

Substitute B 781

Chapter 781: Mr. Crawford, You're Really Annoying~

Hayden Crawford reached out, directly holding Serena Sterling's delicate waist, pulling her into his embrace. "I know you already know about that girl. I am looking for her, but all I have for her is gratitude from back then, not a shred of affection. Serena, I've given my heart to you, and no one can take away my love for you!"

Serena raised her small face in his embrace, looking at him with watery eyes, "Mr. Crawford, your skill in sweet-talking has really advanced lately, it's getting cheesy~"

The subtext in Hayden Crawford's heart was, I can never keep up with your speed of solving cases!

Hayden truly wished the girl in his arms could be a little more foolish. She managed to trick the truth out of Corvus; if she wants to know something, she will certainly find out.

When he drove over just now, he was so nervous, afraid she would misunderstand. He had thought of a string of sweet words, calculating how to charm her.

Being Serena's man, not only must one be strong enough, but also must have a knack for saying sweet words!

But seeing her now with her teary, delicate appearance doesn't seem to match his imagination; she doesn't seem angry at all.

"Serena, you're not angry anymore?" Hayden looked at her in surprise.

"Who said I'm not angry?" Serena's small hands pressed against his robust chest, pretending to push him away, "You say you only have gratitude for that girl, no affection. Then let me ask you, what if you meet her, and she's just as understanding and lovable as me, what if you fall for her?"

Hayden quickly furrowed his well-defined brows, "How could that be? There's only one Serena in this world. There might be someone very similar to you, but they are all your substitutes. You are one of a kind."

"..." Serena realized he was going to carry on with the sweet-talking.

"Serena, don't be angry, okay?" Hayden reached out and pinched her soft cheeks lovingly, "Give me a smile."

Serena pushed him, "Be serious! I have something important to tell you!"

"How am I not being serious?" Hayden squeezed her soft waist affectionately, then lowered his gaze to her ear and huskily asked, "Serena, your monthly time should be coming soon, how about tonight..."

Serena quickly covered his mouth, stopping him from saying anything more, "Mr. Crawford, I really have something to tell you. Didn't that little girl save you back then? Now I want you to take me back to the old place, oh, and take Caroline Sloan with us."

What?

Hayden's movements froze. He is a very alert man; while his woman should be spoiled, any slight anomaly quickly raises his suspicion. He didn't expect Serena to make such a request, asking him to take her back to the old place.

Many years ago, that little girl once saved him in the ice and snow. Now, Serena wants him to personally take her back there, and also bring Caroline Sloan.

"Serena, what kind of ideas are brewing in that little head of yours, could it be... you're plotting against me?"

"Mr. Crawford, how could you say that?" Serena furrowed her elegant brows, pretending to be unhappy, "Since that little girl is so important to you, I also want to be involved in your story, to see the scene from

back then. Didn't Caroline say she saved you? Then let her come along and re-enact the scene for us, killing two birds with one stone."

Hayden pursed his thin lips and said nothing, sharply scrutinizing Serena. He knew her too well; she was so wise and clever, she would never do anything meaningless. What she's saying now must be a lie, but he couldn't quite figure out her real intention yet.

"Why, Mr. Crawford, do you not want to, or don't you dare? That story belongs to you and that little girl, and you don't want to let me in, do you?"

As she spoke, Serena puffed up her delicate brows and huffed coquettishly, turning to leave, "Then forget it, just pretend I didn't say anything. I'm leaving!"

Hayden looked at her current sulky state. If her seductive eyes a moment ago were not too evident, then now her radiant eyes glaring at him, with her pouting cherry lips, her mix of shyness and coquettishness, really softened his bones.

What's gotten into her today?

Could it be... she's giving him a reward?

Hayden quickly embraced her again, forcefully pulling her into his arms, "Don't go, Serena. I agree, I agree to everything you ask!"

Serena curved her lips, "Really? Then you better not lie to me!"

Hayden lowered his head, his thin lips landed on her cheek starting to kiss, moving to her hair, "Not lying, I'll have the secretary prepare the itinerary in a moment."

"Then..."

"Shh." Hayden made a silencing gesture, his eyes burning as he looked at her, "Serena, don't speak, let me kiss you for a while."

Serena's cheeks flushed, "Mr. Crawford, you're so annoying~"

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Caroline Sloan was still in Port Sterling because she had no money and was detained.

Her parents were taken away by the Port Sterling manager, and for a long time, they hadn't returned. Caroline slowly sensed something was wrong. Where did her foolish parents go?

She had indeed thought about eliminating this pair of foolish and dull parents, making herself an orphan, but she feared exposing a flaw, so she kept them around.

Now Caroline sensed something unusual; she felt that the way her parents were taken away was very suspicious.

No way!

Caroline quickly walked to the door, wanting to leave, but a few security guards in black stopped her, "Sorry, you can't go out!"

Caroline's face immediately turned cold, "What do you mean by this, illegally detaining someone's freedom? Where are my parents? You took my parents away for so long, they haven't returned. I have every reason to suspect that you are harming them. Let me out quickly, or I'll call the police!"

At this moment, a deep and magnetic voice sounded, "No need for you to worry, your parents are already at the police station."

Caroline looked up and saw Hayden Crawford had arrived.

Serena also came, now her small hand was tightly held in Hayden Crawford's palm.

Caroline quickly returned to her usual pitiful demeanor, "Mr. Crawford, just now...just now I was only worried about my parents..."

Hayden held Serena's small hand and walked over, looking at Caroline indifferently, "Your parents squandered money recklessly, and now they are merely reaping what they sowed. You can't save them, you'd better pack up and quickly follow me to set off."

"Set off?" Caroline's heart jumped, "Mr. Crawford, where are we going?"

Chapter 782: Devoted to Serena, Devoted to You

"Lillian, didn't you once save Mr. Crawford as a child in a snowy wasteland? I've already spoken with Mr. Crawford. He wants to take me and you back to that place to revisit the past, and listen to you tell the story of that year," Serena's voice rang with a clear allure.

Caroline's gaze fell on Serena. Now Serena's exquisite little face was flushed, more charming than her usual ethereal charm. Her brilliant eyes also looked at Caroline with a radiant smile.

Caroline thought, "... Are they trying to drag her along as a tour guide?"

Caroline's heart was filled with alarm; the person who saved Hayden back then wasn't her, it was Serena. However, she followed them all the way, intending to seize the opportunity, so she knew what happened in the cave between Serena and Hayden, enough to pass off the truth as her own.

Speaking of which, two groups came to the snowy wasteland that year. The first was Yasmine and Vanessa, and the second was herself, the bystander lurking in the shadows.

Now Hayden and Serena suddenly approached her, saying they wanted to take her to revisit the past. Caroline's heart pounded wildly; could it be that these two already knew something?

"Mr. Crawford, Serena, my parents... are still at the police station. I'm worried about them and really not in the mood to leave. How about... we change the date?"

Upon hearing "Serena," Serena felt her skin prickling with pinkness. Who's the elder sister here? Caroline, in her thirties, posing as youthful before her, should be calling herself the older sister.

At this moment, Hayden indifferently parted his thin lips, "I've already decided on this matter. I'm not here to ask for your opinion, but to inform you."

Caroline thought, "..."

"Serena, let's go." Hayden said everything that needed to be said and grasping Serena's small hand, prepared to leave.

Serena nodded, suddenly remembering something, instructing Corvus on the side, "Corvus, I fear Lillian may worry too much about her parents and do something foolish to escape. You must send people to watch her and not let her run off. She's a key figure in this revisit, make sure she doesn't go missing, understand?"

Corvus glanced at Serena's little hand, tightly held in their master's palm, and couldn't help but raise a thumb for this husband-taming technique. Who wouldn't say, 'Miss Sterling is amazing'?

Corvus immediately revealed a flattering smile, "Yes, Miss Sterling. I will definitely protect Miss Sloan, ensuring nothing happens to her!"

"Then I'm relieved," Serena looked at Caroline like a concerned mother, then nodded reassuringly, "Mr. Crawford, shall we go?"

Hayden guided Serena away.

Caroline thought, "...". She was on the verge of spitting blood. Serena had essentially arranged for her confinement, curbing her freedom, under the guise of protection!

Caroline knew the revisit to the past was already settled, and she couldn't escape.

Serena must have discovered the truth!

So what should she do?

Caroline clenched her fist, but soon relaxed it. She turned to sit in the chair, a sinister smile playing on her lips.

Serena, you think knowing the truth is the end? No, everything... is just beginning!

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Hayden led Serena out of Port Sterling. "Serena, will you come to my place tonight, or should I go to yours?"

"..." Three sentences away from normal conversations, Mr. Crawford was such a rogue!

Suddenly, a vigorous, authoritative voice rang in her ear, "Serena."

Serena halted her steps; turning back, she saw the matriarch.

Serena's bright eyes momentarily contracted; she didn't expect to encounter the matriarch here!

"Grandma, why are you here?" Serena instinctively withdrew her small hand from Hayden's grasp and quickly stepped forward to support the matriarch.

The matriarch looked at Serena with affection, "Serena, I was out for a walk and happened to run into you."

Her gaze then fell on Hayden's tall, handsome figure, "Who is this? Could he be the biological father of Caden, Pip, and Stella?"

Hayden felt the sudden withdrawal of her hand from his calm palm, he faintly furrowed his brows, his first impression being that Serena was quite discreet about their relationship before this matriarch.

His profound eyes subtly scanned Serena and the matriarch as if assessing; clearly, the matriarch came from Alani, respected and deeply revered by Serena.

If so, why avoid being open?

Was he unsuitable to be presented before the family?

Hayden felt somewhat displeased, yet briskly approached the matriarch, "Hello Grandma, I am Hayden Crawford."

The matriarch observed Hayden's dignified, mature appearance and nodded in satisfaction, "In Alani, I've wanted to meet the man for whom my Serena would risk her life to birth three children. Now having seen you, I find my Serena has good taste indeed."

"Mr. Crawford, you must eternally remember how my Serena nearly died for you once. Dote on her forever, for her sake." The matriarch advised earnestly.

Hayden solemnly nodded, "Grandma, rest assured, I, Hayden Crawford, will not fail Serena in this life."

Serena saw the seriousness in Hayden's brows and eyes, knowing he wasn't joking; this was his vow.

The matriarch's sudden arrival was unforeseen by Serena, she had been busy and overlooked the matriarch, whose purpose here was seeking the true identity linked to the bloodline feud to thoroughly eliminate.

Westria, Alani, and The Merfolk Clan harbored irreconcilable blood feuds, and Serena bore the mission to revive Alani; yet the matriarch knew Mr. Crawford only as Mr. Crawford. If she found out he was the true blood child, then...

Serena dared not imagine further.

But now, listening to Hayden's pledge, Serena felt ripples of emotion in her heart. If he regarded her this deeply, then no force could separate them, no matter how challenging; she would find a way for both to flourish, cherishing their time together.

"Grandma, since we've met, let's have a meal together," Serena suggested.

Hayden nodded, "I'll have my secretary book a place right away."

The matriarch waved, chuckling warmly, "Serena, you go and enjoy dinner with Mr. Crawford. I'm not joining your young people's world. I'll be on my way now."

The matriarch wisely departed.

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The matriarch returned to the nanny car, the chauffeur ahead said, "Grandma, someone just delivered a note, saying it was for you."

Chapter 783: Ex-Wife

The driver in the front handed over the small note.

The old lady glanced outside, "No one knows I'm here, nor do they know my identity. Where did this note come from? Who handed it over?"

The driver cautiously replied, "Ma'am, it was delivered by a little boy just now."

A note delivered by a little boy?

The old lady took the note, and there was only one line written on it.

The old lady gasped, looking over that line several times, a storm quickly brewing in her eyes.

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After the old lady left, Hayden Crawford looked at Serena Sterling, "Serena, do you have something to tell me?"

He actually discovered it, and Serena shifted her eyes evasively, shaking her little head, "No, what do you want to hear~?"

Seeing she didn't want to say, Hayden didn't force it, but he slowly squinted his deep narrow eyes and looked in the direction the old lady left, then extended his large hand and grabbed her soft little hand in his, "Let's go, I'll take you to a feast."

"Wait a minute," Serena spoke up.

"What is it now?"

Serena took out her phone, "Mr. Crawford, how can you be so indifferent to your parents' situations? Be careful they might actually get divorced!"

Hayden didn't believe it; he knew his father well. Jude Crawford wouldn't get a divorce.

Hayden lowered his handsome eyelids and looked at Serena beside him, seeing her use her slender white fingers to tap on her phone screen, searching for his mother's number and then dialing it.

His heart turned to mush.

He knew she had been running around for the Crawford family lately because they were his loved ones, so she loved what he loved.

Before he met Serena, he had heard people say that all love turns from passionate to indifferent. But after meeting Serena, all the initial passion and romance slowly integrated into his life, and compared to the gripping intensity of passionate love, he longed for a lasting, gentle peace. He always felt that only with her by his side was he truly whole.

Hayden reached out an arm from behind her, wrapping around her soft waist with such force that he almost wanted to mold her into his very bones, burying his handsome face in the nook of her neck, rubbing with the bristle of his determined chin against her tender skin.

Serena felt both pain and tickle, giggling and dodging, "Mr. Crawford, stop fooling around, move a bit further~"

"No!" Hayden clung to her, letting himself soften and indulge in her embrace amid the bustling crowd, holding her tightly.

How he wished time would stop here.

At this moment, many passersby looked over, covering their mouths and laughing softly,

"Wow, look over there—what a handsome man, what a beautiful girl, truly princes belong to princesses, fairy tales don't lie."

"That boyfriend looks so clingy, so sweet~"

"I feel like the night's air is sweet, love is in the air, and I want to fall in love too."

Serena struggled in his arms a couple of times, but his strong arm was like an iron hoop, she couldn't break free, so she had to obediently stay in his embrace, "Mr. Crawford, be good, people are watching."

"Then don't look at others, look at me."

"...I'm calling your mom now; be careful or she'll come back and scold you."

Hayden curved his thin lips, knowing full well that his mother adored Serena like a daughter, and if Serena asked, his mother would indeed scold him.

"Hush now, Serena, don't trouble yourself. Even if my mom scolds me, won't it pain you too?" he said, entirely justified.

"..." Serena gave up on arguing.

At this moment, the call connected, and Isabelle Willow's voice came through.

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Isabelle Willow was now in a café. She had an appointment tonight to discuss some jewelry design drafts.

After the discussion, the person left first, and Isabelle sat at a window seat, not leaving immediately. She held a book, sipping coffee while reading.

Tonight, Isabelle wore a long dress with a beige cardigan on top. Her long black hair was tied up into a low bun, with a few strands falling around her delicate cheeks, adding to her picture-perfect beauty and gentleness.

Such an appearance quickly caught the attention of people coming and going in the café; if she didn't mention her age, no one would believe she already had three grandchildren.

At that moment, a middle-aged man in a suit approached, "Hello, may I add you on WeChat?"

A man was asking for her WeChat.

Isabelle smiled lightly, shaking her head, "Sorry, I don't use WeChat."

Just like that, she had turned down several men trying to chat her up.

Just then, the café door suddenly opened, and two people walked in with a string of tinkling laughter.

Isabelle looked up, and surprisingly, it was Jude Crawford and Jenny.

Jude wore a grey shirt and black trousers, handsome and poised, exuding an innate authority, while Jenny wore a floral dress, young and pretty, with a youthful sparkle in her eyes.

Now Jenny's hand was linked on Jude's strong arm. The two walked in affectionately, Jenny looking up at him, chattering about something, and smiling sweetly along the way.

Isabelle paused; she didn't expect to encounter these two here. What a coincidence today.

"Jude, let's sit over there," Jenny pointed to a spot right in front of her.

Jude raised his head and saw her.

Their eyes met, and Isabelle felt a bit embarrassed and uneasy. The other day on the plane, she had told herself to wish him happiness.

But now meeting again, her heart tightened. She didn't know if she should greet him and then remain as the most familiar strangers.

It was clear that Jude didn't intend to greet her. His deep narrow eyes glanced at her face indifferently, then moved away coldly as if looking at a stranger, and he said softly to Jenny, "Let's sit there."

Jude and Jenny sat in the seat in front of her, and the waiter in the café handed over the menu.

Jenny flipped through the menu, then looked at Jude and laughed softly, "Jude, your wife is right there, shouldn't you greet her?"

As they were at adjacent tables, Isabelle could clearly hear their conversation.

Only to hear Jude lift his thin lips and correct plainly, "She's my ex-wife."

Ex-wife...

Those words pierced Isabelle's heart instantly. Did he really consider her... an ex-wife?

Men are indeed strange—while in the City of Aethelgard, he cared so much for her, yet in the blink of an eye, he had a new love, forgetting her completely.

Chapter 784: Cherishing Her for a Lifetime

Isabelle Willow wanted to ask him, "Hey, are we divorced, did we get the divorce certificate, on what grounds am I the ex-wife?"

But Isabelle Willow restrained herself. She felt that she was being impulsive and uncharacteristic. Her nature had always been cool and indifferent; such moments were rare.

She had felt this way before—when she found out he had been involved with Zelda Willow and made her pregnant.

That day, upon learning that Hayden had a high fever at Zelda Willow's place, she had secretly hidden a knife to confront Zelda. She nearly hurt herself then, partly out of anger for Hayden, but more so because she saw Zelda's big belly, carrying his child.

Her heart ached unbearably, filled with both pain and fury, and at that moment, she truly felt like she no longer wanted to live.

Chase Sullivan had once said that Jude Crawford wasn't good to her, but she had rebutted Sullivan then, saying that Jude Crawford treated her too well.

She understood better than anyone that Jude Crawford had given her half a life of care and affection.

That year under the pear blossom tree, he personally put on cat ears he brought back from abroad for her, wanting to kiss her and tell her, "In the future, I'll treat you well."

"In the future, I'll treat you well."

Jude Crawford spent his whole life fulfilling this promise.

Because he was so good to her, he confined her in Jill's room, which was actually a way to protect her, sparing her from suffering, worries, and a life of instability, giving her a life where she is cherished.

She had always been protected by him, leaving her a life as poetic as it could be; besides being his wife and bearing his children, she only focused on her beloved jewelry design, never having faced hardship or setbacks.

So, when he had a child with Zelda Willow, all his affection for her was withdrawn, and she felt such sorrow.

She admitted that she had been jealous, envious, and concerned about it back then.

Now, seeing Jude Crawford with Jenny, the bad feelings resurfaced.

Isabelle Willow was terribly upset, so she quickly got up and went to the restroom.

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In the restroom.

Isabelle Willow stood at the sink, splashing her face with cold water. At this moment, two women beside her were chatting,

"Did you see a handsome older man bringing a pretty girl for coffee just now?"

Isabelle Willow paused, instinctively feeling that the handsome older man was Jude Crawford.

Jude Crawford was now in his fifties, with even more defined and deep features. At this age, he didn't show signs of aging; instead, he appeared profound and charismatic, exuding money and power, becoming the center of attention wherever he went. Especially to young, beautiful women—it's said many of them are drawn exactly to men like Jude Crawford.

As long as he wanted, Jude Crawford wouldn't lack women.

"I saw it. That older man was so charming. I say, do you think that girl is his mistress? Does his wife know about it?"

The legitimate wife, Isabelle Willow, "..."

She knew!

Not only did she know, but she also witnessed it in person, she was right there!

"Even if she knows, what then? That wife might already be old and losing her charm, a yellowed-face woman. Men, as they age, prefer younger girls. No, to be accurate, men of all ages prefer younger girls."

"Right, I don't believe in lifelong love for just one person; that's something written in books. Men, especially, are fickle—today they love you, tomorrow they love someone else."

"I saw that young girl looking at the older man, her eyes were full of stars, overflowing with admiration and love. I'm telling you, men like gentle and sweet women like that."

"Some women have cold personalities and lack romance; hugging them feels like holding a block of wood. Gentle and sweet women are soft and fragrant in your arms. If you were a man, which one would you prefer?"

The two women walked out of the restroom, gradually leaving.

Isabelle Willow stood frozen in front of the sink. Why did she feel like those women were talking exactly about her?

She had a cool personality, and given her background, she never dared to express her love for Jude Crawford.

Moreover, she was shy in that aspect, unable to let go. Back then, facing the vigorous, energetic Jude Crawford, she could never keep up with his pace.

Could Jude Crawford be letting go of her hand now because of these reasons, as Jenny is now the twenty-year-old version of herself, young and beautiful, with a gentleness and sweetness no man can refuse? If she were a man, she might also fall for Jenny.

Isabelle Willow's face turned pale. She looked up at herself in the mirror. For years, she had never worried about her age. The reflection in the mirror was still beautiful and charming, but compared to Jenny, she was already old.

She truly was getting old.

And Jude Crawford no longer loved her.

Isabelle Willow felt hollow inside as if someone had gouged out a piece of her heart, making her very uncomfortable.

Then came a "click" as the washroom door was pushed open again and someone new entered—this time, it was a familiar face, Jenny.

When Isabelle Willow saw Jenny, she quickly composed her emotions and took a tissue to wipe her hands.

Jenny approached, "Hello, Mrs. Crawford. You saw me with Jude; you shouldn't mind, right?"

Jenny spoke with a hint of pride.

Isabelle Willow didn't want to chat with Jenny, her cool gaze falling on Jenny's face, "What do you want to say?"

"Oh, not much. Just didn't want Mrs. Crawford to misunderstand me. Jude said your relationship is over, in the past tense. You'll be divorcing soon, so that's why I'm with Jude." Jenny said with a provocative yet innocent look, just like the world's most innocent mistress.

Did he say that?

Did he say that to Jenny?

Isabelle Willow's hands hanging by her side clenched into fists, taking a deep breath, but her heart still ached dully.

"Whatever he says, so be it. I'm leaving." Isabelle Willow turned and left.

"Mrs. Crawford, wait a moment. I actually want to ask for your advice. What do you think of Jude? Considering his age, is he...a bit clueless in romance?"

Clueless in romance?

Isabelle Willow quickly denied this. He was very skilled at flirting with women in private, and indeed...a gentlemanly scoundrel.

A man's... prowess grows with age too. Jude Crawford had reached a ripe age, and just back from Alani, he had drugged her and taken her by force.

Isabelle Willow wouldn't tell Jenny about these things. She said flatly, "Sorry, I'm not sure."

Chapter 785: Step Out and Embrace Him

After speaking, Isabelle Willow walked out directly.

Isabelle Willow didn't want to stay in the cafe anymore. Just seeing him with Jenny together made her heart feel suffocated and faintly ache, so she took her bag, hugged her books and design sketches, and left.

Standing on the street, Isabelle Willow began to hail a taxi, but this section of the road was difficult for hailing taxis as several cabs whizzed past.

At this moment, a black luxury car slowly stopped, and the passenger seat window slid down, revealing a familiar face — it was Jenny.

Jenny looked at Isabelle Willow and smiled, "Mrs. Crawford, get in. We can give you a ride."

Isabelle Willow lifted her gaze, looking past Jenny to the man in the driver's seat. Jude Crawford was driving, with his large hands resting on the steering wheel, sleeves of his gray shirt rolled up twice, exposing his sturdy wrists and a premium steel watch — the allure of a mature man.

Perhaps sensing her gaze, he also turned slightly to glance at her indifferently.

Isabelle Willow had left the cafe to avoid these two people, but unexpectedly, she ran into them here, unable to escape the magical circle.

She couldn't comprehend the extent of Jenny's mental strength, to be able to call her Mrs. Crawford with an unchanged face and invite her into the car. However, she was unwilling.

"No need, I'll get a cab myself. You guys can leave," Isabelle Willow refused.

Jude Crawford looked at the woman outside the window; she was just like years ago, hugging a book, with an ethereal presence. The evening breeze scattered the hem of her dress; she stood under the dim streetlights, raising her hand to tuck a few strands of scattered hair behind her ear. Indeed, a northern beauty, isolated from the world.

She was unwilling to get into his car and walked a few steps aside, avoiding them.

"Jude, it seems Mrs. Crawford doesn't want to get in the car," Jenny said at this moment.

Jude Crawford's expression didn't waver much; he just lightly pressed his thin lips together and then reversed the luxury car a bit.

Isabelle Willow suddenly noticed the luxury car had come beside her again, and in the next second, a deep voice reached her ears, "Get in, don't make me say it a second time."

Every word he said was so authoritative that it left no room for argument.

Isabelle Willow's eyelashes trembled; she looked at his stern features, fraught with gloom and displeasure — not someone easily dealt with.

Isabelle Willow furrowed her brows, "I said I won't get in the car, you should take Miss Lee home..."

Jude Crawford glanced at her, then directly opened the driver's door and quickly walked to her side, reaching out a large hand to grab her arm and opened the back door to push her inside.

This person!

Isabelle Willow knew he was used to being forceful; his actions of getting out, grabbing her, and pushing her inside the car were simply smooth, without the slightest pause.

She was angry too, gripping the car door and unwilling to get in, "Jude Crawford, do you not understand human language? I will not get in the car!"

The street was full of vehicles, and the two of them were stuck at the car side, Jude Crawford trying to push her into the car, while Isabelle Willow was unwilling to go inside, trying to escape. Yet his deep and tall body blocked the way outside, causing her to keep bumping into his embrace.

Their bodies kept colliding.

Jude Crawford's eyes darkened, almost being warmed up by her; he furrowed his sword-like brows, "Isabelle Willow, where are you bumping into?"

Isabelle Willow froze, only then realizing how close the two were, practically sticking together. She retreated a step in panic, but as she loosened her grip, the books and design sketches she was holding fell to the ground.

The design sketches were blown open, and the papers quickly scattered everywhere.

"My design sketches!" Isabelle Willow cried out and wanted to pick them up.

But Jude Crawford blocked her, "Get in the car."

He reached out and shoved her inside.

Isabelle Willow wanted to get out of the car, but with a "ding," the car door was already locked, leaving her stuck at the window.

Because Jude Crawford didn't immediately get back into the car; he bent down his straight body and started to pick up each of the design sketches one by one for her.

Regardless of whether he was once the Crown Prince of the Crawford family that dominated the entire City of Aethelgard or a creator of legendary business myths, he had never stooped down before. But now, he was lowering himself, helping her pick up those design sketches on the bustling street.

Isabelle Willow's fingertips quickly curled up; she and Jude Crawford were no longer young, having walked through half their lives, entangled all these years, yet she and he were still standing in place.

She didn't know how many times, she'd risen while watching his shoulders stained with the storms, wanting to reach out and embrace him.

Just like now, she wanted to get out of the car, run over, and tightly hug him from behind.

But...

Isabelle Willow's fair eyes suddenly reddened.

By this time, Jude Crawford had picked up all the design sketches, turned back, and opened the back door, "Your design sketches."

He handed the design sketches to her, but in the next second, he bumped into her eyes that were red, with shimmering mist rising inside, as if she was about to cry.

Jude Crawford's hand paused.

Isabelle Willow knew she had lost control; she didn't want him to see her weakness. She reached out to take the design sketches, "Thank you."

Jude Crawford didn't leave, but instead blocked the car side with his tall figure.

Isabelle Willow looked up at him, only to see his large hand supporting on the door edge, his deep and narrow eyes were looking at her reddened eyes.

Soon, he raised his hand, nearing her face...

What is he doing?

Isabelle Willow turned her head, avoiding his large hand.

Jude Crawford's hand was left hanging in mid-air, he looked at her avoiding demeanor, furrowed his brows heavily, then closed the car door and returned to the driver's seat.

The luxury car sped away.

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Inside the lavish car cabin, Isabelle Willow sat in the back seat, Jenny sat in the front passenger seat, Isabelle Willow didn't speak throughout, trying to reduce her presence.

"Jude, you should first take Mrs. Crawford home, then send me home. You can come up to my place, have a cup of tea tonight." Jenny smiled.

Isabelle Willow felt a tight grip in her heart, Jenny inviting Jude Crawford to come over for a cup of tea in the late evening, everyone knew that when a woman invites a man upstairs at night, it definitely isn't just for tea.

Had he already progressed to this point with Jenny?

Would he go?

Isabelle Willow curled her fingers; he probably would go, after all, he is a normal man with needs in all aspects, now with the demure and gentle Jenny proactively inviting him, how could he refuse?

Isabelle Willow looked up forward, he was driving, eyes straight ahead, the city's dazzling neon lights reflected off the polished car windows onto his well-structured handsome profile, irresistibly charming.

"Alright, I'll go." This time Isabelle Willow heard Jude Crawford answering.

He said he would go.

Jenny's eyes lit up, quickly grips his large hand, "That's wonderful, Jude."

Jude Crawford didn't refuse Jenny's hand grasping onto his; instead, he wrapped it into his own, placing her hand on his firm thigh.

Chapter 786: He Only Has One Month Left

Jude Crawford curled his thin lips, he smiled a little roguishly, "Just as well, I'm thirsty. It's been a long time since I've had tea. Your tea-making skills shouldn't be bad, right?"

Jenny's pretty little face quickly turned red, she immediately reached out and pinched his firm thigh, "Jude, if you keep teasing me like this, I won't like you anymore~"

Jude Crawford let out a laugh from his throat.

Sitting in the back, Isabelle Willow felt like she was on pins and needles. She didn't want to get in the car because she was afraid of seeing them flirt, yet now she's witnessing the scene she most dreads.

Jude Crawford was inherently a bit of a rogue, and now he's laughing with fine lines flowing at the corners of his long, narrow eyes. These lines don't make him look old, but add to the charm of a man deeply imbued with the passage of time. He exuded an air of allure.

And Jenny's little face was flushed as she pinched his thigh, perfectly understanding his flirtation, unlike her usual self. Before, whenever Jude teased her, she'd run off scared, never flirting back with him like Jenny did, exchanging glances full of emotion.

Those two women in the restroom weren't wrong; men do seem to like this kind of thing. Jude Crawford doesn't like her anymore.

The pain in Isabelle's heart was like being cut by a knife. She turned her head to look out the window and took deep breaths to catch her breath.

Even though Jude was smiling from the driver's seat, the smile didn't reach his eyes. He was driving, then he looked up and glanced at the rearview mirror. Isabelle sat there calmly, as if she didn't care about what happened between him and Jenny, not even casting him a glance.

The stories Serena Sterling told him, the words she said, he understood them all. He wasn't willing to accept it, even though she had told him countless times that she didn't like him, never did.

He still wanted to give it a try.

As life gradually came to an end, he thought he still had time to give it a try, to see if he had even a tiny place in her heart.

Jude Crawford withdrew his gaze.

...

They soon arrived at the apartment building, Jude stopped the car, his voice low as he spoke, "We're here."

Isabelle Willow looked up; she was home.

He drove her home first, then he'd take Jenny back and do some indescribable things with her.

Isabelle bit her lip, looking up at Jude Crawford in the front.

Jude Crawford propped one hand on the steering wheel, also looking at her through the rearview mirror, his thin lips slowly curling into a half-smile, asking, "What's wrong?"

Isabelle didn't know what was wrong with her. She thought she should get out of the car, but her body refused to listen. Just the thought of him taking Jenny home later made her not want to leave the car, she wanted... to keep him.

Years ago, his relationship with Zelda Willow had become a lifelong regret and pain for her, and all these years, except for her, he hadn't touched any other woman.

She didn't want him to touch Jenny.

Jude wasn't in a hurry, just watching her, like an elegant leopard strolling through the forest, patiently waiting for the prey to fall into his net, "If you have something to say, then say it. If not, you can get out of the car, I still need to take Jenny home."

Isabelle opened her mouth, wanting to speak.

Then suddenly, Jenny spoke up, "Mrs. Crawford, should I get out of the car and let you and Jude have a good talk?"

Isabelle felt a lump in her throat, unable to say a word. She directly reached out, opened the back door, and got out of the car.

She walked away, heading toward the apartment as quickly as possible, not daring to look back, for fear she wouldn't be able to hold back if she did.

The emotions pent up in her heart for so many years seemed about to explode, she was on the brink of losing control.

Jude Crawford, please leave quickly, stop tempting her.

Watching Isabelle's retreating figure without looking back, Jude's eyes darkened rapidly, the smile on his lips vanished, and his whole demeanor was shrouded in a terrifying gloom.

She still walked away.

He lost the gamble, even the thought of him being with another woman didn't faze her.

Jude felt something he had always believed in break with a crisp snap inside him; he had never felt so clearly that she truly didn't love him.

Her heart never had room for him, not even the tiniest bit he longed for!

"Mr. Crawford, I've been cooperating in acting, but sadly, your Mrs. Crawford truly doesn't care about you."

Raising an eyebrow, Jenny said, "A twisted melon isn't sweet. Even if you had kept Mrs. Crawford, she would likely make the bed for the two of us and tell us to go at it."

Jenny leaned over quietly, placing a hand on Jude's shoulder, with the seductive allure of a young girl, "Mr. Crawford, give it up, don't be upset over such a heartless woman. I really like you, feel it, my heart beats for you. Tonight..."

Jude drew back his gaze, coolly curling his thin lips, a scathing word slipping from his throat, "Feverish?"

That "fever" was more like "horny", Jenny froze directly.

In Jude's deep, narrow eyes, there was no warmth at all, "If you're really feverish, I could find a few men to satisfy you."

Jenny widened her eyes, looking at him with shock and fear. What was he saying?

"Take your hand off me and get out before I make you disappear."

"..." Jenny's face turned completely white, she had met many men, but never someone like him.

Aside from Isabelle, he was always indifferent and heartless toward other women.

All his tenderness and love, he gave only to Isabelle Willow.

Jenny was deeply shaken, she also feared Jude Crawford's methods; if he decided to, she'd truly vanish.

Jenny opened the front passenger door, walked out unwillingly.

The next second, the luxury car sped away; Jude didn't hesitate at all, stepping on the gas pedal, dust and dirt flying in Jenny's direction, "..."

...

In the luxury car, Jude Crawford's handsome face was like frozen frost, the whole cabin was oppressively and stiflingly silent.

At this moment, a series of gentle phone rings sounded, a call from Butler Thorne.

Jude pressed the button to connect, and Butler Thorne's voice came through, "Sir, are you home now?"

Home?

Heh, where is his home?

Jude raised his long fingers to unfasten two buttons on his shirt, his thin, cold lips gradually curling into a weary, desolate, and self-mocking smile.

At this time, he suddenly felt a warmth at the tip of his nose, he raised his hand to touch, and found his hand full of blood.

He had a nosebleed.

"Sir," Butler Thorne's voice was incredibly heavy and sorrowful, "The results from the physical examination a few days ago are out. The doctor said... said your heart disease has reached an advanced stage, you only have... have... a month left."

Chapter 787: Let Me Tell You—How Much I Love You

You know your own body best; Jude Crawford knew he didn't have much time left, but now that Butler Thorne told him he only had a month, his head still buzzed.

It turns out, time has been quietly slipping away, and he has reached the end of his life.

A month...

Maybe he would suddenly collapse someday.

"Sir... sir..." Butler Thorne was still speaking.

But Jude Crawford reached out, directly hanging up the phone.

The luxury car slowly pulled to the roadside, Jude Crawford stopped his nosebleed, then slumped his tall frame lazily and decadently into the seat, and gently closed his eyes.

Actually, he wasn't afraid of death; he was just afraid of dying alone.

He only had a month left, and his life had officially entered a countdown; should he do something now?

What does he most want to do?

Jude Crawford opened his eyes; he turned the steering wheel, the luxury car swiftly took a turn and headed back.

...

Isabelle Willow wanted to go back; she knew Jude Crawford no longer liked her, that he had fallen for Jenny. Even if she spoke in the car earlier, he wouldn't have stayed. She would only be humiliating herself.

But when she reached the apartment entrance, her footsteps suddenly stopped.

Her mind was filled with scenes of Jude Crawford and Jenny about to be together, tearing at her nerves, causing her unbearable pain.

No.

She had to stop it all.

She didn't want to endure anymore; it had been so hard to hide her love all these years, but every thought was filled with him.

Isabelle Willow turned around and quickly ran back, but Jude Crawford's car was already gone.

She looked up and saw Jude Crawford's car just ahead; the luxury car took a turn and disappeared from her sight.

"Jude Crawford!" Isabelle Willow shouted, and then chased after his car.

She chased onto the street, only to see the luxury car merge into traffic. She could only quicken her pace to catch up, "Jude Crawford, wait a minute!"

Jude Crawford, wait a minute!

She had so much to say to him.

To tell him how much she loved him.

There was a red light ahead, and Jude Crawford's car stopped. Isabelle Willow's eyes lit up; she seemed to see hope, getting closer and closer to him.

The night breeze scattered her hair as she sprinted with all her might down the street, chasing his car, pursuing her long-time love. She felt she had finally stepped out, wanting to embrace him tightly.

Just as she was getting close to the luxury car, a motorcycle appeared out of nowhere, "Ah! Move aside! Hurry and move!"

Isabelle Willow couldn't dodge in time, and the next second, the motorcycle collided with her, throwing her heavily to the cement ground.

"I'm sorry, it's all my fault. Are you okay? Do you need to go to the hospital?" The motorcycle rider quickly got down to check Isabelle Willow's injuries.

Because the rider had braked at the last moment, Isabelle Willow wasn't thrown, but she fell hard on the ground, and her legs went numb instantly.

Isabelle Willow looked up, only to see the light turn green, and Jude Crawford's car sped away.

Jude Crawford was gone!

Isabelle Willow struggled to stand, but her legs felt like they were being pricked with needles and wouldn't obey; she couldn't get up.

She was so close just now, but now he was far away again.

Jenny was still in his car; had he and Jenny already...

Thinking of this, Isabelle Willow's eyes turned red, feeling utterly useless.

Is this really the end for him and her?

Fate was unavoidable; she was destined not to reach his side.

Tears quickly welled up in Isabelle Willow's eyes, her lashes trembling, and large drops fell down.

Jude Crawford.

Her Jude Crawford...

Then, suddenly, a pair of polished black leather shoes appeared in her vision; someone had come.

Who?

Was it Jude Crawford?

Isabelle Willow quickly lifted her head, thrilled, but when she saw who it was, the light in her eyes quickly faded.

It wasn't Jude Crawford, but Chase Sullivan.

...

Chase Sullivan brought Isabelle Willow back to the apartment; her knees were scraped, and Chase Sullivan helped to bandage her wounds.

"Chase, how did you get discharged so quickly?"

Chase had been beaten in the City of Aethelgard and was hospitalized for a while, but he quickly got out. Chase looked at Isabelle Willow and smiled, "I've recovered, so I naturally got discharged."

"Chase, I'm really sorry; it was Jude Crawford who sent those people after you. I'm apologizing on his behalf."

Chase smirked; she could apologize for Jude Crawford's mistakes, thinking of Jude Crawford always as her family.

"Yara, were you crying over Jude Crawford earlier on the street?"

Isabelle Willow's eyes were still red as she lowered her lashes gloomily.

Chase already had his answer, and he thought he had let go. When she told him she loved Jude Crawford in Aethelgard, he had already given up.

"Yara, I'm here to say goodbye to you; I'm leaving."

"Leaving? Where are you going?" Isabelle Willow asked, surprised.

Chase revealed a serene smile, "I want to travel and see the world, Yara. Take care of yourself."

Isabelle Willow understood; Chase had finally let go of his obsession. She nodded, "I will, Chase, and you take care too."

Chase's tone shifted, "Yara, there's something about the past I want to tell you."

"What is it? Tell me."

Chase was about to speak, this was the darkness in his heart. Back when she and Jude Crawford were to be married, he and Zelda Willow had conspired to deceive her; he wasn't kidnapped at all, and now he wanted to confess everything.

Moreover, he wanted to confess to Jude Crawford that back then, Isabelle was innocent with him, nothing had happened, and the child she was carrying was his—Jude Crawford's.

Past events are like fleeting clouds; at this moment of truly letting go, Chase sought redemption. He admitted these years he had become base under the overshadowing of Aethelgard's prodigy, Jude Crawford; his crippled leg wasn't Crawford's doing but his self-inflicted consequence.

But before Chase could speak, the doorbell suddenly rang, "Ding-dong," someone was here.

Who?

Isabelle Willow got up, walked over, and opened the apartment door.

Outside was a tall, deep presence; Jude Crawford had returned, Jude Crawford was here!

Isabelle Willow saw Jude Crawford's familiar handsome face, and her pupils constricted rapidly. She stood there, stunned, at the sight of wind-battered Jude Crawford at her door.

How did he get here?

Wasn't he sending Jenny home? Wasn't he supposed to be appreciating Jenny's tea-making skills?

Chapter 788: Be Mrs. Crawford for a Month

Isabelle Willow stared blankly at him, "You... why are you here?"

Jude Crawford had come, in the last moments of his life, he thought he still couldn't let go of this woman, "I..."

Jude Crawford wanted to speak, but just then Chase Sullivan's voice came through, "Yara, who's here?"

There's someone in the apartment!

Jude Crawford's firm body instantly stiffened, he looked up and quickly saw Chase walking over.

Chase had taken off his coat, wearing slippers on his feet, he walked over and also saw Jude at the door.

Their eyes met, and suddenly a storm surged in Jude Crawford's deep and narrow eyes, the two hands hanging at his sides tightly clenched into fists, he looked at Chase, then at Isabelle, a sinister laugh forced out from his throat, "So you already have a guest here, I guess I was just being affectionate alone!"

He bit his handsome jaw, the corners of his eyes tinged with crimson, and turned to leave.

He left.

He came, and then he left!

Isabelle watched his back, at that moment she had a feeling that this time when he left, he might really never come back.

Isabelle ran out, shouting at his back, "Jude Crawford, stop!"

Jude Crawford, stop!

As Jude Crawford was stepping down, he heard her voice from behind, there was a constant whisper in his ear telling him this woman wasn't worth it, to just go!

Yet, his steps still stopped, as if beyond his control.

He clenched his fists tightly, his knuckles bulging with veins, his handsome eyelids fluttered several times, his large hand clenched, released, then clenched again...

A few seconds later, he turned around, his bloodshot narrow eyes fell upon Isabelle's face, "What did you just say?"

Now, he stood at the bottom of the stairs, while Isabelle stood at the top, her chest heaving continuously, her heart seemed to leap out, all these years she had never taken the initiative, this was the first time she reached out to stop him.

She knew, once she spoke, there was no turning back.

So, she stepped forward, walked to this man.

She had attempted countless times to let go, to let go of this extravagant dream, yet, she couldn't bear to.

When she saw him with Jenny, she finally understood her own heart, that fleeting glance in the sea of people when she was young had already left an indelible mark on her life, he had carved an unforgettable imprint on her, a deep, unforgettable love.

Isabelle's fair eyes were reddened, she just looked at him and said, "Jude Crawford, I told you to stop!"

Jude Crawford's tightly clenched hand suddenly loosened, his steadfast heart began to soften slowly, slowly, with helpless indulgence, enough, he loved without reciprocation his whole life, but with her one phrase "Jude Crawford, stop," he should be content.

Jude Crawford walked over, reached out and grabbed her hand, he said fiercely, "Isabelle Willow, you said it, you told me to stop."

Soon, several burly black-suited bodyguards came running, directly bursting into the apartment and binding Chase Sullivan inside.

Chase was shocked, wanting to speak, but the black-suited bodyguard deftly sealed Chase's mouth with tape.

Chase Jude Crawford, let me go, I have something to say!

Jude Crawford No, I don't want to listen.

Chase You want to hear it!

Jude Crawford No, I don't want to.

The sudden situation made Isabelle's complexion change, she immediately nervously looked at Jude Crawford, "Jude Crawford, what are you doing, quickly let Chase go."

Jude Crawford looked at her nervous demeanor towards Chase, and his heart ached, indeed, she was still in love with this first love.

Jude Crawford clasped her hand in his palm, directly pulling her downstairs.

Isabelle's knee was injured, making it difficult to walk, stumbling all the way following him, his strides were huge, dragging and pulling, he directly took her out of the apartment to his luxury car.

He opened the passenger door, ordered forcefully, "Get in the car."

Isabelle stood still, "Jude Crawford, why are you capturing Chase, did you misunderstand something, listen to me..."

Isabelle tried to explain, but Jude Crawford pressed his thin lips and interrupted her, "Everything that happened between you and Chase, I won't hold grudges, I'll forget entirely."

What?

Isabelle was stunned.

Jude Crawford looked at her and continued, "But from now on, I want you to be my Mrs. Crawford again for one month, just one month."

Isabelle's apricot eyes narrowed, to be his Mrs. Crawford for a month?

"I won't harm Chase, just detain him for a month, if you comply during this month, I'll naturally release him, Isabelle Willow, this deal I'm merely notifying you of, for Chase's safety, you must be my Mrs. Crawford for a month."

One month...

Why is it one month?

What happens after a month?

"What about Jenny? Didn't you send her home, why come back to find me?" Isabelle asked.

Jude Crawford was silent for a moment, then said, "I think... what I want is still you."

...

Isabelle agreed, to be his Mrs. Crawford for a month, even though she didn't know why it was one month, this month-long deadline felt odd to her.

But that night Jude Crawford took her back to his villa, they hadn't divorced in the first place, it was just now she became Mrs. Crawford again.

That night, Jude Crawford didn't touch her, early the next morning he went to the company and didn't return.

Isabelle brought little Pip to the mall, during which she bought a small cake for him, met with him staring at the LED rolling screen in the mall.

Isabelle walked over, lovingly patting little Pip on the head, "Pip, what are you looking at?"

Little Pip pointed with his tiny finger, asking in a childish voice, "Grandma, is that person my little uncle?"

Isabelle looked up, at the center of the mall, the LED screen was broadcasting someone, the world-renowned top surgeon Prof. Zane Crawford.

"Grandma, Uncle seems really amazing, I heard his medical team recently developed a drug with remarkable effects on cancer, it's already entered clinical trials, it says on here Uncle seems to be only 27, already a legendary doctor in the medical world."

Isabelle looked at the screen showing Zane Crawford, this photo was captured candidly, now Zane had become a mysterious figure in the medical world, difficult for any major magazine to photograph, on the

screen Zane wore a clean white coat, followed by a group of medical staff, holding some medical records in his hands, the tidy and meticulous sleeves of the coat wrapped around his fair and beautiful hands, his downcast half-profile was as beautiful as jade, cool and elegant.

Chapter 789: His Second Son

This was the first time Isabelle Willow saw Zane Crawford, and at this moment, Zane Crawford crashed unguarded and forcefully into her sight.

Is this... his second son?

Is this... the son he had with Zelda Willow?

Years ago, Isabelle Willow knew that Zelda Willow had a son, but she didn't dare to meet him, so she never saw him. It turned out that over these years, this son had quietly grown up in a place she didn't know, turning into such a handsome and graceful figure.

Actually, she had also wondered what his second son would be like.

Though his biological mother was Zelda Willow, his genes would have inherited from him, so they wouldn't be bad.

But Isabelle Willow never imagined that this son would be so outstanding; his brows and eyes were clean and elegant, quite unlike his mother at all.

Zane... Craw...ford...

Isabelle Willow silently recited the name in her heart, so he was called Zane Crawford, such a melodious name.

"Grandma... Grandma..."

Isabelle Willow quickly snapped back to reality, meeting the concerned eyes of little Pip, "Grandma, what's wrong with you, your face is so pale, and your hands suddenly became cold."

Is it? Isabelle Willow suddenly realized that her whole body was cold, and her heart ached dully—yes, how could it not hurt?

This was the son of him and Zelda Willow. She minded it in her heart, and she also once had a daughter, but that daughter was no more.

"Pip, Grandma is fine, shall we go back?"

"Okay~"

...

Isabelle Willow left the mall with little Pip. Just then, little Pip looked up and saw a familiar figure across the street, exclaiming, "Grandma, look, it's Grandpa."

Isabelle Willow raised her eyes and saw Jude Crawford.

Jude Crawford had just come out of a commercial office building across the street. Today, he wore a black wool coat, stable and upright. As he descended the stairs, those strong, long legs were powerful, walking with an imposing presence; he was the captivating charm of a mature man, exuding a subtle aura of intimidation.

Butler Thorne followed respectfully behind Jude Crawford.

"Grandma, look, there's also a pretty lady beside Grandpa. Who is that lady?" Little Pip asked in confusion.

Isabelle Willow also saw that there was someone beside Jude Crawford—Jenny.

He was actually with Jenny.

Butler Thorne opened the back car door, and Jude Crawford and Jenny got into the car one after the other, and the luxury car sped away.

He drove away with Jenny.

"Grandma, Grandpa left early this morning; could it be that he is with this pretty lady?" Little Pip pouted unhappily.

Isabelle Willow withdrew her gaze, her expression indifferent, "Pip, you don't understand adult matters."

"Grandma, I understand; that pretty lady likes Grandpa, she's seducing him!" Little Pip huffed angrily.

"..."

"Grandma, I've got it! Last time, another pretty lady tried to seduce my dad, and I overheard it at the door. My mommy directly tackled my dad and said she wouldn't let him get out of bed the next day. Grandma, let's hurry home. I'll help you tackle Grandpa, and you can make sure Grandpa can't get out of bed the next day!"

"..."

Oh, my, what kind of parents are Hayden and Serena to not avoid talking about bedroom secrets like that, which will surely lead little Pip astray.

Serena Sterling, "... I did not!

Hayden Crawford, "... Dream on, I never even dreamt of such a good thing!

Isabelle Willow frowned, no, she needed to have a good talk with Hayden.

She raised her eyes and looked again in the direction where the luxury car disappeared—was he still entangled with Jenny?

...

Jude Crawford happened to meet Jenny by chance, and Jenny got out halfway.

"Sir, are we going home now?"

He had been at the company all day and hadn't gone home yet.

Jude Crawford took out his phone from his pocket. It was empty—she hadn't called him or sent him any messages.

He tossed the phone onto the seat beside him. Although she agreed to be his wife for a month last night, he knew she was unwilling. If he hadn't cornered Chase Sullivan, she wouldn't have agreed.

Although he managed to keep her with him, he still couldn't win her heart.

Actually, he wished that while he was working outside, he would receive a call from her.

Actually, he wished that when he came home, he'd see a dim, warm lamp she left for him.

Actually, he was very greedy; having just got her to return to being his wife, he wanted to win her heart.

He was afraid he couldn't control himself, so he left early this morning.

Jude Crawford gently closed his eyes, raising his hand to pinch his tightly furrowed brow.

...

In the villa.

The maid asked, "Madam, the sir hasn't returned yet; shall we wait for him to have dinner together?"

Little Pip looked into the night outside, "Grandma, it's already eight o'clock; is Grandpa not coming back tonight?"

It's quite late now, and Jude Crawford still hadn't returned.

Isabelle Willow patted little Pip's small head, "Pip, are you hungry?"

Little Pip stuck out his tongue bashfully, "A little."

Isabelle Willow looked at the maid, "No need to wait, serve dinner now."

"Yes, Madam."

In the dining room, Isabelle Willow and little Pip sat facing each other. Little Pip pointed at a dish of soup, "Grandma, I want to drink that soup; it looks so good."

Isabelle Willow picked up a small ladle, intending to serve little Pip the soup, but her motion suddenly halted.

Because this was Goji Berry and Bullwhip Soup, it was a tonic for men.

Little Pip couldn't drink this.

Isabelle Willow quickly turned to one of the maids, "Who prepared this soup?"

"Back to the Madam, this soup was... it was ordered by the old madam far away in the City of Aethelgard for us to prepare."

The old madam?

The old madam expressed that even if she wasn't present, her intentions were—the package has been received!

"This morning, we received a box of ingredients, including this bullwhip, sent by the old madam, saying it was for...for the sir to stew soup, to nourish him well." The maid said, her face turning red.

"..."

Isabelle Willow didn't know what to say.

"Grandma, what's wrong with the soup? I want to drink this soup." Little Pip looked at the bullwhip soup, drooling.

Usually, he didn't show such liking for any dish, but just by smelling the fragrance of the bullwhip soup, little Pip couldn't wait.

What to say to little Pip?

Isabelle Willow put down the ladle, "Pip, this soup is not for drinking."

"Why? Is this soup specially prepared for Grandpa?"

Seeing little Pip's innocent eyes, Isabelle Willow's gaze flickered, and she answered vaguely, "Yes."

Little Pip nodded, forming an 'OK' with his fingers, reassuringly, "I understand."

At this moment, two bright white beams of light came from outside, piercing through layers of cold dew at night. Soon, the elegantly carved dark wood door opened, and a wave of chill came rushing in, accompanied by a tall, upright silhouette.

Jude Crawford had returned.

The maid quickly squatted down to change his shoes. Jude Crawford lifted his slender fingers to take off his coat and placed it on the sofa before turning to enter the dining room.

Chapter 790: Make You Unable to Get Out of Bed Tomorrow

Little Pip saw Jude Crawford and was very happy, "Grandpa, you're back?"

"Uh-huh."

Jude Crawford responded and walked over to Isabelle Willow, stopping beside her. He slipped one hand into his pocket, and with the other, distinctively moved through her long hair, touching her face, "Didn't wait for me?"

He had a rich masculine scent, combined with the coolness of night dew, which was particularly pleasant.

Isabelle Willow looked up; he was standing against the light, blocking all of it in his strong presence.

The entire space became quietly oppressive due to his arrival. This was the aura of a man, powerful, like an emperor.

"I thought you weren't coming back," Isabelle Willow replied.

"Yes, Grandpa, this afternoon Grandma and I saw you with a beautiful lady. Grandpa, be honest, did you use work as an excuse today to go fool around with that pretty lady?"

The little bun crossed his tiny arms over his chest to show he was really angry.

Jude Crawford raised an eyebrow and looked down at Isabelle Willow, "You saw me this afternoon? Why didn't you call out to me?"

The little bun huffed, "Of course, we didn't want to disturb Grandpa's good time! By the way, Grandpa, Grandma said she won't let you off the hook tonight, she's going to make sure you can't get out of bed tomorrow!"

"..."

Oh my, what is the little bun saying?

Isabelle Willow was entirely unprepared for the little bun to say such things.

She quickly gave the little bun a kick under the table.

"Heh," a low, magnetic voice came from above, "Mrs. Crawford, do you want to keep me in bed tomorrow?"

"I didn't..."

"Of course, Grandpa, look, this is the soup Grandma specially made for you, wolfberry and bull penis soup!" the little bun said quickly.

"..."

Isabelle Willow was dumbfounded. How did the little bun know it was bull penis soup?

She quickly realized a problem, could it be that the little bun was acting all along?

Where did that naive little Pip go?

Scheming little boy!

Really cunning!

At this moment, the room darkened as Jude Crawford lowered his tall body and kissed her on the forehead. He murmured in a low voice, "Don't overthink, I was at the company all day. Butler Thorne can vouch for me, I only met Jenny later. She said she had something to tell me, but once in the car, I realized she had nothing to say, so I kicked her out halfway."

Really?

Isabelle Willow quickly pushed him away. What was he doing, in the dining room, with so many people around, kissing her forehead like that.

"Ah, Grandma and Grandpa, I'm getting a sty in my eye!" Little Pip quickly covered his eyes with his hands.

Isabelle Willow directly pushed Jude Crawford away.

Jude Crawford's sharply defined features softened with pleasure and tenderness. He sat at the head of the dining table and began to eat.

"Sir, which dish would you like?" the cooking lady asked cautiously while serving.

Jude Crawford looked at the bowl of wolfberry bull penis stew, "That soup."

The cook served a bowl of soup to Jude Crawford.

Seeing him choose this soup, Isabelle Willow, "..."

He misunderstood.

This bull penis soup wasn't ordered by her, and she never said to make him unable to get out of bed tomorrow. Clearly, he took it seriously.

At that moment, the hand she placed under the table was grasped by a large, defined hand, and Isabelle Willow's heart skipped a beat, wanting to pull her hand back strongly.

But she couldn't pull it back; Jude Crawford held her tightly.

The temperature in the dining room skyrocketed, full of ambiguity.

This evening was destined to be a sleepless night.

...

Little Pip took a bath, and Isabelle Willow helped him get dressed, "Pip, do you have anything you want to say to Grandma?"

Little Pip laughed, "Grandma, I'm sorry, I just thought Grandpa looked so pitiful, so I gave him a little help."

As expected.

"Pip, children's affairs are not something you should get involved in," Isabelle Willow said.

Little Pip tilted his head and looked at Isabelle Willow, "Grandma, whatever you're thinking in your heart, you don't say it, then I can only say it for you."

Isabelle Willow stiffened, "..."

"Grandma, what's a mouth for? It's for talking. Whatever you think in your heart, tell it to Grandpa. Otherwise, how will Grandpa understand, and don't forget, say I love you loudly!"

This clever little fellow, he understands everything.

Isabelle Willow affectionately patted the little bun's cheek.

Then came a knock at the door, and Jude Crawford, tall and lean, stood at the doorway, "Pip, not asleep yet?"

Isabelle Willow looked up to see that Jude Crawford had already showered. He was wearing a black silk pajama, his short hair wetly stuck to his forehead, looking significantly young and handsome carrying a trace of cool water mist.

His deep, narrow eyes glanced at the little bun and then settled on her face, the gaze intense.

He was urging.

Urging her to return to the room.

"I've already done it, Grandma, let's go back," the little bun snuggled under the covers and closed his eyes to sleep.

Faced with the instantly-asleep little Pip, Isabelle Willow, "..."

Isabelle Willow got up and went out.

...

In the master bedroom.

Isabelle Willow took a bath and then emerged wearing a silk nightgown.

No one was on the bed. She turned her head to see Jude Crawford standing on the balcony, back facing her. He braced one hand on the carved railing, while the other held a cigarette between long fingers, the outside chill inflating his black robe.

Hearing the sound, he slowly glanced back.

Amidst the swirling smoke, his deep-set eyes fell upon her body, scanning up and down several times, and he narrowed his eyes.

"Finished bathing?"

His hoarse voice was indescribably sexy and alluring.

Jude Crawford at night was irresistible, swathed in elegance, nobility, and an air of mischief and allure as if she were not wearing anything.

Isabelle Willow nodded, "Uh-huh."

Jude Crawford extinguished the cigarette butt in his hand and strode in, closing the balcony door.

In the room, the two locked eyes.

Soon, he walked over with firm steps, carrying an intense sense of invasion.

Isabelle Willow retreated, "Jude Crawford, wait... wait a minute..."

She had already agreed to be his Mrs. Crawford, even though he hadn't explicitly said so, she knew this certainly was a test to pass.

He was such a... passionate man.

But his actions were too direct, making her very anxious.

Isabelle Willow's lower back hit the edge of the table, suddenly her vision darkened as Jude Crawford leaned down and captured her lips.

Mm!

He kissed her with dominance and aggression, like a storm engulfing her breath.

"I don't want to hear, I just want... to do," he murmured in a hoarse voice.

"..." Isabelle Willow quickly placed her hand on his chest, unable to withstand the fervor of his onslaught.

Jude Crawford locked her soft waist, easily twisting her around so her body lay against the table.

Jude Crawford reached out, directly lifting her skirt.