be so much trouble anymore."

Helen sneered. "He already wants to divorce you. What else do you have to figure out? He's clearly just after our family's assets. He's disloyal and ungrateful, so just grant him his wish. If he wants a divorce, just divorce him and make sure he leaves with nothing.

"What's the use of a man whose heart is no longer yours?"

Cora shook her head. "We've been together for so many years. Why would we divorce now? Besides, it's not like we don't love each other anymore. Mom, don't bring up divorce again in the future."

Cora couldn't leave Joseph. After all, Cora loved Joseph, and he could satisfy her desires as well. She already had a perfect husband. There was no reason for her to let him go.

Helen refused to give up. She and Bernard shared the same belief, which was that Joseph was just after the Lowell family's

assets.

Helen said, "Cora, your father's been thinking about this for days. We just can't understand why Natalie's DNA test doesn't match Joseph's. No matter how much we think about it, it doesn't make sense. So tell me honestly... Are you hiding something from your father and me?"

Cora replied, "Mom, I know what you and Dad are suspecting, but it's impossible. Let me make myself clear. Natalie is the child Joseph and I had together. I am Natalie's mother and Joseph's wife. No one knows better than I do where Natalie came from.

"She is our daughter. DNA tests are still operated by people and machines. Errors are always possible. Nothing is ever absolutely

accurate."

Helen asked, “And do you think Joseph will accept that explanation?”

Cora shrugged. “Even if he can’t, he still has to. The child is his.”

Helen couldn’t persuade Cora at all. In the end, she just took out a stack of documents and handed them to Cora,

“Take a look at this. Your father got these from Joseph’s hospital. That ungrateful brat’s gotten himself into trouble. He’s actually sleeping with other women in the open. We can use this as an excuse to kick him out of the family immediately. What do you think?”

Cora laughed in exasperation. “Come on. You and Dad are overthinking things because you care too much. I arranged that woman in the photos. I was the one who sent her to his bed. I leaked the photos, too.

“Joseph knows it was my doing, which is why he’s angry at me right now. That’s also why I’ve been tolerating his temper.”

Helen was surprised. “You arranged it? You actually sent another woman to sleep with your husband? Why? Most women try to stop their men from fooling around outside, but you’re doing the exact opposite. I really can’t understand you.”

Cora explained, “He was trying to pressure me into a divorce with the DNA test, and even wanted to sue me. I was caught completely off guard. But after thinking it through, I realized that Joseph is practically a perfect man.

“After all these years, he’s barely done anything wrong. If he truly insists on divorcing me, I have no way to stop him. That’s what makes him terrifying.”

Helen retorted, “What’s so terrifying about a perfect man?”

Chapen b

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Gota replied, “Because a man like that can never be fully controlled. Besides, things that are too perfect are usually fragile. In this world, whether it’s people or situations, things need two sides for them to feel real and controllable.”

As she spoke, Cora picked up one of the chess pieces Bernard played with and gently rolled it between her fingers. “Just like these pieces. They need opposing sides to maintain balance.”

Helen said, “You’re much more intelligent than am, which is how you’ve achieved what you have today. But let me ask you this. Does that theory apply to you, too? Do you really have another man besides Joseph?”

Cora quickly shot back, “I do not!”

Helen shook her head. “That can’t be true. You’re an amazing woman. Of course, men would desire you. Men have countless tricks up their sleeves. You can reject one or two, but there’s no way you can stop every single one. Can’t you even tell your own mother?”

Cora hesitated for a moment. “Well, it’s not like there were no men at all. But it’s also not exactly what you think. To be precise, they were eliminated right before getting into bed with me. That was as far as they ever got.”

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Things in the hospital remained chaotic. The scandal Gregory caused had not been resolved. In fact, it had only gotten worse.

Joseph found it strange. Situations like this were usually resolved as soon as possible. The longer it dragged on, the more it would impact the hospital. Surely the hospital leadership understood that.

Joseph mused, “Could Dr. Loughlin be doing this on purpose? Maybe he wants to use this incident to weaken Marvin’s faction, since Gregory belongs to Marvin’s side. But is it really worth it? While it’ll hurt their side, the hospital as a whole is also being affected.”

Joseph knew there were at least two factions within the hospital-Walt's camp and Marvin's camp. Because of the Lowell family, Joseph had naturally been grouped with Walt's side.

But he'd never cared much for workplace politics. All he wanted to do was be a doctor, treat patients, and live an ordinary, peaceful life.

"Forget it. What does a small fry like me have to do with all this? Worrying about matters beyond my position is just asking for trouble." Joseph laughed at himself and continued slacking off at work during the day while taking on private consultations

after hours.

After two days outside the hospital entrance, the deceased patient's body had begun to putrefy. The grim sight and worsening smell triggered an even bigger public outcry. The higher-ups were alarmed. An order was issued from above, and the blame was pushed almost entirely onto Gregory.

Gregory was forced to shoulder most of the responsibility, while the hospital only bore a small portion. The patient's family's compensation demands were finally met, and Gregory himself was fired from the hospital.

With the deputy director position in the ICU now vacant, many people immediately began fighting over it. Joseph had originally intended to just sit back and watch the drama unfold, but to his surprise, Walt nominated him for the position.

At the meeting, the moment Joseph appeared, Marvin and the others all stared at him in shock. They clearly hadn't expected him to be nominated while his own issues remained unresolved.

Sure enough, Marvin was the first to object. "I oppose Joseph becoming deputy director. He carries some serious stains in his personal life!"

Joseph immediately shot back, "What stains? Dr. Pierce, maybe you should investigate properly before you speak. Otherwise, you're just slandering me. It's been so many days, and what have you actually found? You haven't found anything, right?"

This time, Joseph didn't hold back.

He was certain Marvin would never uncover anything through Cora, because he knew exactly how capable she was. The woman he had slept with had long since been hidden away by Cora and effectively erased from existence. The investigation was destined to end with nothing.

Joseph was preparing to divorce Cora soon. In the future, he would only have himself to rely on. That meant he needed to fight for the opportunities that belonged to him.

Marvin replied coldly, "The investigation may still be ongoing, but I'm certain that woman was not your wife."

Joseph gave Marvin a big thumbs-up. “You are a part of management. Whatever you say must be right!”

Then, Walt finally spoke up, “The hospital has investigated Joseph’s personal matters for days without making any progress. This already proves he can withstand scrutiny. He’s the victim in this manner, and the investigation will end here.

“Everyone here knows how qualified Joseph is. Unless you can provide additional evidence proving he’s unfit for the position, your objections are invalid.”

Walt wasn’t speaking loudly, but his voice carried the authority of someone in power. After exchanging looks with him, Marvin

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chose not to continue arguing and reluctantly backed down.

As a result, Walt formally recommended Joseph as the top candidate.

After the meeting, Walt spoke with Joseph in private, telling Joseph to prepare mentally and professionally for the new role and to prove himself through outstanding performance

Following several more meetings, the candidate from Marvin's faction withdrew from consideration, and Joseph officially became the deputy director of the ICU.

The hospital even assigned him a better apartment. It was a deputy-director-level residence with one bedroom and one living

room.

On the very day he assumed office, Travis congratulated him.

But shortly afterward, the department experienced two consecutive patient deaths. Both patients had suddenly died during surgery due to unexpected complications.

Joseph was assigned to review the entire treatment process and comfort the victims' families. Unexpectedly, he discovered that the hidden truth behind these cases was actually connected to the Lowell Group.

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If there were only one case, it could be dismissed as a coincidence. But with two cases on the same day, it was likely no accident at all. It was the inevitable result of problems that had been building up for a long time.

After speaking with the families of the deceased patients and learning about the victims' backgrounds, especially their work histories, Joseph combined the information with his medical analysis and compiled a full report. He discussed it with Travis before they went together to see Walt.

After reading the report, Walt fell silent. Then, he sent Travis away, making sure the office door was shut before speaking to Joseph.

"You conclude that chemical exposure caused chronic poisoning. I trust your judgment, but do you know who owns Nonagon Chemical, the company mentioned in your report?"

Joseph shook his head. "I don't."

Walt sighed. "It belongs to the Lowell family. The chairman of Nonagon Chemical, Jackson Lowell, is Cora's cousin. He's an in-law of yours."

Joseph frowned. "Cora's cousin? How do you know so much about it?"

Walt said, "One of my relatives graduated this year and works there in accounting."

Joseph replied, "And what are you trying to say?"

Walt said softly, “Maybe the truth isn’t exactly what you think it is. Even if your report is correct, we can notify the company privately first and have them fix the problems internally. They can compensate the employees-”

Joseph cut him off. “We should just expose this. This chemical plant has already been around for many years. Who knows how many workers have been poisoned? Once the illness fully breaks out, they might not even have a chance to be saved.

“Some people may have already died without ever knowing the real cause. Now that our hospital has discovered the signs, we’ll also have to bear the responsibility if we hide and say nothing/Dr Loughlin, we can’t afford to carry that burden.”

Walt sighed. “If Cora finds out, she’ll make it very hard for you.!”

Joseph shrugged. “On a personal level, she and I were already going to get divorced anyway. To others, this might be the worst outcome, but to me, it’s the best one. And professionally, as an entrepreneur, she has responsibilities toward society.”

Once Joseph learned that the factory belonged to Cora’s family, he became even more determined to expose the truth.

He gathered large amounts of medical literature and clinical case studies. Then, he contacted current and former workers. In cases where the victims had already died, he immediately advised their families to authorize a forensic autopsy.

Having collected airtight evidence, he encouraged the victims' families to report the matter to the police. At the same time, he leaked the materials to media outlets and other channels.

When other employees and retired workers from the chemical factory heard the news, they rushed to the hospital for examinations as well. Many of them were found to have health problems, and public anger was quickly directed at Nonagon Chemical.

Very quickly, this incident exploded into a massive public scandal.

One day, after Joseph finished rescuing a patient, he was summoned to Walt's office.

But when he entered, only Fiona was inside.

Joseph asked immediately, "Has Cora agreed to the divorce yet?"

Fiona replied helplessly, "Joseph, you're obsessed with divorce at this point. You should know that if Cora really wanted to

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livoice you, she would've signed the papers long ago. I'll make it clear to you again. Córa loves you very much. She'll never livoice you."

oseph stared at her and sighed. "You don't know what she's done to ine, so of course you'll take her side. Fine then. Go book a hotel room first, and I'll come after work. Or we could go to your place instead."

Fiona rolled her eyes. "Screw you! I treat you like an older brother, yet all you think about is sleeping with me. What's wrong with you? Forget it. Let's talk business."

Fiona's expression turned serious. "Cora asked me to tell you to stop digging into the Nonagon Chemical case. She already irranged for you to attend a prestigious medical forum. You'll receive an award if you go, too. Just go lie low for a while."

oseph scoffed. "And if I refuse?"

Fiona replied, "Then Cora will be very angry, and the consequences will be dire."

admin

A Man with Nerves of Steel

Joseph repeated, “So the consequences will be serious if I anger Cora?”

When he heard that, Joseph didn’t feel afraid at all. On the contrary, he started to feel vaguely excited. He actually wanted to see just how powerful Cora really was.

Truthfully, he never needed an outsider like Fiona to tell him how formidable Cora was. The fact that she had become the richest person in Jenton already proved that she was far from ordinary.

But Cora never brought work matters home. So even after living with her for all these years, Joseph still didn’t truly know what she was like outside. Otherwise, he might have already discovered who the real father of the three children was.

He asked, “What do you think Cora will do to me?”

Fiona looked exasperated. “Joseph, I’m not joking around. You really shouldn’t ignore my warning. Cora’s methods are beyond what you can imagine. You’d better not force her hand, or you could lose your job at the hospital. You might even pay an even greater price.

Joseph raised an eyebrow. “Is she going to kill me?”

Fiona shook her head. “She loves you too much for that. She wouldn’t hurt you.”

Joseph said, “She told me before that if I kept pushing for divorce, suing her, or causing her trouble, she’d have me committed to a psychiatric hospital. I do believe she meant it. I guess sending a perfectly sane person into a mental institution would take

some skill.”

Fiona sighed. “Joseph, those were your words, not mine. Honestly, there’s no need for you to keep making things difficult for Cora. The Lowell Group has already been handling the chemical plant issue for the past few days. ¹

“We have a full emergency response system in place, including compensation and support for the employees. Every worker will receive the best compensation possible. Your hospital should cooperate with us, especially you. Don’t undermine the process.”

Joseph replied, “Fine then. Go tell Cora that I’m just an ordinary little doctor with limited abilities. There’s only so much I can do. My original intention was simply to save lives. Since the Lowell Group is capable of doing more, then I’ll let the more capable people handle it.”

“That’s more like it.” Satisfied, Fiona left.

Shortly afterward, Walt entered the office and asked about the conversation. Then, he reminded Joseph to focus carefully on his own duties.

Joseph left after that. The moment he entered the elevator and found himself alone, his expression darkened completely.

Cora wanted him to compromise? That would be impossible. She was the one who cheated on him, so why did he have to obey her in everything? There was no way he'd let her push him around like this.

He was going to blow this toxic chemical plant scandal up as big as possible. Ideally, it would turn into a criminal case. Once Cora was implicated and dragged in, he would see which lover would come to save her.

After all, Cora betrayed him. Now that he finally had a chance to strike back, he would never show mercy. Even if he couldn't send Cora to prison, he'd still make sure she suffered badly.

Joseph thought about it over and over again before finally deciding to call in the favor owed to him by the cholera patient he had

once saved.

He personally called Mavis to ask about her recovery before getting straight to the point. “I’ve run into a problem recently. My abilities alone are limited, so I hope you can help me.”

She replied, “Oh, Dr. Hart, I’ve actually been waiting for you to call. I’ve always felt bad that I never managed to repay you for saving me. Whatever it is, just say the word. If it’s within my capabilities, I’ll definitely help you.”

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Joseph said, “These past few days, I’ve treated many workers coming from frontline production jobs. They’re all suffering from chronic poisoning. Their health and lives are being destroyed because there’s a toxic chemical company operating here.”

Mavis replied, “That’s actually something I can help with. I’ll definitely punish that company severely.”

Joseph responded, “Thank you so much for the trouble.”

After hanging up, Joseph had no idea how much help Mavis could actually provide, but he had already done everything within his power.

Two days later, Joseph received a call from Cora, telling him to come home.

Joseph scoffed. “This shameless woman has been out playing with men for days. Only after she’s trad her fill does she ask me to go home. Does she have no shame?” 1

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A Man with Nerves of Steel

“Mr. Hart, you’re back.” The moment Mary saw Joseph enter the house, she quickly greeted him with a bright smile. Not that Joseph could be sure whether the smile was genuine. Nonetheless, Joseph was still the man of the house.

He said, “I’m hungry. Serve dinner as soon as you can.”

Mary replied, “It’s already prepared. We were just waiting for you to come home.”

Joseph nodded. When he saw Mary gesture toward the study, indicating that Cora was inside, he walked over. After that, he

knocked on the door and asked her to come out for dinner.

A moment later, Cora walked out. Whether she was good at hiding her emotions or genuinely in a good mood, she had a big smile on her face. “Honey, you’re back. Some business partners sent me seafood flown in from overseas. It’s all very fresh, so I brought them back for you to try.”

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The two of them sat down at the enormous dining table, which was already covered with expensive seafood. There was everything from deep-sea lobster to premium tuna, all cooked in various ways. The meal was lavish.

Joseph sampled everything and generously praised the food.

Then, he said, “You seem especially happy today, and you must’ve spent so much on the meal. Did something good happen? Let me guess, did the company land some major projects and make another fortune?”

Cora said proudly, “The company did take on several new projects that will make us quite a bit of money, but it won’t really be a noticeable increase in our total wealth. Of course, with how wealthy I am now, even a tiny increase would be an unreachable sum for most people.”

There was a faint arrogance in her tone, as though she was looking down on everyone else.

Joseph replied, "That's good. Unfortunately, I'm not as talented as you are. I can't make that kind of money, so the family's finances are still dependent on you."

Cora shook her head. "Don't say that. This family couldn't function without you either. If you hadn't managed things at home all these years, I could never have focused on my career in peace. After all, we have three children. So in the future, I still hope you-

Joseph interrupted, "I'll be very busy in the future, so I won't have much time for the family anymore. Honestly, even though I'm just a deputy director in the ICU, it feels like I've got a thousand-pound burden on my shoulders.

"Patients who enter the ICU already have one foot in the grave. Our department basically saves people from the brink of death. One small mistake, and they die right in front of you. So from now on, I'll be spending most of my time at the hospital and won't

be able to focus much on home."

Cora protested, "Honey, you don't really need to work. I can provide for you completely."

Joseph said calmly, “I know you can, but the children are grown up now and don’t need me watching over them all day. Wouldn’t asking me to stay at home doing nothing be basically a prison sentence? As husband and wife, some things need to be equal.”

Cora laughed teasingly. “Equal? If we’re talking about equality, then why don’t we split the household expenses 50-50 from now on? Last month alone, the family spent two million dollars. How about you pay one million?”

Joseph smiled helplessly. “Aren’t you deliberately trying to embarrass me? What I earn in an entire year at the hospital probably wouldn’t even cover tonight’s seafood feast. I’m broke.

“But if we look at it from another angle, the conclusion changes. If we’re following marriage law, the wealth accumulated during marriage, even if I didn’t personally help earn it, still counts as marital property. ¹

“Since we’ve been married for more than ten years, your wealth should also belong partly to me. I could even claim half of it. I

+15 Bonus

think that more than covers my share of household expenses.”

Cora giggled. “Honey, you’re so sly!”

She avoided continuing the topic of money and instead drank wine with him.

After dinner, the two bathed together and shared a passionate time together. She needed Joseph, while Joseph treated her as nothing more than a tool to vent his emotions.

In truth, she didn't know that Joseph had begun seeing her as a rotten person the moment she arranged for another woman to sleep with him.

It was purely physical, with no feelings involved.

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