

Substitute B 811

Chapter 811: What Makes You Think I'm So Wicked?

Standing upstairs, Julian Rathborne, "..."

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Julian Rathborne went to the study to work for a while, then went out, just in time to encounter Seraphina Linden coming upstairs.

Seraphina was in a great mood, and when she saw him, she greeted him proactively, her voice sweet and sticky, "Hi, Marcus, you've finished work?"

She was extremely adept at her job, her performance seamless.

Julian Rathborne stopped in his tracks, his phoenix eyes landed on her bright face. She had just eaten cake, and a bit of milky white cream clung to the corner of her luscious lips, deepening his gaze, "Wipe your mouth."

Seraphina paused, "...What?"

Soon, her vision went dark; Julian had already walked over, a masculine, crisp, clean scent enveloping her. The man used his long fingers to clasp her chin, while the other hand held a few soft tissues to wipe the corner of her mouth, disdainfully saying, "So dirty, you managed to get cream on yourself while eating cake?"

Julian Rathborne was born the son of Aethelgard, with noble blood running through his veins, naturally fastidious, and very fond of cleanliness.

The man displayed undisguised disdain on his handsome face, clearly showing his pickiness about the details of life, so the disdain was genuine.

But apart from disdain, his gaze carried a depth, dark and hot.

Now Seraphina's body was enclosed in his embrace, she didn't move, enjoying his proactive service, but she playfully blinked, "Mr. Rathborne, seeing the cream on the corner of my mouth, did some evil images crop up in your mind?"

The woman's faint fragrance kept invading his senses, and with his tissue slightly pressing down on her tender red lips a couple of times, they'd lose their color. This dual stimulation of sight and smell made Julian quickly swallow down his throat, "Miss Linden, what do you think makes me evil, hmm?"

On the surface, he still appeared like a proper gentleman, but Seraphina suddenly had a playful thought. After all, she had long noticed that he was particularly... repressed.

"Mr. Rathborne, did you really not think of anything?" As she spoke, Seraphina licked the corner of her own lips.

His fingertip was still there, so he immediately felt something soft and smooth touch him.

Julian's gaze instantly darkened; he wasn't some innocent boy. Although the small segment of romance in his life often got mocked by his friend Jude Crawford, his physiological age had matured to a certain stage, so Seraphina's highly suggestive action sparked a fire in his eyes.

His fingers suddenly tightened, grabbing her chin, and in a lowered voice, he cursed, "Seraphina, you're a woman, do you even know what shame is!"

Seraphina narrowed her playful and charming eyes, clicking her tongue, truly a hypocritical prude!

"I thought Mr. Rathborne only liked shameless women."

"Seraphina!"

Seeing that he seemed angry, Seraphina quickly softened her tone to placate him, "Are you angry? Don't be angry, I... played with Mr. Rathborne because I couldn't resist since he's so... delectable."

"Good boy~" Seraphina raised her hand and patted his head like soothing a puppy.

The head-patted Julian, "..."

Julian grabbed her slender pale wrist with a snort of displeasure, "Where do you think you're touching?"

Seraphina's clear and bright eyes looked at him, biting her red lip in a pretense of allure, "Mr. Rathborne, where do you want... me to touch you? I can do it."

What a little seductress!

Julian always considered himself to have a reputation for purity, but now she had ignited a body full of fire within him.

At this moment, Old Mrs. Rathborne came upstairs and, seeing the two of them pulling and tugging, quickly covered her eyes with her hand and exclaimed, "OMG, I didn't see anything, you two continue, continue!"

"..." Julian promptly let go of Seraphina.

Seraphina looked shy, "Mom."

Old Mrs. Rathborne was about to leave, but then she turned back, her face blooming with a smile, "Julian, Seraphina, mom's fine, just had your room tidied up, you can rest early."

The Rathborne estate had many rooms, with several master bedrooms. Someone had just climbed into Julian's bed, and he naturally wouldn't enter that room again. Old Mrs. Rathborne had someone prepare a new master bedroom.

Seraphina looked towards Old Mrs. Rathborne, "Mom, then I'll head back to the room," she said, casting Julian a glance both shy and coy, "Marcus, I'm waiting for you, don't come back too late, you've had it tough tonight, when you return I'll give you a good back massage and shoulder rub."

Old Mrs. Rathborne was overjoyed to hear this.

Julian watched coldly as the woman put on an act, his thin lips curving into a dark arc.

"Young Master, your tea is ready." At this time, a maid handed over a cup of tea.

Julian picked up the tea and took a couple of sips but quickly sensed something was off, "Mom, what kind of tea is this?"

"Sweetie, it's enhancement tea, didn't you find it tasty?"

"..." Julian heavily tossed the cup back, his handsome face darkened, "Mom!"

Old Mrs. Rathborne's smile swiftly turned to an aggrieved expression, "Sweetie, why are you being mean to mom, it's not easy for me, I'm already at this age, and still had to put on a brave face to get you something like this, it's not because you haven't been with a woman in so many years that I'm afraid you... won't manage. So I got this for you to spice things up, otherwise what if you lose the good daughter-in-law I finally got, what then, you see, you're being mean to me, life like this can't go on, boo hoo hoo..."

Facing such a drama queen mother, Julian, "..."

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Julian stayed in the study for another hour, dealing with some documents, then returned to the bedroom.

Just after entering the room, Seraphina happened to come out from the bathroom. The woman had just showered, wearing a black silk halter nightgown, with the skirt covering her thighs, beneath which her slender legs were slim and pale like a supermodel's, and the exposed skin was dazzlingly beautiful.

Julian glanced at her, speaking coldly, "Miss Linden, are you dressed like this deliberately to seduce me, or acting as if I don't exist?"

Seraphina sat at the vanity, starting her skincare routine. Through the mirror, she glanced at the man, "That question you need to ask your mom."

The implication being that your mom let me wear it, can I refuse?

Julian stepped forward, his tall and upright figure standing behind her, looking down, the woman's bright facial contours glowing with jade-like brilliance under the light, unbelievably youthful for a woman over forty.

"Seraphina, you're not wearing a bra."

It wasn't a question, but a statement.

Seraphina curled her red lips, "I really want to wear a bra, but your mom didn't give me one to wear."

Chapter 812: You Sleep on the Bed, I'll Sleep on the Sofa

Old Mrs. Rathborne gave her a nightgown, probably thinking it was already more than enough.

Julian Rathborne didn't say another word, turning his back and raising his hands to unbutton his shirt.

At that moment, the door to the room opened, and a beautiful maid named Mildred walked in, "Sir, let me help you with your clothes."

Mildred extended her hand to help Julian Rathborne with his buttons.

Seraphina Linden glanced sideways; Mildred was probably around 24 or 25 years old, exceedingly attractive, and her chest was particularly large, possibly an E cup.

Being able to enter the master's room at will and help him undress, Mildred must be one of Julian Rathborne's top maids.

Heirs to wealthy families have several top maids who hold higher status because they have the opportunity to join the young master's bed and resolve their physiological needs before marriage.

Seraphina Linden chose Julian Rathborne very early when both were in their prime twenties. She knew that night he was still a virgin, but later he got married and divorced, with women coming and going. Having a few intimate maids was quite normal.

Mildred's hand nearly touched Julian Rathborne, but he dodged slightly, pursing his thin lips to speak, "You don't need to serve here, leave."

"Yes." Mildred respectfully retreated.

Julian Rathborne unbuttoned two buttons when Seraphina Linden's soft voice sounded from behind, "Mr. Rathborne, you needn't avoid me. Tonight, you can have this young woman, Mildred, serve you. I'll cover for you with your mother."

Julian Rathborne stiffened, turning to her with a cold stare, "What are you talking about?"

"Did I say something wrong?" Seraphina Linden innocently blinked, "Mr. Rathborne, we're all adults here. You don't need to feel embarrassed around me."

Julian Rathborne realized then that she misunderstood, thinking he was having an affair with the maid!

Her attitude was so carefree, as if she didn't care at all.

An inexplicable fury surged within Julian Rathborne's chest, feeling quite displeased. He thought about these years apart; she must have had other men, otherwise, how did she get 10.1 billion before?

A woman as beautiful, sometimes innocent, sometimes alluring, capable of both sweetness and saltiness, surely no man could resist her!

Julian Rathborne looked at her coldly, then his thin lips curled into a mocking arc, "Seraphina Linden, do you think everyone is like you?"

Like her, how?

Seraphina Linden didn't understand him, and Julian Rathborne let out a cold laugh before turning into the bathroom.

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Ten minutes later, the bathroom door opened, and Julian Rathborne's hair was wet as he came out dressed in a dark blue silk robe, bringing a chilling air.

His phoenix eyes surveyed the large room; he didn't see anyone, and there was no one on the bed. His handsome brows had a touch of anger.

Where had she gone?

He was about to step outside to find her, "Seraphina Linden!"

In the next moment, there was a small movement on the sofa, followed by a soft cat-like sound, "Meow~"

Julian Rathborne paused, turned his head, and saw Seraphina Linden buried under a dark blue blanket; as he called to her, she wiggled and poked her head out, her eyes glistening as she looked at him, "Mr. Rathborne, are you looking for me~"

This blanket was his, also a cold-toned deep blue. Over the years, he hadn't had a single woman around him, and now, seeing such a soft and charming little thing acting like a cat and emerging from his blanket, caused a momentary feeling of comfort and a hint of vibrancy; Julian Rathborne hesitated.

Strangely enough, there had been another girl hiding in his bed earlier, but he had only felt disdain.

Julian Rathborne walked forward, looking down at her, "Go sleep on the bed."

"Hm?" Seraphina Linden asked, wide-eyed and confused, "Mr. Rathborne, I'm playing along with you. Do you also want me to... sleep with you?"

"..."

"Mr. Rathborne, you sleep on the bed, I sleep on the sofa."

"Seraphina Linden, with my upbringing, do you think I would make a woman sleep on the sofa while I take the bed or do you want me to carry you to bed?"

Well...no need for that, Mr. Rathborne!

Seraphina Linden swiftly lifted the blanket and climbed off the sofa, heading toward the bed.

Julian Rathborne lay down on the sofa and adjusted the room's lighting to a soft yellow hue as he started to sleep.

However, he couldn't fall asleep.

The sofa was filled with the fragrant scent from the woman, first from her hair, then from her body, invading his mind and causing his throat to feel dry, wondering if his unreliable mother's supposed potent tonic tea was taking its effect.

In any case, his body temperature soared, and his blood boiled.

The woman on the bed seemed asleep, but a few minutes later he got up and headed into the bathroom again.

Seraphina Linden truly slept, but in a hazy daze, she was suddenly awakened by an urge to use the bathroom.

She opened her sleepy eyes, rose from the bed, and opened the bathroom door.

In the next moment, she stiffened completely, sleep vanishing.

Through the frosted glass door, she saw the man standing under the shower, cold water splashing on his wheat-colored, healthy skin, forming tiny beads, while he lowered his eyelids, his wet bangs partially covering his cold eyes, lending a sense of indulgent sensuality. His hand was moving...

Jude Crawford's daily anecdote—

Jude Crawford's 18th birthday

After being rejected at the temple last time, Isabelle Willow did not feel discouraged; after all, life was long, and she had many moments left to reunite with him.

Soon came Jude Crawford's 18th birthday. In this life, Jude Crawford was even more brilliant than in the previous one, as the Crown Prince of Aethelgard's Crawford family, by the age of 18, he had already launched his third company, with Crawford Group's industry chain sweeping through the financial and business sectors like a tornado. At 18, Jude Crawford had gained such power that he could turn tides at his whim.

He was only 18.

In this life, Isabelle Willow had no opportunity to approach Jude Crawford. On his birthday, she arrived early at the Crawford Group's entrance.

Many girls had already gathered at the entrance, all of them Aethelgard's socialite daughters, here to present gifts, just like her.

Gifts were piled high, yet no one met Jude Crawford. The receptionist smiled, "Little girl, why don't you place your gift here?"

Isabelle Willow shook her head, "No need, I'll wait for him."

Thus she waited from morning till evening, and the receptionist returned, "Little girl, the CEO may not return, why not leave the gift here?"

Isabelle Willow shook her head again, "Thank you, but I'll wait for him."

And so she waited, from evening till the dead of night. The receptionist looked at Isabelle Willow, a young girl of merely fourteen or fifteen, wearing a white down coat with a red scarf wrapped around her neck, her lips red and teeth white, already a captivating figure. Who knows how stunning she'll be one day?

That little girl stood there all along, her eyes fixed ahead, searching in the vast sea of people for the familiar silhouette.

She said, I'll wait for him.

As if, from past lives to this existence, she had come for him, with eyes filled with starlit skies, all focused on him.

Chapter 813: You Hurt Me!

Hearing the voice, Marcus Kingsley's hawk-like eyes cast over, and Seraphina Linden collided with those scarlet eyes filled with passion and desire.

Time froze just like that.

After a few dozen seconds, Seraphina regained her composure, calmly released the door handle, and stepped back, "Sorry, Mr. Rathborne, I'll go out, you make yourself comfortable."

As she turned and took a couple of steps, she felt steady footsteps from behind, then her slender, white wrist was grabbed, the man hoisted her onto his shoulder and with a few quick strides, threw her directly under the showerhead.

Cold water poured down from above, drenching her thoroughly.

Seraphina raised her head, "Mr. Rathborne, what do you want to do?"

Julian Rathborne looked at her through the misty water, with a "smack", a broad palm supported the white porcelain wall beside her, his tall and strong figure pressed into her, speaking hoarsely with burning emotions, "You."

Seraphina raised an eyebrow, moving her red lips, "Mr. Rathborne, are you serious?"

Julian's eyes reddened further, like a beast locked on its prey, determined to claim victory, "I was fine in here, why did you barge in, Seraphina Linden, you provoked me first!"

"..."

So, it's her fault.

The two were now very close, and Seraphina could closely scrutinize his handsome face, many years ago in that room filled with ambiguous tension, she already knew how incomparably handsome he was, flawlessly attractive, a complete mess.

"Mr. Rathborne, we agreed this was just an act, I can flirt with you, but when it comes to sleeping together, I'm not willing." Seraphina tossed out her words, she wasn't willing.

Julian pressed his thin lips together, he never had the habit of forcing others, even though his body was uncomfortable now, hearing her say "not willing" dissipated a lot of his anger.

But he didn't release her, instead, he snorted coldly, "Seraphina Linden, who are you staying chaste for?"

Even as he was bathed in the warm glow, his handsome brows carried a coldness.

Seraphina, "What do you mean?"

Julian's strong body pressed down, both large palms supported either side of her, "What, playing dumb in front of me now, don't tell me, you haven't had a man in these years, even if you said it, I wouldn't believe it, I'm not a three-year-old kid easily fooled!"

"..." Seraphina didn't know what to say, because the words she wanted to speak, he wasn't allowing.

Now her deep chestnut curly hair clung wetly to her face, she raised a hand to tuck a strand behind her ear, with a trace of laziness in her charming eyes, "Mr. Rathborne, why do you seem like you're here... for an affair bust?"

The words "affair bust" provoked him, he sinisterly curled his crimson thin lips, "Tell me, who is that wild man paying you?"

Seraphina just thought, didn't know what little Pip would have to say if he knew his own grandfather referred to him as a "wild man"?

Why is it always our young Pip bearing it all?

The time she had little Pip transfer over 10.1 billion and one hundred bucks, seems he hasn't noticed any anomaly yet.

Seraphina arched her willow-like brows, then raised her small head, leaning closer to him.

Their faces suddenly closed in, breaths intertwined.

Julian Rathborne's tall figure suddenly stiffened, because at such a close distance, he caught her fragrance once more, the fire that had just died down suddenly flared up.

Looking at that bright, charming face before him, Julian's Adam's apple moved up and down, then he mocked, "What, seducing me? Don't think I'll let you go just for this!"

"Mr. Rathborne, maybe you misunderstood, I'm not seducing you, I just wanted to say, no comment."

"..."

Julian Rathborne's entire handsome face darkened, a surge of hostility that had been contained in his chest ignited instantly, he reached out, clasping her smooth shoulder with a big hand, applying pressure little by little, gripping her bones, "Seraphina Linden, speak quickly, who is this wild man?"

Seraphina felt like her shoulders' bones were about to dislocate, "Mr. Rathborne, let go of me, you're hurting me."

Hearing her coyly cry out in pain, Julian realized he had lost control, shit, this wasn't a good sign, she was already affecting his mind; every moment with her, he was led by her.

Julian slowly released his grip.

Seraphina stretched her muscles slightly, unhappy, "Mr. Rathborne, what's the big fuss, what exactly is our relationship, on what grounds are you questioning my privacy like capturing an affair?"

"The only tie between us is Serena, I really don't understand what you're angry about, speaking about cuckold, you've had other women these years, why is it allowed for you to cheat on me, but not for me on you?"

"Bullshit!" Julian Rathborne couldn't bear it and swore.

How exactly had he cheated on her?

These years he was clean, living like a monk, always in solitude.

Seraphina was very surprised, she suspected she was hearing things, did this man really swear!

Everyone knew this son of Aethelgard, Julian Rathborne, had noble blood running through his veins, dignified and outstanding.

Seraphina didn't want to anger him further, after all, the secret techniques of the martial arts world were still on him.

"Alright, Mr. Rathborne, you should take your shower first, I'm heading out." Seraphina wanted to leave.

But Julian blocked her like a wall, unwilling to let her go.

"Mr. Rathborne, could you please move!" Seraphina shifted, trying to push his robust body aside, but inadvertently touched something hard and hot, she paused her movement.

Seraphina looked up at the man's handsome face, blinking, "Mr. Rathborne, haven't you been with a woman for a long time? Why so excited?"

"..." Julian Rathborne didn't speak, instead, he grabbed her hand, slowly guiding it.

Seraphina immediately knew what he wanted, "Julian, you have your own hands!"

Julian's eyes, blood-red, stared at her, his gaze unpleasant as a beast eyeing its delectable prey, "Stop talking nonsense!"

"Go away, Julian, don't pressure me..."

Julian's eyes darkened, he reached out with a big hand to grip her petite chin, then leaned down to kiss her.

Suddenly kissed, Seraphina was momentarily stunned, he kissed intensely, instantly stealing her breath away.

She reasonably suspected he hadn't been with a woman for long, because he had a physiological reaction as soon as he saw her, even kissing was so uncontrollable.

Soon, he nudged at her teeth.

Seraphina immediately clamped her teeth, unwilling.

Julian hoarsely commanded, "Open your mouth!"

Seraphina shook her head, umm umm umm, expressing protest.

Julian glanced at her, then closed his eyes, leading her hand further down...

Chapter 814: Ah, Open Your Mouth!

The next morning.

Julian Rathborne knew he was in trouble because after Seraphina Linden came out of the bathroom last night, she ignored him and didn't speak to him.

Julian Rathborne went downstairs, and from a distance, he heard the laughter of Seraphina Linden and Old Mrs. Rathborne. He didn't know what they were talking about, but Seraphina had Old Mrs. Rathborne laughing heartily, unable to stop.

Seraphina was beautiful, sweet-talking, lively, and cheerful, exactly the kind of daughter-in-law that elders adored.

At this moment, Old Mrs. Rathborne noticed him, "Marcus, you're up?"

Julian Rathborne's eyes fell on Seraphina Linden. Seraphina also saw him, and as their eyes met, Seraphina quickly looked away, "Old Mrs., I'll go check if breakfast is ready in the kitchen."

After saying that, Seraphina turned and left.

She was still angry, angry that he lacked a sense of commitment.

Julian Rathborne slightly furrowed his brows and then walked down the steps, "Mom, morning."

Old Mrs. Rathborne moved closer and quietly asked, "Marcus, did you make Seraphina angry?"

"...No."

"I don't care, it's definitely your fault. Seraphina's so good-tempered, and you managed to make her angry. No excuses, hurry up and make it up to Seraphina. If you drive this daughter-in-law away, you won't be my son anymore, handle it yourself!" Saying that, Old Mrs. Rathborne also went into the kitchen.

"..." Julian Rathborne stood there awkwardly, wondering who was Old Mrs. Rathborne's biological child anyway?

He must be adopted!

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Feeling unappreciated at home, Julian Rathborne went to the office, returning only in the evening.

But he couldn't find Old Mrs. Rathborne and Seraphina Linden in the living room. They seemed to be absent, so Julian Rathborne asked the maid, "Where are Old Mrs. and Miss Linden?"

The maid respectfully replied, "Sir, Old Mrs. and Miss Linden are at home, they're upstairs in the game room playing mahjong."

"Playing mahjong?"

"Yes, Old Mrs. has invited a few old friends over today."

Old Mrs. Rathborne had this one hobby—she enjoyed playing mahjong, though she wasn't very lucky, never winning and constantly losing.

Those elderly friends loved playing with her, viewing Old Mrs. as a kind of generous benefactor.

These friends also loved gossiping. Given Julian Rathborne's many years of marital misfortune and lack of a woman by his side, they always found it a funny topic to tease Old Mrs. Rathborne about.

"Got it." Julian Rathborne headed upstairs.

Approaching the game room, he instantly heard laughter from inside. It wasn't unusual, as he'd always hear laughter whenever he walked by the game room.

However, this time it wasn't the laughter of those elderly friends, but the laughter of Old Mrs. Rathborne.

Inside, Old Mrs. Rathborne was laughing uncontrollably and joyfully.

Julian Rathborne paused, looking inside, and saw four people gathered around a mahjong table. Old Mrs. Rathborne and the other two elderly women were playing mahjong, and the other was... Seraphina Linden.

Seraphina was also playing mahjong and announced a "Six of Bamboo."

"Hold on!" Old Mrs. Rathborne called out, "Sorry, I've won this round!"

Old Mrs. Rathborne declared victory, pushing her tiles forward and pulling in the chips from the two elderly ladies in front of her, "Ah yes, how does the saying go, the wheel of fortune turns, I've won again and won't be polite, all your money is mine now."

The chips in front of Old Mrs. Rathborne had already piled up like a mountain. It seemed she was making up for all her previous losses with multiple wins today.

The two elderly ladies weren't happy, "Old Man Rathborne, did you call us here today to count your money? Your daughter-in-law's playing gives you the wins, you've won dozens of hands."

"Old Madam Alden," Seraphina quickly spoke up, blinking innocently and raising her hand to prove her innocence, "I didn't cheat at all, the sun and moon bear witness, it's just that my mom's luck is good today!"

Seraphina gave a playful wink to Old Mrs. Rathborne.

Old Mrs. Rathborne beamed with excitement, "What are you two grumbling about, don't scare my daughter-in-law! What's this, just because I used to lose to you and now you've lost once, you're upset?"

The two elderly ladies just clicked their tongues, "Old Man Rathborne, now that you have a daughter-in-law, even your tone has hardened!"

"We thought your son would become a monk for life, but suddenly he brings back such a beautiful wife!"

Feeling flattered, Old Mrs. Rathborne was elated. She had taken a lot of jibes in front of these friends over the years, but now, finally, she was having her moment.

At this moment, one of the elderly ladies noticed Julian Rathborne at the door and teased, "Oh, isn't that Mr. Rathborne back? Mr. Rathborne, when will you and Seraphina have your wedding, we're all eager to see you as a groom and toast at your wedding."

Julian Rathborne stood there unmoving, his gaze on Seraphina Linden. She had integrated into this circle of elderly ladies more successfully and quickly than he imagined, gaining everyone's affection.

Just then, Seraphina's charming eyes landed on his handsome face, a mix of shyness and sweetness as she called out to him, "Marcus, you're back?"

Looking at her bright and cheerful expression, it seemed as though it wasn't her who had been giving him the cold shoulder earlier that morning.

This woman's character was just like that, always giving him the respect and admiration he needed in front of others, making everyone else envious of him.

Julian Rathborne extended his long legs to walk in and came to her side, keeping one hand in his pocket, lowering his tall frame to get closer to her, "So, you know how to play mahjong?"

"Yes, just a little." Seraphina smiled broadly, a hint of wit in her eyes.

Julian Rathborne understood. She knew more than just a little, she was... particularly skilled!

The reason Old Mrs. Rathborne won so much money today was definitely intentional on her part.

Julian Rathborne nodded and didn't leave; instead, he sat next to her, seemingly interested in watching her play mahjong.

Seraphina Linden was puzzled, wondering why he was sitting there.

She was still upset and didn't want to talk to him.

Last night, this man... borrowed her service more than once, and now her hand was still sore today!

He did it on purpose, knowing there were so many people around.

Julian Rathborne naturally did it on purpose, clearly signaling that in front of so many people, she should be nice to him!

Beside Seraphina was a plate of exquisite fruits. Julian Rathborne parted his lips and casually asked, "The grapes are sweet today, aren't they?"

Seraphina, being sharp, immediately caught his hint, cursing him in her heart, but she promptly picked up a large grape with her delicate fingers, peeled it and fed the flesh to his lips, "Ah, open your mouth."

Chapter 815: He Hasn't Been with Any Women All These Years

Julian Rathborne glanced at her, then opened his mouth to eat the grape she offered him.

"Is it sweet?" Seraphina asked.

Julian nodded, "Yeah."

The two old ladies exclaimed, "Oh dear, Mr. Rathborne, you should at least consider the presence of us old folks. We can't handle too much sweetness, or you and Seraphina will be the end of us."

"I can't take it anymore. Lost at mahjong and now this lovey-dovey act? I'm done, let's go," they said as they dropped the mahjong pieces and stood up to leave.

Old Mrs. Rathborne, feeling quite pleased, warmly saw them off, "Mrs. Zhao, Mrs. Li, come play again tomorrow."

Once the old ladies left, Julian felt the grape he ate was unusually sweet; he'd eaten grapes before but they never tasted this sweet.

"The grapes are nice," Julian continued to hint.

Seraphina reached out and placed a plate of grapes in front of him, glaring at him teasingly with her bright eyes, "Here, eat up!"

Julian then realized that now that people were gone, she wasn't going to fuss over him anymore.

Julian frowned unhappily, "You..."

But before he could finish, Seraphina got up and walked away.

Her message was clear; she would save face for him in front of others, but she was still angry!

Julian was left behind, feeling speechless, "..."

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As Seraphina walked out, she saw Mildred, the beautiful maid she had noticed last night, approaching.

"Madam," Mildred said anxiously, "I just got a call from my husband saying that our daughter has a high fever. I would like to take a day off to accompany her to the hospital."

"A child's illness is a big deal, go quickly, Mildred, I'll have the driver take you," Old Mrs. Rathborne replied promptly.

Mildred thanked them and quickly left.

Seraphina was stunned. Oh my, Mildred is already married with a child?

Then how could she be with Julian....?

Julian with a married woman...?

Seraphina was thoroughly confused.

"Seraphina, what are you thinking about?" Old Mrs. Rathborne looked at her.

"Mom, so Mildred is married. I think... since she's serving Julian, she shouldn't be with other men." Seraphina voiced her thoughts.

Old Mrs. Rathborne was initially confused but soon realized, and gave Seraphina a teasing look, "You silly child, what nonsense are you talking about? Who said Mildred was serving Julian that way?"

Seraphina paused, wasn't it true?

"Seraphina, I know some wealthy families have the practice of keeping a few concubines for their sons, but our family doesn't follow such bad practices. Remember when you forcefully took action with Julian years ago and found out he was still innocent? He was quite the innocent one back then."

Regarding the incident where Seraphina overpowered her son, Old Mrs. Rathborne couldn't help but want to give Seraphina a thumbs-up as a heroine, "You have my admiration!"

Seraphina knew, that night was his first, and it was her first too.

But still...

"Mom, I've been gone for years, and Julian got married and divorced. He must have had many women around him. Rest assured, I won't mind his past," Seraphina said.

Old Mrs. Rathborne slapped her own thigh, "Seraphina, Julian hasn't told you about these things yet?"

"Tell me what?"

"Seraphina, let me tell you, when my Julian was young, he was so handsome that wherever his private car passed by, girls would flock to see him like crazy. But since childhood, he wasn't interested in girls. He dedicated himself to his studies and family business."

"At first, we thought it was good, but slowly we felt something was wrong. Julian was 18 and still hadn't shown interest in any girls. Later, when he went to study in Vessaria, I had someone find out that he didn't have a girlfriend, which worried me to no end. You see, a young lad full of enthusiasm, I started wondering if he might be gay?"

"Then one day, Yvonne Knight, pregnant, came knocking on our door, asking Julian to marry her. Julian agreed, but throughout the marriage, he never touched Yvonne, not even held her hand."

"All these years, he hasn't touched Yvonne, nor any other women. I went from worrying he was gay to worrying he might be impotent. Seraphina, imagine my anguish all this way."

"So, Seraphina, my Julian is pure to his bones. He's never been in a relationship, never interacted with any woman. He probably hasn't even watched a single adult film. His high intelligence gifted him with an emotional shortcoming, making him like a preschooler in matters of the heart. Seraphina, you're in some ways more mature than Julian. They say women are the best teachers for men, so I'm leaving my Julian in your hands."

"I can see it—you're very different to him. He really likes you."

This was the first time Seraphina had heard these things. She was utterly shocked. All these years, Julian had never... been with a woman?

Oh my, how did he endure all these years?

"Mom!" At this moment, Julian appeared. He seemed to have overheard a bit of their conversation and interrupted, "Stop chatting, it's late, go to bed!"

Old Mrs. Rathborne gave an "OK" gesture, "I'm leaving now."

And just like that, Old Mrs. Rathborne vanished from sight without any further ado.

Julian walked over, looking at Seraphina's bright and charming face, "What were you discussing with my mom just now?"

"Oh, your mom mentioned once catching you watching a film in your room."

At the doorway, Old Mrs. Rathborne stumbled slightly, "..."

Julian's handsome face frowned, "Nonsense, I've never watched!"

"Mr. Rathborne, don't lie. I don't believe there's a guy who hasn't watched films. I don't believe you haven't," Seraphina teased.

Julian maintained a cold expression. He truly hadn't watched. Around the age of 15, a playboy once sneakily shared some films on his phone for him to view.

Storytime with Isabelle Willow at The Crawford Group

Isabelle was waiting outside The Crawford Group's gates, and as midnight approached, a stretch Rolls-Royce business car sped towards her.

The business car brushed past her, and at that moment the tinted back window slowly rolled down, revealing a strikingly handsome face.

Jude Crawford had returned.

At midnight.

Isabelle's clear, cool eyes sparkled like stars, and she ran towards him.

But the business car didn't stop; it went past her with a "whoosh" and drove away.

"Jude Crawford!" Isabelle immediately started running to chase his luxury car.

Unfortunately, the business car turned at the red-green intersection ahead and disappeared.

Isabelle stopped, panting, her gaze fixed in the direction he disappeared, feeling a bit sad and worried, but she smiled, whispering softly, "Jude Crawford, happy birthday."

Chapter 816: He Actually Got a Nosebleed!

At that time, he glanced over and saw that the woman on the screen was too ugly, quite a mood-killer, with a man overlapping her, their pale bodies made him want to vomit.

Perhaps it was then that this kind of thing left him with a psychological shadow, and for many years, he couldn't accept a woman's touch.

Until she appeared.

She was the unexpected in his life.

His mother was terribly worried, crying, causing trouble, and even threatening suicide to push women onto him, never stopping.

"Seraphina Linden, if you insist I've watched any films, then there's only one, the one you starred in."

"..."

Seraphina Linden looked at his handsome visage, dressed in a white shirt and black trousers, the fine fabric perfectly outlining his tall, upright male backbone and the firm, muscular curves of his waist, and below, his long legs, the perfect abstinent male god that made people scream and go crazy.

Seraphina Linden really couldn't imagine that such a man could be so indifferent to desires, having not a single woman in all these years.

The old lady's suspicions were entirely reasonable; for any man, she would suspect something was physically wrong.

But Julian Rathborne's body was fine!

Last night...

"Mr. Rathborne," Seraphina blinked her exquisite lashes at him, "I want to ask you a question, you wouldn't... have fallen for me, right?"

Julian Rathborne stiffened, "What did you say?"

"It's said men never forget their first woman, let alone I'm so pretty, and that time we had was so happy; if you developed love from lust, it wouldn't be impossible."

Julian Rathborne pursed his thin lips, glancing at her condescendingly, "Seraphina Linden, self-love is also a kind of disease, and it's suggested you treat it promptly."

Seraphina wasn't angry at all; instead, she breathed a huge sigh of relief, patting her chest, "You scared me, you scared me, I thought I'd left another romantic debt, after all, I'm a heart-stealer."

"Mr. Rathborne, let me put it this way, I'm not in for love, men are just tools for my reproductive purposes, and when idle, can be teased for fun, don't fall in love with me; it's a dead-end!"

The reproductive tool Julian Rathborne, "..."

His handsome face turned completely dark "swoosh", that upset feeling surged again, he didn't speak, gave her a fierce glare, and lifted his foot to leave.

What's wrong with him?

Could it be... he's angry again?

Seraphina found that Julian Rathborne's temper was really big and unpredictable!

Hey, hey, hey, I'm not even done being angry yet, I'm the one who needs comforting!

...

Julian Rathborne went to the study to work, indeed, work was the thing he was familiar with; women were somewhat foreign to him.

Two hours later, he got up, went out, and returned to the room.

Just entering the room, Julian Rathborne smelled a soft and charming woman's fragrance, completely different from the coolness outside, his room had turned into a soft-bed high-pillow, a gentle tomb because of a woman.

Julian Rathborne paused, and then he heard Seraphina Linden's voice, "Beryl, you're here, I've already bathed, help me apply some body lotion."

Julian Rathborne lifted his eyes and saw a lovely silhouette ahead.

Seraphina had just bathed, lying on a rattan chair by the floor-to-ceiling window, wearing a black nightgown with an open back.

Julian Rathborne's pupils contracted, his gaze fell on her body, unable to move an inch away.

Her whole enchanting and beautiful back was exposed, her skin like high-grade mutton fat, even without touching, it felt like she'd slip through your fingers; her waist was deeply hollowed, yet her hips curving upward, a deep S shape, making any man witnessing this scene liable to have a nosebleed.

Accustomed to abstinence, Julian Rathborne suddenly saw such a stimulating scene, feeling as if hot coals rolled through his throat.

"Beryl, what are you doing, come over quickly."

Seraphina was tired after a day, resting her slender arms underneath, her voice carrying a lazy charm.

Julian Rathborne walked over.

Seraphina lazily lay on the rattan chair, eyes closed, having just soaked in a milk rose petal bath, so comfortable she could fall asleep.

Hearing footsteps approach, she spoke, "Beryl, the body lotion is on the bedside cabinet, help me apply it."

Julian Rathborne reached out, picked up the body lotion.

He poured the body lotion into his palm, then gently covered her exposed beautiful back.

Her whole body softened, as if boneless, the delicate pale skin akin to silk, the feeling that if touched, it would slip away.

Julian Rathborne's breathing tightened, the prominent Adam's apple rolling up and down twice, mouth dry.

He couldn't deny that, whether in looks or figure, Seraphina was a stunner, and years ago, that romantic escapade brought him indescribable extreme joy, so he never forgot over the years.

Over the years, she hadn't changed at all; she maintained herself well, as a healer, she had some quite private methods to stay fresh, if she'd like, she could ensnare any man's soul.

Julian Rathborne's large wide hands covered her beautiful back, gently massaging and applying the lotion.

Seraphina felt Beryl's palm was slightly rough, covered with calluses, but Beryl worked all year round, so this was understandable.

Beryl's technique was good, Seraphina let out a comfortable, soft moan.

The room was very quiet, Julian Rathborne naturally heard her gentle, charming sigh...

Julian Rathborne felt a heat under his nose, as if about to have a nosebleed.

He hadn't controlled his strength, gripping hard on her hollow waistline.

Seraphina felt a little pain, opened her eyes, turned to look, "Beryl, what's wrong... ah!"

Seraphina was shocked to see Julian Rathborne, bouncing off the rattan chair in an instant, "How... how is it you?"

Seraphina grabbed a blanket, covering her body, she never expected it wasn't Beryl, but him!

When did he come in?

Why didn't he say anything?

"Julian... Julian Rathborne, avert thine eyes, get out! You quickly get out for me!"

Seraphina thought of his large hands freely roaming her beautiful back, and the tender flesh just caressed by him bristled with pink bumps, she jumped barefoot off the rattan chair, heading directly for the door.

"Beryl! Beryl!"

Hearing her shout, Julian Rathborne quickly pursued, covering her mouth from behind, "Stop yelling! You mustn't shout!"

Seraphina didn't want to listen to him, but the next second, she sensed something amiss, because one drop, two drops, three drops... of warm liquid dripped onto her shoulder.

What is this?

Seraphina turned her head, her eyes widened instantly, "Julian Rathborne, you... you have a nosebleed!"

Julian Rathborne reached to touch, only to find he had a nosebleed!

He actually had a nosebleed!

Chapter 817: Do You Even Know How to Spell Shame?

"..."

Julian Rathborne, with a face ashen, walked up to the coffee table, pulled out a few tissues to cover his nose, and his muscular chest began to rise and fall. She had caught him off guard again; this joke would likely keep her amused for an entire year.

The man's pride was shattered.

Seraphina Linden hadn't expected him to have a nosebleed. She looked at herself; she wasn't dressed too revealingly. Now, she believed it—the old lady was right—all these years, he hadn't been with a woman!

"Mr. Rathborne~" Seraphina called out to him.

Julian Rathborne turned to look at her, sounding quite irritable, "What?"

Seraphina Linden, "Mr. Rathborne, you seem... like you've never been out in the world."

"..." Julian Rathborne gave her a sharp look, said nothing, and turned to go into the bathroom.

Seraphina watched his retreating back, wondering why this man seemed so awkward but, in a way, also... cute.

...

Julian Rathborne came out from a cold shower, while Seraphina had already changed into a normal nightgown and was leaning against the headboard reading a book.

Upon hearing a sound, she looked up, playful and wise water eyes glanced at him, "Oh, Mr. Rathborne, you took a really long shower this time. Could it be that you secretly... had a happy moment alone in there?"

It took Julian several seconds to realize she was... making a risqué joke with him!

"Shut up!" He spat out two cold words from between his teeth.

Seraphina used her book to cover half her face, leaving only her watery eyes shifting playfully, laughing in delightful convulsions at his embarrassment.

Julian Rathborne returned to his sofa, feeling extremely frustrated.

"Mr. Rathborne, there's something I want to tell you; I've been here for two days now, and I'm leaving tomorrow."

What?

She's leaving tomorrow?

Julian Rathborne suddenly felt empty inside. Though she only stayed for two days, he had gotten used to having such a lovely person in his room.

Every night when he returned home, he saw the warm yellow lights and heard her and the old lady's joyous laughter.

Her clever wit in coaxing the elder, her playful and teasing act, and her mischievous quips all made him very... happy.

He unexpectedly desired such days to last for a long, long time.

But now she suddenly told him she was leaving tomorrow.

Julian Rathborne's gaze landed on the document in his hand, seemingly indifferent to this topic. After a few seconds of silence, he appeared to speak casually, "If you leave suddenly, how will you explain it to the old lady?"

"I just told the old lady that I want to go pursue my career, she supports and understands entirely, she even said that women should have their own careers, the old lady allowed me to leave."

It seems she is determined to leave; the old lady already knows, and he's the last person to find out.

Julian Rathborne looked up from the document, his sharp eyes falling on her bright and beautiful face, "What kind of career are you going to pursue?"

"This..."

Can she tell him?

How to tell him?

Say she's going to be a madam?

NO!

"Secret." Seraphina said with a smile.

If she won't say, then she won't say; Julian Rathborne certainly doesn't think much of her little venture.

Not long after, Seraphina's Phoenix Plume Pavilion opened grandly, with her daughter Serena Sterling and Leah Thorne among an array of beauties gracing the event, causing a sensation in the community, Julian Rathborne, "..."

With a "snap", Julian Rathborne closed the document and slammed it directly onto the table, "Leave, quick, leave, nobody's keeping you, go to sleep!"

He lay down on the sofa and closed his eyes.

"..." Seraphina Linden felt disoriented again; what's up with him now, why is he angry again?

This person is so hard to please.

"Mr. Rathborne, there's one more thing I want to discuss with you. I've kept the old lady entertained as promised, so you should have some peace for awhile. Now, don't you think you owe me something?" Seraphina hinted.

Julian Rathborne directly turned around, back facing her.

Seraphina, "..."

Forget it, I'll bring it up tomorrow morning. Anyway, she must take the martial arts manual away, he can't get away with it!

Seraphina closed the medical book and lay down to sleep.

Julian Rathborne remained awake, but he knew Seraphina had fallen asleep because he heard her peaceful and long breaths.

Julian Rathborne truly felt like getting up at this moment and shaking her awake, this heartless woman!

Julian Rathborne lay back, staring at the crystal chandelier above, it was always like this; she barged into his life boldly, and when leaving, whisked away without a trace, while his originally calm life was stirred into chaos, leaving him abandoned like a forsaken husband!

Julian Rathborne realized in his heart; he had fallen for this woman.

After that serene and romantic encounter, he couldn't forget her, her quirky spirited nature further deepened his affection.

Turning and tossing, Julian Rathborne simply sat up, retrieving the martial arts manual.

The martial arts manual in hand was sealed, its contents hidden from view, piquing his curiosity; what precisely was inside that made her so attentive?

Julian Rathborne unsealed the package and flipped open the martial arts manual.

Little did he know that opening it would be a shock; Julian Rathborne's pupils suddenly contracted.

This martial arts manual was actually...

Each page depicted two little figures in various intimate poses.

Judging by the yellowed pages, it should be a rare collected edition, and she wanted this?!

Julian Rathborne immediately got up, rushing to the bedside, "Seraphina Linden, wake up!"

Seraphina was sleeping soundly, feeling as if an annoying mosquito was buzzing around her ear, so bothersome.

Opening her eyes, Seraphina immediately saw Julian Rathborne standing beside her bed.

So the temperamental Julian Rathborne was this irritating mosquito!

Seraphina was grumpy and unhappy, rubbing her sleepy eyes with both hands, she complained, "Mr. Rathborne, what's wrong now, can't you let people sleep in the middle of the night..."

Before she could finish, with a "snap," Julian Rathborne directly threw the martial arts manual onto her blanket, "Look at this, what is it!"

Her martial arts manual!

Seraphina's eyes lit up, quickly flipping through the manual, looking at it seriously while exclaiming in awe, "Wow, amazing, I've learned so much, truly worthy of being the long-lost manual!"

Beside the bed, Julian Rathborne, "..."

He thought after being caught she'd be embarrassed, ashamed, and wish to hide.

But now, delightfully admiring and even commenting on the manual, who was this woman!

"Seraphina Linden, you're a woman, do you even know how to spell the word shame?"

Chapter 818: Impressive, Macho Man!

"Hmm?" Seraphina Linden looked up, her innocent and pure gaze meeting his, then she nodded, "Of course, Mr. Rathborne, do you not know how to write the word 'shame'? I can write it for you and teach you."

Julian Rathborne was almost livid with anger. He reached out his large hand to snatch back the martial arts manual, "No more reading it, I'll destroy it right now!"

What?

Destroy the martial arts manual?

Has he lost his mind, not appreciating such a good thing?

"No! Don't touch my martial arts manual!" Seraphina quickly raised her hand high, preventing him from snatching it.

Julian Rathborne's tall, jade-like figure leaned in, one large hand grabbing her slender wrist, while the other easily snatched at the manual.

This man, who looked so noble and refined, surprisingly possessed such strength. Seraphina was immobilized by him, quickly falling into a disadvantage with the manual about to be taken back by him.

What to do?

Seraphina had a sudden flash of inspiration and quickly stuffed the martial arts manual into her nightgown, then puffed out her chest, presenting it to him, "Come on, try and take it if you can."

She actually stuffed the manual into her chest!

Julian Rathborne looked at her shapely figure, now bulging with the manual tucked in, his eyes turning red with agitation.

"Julian Rathborne, why aren't you taking it, are you scared?" Seraphina taunted.

Julian Rathborne's throat moved, then he pushed her, and Seraphina was directly pushed onto the soft bed.

Seraphina had no idea what was happening. She tried to get up, but Julian Rathborne had already covered her from above, fiercely saying, "Seraphina Linden, you asked for this, I've put up with you for too long!"

He lowered his head and captured her red lips.

Everything happened so fast; Seraphina forgot to clench her teeth. Julian Rathborne's deep kiss ventured in aggressively, thoroughly plundering all her breaths.

Seraphina's first reaction was that his kissing skills had greatly improved since last time.

Last time, he had awkwardly bumped into the corner of her mouth. Men seemed to be innately talented in this area, and after her guidance, this time his kiss was already confident and adept.

"Mmph!" Seraphina's two hands pressed against his chest, starting to resist, trying to push him away.

Julian Rathborne used a few long fingers to pin both of her slender wrists above her head, starting to kiss her brows and eyes, "Aren't you fond of this martial arts manual? Then let's explore it together tonight."

He said to her in a hoarse voice.

"..." Seraphina realized that this man was not only reserved and shy but also wicked!

At this moment, he shed his usual abstinent demeanor, becoming no different from other men.

"Julian Rathborne, stop, let me go! Didn't you say you don't like to force women? Didn't you say that forced melons are not sweet?"

"How do I know if you're sweet if I haven't tasted it?" Julian Rathborne murmured by her ear.

Seraphina had a rough idea that this time he meant it; he hadn't been with a woman for over twenty years, and it would be strange if he could hold back now.

But, she didn't want this.

"Julian Rathborne, if you dare! If you force me, I will kill you someday!"

Julian Rathborne's crimson eyes narrowed, "Then I'll give my life to you now!"

...

Five minutes later, the room was filled with a decadent atmosphere, Julian Rathborne's crimson eyes shaded with a layer of dejection and frustration.

Underneath him, Seraphina blinked her eyelashes, looking at him timidly and unsurely, "Are you... done?"

Five minutes...

Excluding some preparations, Seraphina estimated about two minutes, no more, or she'd be being too lenient!

Julian Rathborne's handsome face was dark; he released Seraphina and withdrew.

With nimble fingers, he picked up the nightgown from the carpet and put it on, adjusted his state, then turned back to look at her, "Want to take a shower?"

Seraphina grabbed a pillow and hurled it at his handsome face, "No!"

Julian Rathborne didn't dodge, the pillow hitting his face and then falling off.

"Julian Rathborne, this isn't over between us!"

Julian Rathborne's gaze was somber, pressing his thin lips into a cold arc, "Seraphina Linden, look clearly at the situation, it was you who provoked me, doing this is respecting you."

"..." Seraphina frowned deeply.

Julian Rathborne also frowned, a barely detectable nervousness spilling from his deep voice, "Seraphina Linden, what's wrong?"

Seraphina furrowed her brows, rubbing her painfully sore legs, "I got stabbed."

"..."

Julian Rathborne walked into the bathroom, returned with a warm towel, her nightgown ruined by him, he took a clean black shirt and dressed her, his low voice imbued with gentleness, "Does it still hurt?"

Seraphina kept her head down, not speaking to him.

Julian Rathborne showed a bit of emotion, "I'll ask you again, does it hurt, speak."

Seraphina kicked him, "Are you an idiot? I'm in such pain, and you keep asking if it hurts?"

"..."

Julian Rathborne was firmly kicked in the thigh, his entire handsome face turning ashen.

"Julian Rathborne, go buy me medicine!"

"What medicine?"

"Are you really clueless or just pretending, I'm still young, there's a possibility I could get pregnant, go buy contraceptives."

Julian Rathborne stood there, his tone stiff and unhappy, "I won't go!"

Seraphina was also angry, "Julian Rathborne, still, aren't you going to take responsibility for your mere two minutes just now?"

Two minutes...

Julian Rathborne stared hard at her for a few seconds before getting out of bed, he put on his night robe and then opened the room door.

Outside, someone unexpectedly stumbled in, "Ouch, I nearly fell!"

It was Old Mrs. Rathborne.

Julian Rathborne, "..."

"Oh dear, where am I, who am I, what was I doing," Old Mrs. Rathborne muttered, sneaking glances at Seraphina in the room, then nudged Julian's broad shoulder, quietly praising, "Son, staying up so late, you're impressive, a real man."

--A Daily Story of Crawford and Willow--

The extended luxury business car sped away, the quiet, luxurious carriage interior housing Jude Crawford in the back seat, watching the disappearing girl through the rearview mirror.

He had seen her earlier, naturally also noticing the girl who had chased his luxury car all the way.

It was her.

He recognized her.

The girl who had asked for his WeChat at the temple gate that day.

Riley Sutton glanced at his boss, it was the first time seeing his boss settle his gaze on a girl.

The heir of the business world's new generation had risen, and the girl who would stand by his boss's side in the future would also become the lady of the influential Crawford family, attracting many girls.

Riley Sutton also looked back, recognizing Isabelle Willow.

"Sir, isn't that... the girl from the temple gate, today is your birthday, she probably came to deliver a birthday gift."

Jude Crawford nonchalantly withdrew his gaze, giving Riley a faint glance, "Secretary Sutton, are you familiar with this girl?"

Riley Sutton, "..."

No, not familiar at all.

Jude Crawford, in every life, was still so domineering, jealous, a stingy guy!

Chapter 819: Notopterygium—A Cure for Kidney Deficiency

Julian Rathborne felt a twinge of pain for two minutes, "...Mom!"

Seeing Julian's mood sour, Old Mrs. Rathborne quickly scampered back to her room, "Son, hang in there, you're the best!"

Julian was speechless. He donned a black coat, grabbed the car keys, and drove to a nearby pharmacy.

...

Julian went to the pharmacy to buy birth control pills, but instead of heading back right away, he lazily leaned against the luxury car's body and lit a cigarette.

The cold night wind brushed against his face, bringing clarity to the lost.

Clearly, tonight he had lost control.

All these years, uninterested in women, yet tonight he panicked like a clueless youth. Most importantly, he performed poorly, penning a moment of disgrace.

Recalling the woman under him whimpering reluctantly, Julian's throat rolled. Who knows what he was thinking; maybe contemplating a repeat.

At this moment, pedestrians on the street stopped and stared. Under the night neon lights, many young and beautiful girls were secretly watching Julian.

Julian was still young, in his forties. A mature and successful upper-class man at this age naturally exuded an indescribable masculine charm. Once Aethelgard's prodigy, his noble demeanor became more refined with time, radiating the clean grace of a noble scion, magnetically drawing all eyes.

Julian hurried out without changing clothes, throwing a black coat over his attire. Now lazily leaning against the car, with faint sight, one could see his black silk pajamas beneath. Even such an ensemble looked high-class on him.

Moreover, Julian was wearing slippers.

Who would've thought that Aethelgard's prodigy, Julian, would step out in the dead of night in slippers to buy birth control pills?

The young beautiful girls looking at him blushed and their hearts raced.

Julian hadn't noticed any of this. He stubbed out his cigarette and turned to get in the luxury car, which sped away.

...

Julian returned to the Rathborne mansion and opened the bedroom door, not seeing Seraphina Linden on the bed.

She was here when he left, but now she's gone.

Where did she go?

Julian set the birth control pills down and glanced around the room. The room was empty; Seraphina was truly gone.

So late, where could she have gone?

Julian quickly stepped out, intending to summon a maid, "Someone..."

"Don't call for them." Old Mrs. Rathborne appeared, "Julian, are you looking for Seraphina? She said she had something urgent and left first."

What, she left?

Wasn't she supposed to leave tomorrow?

Old Mrs. Rathborne came over, nudging Julian with her elbow, winking suggestively, "What, Seraphina's just left and you're already missing her? You weren't so clingy before."

"..." Julian had no intention of talking to Old Mrs. Rathborne. He turned and went into the room.

Soon, he saw a small note pinned on the bedside table, with a line of graceful writing: Idiot, I left, and took the Jianghu manual with me.

Only then did Julian realize he had been duped. She's a doctor; she has her own ways to handle contraception. She had just sent him to buy birth control pills to get rid of him temporarily while she slipped away with the Jianghu manual!

This woman!

Julian was quite angry that he discovered more writing under the note. Looking down, he saw she had written: Angry, Mr. Rathborne? Don't be mad, I've left you a gift.

She left him a gift?

Julian's tightly furrowed brow relaxed a bit; the woman had some decency left.

He continued reading, curious about the gift she left him.

Soon he discovered the gift – she had written in large characters: Qinghuo remedy, specially for kidney deficiency!

She said, Qinghuo remedy, specially for kidney deficiency.

Julian's handsome face turned black with rage; Seraphina Linden, he almost wanted to strangle her!

...

Serena Sterling hadn't left Aethelgard yet because she was worried about Leah Thorne. On this day, after Leah finished her schedule, she and Serena had afternoon tea together.

In the café, the two friends sat by the window. Today, Leah wore a magenta woolen sweater, loose-fitting yet accentuating her delicate shoulders. Below, she wore black tapered pants, the cuffs rolled up, revealing her exquisite ankles. Her wavy long hair lazily draped over her shoulders, and her small face, like a blooming red rose, was boldly soft.

"Leah, I heard Justin Xavier is getting married?" Serena Sterling asked.

Leah stirred her coffee with a small spoon, curling her red lips carelessly, "Yeah, I heard his bride is Cecilia Pence, the eldest daughter of the entertainment tycoon, the Pence family. It's a wealthy match, right?"

"What wealthy match, Leah, I'm asking you, if Justin gets married, what about you?"

Leah took a sip of her coffee, "What does his marriage have to do with me? At most, I'll have a new sister-in-law."

"...Leah!" Serena held Leah's small hand, "A woman's youth is precious. You've been with Justin for four years..."

Serena had gone back to Alani to give birth to triplets, and it had been four years since.

Leah showed little emotion, casually tucking a strand of hair behind her ear; her gentle, lazy demeanor exuded a myriad of charms. "Serena, don't misunderstand. During these four years, Justin has never laid a finger on me. We have a pure brother-sister relationship."

Back in the day, Serena and Leah were known as the "Twin Belles of Bayside," Serena the ethereal and brilliant, while Leah was a thorny rose, born to outshine others. Her beauty attracted both envy and attack from women, and without a strong background, she'd be devoured by upper-class men, becoming someone else's plaything.

Serena was stunned, understanding that Justin, whom she knew well, had managed to restrain himself around Leah for these years?

"Leah, are you serious? Did Justin have a change of heart?"

"No," Leah shook her head, "it's more like... he wants to but doesn't dare touch me. He doesn't dare give in to his desires. Justin has always been a clear-headed and forbearing person. His self-control is formidable to an alarming degree."

Serena nodded in agreement. Justin was inherently a man with dark elements; the more clear-headed and self-restrained a man is, the more terrifying he becomes.

"Serena, shall we head back?"

"Sure."

The two friends left the café. Madame Goldie's car had been rear-ended today, so their luxury van hadn't come to pick them up. Serena and Leah decided to hail a taxi on the street.

Before the taxi arrived, an Aston Martin pulled up.

Chapter 820: Do You Want Me to Set You Up With a Guy?

This world-class Aston Martin luxury car exudes a low-key and restrained yet luxurious glow, making it particularly eye-catching on the midnight streets. Now the luxury car slowly stopped, the driver's window slid down, revealing an incredibly handsome face — it was Justin Xavier.

Justin Xavier had arrived.

Leah Thorne was still holding Serena Sterling's small hand. Seeing Justin Xavier, she showed no emotional fluctuation, but instead curled her charming red lips and obediently called out, "Brother~"

Today, Justin Xavier wore a well-fitted black suit. The superior fabric was pressed without a single crease, and his demeanor was indifferent and cold, making it hard for people to discern what he was thinking.

Now his gaze fell on Leah Thorne's charming little face, "Where are you going? I'll take you."

At this moment, a sweet female voice came from the luxury car, "Justin, who is it?"

Someone was in the passenger seat. It was Justin Xavier's fiancé, Cecilia Pence.

Cecilia Pence was tall and graceful, very beautiful. Now she leaned her body over to have a look at Leah Thorne and Serena Sterling.

Justin Xavier's face showed no expression as he lifted his thin lips, "My sister."

He said Leah Thorne was his sister.

"Oh, I've heard for a long time that you have a sister and that she's the current hot star in the entertainment industry, Leah Thorne. So it's true," Cecilia Pence looked at Justin Xavier with admiration and infatuation in her eyes. She then turned to the car outside, "Hello, Leah. I'm Cecilia Pence."

Leah Thorne tilted her cute head and looked at Cecilia Pence, blinking playfully, "Oh, it's sister-in-law. Hello, sister-in-law."

Being called "sister-in-law" made Cecilia Pence immediately show a shy expression. She even gave Justin Xavier a glance.

Justin Xavier didn't look at her. His hand, wearing an expensive watch, rested on the steering wheel, and his gaze remained on Leah Thorne.

Cecilia Pence paused for a moment. Sometimes a woman's sixth sense is the most accurate. As she liked Justin Xavier very much, she naturally sent people to investigate everything about him long ago.

So Cecilia Pence knew that Justin Xavier had a sister, but this sister wasn't biologically related. Everyone in the city knew how much Justin Xavier doted on this sister, almost to a pathological extent.

Now, he kept watching Leah Thorne. From the moment Leah appeared, he never took his eyes off her.

Cecilia Pence quickly said, "Leah, where are you and your friend going? Justin and I can give you a ride."

Leah Thorne shook her head, "Thank you, sister-in-law. We'll take a taxi. We don't want to be a third wheel to you and brother."

Cecilia Pence just said this casually and didn't really mean to give Leah a ride. Now that Leah refused, she was about to pretend to say goodbye, but before she could, she heard Justin Xavier's low and magnetic voice saying, "It's hard to get a taxi here. Don't fuss, get in the car."

Cecilia Pence froze. The man next to her said "don't fuss" in a very strong and domineering tone, which could be seen as an elder brother talking to his sister, but... this phrase coming from Justin Xavier gave the illusion of a man commanding his woman.

Leah Thorne looked at the location here and stopped being pretentious, "Alright then, thank you, brother and sister-in-law. Serena, let's get in the car."

Leah Thorne and Serena Sterling got into the back seat.

...

The Aston Martin smoothly sped down the road, and Justin Xavier drove without looking sideways. The atmosphere in the luxury car was very quiet, yet there was a strange air flowing through the silence.

Then Cecilia Pence broke the silence, "Leah, you're 24 years old this year, right? Do you have any boyfriends?"

"Not yet. I've been busy with work these years and have a tight schedule. There are also many paparazzi watching me, so I haven't had the chance to have a boyfriend. If you know anyone suitable, sister-in-law, please introduce him to me." Leah said.

Cecilia Pence nodded happily, "Sure, I'll definitely keep an eye out for you. Justin, you're not doing your duty. You have so many CEOs around you, you should also worry about the lifelong matters of your sister."

Cecilia Pence playfully glanced at Justin Xavier beside her.

Justin Xavier raised his head, his cold eyes looking at the back at Leah Thorne through the rearview mirror.

Magenta is a color that's hard for women to pull off, but Leah's red lips and white teeth, with her picturesque brows, managed this magenta perfectly. Her charming little face was accentuated to an astonishing beauty.

Justin Xavier's eyes darkened, his Adam's apple moved, "Leah, do you want me to introduce a man to you, huh?"

Leah Thorne met his gaze, "Of course I do, and brother, you have to introduce me to a good one. I want someone handsome, well-built, who listens to me and can make me happy."

Justin Xavier softly withdrew his gaze, pulling his thin lips into a darkly mocking, sarcastic smile, then let out a light scoff, "Heh."

Heh.

With that sound, the barely maintained atmosphere in the car instantly dropped to the lowest point.

Luckily, they soon reached the destination, and Leah Thorne and Serena Sterling got off the car.

The two best friends walked together, and Serena Sterling, who hadn't spoken all along, tugged at Leah Thorne's sleeve and whispered, "President Xavier's car hasn't left yet, he's watching you, Cecilia Pence is still there, he's really acting without any regard."

Leah Thorne didn't turn back. The smile that hung on her small face slowly cooled down, and she spoke lazily and indifferently, "He's fearless. It's not like he can't find another wife. If this wife runs away, the next one will come. Serena, don't pay attention to him. He's just a madman."

...

In the Aston Martin luxury car, Justin Xavier kept watching Leah Thorne enter the apartment before he retracted his gaze. He stepped on the accelerator, and the luxury car sped down the road again.

Cecilia Pence looked at him, trying hard to smile, "Justin, Leah is really beautiful, even more beautiful than in the TV and magazines. They say Leah is the current pinnacle of beauty in the entertainment industry, seeing it today, it's indeed well-deserved."

Justin Xavier was focused on driving, treating it as if he was listening to nonsense. Doesn't he know if she's beautiful or not?

"But Justin, I also heard some bad rumors, don't get angry. I heard... Leah entered the entertainment industry too smoothly. She has top-notch teams around her, some top resources don't even need her teams to fight for, they're personally offered, so... everyone's guessing... guessing... there's a big backer behind Leah."

Cecilia Pence said while observing Justin Xavier's complexion, "This backer isn't a good term. People say that most female stars in the entertainment industry now have backers, backers who provide money and effort, and all they need to do is... sleep with them."

Sleep with them?

The term "sleep with them" was used with much nuance. Cecilia Pence thought Justin Xavier would get angry, but saw that when Justin heard these words, he subtly raised an eyebrow, inexplicably exuding a bit of a wicked rogue charm, even curving his thin lips into a playful arc.