

## **Substitute B 1181**

### Chapter 1181: She's Getting Married

The ebony hair scattered messily, obscuring Dianna's expression, only her slightly intoxicated eyes stayed on the television, unwilling to move away.

Jodie Young already noticed Dianna's sudden drop in temperature; her little hand was as cold as ice.

"Dianna..." Jodie was very worried.

At this time, Dianna slowly retracted her gaze, her voice was soft, "Mom, I'm tired, going upstairs to sleep."

After speaking, Dianna went upstairs and returned to her room.

Jodie watched her daughter's figure disappear from her sight. She was very worried about Dianna, because upon hearing the news of Cain Shaw's death, Dianna's reaction was too calm.

Jodie actually hoped Dianna would have a big cry and throw a tantrum, but there was nothing, like a bird flying without a trace, as if Mort Thorne had never appeared in Dianna's life.

...

Jodie worried for a long time, but time proved she seemed to have overthought it, because Dianna was very obedient and well-behaved, as if Cain Shaw's death had not stirred any waves in her life.

Dianna graduated smoothly and stayed at her alma mater, her graduation thesis was outstanding and received applause, her reputation as a talented woman spread widely again.

Soon Dianna fell in love, this time her boyfriend was Raymond Alden, the Crown Prince of City of Crestfall's richest family. This Raymond was young and promising, having returned from studying abroad and taken over the Alden Group, his character was stable and gentle, treating Dianna like a treasured gem.

Jodie Young was extremely satisfied with Raymond, he almost fulfilled all her fantasies about a son-in-law.

Two months later, Dianna was going to marry Raymond, and both families were busy arranging the wedding.

That evening, Dianna brought Raymond home for dinner, Jodie Young personally cooked, and the three of them sat in the dining room to eat.

Raymond peeled a few shrimp, then placed the peeled shrimp into Dianna's bowl, and cut a piece of steak into small pieces to give to Dianna. He was very skilled in these actions, since they started dating, he had meticulously taken care of every aspect of Dianna's life.

Jodie nodded contentedly, having gone through Cain Shaw and Yuric Thatcher, now Raymond almost made up for any flaws and regrets.

"Raymond, your wedding with Dianna is coming soon, is everything for the wedding arranged? There are many things to consider when getting married," Jodie asked.

Raymond, nearing thirty years old, was gentle and elegant, he nodded, "Mom, rest assured, everything is arranged, you don't need to worry, I personally took care of it. By the way, after the wedding, Dianna and I will go on a honeymoon. During the honeymoon, it'll be Dianna's birthday, I'll send someone to bring mom along for a global trip as well."

This is just how Raymond is; meticulous in every detail, able to arrange everything well, he can take care of Dianna's life, accommodate her every little mood, he remembers all of Dianna's special dates, knows romance, creates surprises, simply the perfect lover.

"Alright, Raymond, leaving Dianna in your care, I'm very relieved." Jodie nodded with satisfaction.

...

After dinner, Dianna went out to see Raymond off, Raymond didn't drive, and the two walked leisurely on the street.

Raymond reached out and held Dianna's small hand in his palm, her hand was still so cold, cold as ice, with no warmth at all.

Raymond rubbed her little hand, hoping to pass his warmth to her, "Dianna, I really want to hold your hand like this and keep walking forward."

All this time, Dianna was no different, as cool and distant as before, she looked at Raymond, "Do you really not mind my past?"

Raymond raised an eyebrow, "The past? Are you referring to your past with Yuric Thatcher, or with... him?"

Dianna was silent.

Raymond put one hand in his pocket, raised an eyebrow, "I know all your past, but from now on, don't talk about your ex in front of your current partner, because I can get jealous too."

Raymond laughed, and Dianna curled her red lips in response.

At this moment, Dianna saw a street vendor selling ice cream and she stopped.

"Want to eat? I'll go get it for you." Raymond immediately let go of her hand and ran to buy it.

As he ran, he turned back, "Which flavor do you want?"

Dianna thought for a moment, "I'll have..."

"How about strawberry flavor, and one original, buy two." Raymond already made the decision and bought her two ice creams.

The dignified CEO of Alden Group actually lowered himself to run to a vendor to buy ice cream for his fiancée; any young girl seeing this would be touched.

Dianna stood there, staring blankly at Raymond's departing figure.

At this moment, noise came from her ear, "Little mutt, stop running, stole our stuff and still want to run, stop!"

A few men chased out, pursuing a little boy who accidentally crashed into Dianna.

The little boy looked up and immediately saw Dianna.

Dianna also recognized this little boy, he was Cain Shaw's illegitimate son, Yuri Shaw.

Cain Shaw was dead, Christina Shaw was imprisoned, once a prominent family in Starfall City, the Shaw family had fallen, and it was lamentable. Naturally, Yuri lost everything overnight, he was forcibly sent to a juvenile detention center, but he escaped. Without money or skills to survive, he began stealing, living a very poor life.

"It's you?" Yuri also recognized Dianna, he looked full of hatred, "You're the seductress who seduced my daddy?"

Dianna did not speak, only looked quietly and coldly at Yuri.

Yuri was very agitated, "It's all your fault, I ended up this way because of you. You made me lose everything!"

"My daddy died, and I heard you didn't shed a single tear for him, Dianna, you're so ruthless."

"I heard you're in a relationship, and about to get married, it's only been a few months, and you've forgotten my daddy, marrying someone else. We're all living poorly, but you have everything, a bright future, and a CEO fiancé by your side, Dianna, you're truly cold-blooded, I doubt you even have a heart!"

Saying so, Yuri wanted to rush over and bite Dianna, but unfortunately, several men behind him caught up and grabbed him.

"Little mutt, hurry up and follow us!" A few men dragged Yuri away.

Unconvinced, Yuri picked up a small stone and hurled it fiercely at Dianna's forehead.

Dianna didn't dodge, sudden pain came from her forehead, and fresh blood started to flow down.

"Dianna!" At this moment, Raymond came running over, seeing Dianna injured, he immediately threw away the ice cream in his hand and took out a handkerchief to forcefully cover her bleeding wound, "Dianna, does it hurt? Why didn't you dodge earlier, you could have avoided it!"

Chapter 1182: I Came to Find You

Dianna Hollis lowered her head, saying nothing.

Raymond Alden looked at the girl, the bright red blood dripping down, making her oval face look deathly pale. He suddenly realized his tone had been too harsh earlier, "Dianna, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to be so stern with you, I was just too anxious..."

Dianna gently shook her head, "I'm fine."

"Really fine?"

"I won't see you out, I'm a bit tired, I'm heading back first." Dianna turned around and left.

Raymond Alden stood there for a long time, watching as Dianna's silhouette disappeared.

...

In the middle of the night, Jodie Young suddenly woke up, feeling very thirsty, so she got out of bed to get some water.

When she passed by Dianna Hollis's room, she noticed the light was still on, even though it was two or three in the morning. Hadn't Dianna gone to sleep?

Jodie Young reached out and pushed open the door.

The room was silent, lit by a dim, yellow light. Dianna was leaning lightly on the balcony, arms wrapped around herself, lost in thought.

"Dianna," called Jodie Young.

Dianna didn't respond, as if she hadn't heard her.

Jodie Young felt a wave of anxiety because ever since Cain Shaw died, Dianna had been too quiet, and she worried that the silence would eventually lead to an eruption.

Jodie Young stepped closer and called again, "Dianna."

Dianna finally came back to her senses, turning her head to look at Jodie Young, "Oh, Mom, why are you here?"

"Dianna, what are you thinking about? It's already midnight, why aren't you sleeping?" Jodie Young asked, concerned and tense.

"Mom, I can't sleep, you go to bed, I'm fine."

The more Dianna insisted she was fine, the more uneasy Jodie Young felt, "Dianna, you and Raymond are getting married soon, are you nervous because you're about to become a bride?"

Dianna didn't answer this question, she slowly extended her small hand to hug Jodie Young, "Mom."

She softly called, with a girlish whimsy.

Jodie Young understood her daughter's character well; she was not someone who would easily act spoiled, "Dianna, what's wrong? If you have something on your mind, tell me, you're making me really uneasy like this."

"Your father is gone, you are Mommy's only family in this world, if something happens to you, Mommy doesn't want to live either."

Jodie Young's eyes reddened.

Dianna held Jodie Young tightly, still quiet and taciturn, her long lashes slowly drooping. After a long while, she finally said softly, "Mom, I've tried very hard already."

Mom, I've tried very hard already.

This sentence pained Jodie Young's heart, she raised her hand and stroked her daughter's hair, "Dianna, since... he died, you haven't shed a single tear. If you want to cry, then just cry out loud, Mom will be here with you."

Cry?

Dianna felt her eyes were dry and gritty, there was nothing inside, she didn't want to cry, she simply couldn't cry.

"Mom, have I never told you?"

"Told me what?"

"Mom, I love you. For so many years, just like Dad, I've always deeply loved you, no one could take your place. Even though you left us, the spot next to us has always been reserved for you, Mom, I love you."

...

Jodie Young had a nightmare. She dreamt of Dianna, in the dream Dianna held her tightly, saying to her, "Mom, I love you, but I'm sorry, I have to go."

She clutched onto Dianna, "Dianna, where are you going in this dark night? Where are you going alone, quickly tell Mommy."

Dianna just smiled, "Mom, I've tried very hard, but... it's still useless..."

Jodie Young's heart kept on sinking, immediately plunging into an abyss. She desperately clutched at Dianna, but Dianna still slipped away from her grasp.

"Dianna! Dianna!"

Sleeping Jodie Young shouted twice and abruptly awakened from her nightmare.

She sat on the bed, gasping for breath, her nightgown soaked in cold sweat, feeling thoroughly chilled.

Why did she have this dream?

Dianna?

Dianna!

Jodie Young quickly threw off the covers and got out of bed, walked out, and pushed open Dianna's bedroom door, "Dianna, Mommy..."

Jodie Young's voice stopped abruptly because the room was empty, there was no one there.

Dianna was gone.

An hour ago, Dianna had been on the balcony embracing her, telling her "Mom, I love you."

Now, Dianna was missing.

It was only a little after four in the morning, the outside was pitch dark. Jodie Young felt as if she had fallen into an abyss; she knew something bad had happened, something really bad.

She rushed back to her room, picked up her phone, and dialed Raymond Alden's number.

Her fingers kept trembling, she could barely hold the phone steadily.

Soon, the phone connected, and Raymond Alden's composed voice came through, "Hello, Auntie, did you call at such a late hour because something happened to Dianna?"

Indeed, apart from herself, even Raymond had sensed something was wrong.

"Raymond, Dianna... Dianna is missing!"

"What? Where did Dianna go?"

"I... I don't know either..."

"Auntie, don't panic, try to think, where would Dianna go this late at night?"

Jodie Young thought for a moment and suddenly remembered, "Did Dianna go to... to..."

...

In the graveyard.

The early morning graveyard was very dark, but there were street lamps on either side of the path, at this moment a slender figure approached from afar, she was wearing a black long dress, Dianna had arrived.

Very soon, Dianna stopped in her tracks, looking at the tombstone before her, the grave of Cain Shaw.

She had come to see him.

Since he died, she had never come here; this was her first time.

Dianna stood quietly in front of the tombstone, then she raised her small hand, her fingertip falling on the photo on the tombstone, it was the eyebrows and eyes familiar to her.

During these days she tried hard to forget him, she thought she succeeded, but now she finally understood it was just self-deception, his eyebrows and eyes, his breath... were all deeply etched in her mind, in her heart.

She thought, for the rest of her life, she could never forget this man.

She tried.

She really tried hard.

"Mort Thorne," Her voice was very light, like a wisp of smoke, as she softly murmured the name hidden away over time, her red lips curved, "I tried millions upon millions of times to forgive you, but... I couldn't, I hate you, I will never forgive you in this life."

Don't think a few lousy dollars can make amends, she wouldn't take a penny of his money.

She just... wanted to hate him.

The photo of Mort Thorne would never give her any response, Dianna slowly squatted down, just like between her and him, she was always the only one playing a solo act.

Dianna looked at the distant sky, dawn was approaching, "Mort Thorne, I said if one day you betrayed me, I wouldn't let you go, so... I came to find you."

On XX Year XX Month XX Day, Dianna committed suicide in front of Mort Thorne's grave.

By the time Jodie's mother and Raymond arrived there, Dianna was sitting alone by the grave, she had slashed her wrists, and blood was gushing from her right wrist, staining the area around the grave a brilliant red.

Chapter 1183: The Future First Crown Princess

Three years later.

Today, a light rain started outside, yet it couldn't prevent the commencement of a grand banquet. Half of the aristocracy had been invited, as today marks the tenth birthday of the Crawford family's youngest daughter, Willow Crawford.

The Crawford family organized an extravagant birthday party to celebrate this little princess, Willow.

The attendees, all from high society and powerful families, came with their families, eagerly anticipating the growth of Willow, this precious flower, and speculating who would have the honor of becoming her future consort.

Today, Willow is ten years old.

At this moment, a long limousine sped through the rainy night, with Willow sitting in the back seat. She wore a princess dress, her long black hair cascading down her shoulders, revealing her stunningly beautiful face. Although she was only ten, she already possessed breathtaking beauty and impeccable elegance.

Hayden Crawford personally drove to pick up his daughter, as he had been doting on her for years.

When they were almost home, Willow looked through the gleaming car window and saw a ragged boy kneeling on the dark street. In front of him was a piece of paper with the words "Sell Myself for Mother's Burial" written in large characters.

Willow rolled down the car window and looked at the boy, while the boy also lifted his head. His face was dirty, but his dark eyes shone like diamonds.

"Daddy," little Willow's soft voice called out, "that boy looks pitiful, please help him."

Hayden stopped the car, got out, and approached the boy.

He squatted down slightly, "Where is your mother? I'll make a call and have someone help you with it."

The boy looked up at Hayden Crawford. Due to long-term malnutrition, he was a bit thin, but facing Hayden, a man of authority, the boy was neither humble nor arrogant, "Thank you, sir. I wrote to sell myself for a burial. If you help bury my mother, you've bought me, and I'll repay you in the future."

Seeing the boy's clear logic and composed demeanor, Hayden raised the corners of his lips slightly, "Child, if you want to thank someone, thank my daughter. She's the one who wants to help you."

The boy looked up at little Willow.

Little Willow sat in the luxury car, not alighting. The sleek car window slowly rolled down, revealing half of her fair, tender face and a pair of bright, lively eyes.

"There are many poor people in this world. I'm not a philanthropist. If it weren't for my daughter, I might not have even seen you. Therefore, I don't need you to sell yourself. Even if you can't afford to bury your mother, buying you wouldn't help. However, I'll arrange for you to go to school. Cherish this opportunity and make yourself stronger, child." Hayden patted the boy's shoulder, then drove away.

The boy watched the direction in which the luxury car departed for a long time, when an old man next to him chuckled, "Child, they're gone, what are you still looking at? Could it be you fancy the little princess in the car?"

The boy said nothing.

"Let me tell you, the gentleman who just helped you is Hayden Crawford, the world's richest man. The one in the car is the Crawford family's cherished jewel, Willow Crawford. They live up in the clouds, and people like us at the bottom of society can hardly reach them. So you'd best give up that thought early. The little princess Willow is not someone we can aspire to."

.....

Hayden took little Willow home. Vivi Xavier came, and the two sisters entered the room to engage in endless whisperings.

Serena Sterling helped Hayden change his coat and said with a charming smile, "Mr. Crawford, why are you home ten minutes later than usual today? Could it be that some vixen on the road caught your eye and delayed your steps?"

Hayden hugged Serena in one swift motion, "What vixen, isn't the vixen right here? One is enough for me."

Years passed, but our Mr. Crawford still knew how to sweet-talk.

Serena raised her lips, "Don't stray off-topic, confess honestly!"

"Delayed a bit on the way, Willow saw a boy selling himself for his mother's burial and asked me to help. When the daughter speaks, I had to comply."

So that's what happened...

Serena sighed.

"What's wrong?" Hayden buried his handsome face in her long hair and asked, "Do you have something on your mind?"

"Willow is our little princess, but she also has her mission and responsibilities. Her life can never be as joyous and free as the lives of ordinary children, and both love and marriage are... beyond her control."

Hayden raised his head, "Is Willow's marriage already decided?"

Serena nodded, "We're opting for a royal alliance with Prince Rosen from the Rosen family. Prince Rosen is two years older than Willow, and the two are quite a match. Willow's path is set; in the future, she will be the world-renowned primary princess consort."

Feeling his wife's heartache, Hayden clutched her hand, intertwining their fingers, "Serena, I know you feel for our daughter. From the moment Willow was born, her life was framed within a set destiny. But, that's the path of our children. As the daughter of Hayden Crawford and you, Serena Sterling, she is destined not to be ordinary. I also believe that whether as the Princess of Alani or as the primary princess consort, Willow will walk her path well."

Serena looked up, seeing through the window the brilliantly lit banquet hall below, where Prince Rosen made his entrance.

Prince Rosen wore a black suit, adorned with a gentleman's bow tie at the collar, exuding the noble elegance of a prince in every gesture.

In terms of birth, demeanor, and breeding, Prince Rosen and Willow are indeed well-matched.

The so-called match made in heaven, nothing more than this.

Little Willow and little Vivi Xavier approached Prince Rosen, who handed over a beautifully wrapped gift, "Willow, happy birthday. This is the birthday present I prepared for you. Open it and see."

Little Willow opened the gift, inside was a Pearl Nightingale.

The top-quality Pearl Nightingale immediately shone brightly, its brilliant and radiant light instantly dazzling the entire hall.

Wow.

Everyone cast envious glances. What a grand gesture by Prince Rosen, a Pearl Nightingale is worth a fortune.

"Look, Prince Rosen has arrived, he's here with a Pearl Nightingale to propose to his future princess consort."

"Don't you know? Little Princess Willow and Prince Rosen's marriage alliance is already decided."

"My little princess Willow, my heart is broken."

Discussions buzzed all around.

Little Willow put away the Pearl Nightingale and looked at Prince Rosen. "Prince Rosen, thank you, I really like the gift you gave me."

Prince Rosen gazed at little Willow with admiration, "Willow, as long as you like it."

Little Willow handed the gift to the butler. Little Vivi Xavier whispered, "Sister Willow, although this Pearl Nightingale is nice, as the precious daughter of the Crawford family, you've seen all kinds of treasures. I don't feel like you like this Pearl Nightingale that much, so why do you pretend to like it a lot?"

Chapter 1184: Dianna Hollis Gave Birth to a Daughter

Little Willow smiled, "Vivi, precisely because I've seen many rare treasures since childhood, I know that the Pearl Nightingale just now was no ordinary item. I heard that recently the Rosen royal family acquired a thousand-year-old Pearl Nightingale. If I'm not mistaken, it's the one the prince of Rosen gifted me, showing the royal family and the prince's affection for me."

Little Vivi nodded, "But sister Willow, do you like Prince Rosen? Even if something is nice, if it's not given by a boy I like, I wouldn't accept it."

Little Willow gazed at Vivi's innocent face with some envy. The Xavier family's daughter has always been cherished, held dearly, and if anyone ever tries to force her to marry someone she doesn't love, her daddy and mommy, Justin Xavier and Leah Thorne, wouldn't agree at all.

But she's different.

She's the Princess of Alani!

Little Willow looked up at the night sky, filled with dazzling stars. It's so beautiful tonight. "Vivi, you don't understand yet. What I don't like, I cannot refuse; what I like, I cannot have. The word 'like' is a luxury for me; I cannot afford it."

Why?

Little Vivi truly didn't understand. She looked at her sister Willow. Willow was so beautiful, born to a noble family, a princess of the nation, truly the pride of heaven, her brilliance outshining the night sky.

In her memory, sister Willow had been receiving the most traditional education from a young age, mastering music, chess, poetry, painting—nothing was beyond her. She was more noble, elegant, wise, composed, and perfect.

But young Vivi already saw a faint melancholy on sister Willow's face. What could be troubling sister Willow?

Upstairs, Serena took in the scene below completely. She nodded, "Although Willow hasn't told us anything, I know our daughter understands everything."

"Everyone has their path to walk in life, and I will always be by your side. You have me." Hayden Crawford kissed her cheek.

Serena felt her heart was full, and she curled her lips into a smile.

Suddenly, the sound of crying reached her ears, and a maid brought in a little girl, "Madam, look, Dotty is crying."

Serena had already heard Dotty's cries. Dotty turned two this year, having just celebrated her second birthday. She was such a tiny bundle, with a little face crafted like jade, and her bright eyes resembling her mommy's.

Dotty was crying now, her tender cries heart-wrenching, sobbing so sorrowfully that anyone watching would have their heart melt.

"Dotty, why are you crying? Come here, let me hold you." Serena quickly took Dotty into her arms, gently wiping away the tears from her little face.

Dotty wrapped her little arms around Serena's neck, "Mommy... I miss mommy..."

"So Dotty misses mommy, mommy will come soon, and mommy misses Dotty too..."

"Really?"

"Of course, it's true. Don't cry anymore, or you won't be pretty." Serena said lovingly.

Dotty listened, and soon stopped crying.

Then a familiar figure appeared, Leah Thorne had arrived.

Leah reached out to embrace Dotty, "Dotty, you miss mommy, but do you miss Aunt Leah?"

"Of course, I do. Aunt Leah and Aunt Serena are the prettiest~" Little Dotty sweetly hugged Leah and planted a kiss on her.

Serena and Leah laughed blossom-like, taking little Dotty downstairs to play.

At that moment, little Dotty looked up and saw two people ahead, happily calling in her childish voice, "Mommy~ Daddy~ Mommy and Daddy are here~"

Serena and Leah turned around to see Dianna Hollis and Raymond Alden.

Three years ago, Dianna married Raymond, and soon they had their daughter Dotty. These three years, the couple was very much in love, making many envious.

Leah put down little Dotty, and she ran forward with her little legs.

Dianna bent down, lovingly opening her arms to her.

Little Dotty rushed into Dianna's embrace, joyfully hugging her mommy's neck, "Mommy, you're here, Dotty missed you so much~"

Dianna picked Dotty up, kissing her cheeks lovingly twice, "Mommy missed Dotty too~"

Little Dotty giggled happily.

Raymond wiped Dotty's forehead with a tissue, tenderly saying, "Dotty, come here, let Daddy hold you, and let's ride a horse together, okay?"

Little Dotty adored her daddy, nodding, "Okay."

Raymond lifted Dotty onto his shoulders, "Flying~ Flying~"

Dianna walked over to Serena and Leah, delivering a gift, "Sister Serena, happy birthday to Princess Willow."

Serena accepted the gift, gently taking Dianna's hand, "Dianna, stay and play for a few days; Leah and I love playing with Dotty."

Dianna shook her head, "No, my husband has to handle company business, so we'll leave early. Besides, my mom can't go a day without seeing Dotty, she misses her terribly now."

Serena didn't insist, Leah stepped forward, holding Dianna's elegant arm, "Dianna, are you happy now?"

Are you happy?

Dianna looked at Raymond and Dotty playing joyfully; her cool features softened into a gentle smile, nodding, "Yes, very happy."

Then little Dotty reached out her hand and called, "Mommy, come here, play with me and Daddy~"

Dianna quickly walked over, joining her husband and daughter.

Serena and Leah stood together, "Leah, do you want to ask something from Dianna?"

Leah paused for a few seconds, looking at the present Dianna. After three years of not seeing her, today's Dianna was already 24 years old; she had transformed from a girl into a woman. Time had bestowed upon

her an even more refined and attractive beauty; a simple black long dress outlined her graceful curves, making her a noticeable sight wherever she went.

Now Dianna was with Raymond and Dotty, their family of three constantly laughing and smiling.

Leah slowly shook her head, "No, I don't want to ask anything; I have no right to."

Serena looked at Leah.

Leah curled her lips into a smile, "I can see that Dianna's eyes shine now. Earlier, she said she was very happy, and she wasn't lying. Now she has a mom, a husband, and a daughter, truly happy, very happy."

"Sometimes I think, my brother couldn't give Dianna everything, yet someone else has, and doubled it. That's enough."

"No one was wrong; not every emotion reaches fulfillment. Now, I only hope Dianna is happy and content."

"The name 'Mort Thorne' disappeared three years ago; no one mentions him now. He vanished from everyone's life. Now, everyone lives peacefully and happily."

Dianna gave birth to a daughter.

At first, Leah had questions she wanted to ask, but now, those questions don't matter anymore.

Chapter 1185: Mort Thorne Is Back

Little Willow Crawford's birthday banquet ended, and Dianna Hollis and Raymond Alden took Dotty back home. Dotty was raised by her grandmother Jodie Young, and the bond between the grandmother and granddaughter is particularly strong.

After leaving Dotty with her grandmother, Dianna Hollis and Raymond Alden walked out, Raymond put an arm around Dianna's shoulder, "Dianna, let's go home."

Just as these words fell, there was a "ding" sound, and Dianna received a text message.

She took out her phone, opened the message, and then looked up apologetically at Raymond, "I can't go home with you."

Raymond shrugged, clearly already accustomed to it. His wife was much busier than him, even though he was a CEO. "Another task?"

"Yes, I have to leave."

Raymond sighed softly, affectionately ruffling her hair, "Go ahead, your husband and daughter can take care of themselves."

"Then I'm off." Dianna left.

However, Raymond grabbed Dianna's hand, "Wait."

Dianna looked at him puzzled, "Something else?"

Raymond chuckled, "Can't call you for nothing? Dianna, you're my Mrs. Alden now, you need to be mindful of your role as a wife. Come, give a hug."

Raymond extended his arm and embraced Dianna.

...

Dianna went to the bustling street and started to hail a cab.

At this time, a regular van stopped in front of a convenience store. The back door was pulled open, and five or six kids from the mountains got out with their luggage. They looked at the man in the driver's seat, "Uncle, we're off to college." In the driver's seat was a man wearing a black V-neck T-shirt and a baseball cap on his head.

The cap was pulled down low, concealing his face. Only his cold, chiseled jawline was vaguely visible.

His large hands gripped the steering wheel. Those hands, rough from years of manual labor, were strong under the thin T-shirt, hinting at muscular, defined male curves, radiating a rugged masculinity and manly strength that made one want to swoon.

Just then, a school bus stopped, and the dean of X University arrived to pick up the kids.

The dean waved to the man in the van.

The man lifted his deep, dark eyes to glance at the dean, then turned to look out the window at the simple kids. He spoke softly, "Go on."

Go on.

A simple two words, without any further admonition.

But the kids' eyes reddened with emotion, "Uncle, we'll study hard and make you proud."

Before breaking into sobs, the kids ran off.

The man watched their retreating figures, then reached into the van's compartment to find a pack of cigarettes. He placed one between his lips.

At this moment, a girl suddenly ran back. She gathered her courage, leaned over, and quickly kissed the man's handsome cheek, "Uncle, when I graduate, I'll marry you and be your wife."

Saying this, the girl blushed and ran off again.

The dean gently took the kids' luggage, kindly smiling, "Every year your uncle sends students here for college. Many girls say they'll marry him after graduation. It seems your uncle has quite the charm."

The kids smiled brightly, "Uncle adopted us, gave us light and hope. He's the greatest and most lovable person in our hearts."

The dean repeatedly nodded, realizing the fervor of true fans. "Is your uncle's leg any better?"

At this, the kids quickly showed sad expressions, "Uncle's leg was amputated three years ago. He relies on a prosthetic but has a special condition where each time he uses it, he's in pain and has allergic reactions for a long time."

The dean looked out the window, sighing. He patted the kids' heads, knowing many of them went into medical studies hoping to help that man.

Things will get better; good people deserve a lifetime of peace.

In the van, the man squinted his eyes, "pop" as he lit the cigarette between his lips, silently exhaling smoke.

He was Mort Thorne!

Three years later, Mort Thorne hadn't changed much, yet he seemed different everywhere. The passage of time had forged him into a man of restraint and compassion, with a quiet dignity. Now, he was more reserved.

Sitting in the cheap car, he silently smoked, his dark eyes behind the smoke glancing faintly at the neon city lights outside. This was the City of Crestfall, a place familiar to him.

Here, lived the people he knew best.

But he couldn't reveal his true face.

Who was he now?

He didn't know.

Maybe just a wandering soul in this city.

But thinking of those simple kids, he curled his lips into a slight smile, taking a drag of his cigarette, a tender ripple passing through his eyes.

A girl had kissed him, he hadn't paid much attention. They're just kids, knowing nothing.

He lowered his handsome gaze to his right leg, which was empty, having been amputated.

In the passenger seat lay a prosthetic limb, ready for use.

He leaned back the driver's seat, letting his strong body relax in it temporarily.

Taking a drag, he pulled out his phone, an old model, and scrolled to a photo.

The only photo.

The photo was of... Dianna.

Three years ago when he got out of prison, she had lain on his bed, her face peaceful, butterfly-like lashes gently resting, like a little angel who had fallen to earth.

His rough fingertip caressed her tender face, the soft sound of her voice echoed in his ear.

Mort Thorne, I miss you so much.

Mort Thorne, I want you to kiss me, hug me, praise me.

Mort Thorne, I miss you so much I could cry...

Dianna.

His Dianna.

This year he had turned thirty-eight. If he had any regrets in life, it was Dianna.

The ring still lay quietly in his pants pocket. In the end, he and she had missed each other.

But...

Mort closed his eyes, wanting to shake away that small oval face from his mind, but it was no use. Whenever he was in her city, he felt restless.

Inside him lived a beast, running wild, roaring.

Mort swallowed down his emotions, abruptly opened his eyes, sat up, turned the wheel, and pressed the gas, speeding away.

In the school bus, the kids watched Mort drive off, not finding it strange because their older siblings had told them that every time he was here, Uncle would go to see someone.

"Look, Uncle really left."

"Who do you think Uncle went to see?"

"I don't know either, but I think it must be the person Uncle loves the most."

"I can't imagine what kind of person we love would captivate Uncle's heart."

Chapter 1186: Reunion of Ming and Bing!

Mort Thorne drove, speeding down the road.

The private cars on the road all noticed him, and someone jokingly said, "Who's such a badass to make a broken van feel like a rocket?"

"I bet he's going to chase the girl he likes, but that girl is probably already crying in a BMW."

Soon, the van stopped by the roadside because Mort Thorne saw the figure he had been yearning for on the street; he saw Dianna Hollis.

At this moment, Dianna Hollis was with Raymond Alden, who was holding her in his arms as they embraced on the street at night.

Mort Thorne's tightly clenched hand on the steering wheel suddenly relaxed, and his gaze fell on Dianna Hollis, unable to look away.

In fact, he knew she was married.

He had secretly come back before.

He knew that she was now by another man's side, a man who treasured her immensely.

She was living happily.

Throughout history, time never turns back, and deep love rarely reaches old age.

Mort Thorne curled his lips into a self-deprecating smile.

Across the street, Dianna Hollis did not reject Raymond Alden's embrace, but her hands hung at her sides without responding to it. Soon, she reached out and pushed Raymond Alden away.

"Raymond Alden, you should go back."

"I'll drive you."

"No need," Dianna Hollis declined.

Raymond Alden shrugged helplessly, "Alright, I'm leaving."

Raymond Alden turned and left.

Dianna Hollis stood for a while before crossing the street and walking toward the black van.

Inside the van, Mort Thorne watched Dianna Hollis walk toward him, getting closer and closer.

In these three years, it was the closest she had come to him.

Mort Thorne sat upright, his previously relaxed hand gripping the steering wheel again. She didn't know he was here; she walked with her head down, lost in her thoughts.

But it was enough for him to see her clearly. After three years, the 24-year-old girl had grown more elegant and even more beautiful.

Mort Thorne's dark eyes were faintly bloodshot. She had once been his girl.

At this moment, Dianna Hollis reached the edge of the van, but due to the dark tint of the windows, she couldn't see inside, nor did she attempt to look.

She suddenly stopped.

She quietly stood by the driver's door, lowering her head to look at her shadow on the ground, stretched long by the moonlight.

Separated by a car door, they reunited once more.

But everything had changed.

She was unaware he had ever come to her city, walked the streets she walked, felt the breeze she felt.

Mort Thorne clenched his hand tightly, the veins bulging until he used all his strength to refrain from opening the door, from disturbing her.

The happiness he couldn't provide, someone else had, so he endured the pain and let go, no longer interfering.

His throat moved several times, Mort Thorne slowly lowered his handsome eyes; let it be like this...

But just then, Dianna Hollis seemed to sense something. She slowly lifted her head, her eyes looking into the van.

Mort Thorne's heartbeat suddenly stopped. She...

Suddenly, a scream pierced his ears, "Ah, someone's snatching my child, help, save my child!"

Outside, Dianna Hollis quickly turned her head, where a woman screamed in despair on the street, her six-month-old baby snatched by a hulking tattooed man.

How brazen, daring to snatch a child in broad daylight!

Dianna Hollis's eyes turned icy cold, she rushed forward like a bolt, opened her small hand in a five-finger gesture, and grabbed the tattooed man's shoulder.

Ah.

The tattooed man felt a sudden sharp pain in his shoulder as if his bones were being crushed, causing him to throw the baby into the air.

The baby was caught by someone in a black car. Inside were his accomplices.

With the baby in hand, the car sped away.

"Miss, please save my child, my child's been taken," the mother pleaded tearfully at Dianna Hollis.

Dianna Hollis threw the tattooed man aside, then chased after the black car, which was suddenly caught in a traffic jam ahead. She leaped forward, her heels landing sharply and fiercely on the rooftops of the jammed cars, skillfully crossing them as if in a martial arts movie.

Bystanders were stunned.

"Wow, look at that, who is she? She's amazing, I'm totally smitten!"...

Meanwhile, Mort Thorne inside the van watched Dianna Hollis, easily spotting the graceful black silhouette flying over the car rooftops in the crowd.

What was she doing?

Where did she get such skills?

Such skills couldn't be achieved without professional training.

Mort Thorne extended his large hand and opened the driver's door, stepping out.

He only had his left leg on the ground, the right pant leg empty, swaying with the night breeze.

Yet this empty right leg didn't make him seem less impressive. With one hand in his pocket, the man stood tall and towering, narrowing his deep, dark eyes to watch the commotion.

Dianna Hollis was chasing the black car, with the mother's piercing cries echoing behind.

Mort Thorne, experienced in battles, bent down to pick up a stone from beside his foot.

He had always had a steady aim, and now he raised his hand, hurling the stone at the black car.

Bang, the front windshield of the black car shattered.

The piercing sound of brakes rang out as the black car skidded roadside, crashing into the barrier, forced to stop.

Dianna Hollis quickly yanked open the rear door, pulling out the person inside.

The baby was rescued.

"Thank you, truly, thank you, miss, my baby," the mother cried as she took her child back, expressing endless gratitude to Dianna Hollis.

At this time, concerned citizens swarmed in, and the police arrived.

Dianna Hollis stepped aside, turning accurately to glance at the van.

The stone earlier had come from the direction of the van.

The skill was swift, precise, and fierce.

Who was it?

The van started to move, ready to leave.

Mort Thorne truly intended to leave here; he didn't want Dianna Hollis to discover him.

On one hand, he didn't want to disrupt Dianna Hollis's current happy life; on the other, he didn't want her to see his current disability and downfall.

Perhaps tonight he shouldn't have come secretly.

These years, secretly watching her had become his life's greatest luxury.

In fact, he could have sent the children to other cities, but he chose here, where his deepest love lay, with his greatest fondness and reluctance.

He was leaving.

Mort Thorne pressed the gas pedal, the van about to speed away, but in the next moment, Dianna Hollis's graceful figure suddenly rushed over, blocking his car, "Stop!"

Chapter 1187: Borrowing a Cigarette

Mort Thorne was forced to hit the brakes because Dianna Hollis blocked his car.

He pulled his baseball cap down low and said nothing.

Dianna reached out to open the back door of the van and jumped in.

It was an ordinary van, and apart from the driver, no one else was inside.

Dianna sat on the back seat, glanced around, and then looked up at the driver, "Did you see anyone suspicious just now?"

Mort shook his head.

This person didn't speak, and with his cap pulled low and no lights on in the cabin, it was pitch black, but something flickered in Dianna's bright eyes; this person seemed suspicious.

"Why aren't you talking?" Dianna asked.

Mort never expected that as soon as he made a move, she would come over. He pointed to a certificate on the windshield that read "Disabled Person."

Disabled?

Is he mute?

Dianna looked at him a few times; his build was robust and somewhat familiar.

She looked down further and saw his right pant leg was empty, and there was a prosthetic on the passenger seat.

He lost his right leg.

He really is disabled!

Dianna frowned slightly, "Drive, give me a ride."

Mort nodded and started the van.

...

The van sped steadily down the road, and Mort lifted his head slightly, looking at Dianna through the rearview mirror.

Dianna leaned lazily against the back seat, wearing a black windbreaker with the zipper pulled all the way up. Her pure black hair was tied in a low ponytail, enhancing her neat and simple style.

Over the past three years, she had changed a lot; she was more feminine now.

Mort quickly shifted his gaze, his throat moving up and down.

After three years apart, her every movement exuded a lazy, cold, sensual charm that made it hard to look away.

She's 24 now, at the most beautiful age.

Mort drove not fast, even a bit slow. At this moment, with her sitting in his car, the whole world seemed quiet.

His empty heart felt filled at this moment. Where should he drive to? Maybe he wanted to drive to the ends of the earth.

He couldn't resist looking at her again.

The next second, he directly met her clear bright eyes.

Sometime during this, Dianna's gaze also wandered over, quietly watching him.

At this moment, their eyes met, each other's reflections carved into their eyes.

Mort's fingers tightened around the steering wheel. Then he saw Dianna curl her red lips slightly, raising an eyebrow, "What are you looking at? Watching me?"

Mort knew he had been caught. She found out he was secretly watching her.

"Well, do I look good?" Dianna's teasing smile was playful, almost as if she was flirting with him.

Mort wondered if she had recognized him.

"If you dare to look again, do you believe I'll gouge your eyes out?" Dianna continued.

Gouge out his eyes?

Mort laughed inwardly, how fierce, he was a little scared.

He averted his gaze.

Dianna looked at the pack of cigarettes by his hand. They weren't expensive, just a few bucks a pack, but she was itching for a smoke.

"Lend me a cigarette," she said.

She was borrowing a cigarette from him.

Mort pursed his thin lips, a little displeased; since when did she start smoking?

She didn't smoke before.

Dianna watched him as he moved, reaching out his large hand to grab the pack of cigarettes.

She quickly reached for it.

But the next second, the pack was crushed in his large palm, and as the window slowly rolled down, he aimed to throw the crumpled pack perfectly into a roadside trash can.

"..."

He did it on purpose!

Dianna's hand hung stiffly in the air. Her bright eyes suddenly turned cold as she curled her lips, "What, just because I won't let you look, you threw the cigarettes away? You really have a temper, very manly."

She sneered again, casting a glance at his empty right leg, "Even if I let you look, what could you do, you don't even have a leg."

She said you don't even have a leg.

Mort's dangerous dark eyes narrowed suddenly, his rough hand tightening unconsciously on the wheel; she was mocking him.

The atmosphere in the cabin quickly turned oppressive, tense.

At this moment, a melodic ringtone sounded; Dianna had a call.

She took out her phone from her bag. It was Jodie Young calling; it must be Dotty missing her, Dotty called her every night.

Dianna answered, "Hello."

Sure enough, Dotty's childish voice came through, "Hi, Mommy, it's me, I'm Dotty, Dotty misses you!"

Mort had no idea who Dianna was talking to; he only saw her cold features soften completely, a stark contrast to the cold and dazzling attitude she had towards him earlier. She cradled the phone, saying with a smile, "Yeah, I miss you too, darling~"

She called her darling~

Mort pursed his thin lips. Was it... her husband calling?

She seemed like a different person when she took the call, her eyes sparkling like stars. He had seen her like this before, back when they were together three years ago.

Mort glanced out the car window at the city's neon lights, his mind flooded with images of those early days after his release from prison, the sweet, lingering memories of being with her.

Her sock slipping off, him helping her put it on.

Delivering dinner, carrying her to eat.

Her getting angry, telling him to leave, him sulking but still bringing her roses...

Every scene felt as if it happened yesterday.

Those brief moments were so sweet, enough for a lifetime of remembrance.

Her husband treated her well now; did she love him too?

Years later, they had become the most familiar strangers, and she was by someone else's side.

Mort suddenly felt a pang in his heart, twisting with pain. He thought he could bear it, but hearing her whisper sweet nothings to another man made his heart bleed.

Dianna, still on the phone with Dotty, looked up at the man in the driver's seat. Though she still couldn't see his face, she could make out his now tense jawline, and she curled her lips, still speaking to Dotty, "Okay, I'll come home early. I think about you every night, love you~"

She said love you~

So she really fell for someone else!

Mort pressed his lips into a cold, white line, his body exuding a chill.

The van slowly came to a stop; they'd arrived. It was time for her to get off.

Dianna reached out her small hand, tucking a lock of hair behind her ear. When she looked up again, her delicate face had turned indifferent and lazy. She opened the back door and elegantly jumped out.

With slender legs, she made her way to the driver's side door, raised her hand, and knocked "knock knock" on the window, indicating for him to roll it down.

#### Chapter 1188: He Met Her Eyes

A few seconds later, the car window slid down, but only a little, and Dianna Hollis could only see his baseball cap from outside.

This person was deliberately covering his face.

Dianna Hollis opened her bag, took out a couple of hundred-yuan notes, and handed them over. "This is for your fare."

A broad, rough hand reached out from the car to take the money.

But before it could, Dianna Hollis smiled, crumpled the notes in her palm, and tossed them onto the passenger seat next to him.

The action mimicked him, as he hadn't given her a cigarette earlier.

Inside the car, Mort Thorne paused, then turned his handsome face, his dark eyes hidden under the baseball cap looking at the little woman outside the window. Damn, had she become so brazen?

Daring to provoke him?

Dianna Hollis knew he was watching her. She raised her delicate eyebrows, "No need for change, the extra is your tip."

With that, she walked away in her high heels.

Dianna Hollis!

Inside the car, Mort Thorne suddenly narrowed his eyes, curling his thin lips in a wicked grin, and with a swift motion, opened the driver's side door. A rough, broad hand shot out like lightning and grabbed Dianna Hollis's slender wrist.

Dianna Hollis, highly alert, felt her eyes turn cold as he caught her wrist. She was ready to backflip and lock his throat with her legs, break his neck.

But the man had already seen through her move. A few long, strong fingers forcefully restrained both her wrists behind her back, then yanked, causing her face to unexpectedly collide with his pants.

His moves were as sharp as a drawn arrow, effortlessly capturing her.

Dianna Hollis's brows and eyes turned cold. She was top-tier in FIU, with no match to this day.

Yet this man had subdued her within a few moves.

She was defenseless in front of him.

At this moment, she realized she had landed in the wrong place, burying her face in his lap!

He wore black pants, the coarse material rubbing uncomfortably against her delicate skin.

The posture was quite ambiguous.

"Let go of me!" Dianna Hollis said coldly.

The woman's hand, as soft as boneless yet strong, tried to slip away from his grip. Mort Thorne raised his sharp eyebrows and extended his tongue to lick his dry, thin lips, looking both wicked and wild.

This little thing dared to be defiant in front of him?

No matter what she had done outside these three years, she was still too naive in front of him!

Mort Thorne's strong chest heaved a couple of times. His broad, rough hand clamped her slender wrist like iron, the more she struggled, the tighter his grip grew.

Dianna Hollis couldn't break free or beat him. How could a disabled driver possess such skills? Clearly, there was something fishy about it.

"Just who are you?" Dianna Hollis raised her head, trying to look at his handsome face.

Mort Thorne reached out, cupping the back of her head, pressing her face back to his lap before she could see.

He wouldn't let her look.

Dianna Hollis saw nothing; the man's moves were too quick.

Soon she felt out of breath as he had her entire small face pressed down.

Her tender skin immediately burned, for she felt his physiological reaction.

He even...

"Let me go! Do you, a cripple, even have thoughts about me?"

Cripple...

Mort Thorne heard those words and faintly curled his thin lips. He was indeed a cripple.

He released her head.

Dianna Hollis quickly lifted her head, trying to see his face.

Mort Thorne didn't expect her to still want to see him, damn, he cursed silently, cupping her head once more, pressing her back to his lap.

Damn it!

"Damn you!" Dianna Hollis burst out with a curse.

Mort Thorne's face turned cold. In three years, she had indeed grown more daring, smoking, drinking, and now swearing.

He was so angry, he felt a strong urge to teach her a harsh lesson.

Suddenly, Dianna Hollis stopped moving as she caught a whiff of his scent.

It was the rich, healthy scent of a man.

The scent was so familiar, so vividly familiar that it left her dazed.

It was... Mort Thorne!

This was the scent from Mort Thorne!

Dianna Hollis started to sniff with her nose,

Gradually sniffing his scent.

His scent was cleaner than before, with a refreshing pine aroma, yet his masculine scent remained just as dense, intensely assaulting her senses.

What was she doing?

The place was dimly lit without light streaming in, and Mort Thorne lowered his handsome eyelids to look at the girl clinging to his pants, sniffing his scent like a little puppy.

Already a mature man nearing forty, having abstained from women for three years, he knew exactly what sort of indecent thoughts were racing through his mind.

His Adam's apple bobbed up and down.

At that moment, Dianna Hollis opened her mouth, biting into his firm thigh.

Ssss.

Mort Thorne frowned, muffling a groan.

It hurt.

The ungrateful little thing was really biting him, as if she wanted to tear a chunk out of his leg.

He had once doted on her, but it turned out to be feeding a dog in vain.

His thick eyelashes fluttered, and he clenched his strong waist and abdomen for her to bite, his inky eyes gradually turning blood-red, damn, he actually found her bite quite thrilling.

This little thing had grown up, filled with strength.

At this moment, someone came walking by—a grandmother with her grandson returning from a stroll. The keen-eyed little boy looked over curiously and asked, "Grandma, what are they doing there?"

Someone was coming!

Mort Thorne lowered his lashes to look at the girl on his leg. It seemed she hadn't heard the movement outside, still clinging to him, unyielding.

His eyes darkened, and he used his rough palm to push her forehead, easily pushing her off his firm thigh.

The man's strength was great, and Dianna Hollis was indeed pushed off.

Her lithe and graceful body was directly pushed out of the car.

Dianna Hollis looked at him, suddenly extending her hand like lightning to snatch the baseball cap off his head.

Mort Thorne wasn't prepared for this, and the baseball cap had already been taken by her.

He turned his head, those deep, sharp eyes clashing with the girl's clear, cold gaze.

In her pure black and white eyes, he saw his reflection.

Dianna Hollis saw him, saw a... unfamiliar face.

This wasn't Mort Thorne's face.

Or rather, it wasn't Cain Shaw's face either.

Not the face she was familiar with, a stranger's face.

Dianna Hollis froze immediately.

Mort Thorne should feel fortunate that she didn't recognize him. Back when he was still Cain Shaw, he had disguised himself, and now this face was truly Mort Thorne's own, which she hadn't seen before.

Therefore, she wouldn't recognize him.

Indeed, Dianna Hollis's clear eyes were burning with something, but after seeing his face, she was stunned, and those things slowly extinguished, finally returning to calmness.

Soon, Dianna Hollis turned and left.

Chapter 1189: Who Is He?

She left.

Mort Thorne watched as her silhouette gradually disappeared from his sight. He did nothing because there was nothing he could do.

...

Dianna Hollis returned to her room and sat on the bed in a daze.

A few minutes later, she opened the thin laptop on the desk, tied her black long hair into a casual ponytail with a rubber band, revealing her slender, swan-like neck.

Her pale fingers flew over the keyboard as she logged into the FIU's system to check the license plate of the van.

The results showed that the license plate was not registered.

He actually used a fake license plate!

Dianna curled her red lips coldly; he always found ways to exploit loopholes and avoid detection!

One day she would catch him!

She would personally expose him!

Dianna picked up her phone and dialed a number.

The melodious ringtone rang once, and then a familiar unhurried voice came from the other end, "Dianna, home yet?"

"Senior, help me check a license plate."

"Sure, what's the license plate number?"

Dianna recited the license plate number.

There was silence for a few seconds, "Dianna, is he back?"

Dianna frowned, "He?"

"Yes, the man you wanted to follow three years ago."

Dianna didn't answer; she looked down at the baseball cap in her hand, his cap, which she brought back and had been holding on to.

She brought the cap to her nose and took a deep breath, inhaling his masculine scent.

How could she possibly be mistaken?

The man, the man named Mort Thorne, even if he turned to ashes, she would recognize him at a glance.

Earlier in the van, she recognized him already, his figure, his scent, his essence, deeply imprinted in her bones and blood, she recognized him.

How laughable, the man who supposedly died three years ago, had actually returned.

She was so confident that she believed it was Mort Thorne, but when she removed his baseball cap, it wasn't his face.

Why wasn't it him?

Could she have been mistaken?

Perhaps she was wrong. If he wasn't dead, then why didn't he come back over the past three years?

If that was him, why was his right leg gone?

She saw his empty right leg; he was already crippled.

So, was that Mort Thorne?

She didn't know either.

All she knew was that her long-calm heart was suddenly in turmoil; his appearance was like a pebble thrown into her tranquil heart lake, causing ripples upon ripples.

"Dianna, have you not forgotten him?" the voice on the other side asked.

"I've forgotten..."

"Dianna, you don't need to answer me. This 'forgotten' should convince you, yourself." The other end directly hung up the call.

Dianna put down her phone and lay on the bed, her eyes blankly staring at the ceiling for a moment; she thought of three years ago, just after her surgery, when a private steward brought a document of substantial inheritance transfer to inform her tactfully that he was gone, that he didn't want her anymore.

Dianna reached out and tossed the baseball cap directly into the trash can.

She closed her eyes, forcing herself not to think about those past memories, but her mind again conjured the face she saw in the van, that unfamiliar and completely new face.

That face was even more handsome and attractive than Cain Shaw's before.

Dianna quickly opened her eyes again; no, she couldn't let him leave like this.

Why should he come and go as he pleased? Whether he was Mort Thorne or not, she had to get an answer.

...

The van pulled out of the City of Crestfall, slowly coming to a stop at the highway entrance.

Mort Thorne reached out to turn on the car light, used his thumb and forefinger to swiftly undo the sturdy black belt around his waist, pulled down his pants, and gazed at a noticeable bite mark on the inside of his thigh.

The area around the bite was mottled with blood, and it ached with any movement.

That little thing!

He traced the delicate bite mark with rough fingertips; she must have hated him so much to bite so hard.

His coarse fingers caressed the bite mark; suddenly, he found it intensely fascinating; it was a mark she left on him. Just moments ago, she fell into his arms, and her scent still lingered on him.

But he had to leave now.

She didn't recognize him, which was for the best; she had a happy life now, and he had to return to the mountains. From now on, they would be two parallel lines, never to meet again.

Mort Thorne withdrew his hand, ready to step on the gas pedal.

But just then, a police car roared by and stopped him. A uniformed officer came over, "Sorry, sir, you can't leave now."

Mort Thorne, "Why?"

"We just received a report; did you carry someone about half an hour ago? That person reported losing a valuable item and suspects you stole it. Now we need you to come with us for further investigation."

"..." Mort Thorne's expression darkened; it was Dianna again!

She actually called the police, accusing him of stealing a valuable item?

What valuable item?

He hadn't seen her bring any valuable item onto the van; this was simply slander.

Dare she slander him as a... thief?

What audacity!

...

Mort Thorne was unable to reveal his identity, so he was taken to the police station.

He sat in a small room; it was silent, with not a sound.

Don't know how much later, light footsteps approached, and the door to the room was opened.

Mort Thorne looked up and saw Dianna at the door.

Dianna had come.

Dianna walked in and sat across from him; she noticed he was wearing a prosthetic leg now, unlike the emptiness she saw in the van earlier.

Seeing her gaze fixated on his disabled right leg, Mort Thorne spoke first, his voice low and hoarse, with a notable magnetism, "What valuable item did you lose?"

Dianna's gaze fell on his handsome face, and she suddenly said, "You resemble a man I once knew."

Mort Thorne paused and said nothing.

"Although your face is different from his, I feel you are him. I suppose you wouldn't tell me the truth, even if you did. So I want to verify for myself whether you are really him or not." Dianna cut straight to the chase, implying that he should cooperate obediently.

Mort Thorne showed no expression, "And if I don't cooperate?"

Dianna curled her lips, a hint of provocation in her lazy demeanor, "Then I'll insist that you stole my belongings, and you, as the thief, can remain here."

Calling him a thief over and over, Mort Thorne laughed in exasperation, pressing his tongue against his right cheek, "How do you plan to verify it?"

Dianna's gaze moved from his handsome face down to his pants, then raised her eyebrows and said, "The man I knew has a small birthmark on his body, so now please, take off your pants."

Chapter 1190: He's Already Dead, Dead Three Years Ago

She told him, now please, take off your pants.

Mort Thorne's brows furrowed immediately. He looked at Dianna Hollis across from him, her cold, bright eyes were staring straight at him without a hint of shyness. She really had become... reckless.

"Is asking a man to take off his pants something a girl like you can say so casually?" he criticized sternly.

Dianna Hollis crossed her delicate arms over her chest, her rosy lips curled up charmingly, "I just said it casually, what can you do about it?"

"..." Mort Thorne actually felt like hitting her right now, but her arrogant, yet dazzlingly lazy demeanor was making his heart itch. He desperately wanted to pull her into his arms and cherish her, "What if I say I won't take them off? What will you do then?"

Dianna quickly got up, came over to Mort Thorne, suddenly lifted her hand, and placed it on his broad shoulder.

Mort Thorne froze suddenly.

Then Dianna's small hand slowly traveled down along his shoulder line, as she leaned in close to his ear, her breath warm and fragrant, "Then... I'll have to do it myself. If you won't take them off, I'll help you do it."

Mort Thorne's toned waist tightened suddenly. He hadn't expected her to be bold enough to come over like this. Now it felt as if her small hand carried an electric current, wherever it traveled on him, a tingling sensation surged through his core, and he quickly swallowed hard.

Dianna had already felt the change in his body temperature, but she did not stop, her soft fingertips traced down his chest toward his waist, she clicked her tongue twice and praised, "I didn't expect that although your legs are impaired, your physique is so great. In this regard, you're quite like him... Oh right, he had eight-pack abs, let me count yours, and see if they're the same?"

She actually started counting his abs.

Mort Thorne closed his eyes; this was by far the greatest temptation he had ever faced. She was playing with fire everywhere. If this continued, he feared he wouldn't be able to hold back.

Mort Thorne reached out, firmly grabbed her slender, fair wrist, "Enough, stop fooling around!"

Enough, stop fooling around!

A person's voice may change, but their tone doesn't. Dianna looked at him, remembering how, in the past, Mort Thorne would also reprimand her in that low voice, telling her to stop fooling around.

She was still bent down, the two of them so close that she could smell the fresh soap scent on him. She stopped smiling and asked directly, "So, are you going to take them off yourself, or shall I help you?"

"..." Mort Thorne felt she was doing it on purpose, purposely torturing him. He pressed his thin lips together, "It's not convenient here. Take me out first, and we'll see."

He wanted to leave first.

Dianna sneered, "Do you really need to pick a place to take off your pants? You're really fussy."

After saying this, she forcefully pulled her wrist back from his grip.

Mort Thorne's hand fell into emptiness. His fingers curled and brushed against it, already beginning to miss the warm and smooth feel of her skin.

Dianna didn't linger, she took a step and walked out, not turning back, "Come out."

...

Dianna was the first to step out, waiting outside for Mort Thorne.

Two men stumbled over, top executives of the mall, dead drunk. They brightened up upon seeing Dianna, "Oh my, who is this? Isn't this the first ice beauty of City of Crestfall, Miss Dianna Hollis?"

"Miss Hollis, hello, come, give us a hug."

One man lunged at Dianna.

A cold gleam flashed in Dianna's eyes, she sidestepped slightly, and the drunken man crashed right into the wall.

Ouch.

That man, furious from embarrassment, snorted coldly, "What's with the arrogance? We address you as Miss Hollis, and you really think you're a big shot?"

The other man's sleazy eyes roamed over Dianna's delicate face and her graceful, lithe figure, rubbing his hands wickedly, "That's not the right way to put it; show some respect. She's now the young lady of the Alden family. When we see her, we should respectfully call her Mrs. Alden."

"What, Mrs. Alden? Oh, right, right, she's Mrs. Alden!"

"I don't know what President Alden is thinking. What kind of woman can't he have? Why did he choose Dianna? Just because nobody dares to mention it, doesn't mean the past doesn't exist. Do you still remember Cain Shaw, the great boss who dominated Starfall City three years ago? Our Mrs. Alden was his mistress!"

"Even though Cain Shaw died three years ago, it doesn't change the fact that you're just a toy that's been played with by others!"

"Mrs. Alden, you must be very lonely, right? How about us brothers keep you company tonight?"

The two men simultaneously moved toward Dianna with bad intentions.

Dianna remained expressionless and didn't move at all. She let out a cold, sarcastic laugh, waiting for them to come close.

Yet, a bee sting-like pain and ache seeped into her heart.

City of Crestfall is so small; no matter how much the past is buried, there are always rumors circulating.

What she thought she had already forgotten was brought up so easily.

The wound deep inside her heart, which she thought had scarred over, was now seen to be still bleeding profusely.

As those two men came closer, Dianna's eyes turned sharp, planning to take action.

But just then, her vision darkened as a tall, muscular figure quickly appeared, the man kicked both men with a leg.

Ow.

The two men screamed and fell to the ground, unable to get up.

Dianna looked up at the newcomer, it was Mort Thorne.

Dianna showed no expression; she took her long legs, stepped around Mort Thorne in her high heels, and walked away.

...

Dianna knew Mort Thorne was following her, she coldly curved her lips, "Why aren't you saying anything?"

Mort Thorne deeply furrowed his brows into a frown. He had heard the things those two men said to humiliate her; these were the wounds he had caused her, wounds that could never be healed.

He didn't know what to say.

He didn't know what else he could do.

"You also heard the conversation of those two men earlier. Everyone in City of Crestfall understands; they all see me this way. My reputation has long been ruined. That's what that man brought upon me."

Mort Thorne's big hands hanging at his sides suddenly clenched into fists, but after a long time, they slowly loosened again. He asked in a low voice, "Does your husband...mind these things? Is he...good to you?"

Dianna suddenly stopped in her tracks. She turned to face him, looking at him, "You know I'm married now?"

Mort Thorne pressed his lips together.

Dianna stared at him, fixated her gaze on him. She got her answer; he knew she was married.

So, he knew about her marriage!

Ha.

Good.

Really good.

"Go," Dianna suddenly said.

Mort Thorne paused.

"Yes, I really wanted to know if you are really him at first, but now I realize the question is meaningless. That man died; he died three years ago. You are not him."