

Substitute B 1161

Chapter 1161: Tonight, Don't Go Back

Charles Bishop paced anxiously back and forth, "This is really stressful. The herbologist said this caterpillar fungus is extremely rare, only found deep in the Changbai Mountains. Last night, I offered a reward for anyone who would venture into the mountains to find it, but no one wanted to take the risk. Some people went this morning, but there's been no word all day, so I guess they didn't find it."

Just then, the door opened, and someone entered.

"Doctor Sterling!" Charles thought it was Serena Sterling, but it wasn't. Standing by the door was the charming figure of Dianna Hollis.

"Dianna, why are you here? Where's Doctor Sterling?" Charles asked anxiously.

Dianna looked over Charles' shoulder into the room. Mort Thorne was tied to a chair to prevent self-harm.

"Lieutenant Bishop, please step outside for a moment," Dianna instructed.

Charles hesitated, surprised that Dianna would ask him to leave at this moment.

"Alright, Dianna, you stay here, I'll head out for a while." Charles wanted to personally go to the Changbai Mountains.

"Lieutenant Bishop, there's no need for that. I've already found the caterpillar fungus." Dianna had already seen through Charles' intentions and took out the fungus she had obtained.

Because Mort didn't want Dianna to know how bad his condition was, Charles hadn't explicitly mentioned it. Now he froze, utterly shocked to see the fungus in Dianna's hand.

Charles gasped, "Dianna, where did you get that fungus? Don't tell me... you went to the Changbai Mountains?"

Dianna nodded, "Yes, I did."

After his initial shock, Charles felt a sense of calm, "Dianna, I'll leave Mort to you then. I'll be right outside the door if you need anything."

Charles walked out and closed the door behind him.

...

Inside the room, Dianna walked over to Mort Thorne. The man sat with his head hanging low, his damp bangs shadowing his bloodshot eyes, large beads of sweat dripping from his chiseled jaw, soaking his shirt and pants.

She reached out with her small hand, slowly caressing his firm cheek.

Suddenly touched, Mort raised his head abruptly, his bloodshot eyes cold and fierce as they locked onto Dianna.

Seeing it was Dianna, his expression changed, and he rasped hoarsely, "Dianna, please go. Don't worry, I'll be fine soon!"

He wanted her to leave.

Dianna's gentle fingers lingered over his stubbled chin, softly stroking, "Mort, there's no state of yours I haven't seen, no matter how terrible. I don't want to leave; I want to stay with you."

Mort pressed his thin lips together. Her small hand felt like a kitten's paw, occasionally scratching his stubble, soft and making him itch inside. He closed his eyes briefly, pressing his handsome cheek into her palm.

He thought he could endure without her, but he was wrong.

He needed her.

Dianna extended her small hand and untied the ropes on his hands.

Freed, Mort stood up, clasping her slender wrist with his rough palm as he led her out, "Dianna, my addiction is severe this time, and I can't guarantee your safety if you stay. Please, just go, I promise I'll be alright."

Dianna was led to the door, and Mort reached out to open it, but with a "snap," Dianna swiftly closed it again.

Swinging around swiftly, Dianna wrapped her little hands around his neck, stood on her tiptoes, and kissed his thin lips.

Mort froze.

Then, Dianna pried open his teeth and fed the fungus into his mouth.

After she was done, she retreated.

Now, their position was she was pinned between his solid chest and the door, her hands still around his neck in an incredibly intimate posture.

Mort lowered his handsome eyelids, staring at her small oval face, hoarsely asking, "What did you feed me?"

Dianna tilted her head, her bright eyes sparkling, "It's a soul-capturing herb. Once you eat it, your soul will be enchanted by me."

Mort's rough hand squeezed her willowy waist, and his heavy breath brushed against her tender skin, "You went looking for fungus?"

Dianna didn't reply.

He squeezed her waist more forcefully, their faces pressing together, noses touching, breaths intertwined, "Answer me!"

His hoarse voice was a bit stern.

Ouch.

Dianna winced slightly.

"Are you hurt? Let me see where you're injured," Mort's eyes darkened as he tried to lift her dress to check for injuries.

"Mort, lower your head."

"Lower your head..."

Mort slowly bent his tall and muscular body down.

Dianna's little hands moved up to cradle his head, pulling it into her embrace, "Mort, does it hurt?"

Mort...

Does it hurt...

At this moment, the room was very quiet, the warm yellow light cast a gentle hue over them.

Mort's head rested against her soft chest, her voice filled with concern and tenderness echoing around him, "Mort, does it hurt?"

All of Mort's muscles tightened, gathering all his strength as if ready to act, but soon his strong muscles relaxed, and he wrapped his strong arms around her slender waist, burying his face in her chest.

Dianna's fair fingers wove through his prickly short hair, gently massaging, "It's alright, it won't hurt soon, everything is in the past."

Yes, soon it won't hurt...

Now having eaten the fungus, he slowly felt the pain subsiding.

Mort lifted his head and kissed her.

Dianna embraced him, returning his kiss passionately and willingly.

No words, no actions, just two people lost in their passionate kiss, their breath and heartbeats entwined.

The craving passed, Mort released Dianna just as a maid brought dinner. Mort began eating the simple porridge and steamed buns.

Mort took a few bites of the steamed bun, and Dianna looked at him with glistening eyes, "I'm hungry too, I want to eat."

Mort handed her the bun, and Dianna took a bite from his hand.

"Tonight, don't go back," he said, holding her.

"Why?"

"Let me see your injuries."

Dianna raised her face, "Really just to check the injuries?"

She smiled mischievously like a little fox, and Mort swallowed, clearing his throat earnestly, "Don't joke about it!"

Dianna nestled beside him, and although there was no heating, there was a clean wooden tub. She commanded, "Later, you fetch hot water; I want to take a bath."

"Okay."

Mort brought the hot water. Carrying several buckets, the muscles on his arms bulged one by one as he filled the wooden tub. Water splashed, wetting his black shirt and pants, but he paid no heed.

With the tub full, his deep eyes glanced toward Dianna in the room, "You can come and wash now."

Chapter 1162: Dianna, Let's Get Married

"Oh." Dianna walked over.

"I'm heading out." Mort Thorne said, wanting to leave.

But Dianna's small hand reached over and grabbed his sleeve.

Mort Thorne paused and turned to look at her.

"Didn't you say you wanted to see my wounds? Are you not going to look?" Dianna blinked at him with an unfathomable innocence.

Mort Thorne pressed his thin lips, "I do want to see."

Dianna pulled his large hand and placed it on her buttons. Her voice carried a light, teasing charm, becoming exceptionally soft and alluring, "Then why are you just standing there? Hurry up and undo my buttons."

Mort Thorne wasn't sure if she was doing it on purpose; he was, after all, a mature and normal man. She seemed to be giving him all sorts of hints, but he had no proof.

Mort Thorne's fingers fell on her buttons, undoing them one by one.

With the outer garment removed, she was wearing a black vest underneath, starkly contrasting her milky white skin, which was now covered in wounds.

"How did you get so many injuries?" Mort Thorne frowned, his eyes filled with concern. Just thinking about how these injuries were for him made his heart ache, "Did you apply any ointment?"

"Yes, Sister Serena applied some for me. I have even more severe injuries. Do you want to see?"

"Of course, where?"

"Right here~" Dianna guided his large hand to her skirt.

Mort Thorne froze, quickly looking up at her, only to see Dianna smiling at him with arched brows.

She did it on purpose!

Absolutely on purpose!

She's been flirting with him!

"Behave yourself, hurry and take a bath!" Mort Thorne withdrew his hand and turned to leave.

...

Mort Thorne strode into the room, closing the glass sliding door behind him.

The room was very quiet, quiet enough to hear the rustling of clothes being removed inside, followed by the sound of water. The girl must have entered the wooden tub for a bath.

Mort Thorne's Adam's apple moved up and down, feeling like he was feverish again.

After ten minutes, the girl's soft voice came from inside, "Mort Thorne, I don't have any change of clothes. Can you lend me a shirt?"

Mort Thorne looked at his clothes; none were new, all worn before.

He casually picked a white shirt and walked over, knocking on the glass sliding door, "All I've got are shirts I've worn."

His voice was unbearably hoarse.

The glass sliding door opened a crack, and a small hand reached out, "Give it to me."

Mort Thorne handed over the white shirt.

Then, his gaze caught her extended hand, glistening with water droplets on her tender skin, resembling dew on rose petals, mesmerizingly beautiful.

He looked away, handing over the shirt.

But she didn't take it for a long time.

Mort Thorne was puzzled and looked up.

Dianna's little head peeked out, her petite oval face looked charmingly at him.

Mort Thorne's voice was entirely hoarse, "What's wrong now?"

"Mort Thorne, do you want to... come in and bathe with me? It's so comfortable to soak in the tub." She laughed softly.

Mort Thorne, "..."

"I feel like, don't waste this whole tub of hot water. You're going to bathe anyways, why not join me? This seems like... a couple's bath..."

Her enthusiastic invitation ignited a fire in Mort Thorne's eyes, but he restrained himself, pushed the shirt into her hands, and sternly advised, "Hurry and bathe, don't catch cold."

He pulled the glass door shut again.

...

Some time later, Dianna dried off completely and walked out wearing his white shirt. The man's shirt was too large, reaching her knees, its loose fit made her look even more delicate.

She went over to the bed, lifted the covers, and lay inside.

The bed was filled with his robust masculine scent.

"Mort Thorne, I've finished bathing. You can go take your shower now."

Mort Thorne watched her naturally climb into his bed, his large hand slipped into his pants pocket as he walked into the shower area.

With a "shush," he shut the glass sliding door, his hand rummaging in his pocket but finding no cigarettes. He closed his handsome eyes, flicking out his tongue to lick his dry lips.

Over the years, he's encountered many women, every type throwing themselves at him, and all kinds of hints; he's not naive enough to miss her teasing. She came to seduce him.

She wants to sleep with him.

This little vixen's enthusiasm was almost unbearable for him.

Mort Thorne finally felt his age, a 35-year-old man dating a lively young girlfriend, indeed... blessed in romance.

...

Mort Thorne finished a cold shower, then emerged wearing a black tank top and trousers. He grabbed another quilt from the cabinet and made a floor bed.

Dianna hadn't slept yet, supporting her head with a slender arm, gazing at him intently, "Mort Thorne, tonight might be your most gentlemanly moment in life."

Mort Thorne lay down and closed his eyes, "Dianna, go to sleep."

Dianna sat up, sitting at the bedside, stretched out her snow-white bare foot, and kicked off the blanket covering him.

He was only wearing a black tank top, revealing two strong arms, his shoulders broad and his chest muscular. Dianna stared at him directly, "Mort Thorne, you've chicken out."

Mort Thorne didn't open his eyes, curling his thin lips, "Sleeping with you, does that make me brave?"

"..." Dianna kicked him.

Mort Thorne just felt her small foot causing trouble, so he reached out and caught her delicate ankle.

But suddenly his vision darkened, a soft scent of young girl enveloped him as Dianna fell straight from the bed into his embrace.

With the quilt kicked away by her, she now nestled into his sturdy chest.

"Hehe," Dianna laughed while lying in his arms.

Mort Thorne gazed down at the delicate little face in his arms, "Doing it deliberately, huh?"

Dianna lifted her little head, looking at the nearby handsome face, smiling brightly, "Mort Thorne, you're so adorable not yielding to temptation this whole time, I really want to give you a purity award."

Mort Thorne's Adam's apple moved up and down, knowing she was teasing him.

Dianna touched his stubble with her soft fingertips, seeming particularly fond of this gesture.

Mort Thorne quickly pinned down her wandering hand and pulled the quilt over her, tucking her entirely inside, fearing she'd catch cold due to the chill of the night.

"Mort Thorne, you really don't want to?" Dianna asked him. Now he seemed so strange, truly sitting in this moment without yielding.

Mort Thorne held her in his arms, kissed her forehead, and softly murmured, "Dianna, let's get married."

He said, Dianna, let's get married.

Chapter 1163: He's Jealous!

Dianna shuddered slightly.

Mort Thorne looked down at the girl in his arms, his voice hoarse, "Dianna, I'm better now, so I want to plan our future properly. I'm no longer content with just one night's pleasure. It's not fair to you, of course. I want to sleep with you, but I also want to do it legally after we're married. I want to go back soon and apply for marriage. With your mother, I will do my best to gain her acceptance. In short, marry me, and I won't let you suffer any grievances."

It was the first time Dianna heard him say such things. It turned out he had long been considering marriage.

He had thought about everything thoroughly, making sure she wouldn't suffer any grievances.

No wonder tonight he wasn't as eager. It wasn't that he didn't want to, but he wanted to elevate their relationship further. Without marriage, he felt embarrassed to take advantage of her; this was all his tenderness towards her.

Dianna rested her head on his chest, listening to the "thump thump" of his strong and powerful heartbeat, which gave her a sense of security.

She thought that when they returned together, she would tell him about her illness.

With Serena and him by her side, any difficulties could be overcome.

"Mort, you said it, you must propose to me then." Dianna said coyly, her voice soft and tender, sounding like the 21-year-old girl she was.

Mort couldn't help but smile as he saw her expression that seemed to say "if you propose properly, I'll agree to marry you," "Okay."

Dianna raised her head and kissed his thin lips.

Mort wanted to push her away. He had already used all his self-control to refuse her tonight. If she kept teasing him, he feared he wouldn't be able to control himself anymore.

Just then, Dianna's small hands wrapped around his neck, her breath as sweet as orchids, "Mort, I want you."

Mort paused for a moment, and a few seconds later, he immediately turned over and pressed her beneath him.

"Old cow eats young grass," Mort once again experienced the energy and passion of a young girl.

...

In the morning, Dianna dragged her almost collapsing body back to her room. She stood under the shower in the bathroom, took a hot shower.

Her slender arms hugged herself, letting the comfortable water temperature cascade down from her head, two blushes emerging on her pink little face.

Now she was like a banana tree in the rain, delicately beautiful with a stunning charm.

Meanwhile, Mort turned over, stretching his strong arm to encircle the soft body beside him, wanting to hold her and sleep a little longer.

But the bed beside him was empty; she was gone.

Mort slowly opened his eyes, the haze clearing in a few seconds; Dianna had already left.

He immediately sat up from the bed, the dark blue quilt sliding to his muscular waist and abdomen, ambiguous scratch marks visible on his bronze skin.

Lifting the quilt, his long index finger hooked the bullet cover and jeans carelessly thrown on the floor, pulling them on.

Just then, there was a "knock knock" at the door, and Charles Bishop pushed it open, "Mort, you awake?"

Mort stood at the bed, tall and long-legged, dressing with his back to him.

The dazzling morning light outside the window streamed through the glass door, coating the man's thick shoulders with a golden glow. He was putting on a black shirt, the robust shoulder line and the strong scapular line behind him forming a sexy valley. There were a few scratches on his back as well.

Charles quickly looked away, glancing at the blood test report in his hand, "Mort, the toxins in your body have almost disappeared. We should go back. We've received messages from above that although the entire criminal network in Starfall City has been uprooted, the second-in-command, Scorpio, has risen quickly and committed crimes in that area of Zanthos. Scorpio is the godson of the leader; he will likely contact you soon. So, Mort, you can't resume your identity yet. You are still Cain Shaw."

Mort had anticipated this; it was almost impossible to completely eradicate the entire network. There were bound to be stragglers. He originally planned to marry Dianna as soon as he returned, but it seemed the marriage plan had to be postponed; he had a new mission.

Mort nodded, "Okay."

...

Mort came to find Dianna, arriving at her room door, raising his hand to knock.

But then the door automatically opened a crack, and through it, he saw a strange boy in Dianna's room.

"Dianna, what a coincidence! We came here to travel, and we didn't expect to run into you."

"Are you going back? Don't go back; join us on our journey. We'll see the lavender, the cherry blossoms, go skiing, do all the romantic things."

This was Dianna's senior from university, who coincidentally also came here to travel and was now enthusiastically inviting her to join them.

Mort pursed his thin lips, seeing the eager glow of admiration in the boy's eyes; it was easy to tell the senior liked Dianna.

Dianna, being the ice beauty of Rainbow Lake, attracted too many admirers among the boys.

Mort felt a bit displeased, not expecting Dianna to be entangled by other boys as soon as she got off his bed. His woman being coveted by other men was an utterly unpleasant feeling.

"Dianna, the world is vast, we should see more while we're young, really take in the splendor of the world, do all the things you love, only then will we be happy." The senior continued to persuade.

Mort listened to these generous statements, looking at Dianna. She was indeed still young, unable to resist the temptations of the world at her age. How would she respond?

Dianna showed little expression as she politely distanced herself, "Senior, thank you, but I believe... we explore the world to find the most beautiful scenery in our eyes. I have already found the most beautiful scenery, so I've stopped. You continue on your journey, I won't join."

Dianna refused.

The senior was disappointed, "Dianna, rest well, I'll go out first."

"Okay."

The senior left.

...

With the guest gone, Dianna turned around, wanting to return to her soft big bed.

But just then came a creak, and the door opened again.

"Senior, why are you..."

Dianna's voice halted because it wasn't the senior who came in, but Mort.

Mort, tall and long-legged, walked in and closed the door.

Seeing her surprised look, Mort curled his lips into a half-smile, "What, not your senior, you disappointed?"

Dianna knew he was jealous; she playfully blinked, "What if I say I am disappointed?"

Mort stepped forward with long strides, towering over her slightly due to their height difference. With a stern face, he threatened, "You dare!"

Chapter 1164: I'll Miss You, Every Day.

Dianna smiled immediately, reaching out her small hand to stroke his handsome cheek. Just like yesterday, her soft fingertips gently brushed the stubble on his face.

She really liked this face of his.

She really liked him as a person too.

How could she ever fall for someone else?

Dianna's bright eyes were watery, and her soft voice held a hint of playful reproach, "I was teasing you, dummy!"

Mort Thorne grabbed her small hand, holding it tightly in his palm, "Dianna, liking someone is a lifelong matter. I won't allow you to fall for someone else, or I won't let you go. Of course, I'll take down your senior first!"

Your senior?

Since he came in, he hadn't stopped mentioning this "senior". Dianna laughed, "Officer Thorne, you're quite the jealous one!"

Mort's eyes darkened, and he pulled her into his arms with an insistent tug.

Hiss.

At that moment, Dianna let out a pained whimper, her brows knitting together.

Mort's expression changed, and his deep, cold eyes were filled with sympathy, heartache, and concern. His strong arms wrapped securely around her slender waist, as he asked in a hoarse voice, "What's wrong?"

He dared to ask what's wrong?

Dianna waved a small fist and gave him a solid thump, "What do you think?"

Mort raised an eyebrow in understanding, quickly bent down, and lifted the girl in his arms, placing her on the bed, "This is the consequence of you teasing me."

Dianna watched him with a smile, not saying a word.

Standing outside the door before, Mort had been furious, but now looking at her smiling eyes, his anger was replaced by a tender affection, filling his entire robust chest.

Perhaps if she ever cheated on him in the future, a bit of her coquetry would soften him, preventing him from ever wanting to lay a hand on her.

Placing her by the bed, Mort knelt on one knee, holding her delicate, jade-like foot in his rough palm.

She didn't come down wearing shoes, even though the place was laid with fine wool carpets.

He stretched out his large hand to dust off the dirt from her sole.

Dianna watched him, this six-foot-three man stooping before her, holding her small foot, and she found herself liking him more and more.

More and more reluctant to let him go.

At that moment, Mort leaned down and placed a kiss on her snowy little foot.

"Ah," Dianna let out a soft exclamation, her pale toes curling in shy fear, and she quickly kicked out, swiftly retracting her foot.

How could he...kiss her foot?

So embarrassing.

Dianna's face flushed red, as red as if blood could drip, and she quickly crawled to the corner of the bed.

Watching her crawl on the bed, Mort stood up, his dark eyes already alight with twin flames.

He moved, wanting to get on the bed too.

But at that moment, the sound of knocking came from the door, followed by the voice of a maid, "Miss Hollis, your medicine is here."

Someone was coming, and Mort's eyes quickly flashed with a sharp vigilance; he couldn't show himself.

"Mort, you should hide," Dianna said aloud.

Mort retreated behind the bed curtains.

At that moment, the door opened, and the maid entered with a bowl of medicine, "Miss Hollis, here is the contraceptive medicine you asked for."

"Alright, give it to me, thank you."

The maid left.

Dianna lowered her eyes, sipping the contraceptive medicine in small mouthfuls.

But the herbal medicine was too bitter, and after taking a few sips, Dianna's brows knitted.

Then, a low voice resonated beside her ear, "You're taking contraceptive medicine?"

Dianna looked up, meeting the dark eyes of the man, his gaze coldly informed, fixed tightly on her and the bowl of contraceptive medicine in her hand.

Was he unhappy?

Dianna looked at him, her voice soft as she asked, "Do you want a child?"

Mort's hand, buried in his trouser pocket, suddenly clenched. How should he answer?

He did.

He wanted a child.

He wasn't young anymore and wanted a child of his own.

But Mort looked at her face, so full and vibrant like a flower. She was still so young, only 21; how could she have a child?

Moreover, they were not married yet, and he didn't want her to be unmarried and pregnant.

Even with all these reasons, seeing her drink contraceptive medicine still made him uncomfortable.

He shook his head, "I don't want one."

"Oh." Dianna lowered her head and drank the herbal medicine in the bowl, "I was in a risky period yesterday. To be safe, I had Serena brew me a bowl of contraceptive medicine."

Her body wasn't fit for pregnancy right now, and she needed to take contraceptive medicine.

Saying this, Dianna came to his side, "Take note; this is contraceptive medicine. I am the woman taking it for you!"

She was referring to Kate Lee.

Mort reached out and pulled her into his embrace again, "Dianna, let's go back home tomorrow."

"Okay," Dianna agreed willingly; she wanted to tell him about her health condition too.

But before she could open her mouth, Mort continued, "Dianna, I'm sorry, but our wedding plans will have to be delayed. I have a new mission. I'm going away again."

Another new mission?

Dianna had wanted to tell him about her health, but now she didn't want to say anything at all. Every mission was fraught with danger, and she couldn't have him distracted because of her.

His body and soul belonged to his beliefs.

"Can I ask, is this mission dangerous?"

"I can't reveal my identity yet. I'm still Cain Shaw. Following normal procedures, once I return, I'll be imprisoned. So, Dianna, I won't be able to be with you for a while."

Is that so...

Dianna's eyelashes fluttered briefly, then she nodded, "It's okay, I don't need you to accompany me."

Mort looked at her, at her fragile shoulders, thinking about how it had been this slender body that drove him wild last night.

Now, with her head bowed, her innocence tugged at his heartstrings, making him want to cherish her even more.

"Don't you want me to avoid prison, to stay with you?" he asked again.

Keeping her head down, Dianna looked at her skirt, "No, go and carry out your mission, don't worry about me. Once I get back, I'll return to school. It's graduation season, and I'll be busy with my thesis and everything else. I might not even have the time to think about you."

Listening to her words, Mort raised a handsome eyebrow, the sternness in his eyes melting into a tender warmth, "But I will think of you every day, every hour, every minute."

Dianna reached out with her small hands and hugged him, "Then...can I visit you? Isn't it possible to visit in prison?"

Mort didn't want her to come. He was waiting for Scorpion, and if Scorpion discovered her existence, it would endanger her.

"Not...right now." He refused ruthlessly.

In his arms, Dianna closed her eyes. She sighed and smiled softly, "Alright then, I will dream of you."

Chapter 1165: Do You Still Love Him?

Mort Thorne and Dianna Hollis went back, Mort went to prison, and Dianna first returned home to see Jodie Young.

The villa's gate opened, and the maid trembled when she saw Dianna, "Miss? Miss, you're back? This... this is wonderful, come in quickly!"

Dianna walked inside, glanced at the living room, but didn't see Jodie Young, "Where's my mom?"

"Miss, the madam is at home. I'll call her now. Madam, madam, come look, Miss is back!" the maid called out happily.

Dianna looked upstairs, "Is my mom upstairs?"

"Yes, Miss, you don't know, the madam got sick while you were away and needs infusion every day."

"What, my mom is sick, what illness?"

"Miss, the day you ran away from the wedding, the whole City of Crestfall was abuzz, and the madam fainted on the spot. Later you disappeared without a word, the madam was both angry and anxious, angry that you ran away, but worried for your safety. She sent many people to trace your whereabouts, secretly wiping tears every night, scared you might face danger or be bullied outside. She lost a lot of weight, relying only on some nutritional infusions daily."

Dianna's heart suddenly ached, she knew Jodie Young loved her, especially after taking her home three years ago, showering all her love on her.

Actually, thinking from another angle, Jodie Young had an unspeakable past marriage, afraid, really afraid, so when her beloved daughter chose the same path, she would be intensely emotional and opposed.

"Miss, listen to me, when the madam comes down later, be softer in your attitude. No parent can win over their child in this world, you're still young now, love is everything to you, but once you're married and have children, you'll deeply understand the challenges of being a mother. We can't abandon our mothers for a man, can we?"

Dianna lowered her lashes, nodding, "I understand."

At this moment, hurried footsteps sounded upstairs, Jodie Young hurried down, "Dianna! Dianna, you finally came back!"

Jodie Young was in pajamas, unmade-up, shedding the incisive intensity of a female CEO, looking pale, having lost a lot of weight recently, appearing extremely sickly and haggard.

Jodie Young rushed over, holding Dianna to see her carefully, "Dianna, have you been well lately? You really scared mom. You're such a disobedient child, you shouldn't have run away from home under any circumstances."

Jodie Young choked with emotion, crying tears of joy.

Dianna reached out, gently hugging Jodie Young, "Mom, I'm fine. I'm sorry for worrying you."

Jodie Young wiped her tears, hardening her resolve, she pushed Dianna away with a firm hand, "Don't play this game, you think I'll forgive you like this? Tell me, what do you and Cain Shaw plan to do?"

Jodie Young sat on the sofa, face cold, looking like she intended to settle scores afterwards.

"Mom, I won't marry Yuric Thatcher. I want to marry Cain Shaw in this life," Dianna said honestly.

Jodie Young immediately got angry, "You shouldn't be saying this to me, where is Cain Shaw? Why didn't he come with you?"

"He... he has something to deal with..."

Hearing Cain Shaw hasn't come, Jodie Young's face turned ashen, "What could be more important than your issue? You ran away from marriage for him, now it's gossip all over the City of Crestfall, what about your reputation as a young woman? You abandoned everything for him, even if he has urgent matters, he should come with you, instead of leaving you to face this alone!"

"Dianna, how can I agree to anything between you and him? I see no sincerity from Cain Shaw, nor any promises. He just lets you be alone now, and you're not even married yet. When you get married, when you have a baby, when you're sick or hospitalized, others have family reunions, will he be absent from every important moment in your life? When time erodes the passion of a young love, will you start yearning for the most ordinary happiness and the longest companionship? Dianna, you're too young now, I'm your mother, I really can't watch you walk down a path of no return with open eyes. I'm afraid you'll regret it someday!"

Dianna's clear eyes rested quietly on Jodie Young, she asked softly, "Mom, do you still love Dad?"

What?

Jodie Young stiffened.

"I saw it, your drawer still locks your picture with Dad."

Jodie Young's heart suddenly ached, she interrupted Dianna coldly, "Don't mention him, I don't want to talk about that person ever again in this life!"

"Mom, I know, you still love Dad deeply inside."

"You always said Dad brought you only despair and loneliness, then why, after all these years since your divorce, are you still alone? You're most afraid of solitude, yet you hold it the most. Perhaps then, you thought leaving Dad would bring you to meet someone better, but after all these years, you slowly realized, you indeed met better ones, but you couldn't love anyone again. Actually, the ones we love in our youth are for a lifetime, he might not be the best, but irreplaceable."

"Mom, I grew up by Dad's side, so I'm different from you. Now, neither are you me, how do you know whether I can finish the path you didn't complete back then? Didn't you ever wonder what you'd see if back then you didn't flee halfway, but finished that path? Now I can take your place to see."

As Dianna said these words, the entire villa plunged into silence, not a sound could be heard.

Jodie Young's eyes reddened, tears brimmed over and fell heavily. She understood now, her daughter truly grew up, not clueless but actually comprehending everything.

Over the years she's remained alone, not due to lack of choices, rather too many choices. Each night when all is quiet, she often thinks she was wrong from the start. If only she'd never met Jason Hollis.

Yet, often she wonders if... if she didn't leave halfway, and instead, stayed strong, what would she see at the end of the road?

She always feared her daughter would walk her old path, but her daughter was right, plainly... her path was only half-trodden.

She initially believed leaving him would bring her happiness, yet realized later, she never felt happy again.

All her happiness remained locked in the drawer with that photograph, those old times were her entire happiness.

Jodie Young took out her phone, "I'll give you both a chance. Call Cain Shaw now, I want to see him immediately."

Chapter 1166: Him or Me—Make Your Choice

It was she who wanted Cain Shaw to appear in front of her immediately.

Looking at the phone on the coffee table, Dianna Hollis frowned slightly. Cain was currently on a mission, and he definitely couldn't make it in time. Moreover, she couldn't disclose anything about the mission to Jodie Young. The last time Jodie went to the island, she almost got Cain killed.

"Mom, Cain is busy right now and can't make it."

What?

Jodie Young's expression changed instantly. She had already agreed to give Cain a chance, and he still couldn't make it. Was this "son-in-law" putting on airs, or was he just not sincere?

"I don't care what Cain is doing now; I want him to come over immediately, or else we won't discuss anything about you and Cain."

"Mom..."

At this moment, there was a "ding dong," and the doorbell of the villa suddenly rang. A guest had arrived.

The maid went to open the door, and Yuric Thatcher had come!

Seeing this unexpected guest, Dianna's frowned even deeper. If it weren't for Yuric's manipulation behind the scenes, her mother wouldn't have been led so astray. Now that she just returned, Yuric rushed over—it was obvious he had been keeping an eye on her. Who knew what scheme he was plotting now?

"Dianna, you're finally back. I was so worried about you. How have you been?" Yuric came over with a face full of anxious concern, as if he wasn't at all resentful that Dianna's escaped wedding had made him the laughingstock here—truly portraying the image of a lovelorn man to perfection.

Dianna said nothing. At this, Jodie Young stood up, "Yuric, it's ultimately my daughter Dianna who wronged you. You shouldn't be so good to her anymore."

Jodie Young's dislike for Cain was partly due to Yuric. She and Yuric's mother were best friends, and she watched Yuric grow up. To her, he was bright, handsome, and an accomplished young man with good family background—perfect for her daughter. In comparison, Cain was older, had a dangerous job, and any mother choosing a son-in-law would pick Yuric.

Only Jodie Young didn't know that the Yuric before her was no longer the one in her eyes.

"Auntie, please don't say that. I always believe that if I just try a little harder and am a little better to Dianna, she will have a change of heart. I'm willing to wait for her." Yuric said sincerely.

Jodie Young held Yuric's hand, "Yuric, you really are a good child, but... but about Dianna and Cain..."

Yuric's expression shifted because he sensitively noticed that Jodie Young's tone was wavering, unlike before, when she was resolutely on his side.

"Auntie," Yuric quickly interrupted, "Do you know that Cain is already in prison?"

What?

Jodie Young was stunned.

"Auntie, Cain has already been sentenced to over ten years in prison. Do you really want Dianna to wait for him? Cain is thirty-five this year; when he gets out, he'll be fifty or sixty!" Yuric said.

Jodie Young was utterly devastated. She looked at Dianna, "Dianna, is this true?"

"Mom, let me explain..."

"I don't want to hear it! Dianna, I will never agree to you being with Cain. It's either me or Cain; you must choose one!" Jodie Young said coldly.

"Mom..."

At that moment, Jodie Young swayed twice, her face turning pale.

"Mom, what's wrong?" Dianna quickly supported Jodie Young.

Jodie Young closed her eyes and fainted.

"Mom! Mom! Call an ambulance!"

The whole villa was in chaos.

...

In the hospital.

Dianna looked at the doctor, "Doctor, how is my mom? Why did she suddenly faint?"

"Miss Hollis, President Young has mild depression and has been taking medication. Did you know about this?"

Depression?

Dianna didn't know because Jodie Young hadn't told her.

"Miss Hollis, President Young's recent emotional fluctuations have been too great, and she's been increasing her medication, which is very harmful to her health. She needs to rest and recuperate without any more stress, understand?" the doctor advised.

Dianna nodded, "I understand."

After the doctor left, Dianna wanted to enter the VIP ward, but the maid stopped her, "Miss, Madam said... she doesn't want to see you right now. Just tell her your decision when you've made up your mind. If you choose that man, then... then Madam will consider you no longer her daughter."

Dianna stood at the door of the ward, looking through the small glass window at Jodie Young inside. Jodie, dressed in hospital attire, looked pale and sickly, lying exhausted in bed.

Dianna felt a pang of sadness, and her fair eyes slowly turned red.

"Dianna." At this moment, Yuric came over, "Dianna, don't worry, I'll persuade Auntie. Auntie can't accept Cain; do you really want to give up your mother for him? Auntie is your only family in this world."

"Enough!" Dianna looked coldly at Yuric, "Yuric, are you done acting?"

Yuric stiffened, meeting Dianna's icy, sharp gaze. At that moment, she looked at him with an icy coldness, her eyes flashing with a piercing sharpness.

"Yuric, you might be able to fool my mom, but don't put on an act in front of me. It just makes me hate you even more! I will never be with you, so give up!" With that, Dianna left immediately.

Watching Dianna's departing figure, Yuric's hands clenched into fists at his sides, his face darkening with a sinister and terrifying gloom.

At this moment, his subordinate approached, "Young master, this Miss Hollis is truly ungrateful. Back then, her runaway wedding made you laughable throughout the City of Crestfall, and now she dares to act so arrogantly."

Yuric looked at Dianna. If he couldn't have it, then... he would ruin it!

"Send someone to Dianna's school and spread the word about Dianna and Cain. Cain is a married man. I want Dianna to be labeled as a homewrecker. Once the school hears it, the whole City of Crestfall will know. I want Dianna to be pointed at for the rest of her life, unable to lift her head!"

"Yes, young master!"

...

Dianna walked away, but after a few steps, her vision went black, and she fainted.

"Miss Hollis! Miss Hollis!"

Dianna had fainted. The poison of the cordyceps in her body was spreading rapidly. Serena Sterling had provided a series of treatments, but the results were not ideal, and the toxin's spread hadn't been controlled.

Dianna's levels kept rising, and she was rushed into the emergency operating room at night.

Serena and the medical team were constantly discussing solutions day and night, but there had been no breakthrough yet.

Leah Thorne brought soup, carrying a thermos cup into the ward. Dianna wasn't on the bed; she was standing by the window.

The girl was dressed in a blue and white striped hospital gown, which looked loose on her despite being the smallest size. She had lost a lot of weight in just a few days.

Chapter 1167: Let Her See Him Once

Dianna raised her head, gazing out at the world beyond the window. Her delicate face carried a pale hue. Her skin was so fair that one could faintly see the small blood vessels beneath. She looked up at the blue sky and white clouds with a devout posture, perhaps longing for someone.

Leah's heart suddenly ached; she already knew what had happened with Jodie. As a daughter, she understood the difficulties Dianna faced in this situation. Her brother, Mort, was not by her side.

After collecting herself, Leah raised her hand and knocked on the door, "Dianna, it's me."

Dianna's voice soon came from inside, "Leah, come in."

Leah pushed the door open and entered, "Dianna, I've made some chicken soup for you. Drink some while it's hot."

Dianna returned to her bed and gave a faint smile, "Leah, just leave it there for now. I'll drink it when I get hungry later."

These days, Dianna had been very obedient. She listened to Serena and followed her advice to take medicine, get injections, and eat, though her appetite was small.

Just then, the melodious chime of a phone sounded; Dianna received a call.

Dianna pressed the button to answer, and it was a teacher from the school, "Dianna, the school is in an uproar over your situation these days. Please come to school as soon as possible to explain the matter with that big shot from Starfall City!"

"Dianna, do you know what everyone is saying about you? It's said that this big shot from Starfall City is well into his forties. What is a young girl like you doing with him? And the worst part is, this big shot is already married. How could you interfere with someone else's family and be a homewrecker?"

"This matter has severely affected the school. The education bureau is putting pressure on us to sternly handle the situation and rectify the malicious behavior on campus. You're about to graduate. At this rate, forget about graduating; we may have to expel you." The teacher's agitated voice was clearly heard by Leah due to the quietness of the ward; Dianna was known as the first ice beauty of City of Crestfall and exceptionally outstanding in school. The principal and mentors all valued her and hoped she would stay, but who would have thought these rumors would spread so widely, leaving everyone disappointed in Dianna.

"I'm sorry, Teacher," Dianna said softly.

"It's too late for apologies now; you should think about how to salvage this situation." The teacher hung up directly.

The whole ward fell into a deathly silence and oppression. Leah stepped forward and held Dianna's cold hand, "Dianna, are you okay?"

Dianna gave a faint smile, "Leah, I'm fine. I'm going out for some air."

Dianna walked out.

Leah didn't feel comfortable leaving Dianna alone, so she followed her.

Just as she stepped into the corridor, Leah saw Dianna surrounded by people ahead, who pointed at her.

"Look, this is the renowned first ice beauty of City of Crestfall, the runaway bride from a while ago, Dianna."

"Have you heard? She got involved with a big shot from Starfall City. That big shot isn't just old enough to be her father; he's also married. She's become a homewrecker."

"Oh my, has she gone mad or blind? The Crown Prince of the Thatcher family is a great catch; many girls dream of marrying into their family as the young mistress. But she chose to be a mistress?"

"Who knows, nowadays girls have chaotic and playful private lives, with no sense of integrity. Maybe this big shot has some exceptional charms that enchant our ice beauty into a daze, confusing her wholly."...

Everyone looked at Dianna with judgmental eyes, pointing and whispering. Some unsavory types started having inappropriate thoughts, leering at her pretty face and graceful figure.

Leah immediately got furious and wanted to drive all these people away.

But before she could, Dianna left. Dianna's expression was calm and indifferent as if she hadn't taken their words to heart.

Dianna was about to turn, but she paused because she saw Jodie in front of her.

Jodie had obviously heard everything the people said; her worst fears had come true.

"Mom," Dianna quickly approached. Jodie hadn't let her in recently, and Dianna was very concerned about her mother's health, "Mom, how are you feeling?"

Jodie's face was pale. She glanced at Dianna's hospital outfit and frowned, "What's wrong with you? Why are you hospitalized too?"

"I... caught a cold..." she replied.

"Where's Cain? You're sick and hospitalized, he's not here. You're being pointed at and criticized, he's not around?"

"He..." she started.

"Oh, I forgot, he's in prison now and can't come. You sympathize with his situation, willing to bear everything alone, but the daughter I raised won't let others humiliate and trample on her. I know to care about you. Any relationship without mutual effort is extremely cheap!" Jodie sneered coldly and turned back into her room.

"Mom!"

With a "bang," Jodie directly shut the door, locking it; clearly, she didn't want to see Dianna.

Dianna faced a closed door, standing alone at the ward entrance. Her eyes turned red as she called out, "Mom..."

Sorry.

As a daughter, she truly was sorry.

She didn't know how much longer she had to live. Her father, after divorcing, never remarried. He dedicated his brief life to his beliefs. When he was alive, he said, Dianna, your mother has had a hard life. She's most afraid of loneliness. So in the future, you must stay by her side; she's the one who loves you most in this world, the best mom.

She felt deeply sorry, unable to fulfill her father's last wish.

Dianna lowered her head, large tears falling down like stones. The gossip outside didn't hurt her at all, but only those closest and dearest could strike her dead on.

...

Leah stood at a distance, watching Dianna cry in front of her mom's door. Her eyes were red.

At that moment, a large hand brushed the top of her head, and Leah looked up; Justin Xavier had arrived.

"What's the matter?" Justin asked gently.

Leah reached out, hugging Justin's waist and burying herself in his embrace, "Let Dianna see my brother."

Justin pursed his lips, "But... Dianna's current health condition doesn't allow her to be discharged, and your brother is still imprisoned. He has some important tasks..."

"Dianna hasn't gotten better staying in the hospital, and as for my brother, isn't Dianna his responsibility too?" Leah questioned.

Justin understood. He embraced Leah's shoulder, "Alright, I'll arrange it."

Leah nodded, "Dianna's mom is a good mother. Some people... once they miss the most important moments in your life, they're bound to miss out forever. How could my brother miss this moment?"

Chapter 1168: What, You Miss Me?

Justin Xavier quickly took care of the matter, and Leah Thorne came into the hospital room. She gently stroked Dianna Hollis's hair, "Dianna, do you want to see my brother?"

Dianna's long eyelashes quivered. It had been a long, long time since she last saw him.

Given her current condition, she didn't know if she could ever see him again.

Her life was gradually withering away in this cold hospital, waiting for the dawn in every night, loneliness and longing drowning her like a tide. Sometimes she wished that when she opened her eyes, he would already be beside her, giving her a big and strong hug, but he never came.

She knew, she knew he was on a mission, so even if she missed him, she could restrain herself, not daring to be willful, not daring to feel wronged.

"Leah, can I...?" Dianna asked uncertainly.

"Of course you can, Dianna. Let's go see my brother now!"

...

In the luxury car.

Dianna put down the small mirror in her hand, "Leah, I put on a bit of blush; does it look good?"

Her face was too pale, and she didn't want Mort Thorne to see her looking so sickly and haggard, so she applied a bit of blush.

She was about to see Mort.

Leah held Dianna's soft, cold little hand, "Dianna, you look beautiful like this!"

Dianna's eyes sparkled with a dazzling light, and her smile was very sweet.

Soon they arrived at the prison, and Dianna was waiting. At this moment, a series of strong and powerful footsteps echoed in her ears; Mort had arrived.

Dianna's heart skipped a beat, and through the glass, she quickly looked at the man.

Mort was wearing a black tank top and black trousers. It seemed he had become more muscular since she last saw him. His arms were bare, shoulders broad, muscles robust, waistline narrow, embodying male tension and masculine power.

He hadn't changed much, just had grown more stubble on his face. His dark eyes fell deeply and brightly through the glass onto her small face.

Their eyes met, and Dianna's pale eyes quickly turned red. It had been so long since she last saw him, she missed him so much.

Mort sat down across from her. She saw his excessively stern and masculine features; despite the stubble, he was still extraordinarily handsome.

She reached out with her small hand to pick up the phone, her eyes smiling warmly at him, "Mort, how have you been?"

Mort picked up the phone and heard the girl's soft and gentle voice coming through from the other end, saying, "Mort, how are you?"

When he was in the border region, he had told her she couldn't come, fearing she'd be exposed to danger. But yesterday, news came from Justin Xavier, saying he was going to arrange a meeting between him and Dianna. He admitted that at that moment, a tickle rose in his throat, and his heart stirred.

He, too, had not seen her for a long, long time.

Mort looked at the girl through the glass. Today she wore a fringe dress with a cinched waist, covered by an ivory cardigan. Her silky black hair fell gently, and her temple hair was tucked behind snow-white ears, exposing her cool and exquisite face.

Her skin still maintained that lustrous and delicate white sheen, inviting one to take a bite.

In just a few days without seeing her, she seemed to have grown more and become even more beautiful.

Mort lifted his sharp, spirited brows, curling his lips into a smile, "I'm very well, and you?"

How is she?

She's not well at all.

Dianna looked at him softly, not wanting to say she was good. There is always one person in the world who makes you drop all your strong disguises and show your vulnerable side, someone you want to depend on.

Seeing her silent, Mort frowned slightly, his deep voice somewhat stern, "Did someone bully you?"

Dianna said nothing.

If not for the glass barrier, Mort thought he would have reached out and pulled her onto his lap to kiss her. In prison, everything was fine, except for the absence of a woman.

She was looking so beautiful in front of him, her skin so fair, her whole being so soft.

Mort's eyes deepened, "What's wrong? Talk to me!"

Just those few words were full of authority, severe and oppressive.

Dianna felt a warmth in her heart; she just liked his domineering nature.

Right now, she didn't want to do anything, just wanted to lean into his embrace, where only his presence and his arms gave her a sense of security.

"What would you do if someone bullied me?" she asked.

Mort didn't even think, "I'd kill him."

"You're boasting; you can't even get out now."

Mort's tightly furrowed eyebrows suddenly relaxed, curving his thin lips into a devilishly charming arc, "What, you miss me?"

No one bullied her; she just missed him, which was why she looked so pitiful.

Yes, she missed him.

She missed him so much.

If only he could be with her in the hospital, that would be wonderful.

Actually, she didn't want treatment, didn't want to take medicine, didn't want to eat. Every night she couldn't sleep, but she couldn't tell anyone.

Couldn't let Leah feel sad, nor let Serena be disappointed.

If he were there, he would surely coax her.

"Yes, Mort, I miss you. Do you miss me?"

Can he not miss her?

He was going crazy, missing her.

Mort's sharp gaze swept around, seeing other couples visiting each other, everyone casting glances their way.

A 35-year-old man and a 21-year-old girl, incessantly asking if he misses her.

Their gazes filled with doubt.

Mort was a straightforward guy, rarely sweet-talking, but caught under everyone's watchful eyes, his charming face got a bit tense.

"Mort, say you miss me; I want to hear it," Dianna said.

Mort's rough and rugged profile immediately darkened, reprimanding displeased, "Dianna, stop it."

Oh.

So be it then.

"Take care inside; I won't bother you again. I'm leaving." With that, Dianna abruptly hung up the phone and turned to leave.

She left?

She actually just left like that?

Her delicate figure quickly vanished from sight, and Mort's rough big hand still held the phone, listening to the "beep beep" busy signal from the other end, his heart suddenly felt hollow, painfully empty.

What's wrong with her?

...

Mort returned to his cell. His neighbor had also just finished with visiting hours and approached Mort for a chat, "Buddy, who was that little girl who came for you, your girlfriend?"

Mort lazily lay on the wooden bed, resting his strong arms behind his head, his muscular long legs crossed and swinging idly.

"My woman," he answered curtly.

"Wow, buddy, that girl may be 18, and you snagged a young and fresh belle like her?" the neighbor's admiration and envy were like a surging river.

Mort raised his sharp, spirited brows, not responding.

"But buddy, I think you just made that girl angry; she might not bother with you anymore."

Not bother with him?

Mort's thin lips twitched, asserting, "She won't."

She wouldn't ignore him.

Chapter 1169: Come Here!

"Buddy, why are you so confident? That little girl just left without looking back. Be careful she doesn't run off with another man."

Hearing this, Mort Thorne's handsome brows furrowed deeply as he thought of Yuric Thatcher waiting outside.

Not only Yuric, but also Yuric No. 1, Yuric No. 2, Yuric No. 3... There were plenty of men eyeing her.

She's only 21, a young girl in full bloom, with a pack of wolves lined up outside eyeing her hungrily.

Thinking of this, Mort felt a bit vexed, a bit unhappy.

"Buddy, I see that you're pretty cold to that little girl. That's your mistake. Nowadays, girls need sweet talk and money to indulge them. Guys like us who are in prison, with women waiting outside, have it so tough. Women's hearts are very sensitive, they need a shoulder to rely on, someone to shield them from storms. Like that little girl, when she asks if you miss her, just say 'yes.' If you don't say it, how will she know you miss her?"

The neighbor next door kept rambling on, while Mort's head was full of Dianna's image, always feeling she was acting strange.

Mort suddenly sat up and shouted, "Open the door, I need to make a call!"

...

Mort stood in front of the phone, one hand in his pocket, and picked up the receiver with the other. He didn't dial right away, but looked at a staff member. "You, yes you, let me ask you, how do you tell your wife you miss her?"

The named staff member looked bewildered. Was Mort talking to him?

The man had one hand in his pocket, his black tank top clung to his tall, strong build, outlining his muscles, evenly distributed around the eight-pack abs on his waist, sexy enough to make people drool.

At this moment, the man squinted his dark eyes at him, his tone lofty and commanding.

The staff member was fuming inside, this was outrageous—who exactly was locked up here?

"You, you..." The staff member stammered as soon as he started to speak.

Mort's brow furrowed, impatiently, "What are you 'you'-ing for? Tongue-tied?"

"..."

The staff member admitted to feeling a bit scared. This man was filled with strong power, his presence commanding. "I... I don't have a wife yet."

"..."

Mort pouted, giving the staff member a glare—what a waste of time.

However, women are just trouble.

Mort had seen many women, but wasn't good at relationships, a blank area in his life.

Today felt unsettled, he still had some time to serve in prison, afraid she wouldn't wait for him.

Mort lifted his foot and kicked the staff member's desk, "Dianna, damn it, I like you!"

In a domineering CEO's tone.

But feeling it was off, Mort removed his large hand from his pocket, showing a soft smile, "Dianna, I love you."

In a deeply affectionate tone.

Still wasn't quite right.

Mort thought for a moment, made a mock gesture of kneeling on one knee, "Dianna, give yourself to me, I'll take good care of you and love you in the future."

Damn, that's way too humble!

Mort felt even more annoyed.

He then sharply directed his gaze at the staff member, who stood stunned watching his split-personality performance, mouth agape with shock wide enough to fit an egg.

Shit!

Mort cursed inwardly, feeling embarrassed enough.

He picked up the phone, dialing that familiar number engraved in his bones.

...

In the hospital's VIP ward.

It's nighttime, deep and silent. The ward is completely quiet, not even the lights are on. A small figure curls up on the bed, Dianna lies sideways under the quilt, eyes open looking at the window.

From her position she could see the stars in the sky, twinkling, lifting her little head she watches, feeling the passage of time dragging.

Soon the phone ring sounded abruptly—it was a call.

The phone was on the bedside cabinet, its screen lit up, automatically displaying the call from XX prison.

Mort Thorne.

Mort was calling.

She reached out her small hand to grab the phone, watching the caller display jumping on the screen, but didn't answer immediately.

In prison.

Mort listened expressionlessly as the mechanical female voice on the other end of the line said, "Sorry, the number you dialed can't be reached, please try again later."

His dark eyes suddenly turned sharp. The little thing dared not answer his call.

He continued to call.

That side still didn't answer.

He kept calling.

The staff member glanced at the time, half an hour had passed, Mort just stood there making calls, probably hitting hundreds.

"Mort, time's up, others are waiting to use the phone too," the staff reminded him.

At that moment, the mechanical voice had changed to, "Sorry, the number you dialed is powered off."

He had drained her phone completely.

Mort was also annoyed, she used to never act this way toward him, now she was getting bolder.

With a "click," he hung up directly and turned back to his cell.

...

Mort lay back in his bed, the neighbor next door noticed his displeased expression and quickly said, "Buddy, the little girl didn't answer your call, right? See, you scared her away. Love requires mutual effort and maintenance. Maybe that little girl is out dating another guy, watching a movie, shopping for clothes..."

Mort's rough big hand felt around on the bed, grabbed a book, and threw it at the neighbor's face. "Damn, can you shut up?"

Neighbor, "..."

With peace restored at his ears, Mort's mind was full of Dianna's little face, she refused to answer his call.

Does she not like him anymore?

Is she going to leave him?

She used to never be able to bear treating him like this.

Mort sat up again, loudly shouting, "Open the door, I need to make a call."

Mort made a call, speaking in a lowered voice, "Hey, find a reason to get me out... missing a woman, missing terribly..."

...

Early the next morning, at the hospital.

Leah Thorne had cooked some millet porridge and brought it over, Dianna was leaning at the bedhead drinking it obediently.

She wasn't very hungry, only had a few spoonfuls and couldn't eat any more.

At that moment, "ding," she received a text message.

Her slender lashes trembled slightly, taking the phone and opening the message.

XX villa, come over.

Just a few simple words, making Dianna's heart skip a beat.

She carefully read the words a few more times, verifying that Mort invited her to the villa.

Where... where is he now?

How is he inviting her to the villa?

Dianna suddenly thought of a possibility, this idea sprouting and growing wildly in her heart. She looked up at Leah Thorne, "Leah, I'm going out for a bit."

After speaking, Dianna took her coat and immediately left.

"Hey, Dianna, where are you going..." Leah hadn't finished speaking before Dianna's figure had disappeared.

Chapter 1170: I Missed You So Much It Made Me Cry

Dianna Hollis took a taxi to the mansion Mort Thorne had specified, and the maid opened the mansion's door, "Hello, Miss Hollis."

Dianna Hollis glanced at the mansion but didn't see the person she wanted to meet, "Has Cain Shaw returned?"

"Mr. Shaw hasn't returned yet, but he'll be back soon. Miss Hollis, you can wait upstairs for a moment."

"Alright."

Dianna Hollis went upstairs and entered the master bedroom, now certain that Mort Thorne was really coming back—it wasn't a dream, but reality.

She was utterly unprepared.

"Can I take a bath?"

"Certainly, Miss Hollis. We'll prepare a rose petal bath for you immediately," the maid replied respectfully.

The maid quickly prepared the rose petal bath, and Dianna Hollis soaked for an hour, drying the water droplets off her delicate skin with a towel, then slipped into a cream-colored nightgown.

Standing before the mirror, she looked at her small oval face. After the bath, her pale cheeks had a healthy blush, youthful with plump, bouncy collagen and dewy skin, with large moist eyes embedded like gems, enough to captivate any man.

Just then, a voice was heard outside the door, "Mr. Shaw, you're back?"

Mort Thorne returned?

Mort Thorne returned!

He had texted her, yet she wasn't sure because he had been in prison; but now she was certain—he really returned.

Dianna Hollis opened the room door and looked downwards; a tall, sturdy figure stood by the mansion's door.

He was so tall, like a guardian deity, with the dim light at the entryway casting a captivating halo over his broad shoulders.

Dianna Hollis glanced at him and quickly turned back to her room, picked out a long knitted cardigan to wear, and hurriedly headed downstairs.

Upon hearing footsteps, Mort Thorne, standing in the entryway, looked up. A small, youthful silhouette in soft yellow came running down the vintage-carved stairs.

With his hands in his pockets, Mort Thorne's dark eyes carefully examined her from top to bottom—a soft yellow knit cardigan, seemingly wrapped over a cream-colored dress, with the hem peeking out slightly under the cardigan's edge, revealing two slim, fair legs at the bottom, and pink slippers on her feet. At twenty-one, her vibrant youth was mesmerizing.

Mort Thorne lifted a well-shaped brow and subtly rubbed his large palms clasped in his pockets.

He watched her as she ran all the way down, never tiring of the sight.

A maid had crouched down to change Mort Thorne's shoes. The maid was young and attractive, with a great figure clad in an apron dress that fit snugly at the waist, with a wide neckline showing her ample bosom, forming a deep cleavage.

Dianna Hollis noticed this maid's ample bosom as she sprinted over and said, "You can leave now, I'll do it."

The maid was startled, and immediately looked up at the man standing beside her, only to find that Mort Thorne wasn't even looking at her; his gaze was fixed on Dianna Hollis.

"Yes, Miss Hollis." The maid hesitantly stepped aside.

Dianna Hollis walked over, crouched her slender body down, and reached her small hands out to change Mort Thorne's shoes.

Mort Thorne lowered his handsome eyelids to watch her; she bowed her head to change his shoes, looking ever so gentle and tender, almost like a newborn kitten nestled at his feet.

With the slippers changed, he nudged her shin gently with the tip of his shoe.

As she crouched down, her slender legs were neatly together, very prim and proper, but it made him itch.

He nudged her with the tip of his shoe.

Dianna Hollis lifted her head and looked at him with big black-and-white eyes, while he also stared at her, a touch of mischief in his gaze.

He was teasing her.

Like teasing his little cat.

Dianna Hollis got up to leave.

But as soon as she stepped forward, a rough large hand reached out and grabbed her slender alabaster wrist forcibly, pulling her back.

Dianna Hollis's delicate body fell into his robust chest.

Her head hurt; his chest was like steel, cold and aching, and she collided with him so hard that tears welled up.

"What are you doing?" she reached out to push him.

At that moment, his long fingers pinched her delicate chin, forcing her to look up, and a teasing, low laughter sounded from above, "What am I doing, didn't you miss me? I've come back, where do you think you're going? Let me take a good look."

He playfully examined her small face, this man was all about teasing.

Even though Dianna Hollis was already his woman, and they had done intimate things together, she was still innocent; she hadn't dealt with many men besides him. His teasing made her blushing red, wanting to push him away.

Mort Thorne didn't budge, watching her squirm in his arms, inhaling her fragrance, a scent he never knew women could possess.

His powerful hand gripped her slender waist tightly, lifting her lightly and pinning her against the corner of the wall.

Her soft back pressed against the wall as Dianna Hollis tried to move, but then there was a "thud," as Mort Thorne's large palm rested on the wall beside her, trapping her completely.

"What's wrong, all shy like this?"

His low, slightly husky voice echoed in Dianna Hollis's ear, causing her legs to weaken.

Heart racing, she gazed at him, all watery and eager.

In this expansive mansion, he had her cornered in the wall's edge, this tiny space infused with his clean, masculine heat. This was the world she longed for.

"Why didn't you answer my call last night?" he asked softly.

Dianna Hollis shifted her lips, lying, "I fell asleep and didn't hear it."

"Bullshit!" he cursed at her.

Dianna Hollis shivered slightly, "Mort Thorne, don't use foul language!"

Mort Thorne squeezed her soft waist with his rough hand, it was so supple it seemed it could snap with a gentle bend, he pinched it a couple more times.

Dianna Hollis squirmed, "Mort Thorne, it tickles."

Mort Thorne's eyes darkened, "I know you're ticklish."

"..."

This rogue!

"You won't behave, making me rush over to accompany you, aren't you ticklish?" He teased her flushed face.

He was still wearing the prison uniform, though layered with a gray shirt over the black undershirt, untucked from the pants, appearing tall and strong. Women would like this.

Dianna Hollis slowly extended her small arms and hugged his robust waist, her head hanging low, "Mort Thorne, I missed you so much."

Her height reached just below his chest; speaking with her head down, she sounded a bit pitiful and a bit coquettish. Mort Thorne squeezed his hand in his pocket, "You missed me but didn't take my call?"

"Even if I did, I wouldn't be able to see you, it'd just make me miss you more."

"Why do you miss me?"

"Lots of things, like you praising me, kissing me, holding me..."

"Enough! Not weaned yet?"

"..." Dianna Hollis nestled her face against his chest, listening to the strong, steady heartbeats from beneath, thumping powerfully. She softly whispered, "Mort Thorne, I missed you so much, I almost cried..."