

## **Substitute B 971**

Chapter 971: Leah Thorne Injured by a Small Stone

Leah Thorne and Shane Young were in the middle of filming their second scene when suddenly a commotion erupted outside the set, causing quite a racket.

Director Wright urgently called for a halt, scolding, "What's going on? What's that noise outside? Where's security? What happened?"

At that moment, the assistant director burst through the door, stumbling as he ran in, "It's bad, Director Wright, something big happened!"

As he spoke, the assistant director furtively glanced at Leah Thorne.

"What happened? Speak!"

The assistant director tiptoed and whispered into Director Wright's ear, "Director Wright, we just got news that someone leaked... Leah Thorne got pregnant at 18 and had an abortion!"

"What?" Director Wright couldn't believe it.

"Director Wright, the news is absolutely true. The leak has spread to Weibo, and in just a few minutes, it's skyrocketed to the top of the trending searches. All the media reporters are swarming in, surrounding our entire film crew, and frenzied fans are charging forward, all demanding to see Leah Thorne. Security is barely holding them back; they're like they've been injected with adrenaline and are about to storm in!"

The news was like a thunderbolt. Director Wright stood stunned for a while before reacting. After all, he was used to big scenes. He immediately looked at Leah Thorne, "Today's shoot is canceled. Leah, something happened outside. Let Madame Goldie take you away quickly. You need to lay low for a while."

Leah Thorne calmly put down the script in her hand, "Okay, Director Wright, I'll leave now."

Madame Goldie was prepared for this, but she didn't expect the situation to escalate so quickly. Leah's natural publicity draw was too significant. "Leah, the van is waiting outside. Let's go."

Leah nodded, ready to leave with Madame Goldie.

But by then, reporters and frenzied fans outside had broken through all the barriers and rushed in, their cameras clicking away at Leah Thorne with blinding flashlights.

Countless microphones were shoved forward, and all Leah could see were the swarming heads thick with anticipation. The makeshift set was at risk of collapsing under the pressure.

"Leah Thorne, are the leaks and rumors true that you got pregnant at 18 and had an abortion?"

"Leah Thorne, can you tell us who the man is? You've been single all this time, did you have premarital pregnancy?"

The lights were blinding. Leah raised her hand to shield her eyes.

Madame Goldie quickly shielded Leah behind her, blocking the cameras, "Sorry, everyone, we won't respond to these rumors right now. This is a filming location. Please be safe and leave immediately."

At that moment, a group of agitated fans surged forward, pointing at Leah Thorne and cursing,

"Leah Thorne, we've been following you for so long, and this is what you show us?"

"An 18-year-old pregnant girl, at an age when you should be studying and learning, fooling around with men, then suddenly transforming into a major star in the entertainment industry. You usually pretend to be an aloof and glamorous ice queen, fooling so many people. Ugh, you're truly shameless!"

"Leah Thorne, you're a bad influence on kids. Give us our genuine feelings back, we are no longer your fans, we're leaving now!"

"Leah Thorne, you have parents, right? Oh, I forgot, you're an orphan, your parents have long passed away. You're truly like someone born but never taught anything. If my daughter were as cheap as you, I'd probably beat her to death. Your parents must be turning in their graves with anger!"

An agitated fan picked up a stone and hurled it at Leah Thorne's forehead.

With a dull thud, Leah was hit, and blood began to flow immediately, blurring her vision.

"Ah!" Madame Goldie screamed, shouting angrily, "Where's security? Security, get here quickly!"

The scene descended into chaos, but hotel security quickly swooped in, diving into the throng to barely maintain order. Madame Goldie embraced the injured Leah and swiftly led her away.

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Madame Goldie, being a master manager, had handled many crises. Although the scene was once out of control, she successfully brought Leah back to the villa.

"Leah, stay here for the next few days. It's safe, and those paparazzi won't find you." Madame Goldie wiped the blood from Leah's face with a warm towel.

Leah's forehead was wounded, a chunk of flesh missing, blood flowing profusely, it looked gruesome.

Madame Goldie took out a medicine kit and started treating Leah's wound. Leah pulled out her phone and opened Weibo. Moments ago, the app had collapsed due to the news of her pregnancy, and programmers worked overtime to restore it. Still, it was sluggish, indicating the massive traffic she generated.

Now, Leah was the top three trending topics on Weibo: Leah's pregnancy and abortion, 18-year-old Leah, and Leah's man.

The internet was flooded with curses. Previous praises and positive comments turned into flakes of snow, relentlessly pelting Leah. Some even categorized her as a tainted artist and called for her banishment.

Madame Goldie took Leah's phone from her hands, "Leah, don't look. The internet is full of insults and nasty comments about you. Besides a few irrational fans, many of your rivals are taking this opportunity to trample on you. After all, if you fall, your endorsement contracts are up for grabs. That fan who threw the stone was sent by your rivals."

The entertainment industry is like this, filled with unseen knives yet riddled with bloody storms.

Leah showed little emotion. She raised her hand, tucking a strand of hair behind her ear, "Madame Goldie, it's fine. Since I exposed this incident, I was already mentally prepared."

Madame Goldie paused, "Leah, what should we do next?"

Even Madame Goldie was unsure of what Leah intended to do.

Leah slowly curved her red lips, "Madame Goldie, we don't need to hurry. The ones who should be anxious are others."

Others?

Who?

At that moment, a melodious ringtone chimed. Leah received a call; it was Old Master Xavier.

"Leah, it's Old Master Xavier calling."

The call was expected. Leah reached for her phone and directly hung it up.

She didn't answer.

Soon, the phone rang again. This time, it was Mrs. Xavier; Laura Xavier calling.

Leah again directly hung up.

Her pregnancy and abortion at 18, who the child's father was—she didn't need to say it. The Xavier family could likely guess most of it.

A cold glint flickered in Leah's eyes. She wouldn't answer the phone, preferring to watch them squirm like ants on a hot pan.

These were debts that the Xavier family owed her, and she intended to reclaim them one by one.

Soon, there was a "ding-dong," and the doorbell rang at the villa.

Madame Goldie was startled, "Who is it? This place is secluded; no one should have found us."

Leah stood up, "I'll go open the door. If I'm not mistaken, it should be... someone here to pick me up."

Who?

Madame Goldie grew even more puzzled.

Leah walked over and opened the villa door...

Chapter 972: Is the Child Justin Xavier's?

Outside the villa's front gate stood several burly bodyguards dressed in black. "Hello Miss Thorne, the Old Master and Mrs. Xavier request that you return to the Xavier family mansion immediately. Please come with us."

"Leah, don't go." Madame Goldie hadn't expected that old Xavier and that resentful woman Laura would come so quickly. She was afraid they'd harm Leah, so she quickly stopped her.

Leah looked at Madame Goldie reassuringly, "Madame Goldie, don't worry, I'll be back soon."

Leah followed those black-clad bodyguards.

Madame Goldie was restless, afraid something might happen. The only person she could think of at this moment was... Justin Xavier!

That's right, Justin Xavier!

Madame Goldie immediately picked up her phone to contact Justin Xavier, but she quickly put it down again. Did she still need to contact Justin at this point?

He should have already heard the news by now, right?

No one had expected it... Leah got pregnant and miscarried at 18. He had once been about to be a father, and in the end, he learned about it like this, hearing it from others. Madame Goldie felt that Leah was quite ruthless this time.

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At Xavier Corp, in the VIP conference room.

The sales director was giving the quarterly sales report, and the company's executives, who wore blue badges around their necks, were listening intently. Of course, they occasionally stole glances at Justin Xavier, who was sitting at the head of the table. They all realized the CEO was off today because he frequently checked his phone during the meeting, as if something on it had hooked his soul.

Today, Justin Xavier was dressed in a well-fitted black suit. He sat at the main seat, lean back against the chair in a lazy posture, his handsome eyes lowered as he fiddled with his phone.

He opened WeChat, closed it, then opened it again...

His WeChat was empty; Leah hadn't contacted him.

Justin curled his thin lips into a faint, mocking arc; she really was heartless.

Last night, when he slammed the door and left, she didn't contact him or hold him back, just let him go.

She knew very well how popular he was outside, with so many seductresses trying to throw themselves at him, yet she didn't care at all.

Justin hated her, and he hated himself even more. He was the one who spoiled her.

He wasn't at all interested in the content of the meeting; his mind was all about going back to her. Last night in the bathroom, afraid of hurting her, he hesitated for a while, but in the end, he ignored her protests and made his way into her body. He was still not satisfied when she turned around and slapped him.

Despite her claiming to be the most worry-free and attentive mistress, he found her skills as a mistress seriously lacking.

Again, Justin thought about her paranoia about getting pregnant, and he felt restless. He shut off his phone, and his brows furrowed into a tight "||" character.

Just then, with a "boom," the conference room doors burst open, and his personal secretary rushed in.

The sales director, who was previously giving the report, was interrupted. Everyone's eyes focused on the personal secretary.

The room was so quiet that you could hear a pin drop.

The atmosphere was eerie.

Justin Xavier, at the head of the table, lifted his head, sending a chilling, displeased gaze at the secretary. The personal secretary had worked for him for years, and this was the first time he had been so reckless and out of line.

The personal secretary hurried over and reported in a low voice, "CEO, something terrible happened with Miss Thorne."

Justin Xavier pursed his thin lips, "What kind of trouble could she get into?"

The personal secretary lowered his voice, "CEO, we just learned... Miss Thorne was pregnant and miscarried once when she was 18..."

When the personal secretary first learned of this news, it made his heart race. Now, as soon as he finished speaking, he sensed the man at the main seat suddenly tense up.

Justin Xavier lifted his head, looking at his personal secretary, and asked, "What did you just say?"

The personal secretary's scalp tingled. Leah had been with Justin Xavier when she was 18, and later she went abroad for a while. It wasn't hard to guess whose child it was.

The personal secretary steeled himself and said, "CEO, Miss Thorne..."

Before he could finish, Justin Xavier abruptly stood up, his handsome face clouded with gloom, his cold eyes flickering with a frosty glint, "Where is she?"

"She was just taken to the Xavier family mansion by the Old Master and Mrs. Xavier."

With that, Justin Xavier quickly disappeared from everyone's sight.

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At the Xavier family mansion.

Leah arrived, and Old Master Xavier and Laura were already waiting for her with stern faces, along with Davina Rowe.

Davina had been caught and interrogated, and now she was trembling with fear, huddled in a corner.

"It was her! She's the one who said it herself! She said she was pregnant and miscarried at 18. Old Master, Mrs. Xavier, you must believe me, I'm not lying, all my allegations are true!" Davina looked resentfully at Leah, then knelt directly in front of Old Master Xavier, begging for mercy.

Old Master Xavier, with his sharp discernment, raised his cloudy eyes to look at Leah, "Did you deliberately tell her, wanting to use her hand?"

Leah glanced at the kneeling Davina, pitying her for not even realizing her mistake at this point.

Leah nodded, "Yes, since she was a pawn you sent to my door, why wouldn't I use her, lest I waste your kind gesture?"

Old Master Xavier, enraged, lifted his foot and kicked Davina in the chest, "You pig-headed fool, being used and still feeling smug!"

With a miserable scream, Davina fell to the ground, blood seeping from the corner of her mouth.

Laura sat in her wheelchair, gripping the wheel handles tightly, and asked through gritted teeth, "Leah, I want to know, whose child was the one you lost at 18?"

Leah looked at Laura, her exquisite eyes lazy and relaxed, "Mrs. Xavier, who do you think it was?"

Laura knew her son had slept with 18-year-old Leah, but she and Old Master Xavier had no idea about the pregnancy and miscarriage.

By the time they found out, the news had spread like wildfire, and the massive attention Leah brought had made the situation impossible to suppress.

They hadn't expected Leah would play such a card, catching everyone off guard.

Laura laughed coldly, "Leah, are you going to say that child was Justin's? Ha, what a joke. The child's already dead. How do you plan to prove it was Justin's? You were always a seductress, luring men everywhere. Who knows if you played around and got pregnant by someone else, then tried to pin it on Justin?"

Leah looked coldly at Laura. Although Laura was also a victim in this marriage, it wasn't reason enough for forgiveness.

"Whether the child was Justin's, it's not up to you to decide, only Justin can say!" Leah retorted.

"You!"

At that moment, with a "bang," the mansion doors were kicked open from the outside. Justin Xavier had returned!

Chapter 973: How Was the Child Lost?

Justin Xavier is back.

Leah Thorne looked up, and the chill from outside instantly invaded. Justin Xavier's tall, handsome figure entered her view. He had rushed over in a hurry and hadn't worn a coat. A layer of frost had gathered on the broad shoulders of his black suit. He was drenched in the darkness, his expression unreadable.

Laura Xavier knew she couldn't keep this news from her son. Leah played too hard this time, not hesitating to ruin herself and her career.

Laura immediately wheeled over to greet him, "Justin, why are you back? The company is so busy; don't get distracted by trivial matters."

Justin strode in, ignoring Laura. With car keys in hand, his cold eyes were fixed on Leah's small face.

"Justin, you've probably heard the rumors outside. Leah's pregnancy and miscarriage at 18 have nothing to do with you. Don't listen to her nonsense. Who knows whom she was messing with abroad and brought this upon herself," Laura sarcastically remarked.

A haze covered Justin's handsome features as if Laura was invisible, and he directly approached Leah. His thin lips moved, and in a hoarse voice, he asked, "Is what they're saying outside true?"

Leah straightened her pretty back to meet Justin's gaze and smiled, "President Xavier, which story are you asking about? There's so much gossip out there..."

"I'm asking if the story about you being pregnant at eighteen and having a miscarriage is true. Did you understand me?" Justin interrupted word by word, his voice ominous.

Leah paused for a few seconds, then nodded, "It's true."

Justin quickly lowered his eyes, and when he looked up again, fury had turned the corners of his long eyes red. After a long moment, he let out a low laugh.

"Why didn't you tell me? Why didn't you tell me, huh?" Justin gripped her smooth shoulders with his large hands, veins throbbing on his forehead as he struggled to suppress his voice and near-out-of-control emotions.

All the servants in the mansion sensed the frightening aura of their young master, daring not to breathe audibly.

However, Leah was not afraid. Her alluring eyes scanned over Old Master Xavier, Laura Xavier, and Davina Rowe, before carelessly settling on Justin's handsome face. She laughed, "President Xavier, why are you upset? Did I ever say that child was yours? It could have been someone else's."

Old Master Xavier and Laura were just about to agree when Justin exploded with a roar, "Don't give me that crap here, that child was mine, it was my blood!"

Old Master Xavier and Laura, "...What he said sounded like an insult to us!

Davina, embarrassed on the carpet, was stunned. She shook her head incredulously; what, the child Leah lost was... was Justin's?

Only now did Davina belatedly realize the foolish thing she had done!

Justin shook Leah's delicate shoulders forcefully. He gritted his teeth, his handsome jaw fiercely moving, "Leah, why didn't you tell me sooner? Why didn't you call to tell me when you were pregnant?"

"Ha, Leah, I've really underestimated you. You've had so many chances to tell me over the years, but you remained silent. Now I have to hear from others that you were pregnant. The whole world knows, and damn it, I'm the last one to find out. I must seem so stupid and easy to manipulate in your eyes, right?"

His voice was loud, nearly shouting, the beast-like eruption echoing throughout the mansion, causing everyone to shiver.

Leah had recently lost weight, and after being shaken twice by him, she felt like a kite with a broken string, on the verge of collapsing. In fact, she did feel dizzy, but she kept her back straight, meeting Justin's devouring gaze head-on, "President Xavier, don't be angry. Even if I had called you then, what would you have done with me and the child? Did you want the child to be born?"

What?

Justin froze.

A faint smile hung on Leah's red lips, "President Xavier, if you don't have the memory of a goldfish, you should remember that you've told me countless times you didn't want children. And, if I had kept the child, wouldn't you be afraid your grandfather and your mother would be enraged to death?"

The suddenly called-out Old Master Xavier and Laura, "...They're already furious to death!

Justin's face turned livid, pressing his thin lips into a cold, pale line. After several minutes, he finally spoke in a hoarse voice, "What to do with you and the child is my decision!"

With that, he gripped her cold, soft little hand and led her away.

"Justin..." Laura called out to Justin.

Justin's footsteps paused for a moment, his blood-red cold eyes swept over Laura and Old Master Xavier, "Leah is my woman. I don't like others interfering with my woman, including you two. This time, you brought her here, fine, but don't do this kind of thing again, or it'll end badly for all of us!"

With that, Justin quickly disappeared from sight with Leah.

Laura was trembling with rage, was Justin... warning her just now?

Laura increasingly felt that her bond with Justin was weakening. In his eyes, Leah seemed to weigh more than she did as a mother.

Old Master Xavier's complexion was also terrible, watching Leah's departing figure, his murky eyes slowly filled with fierce murderous intent.

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Justin drove Leah back to the villa, and the two said nothing along the way, the atmosphere deathly still.

The lost child had brought their relationship to a freezing point.

Leah took a hot shower and went to bed to sleep. She knew Justin was on the balcony, smoking since he returned, one cigarette after another, craving the numbing effect of nicotine.

Who knows how long it was, but there was movement on the balcony, and then a weight sank beside her on the bed. He sat down, bringing with him the smell of smoke.

"Was the child conceived on that birthday?" he asked.

Leah shrank under the blanket without opening her eyes, "Yes, I didn't know anything at the time, I was alone, and didn't know I was pregnant. By the time I found out, I had already miscarried."

"How did you lose the child?" Justin asked, smoking, through the swirling smoke his tightly knotted brows were faintly visible, "You'd better tell the truth. I'll have someone investigate, and if I find out you're lying, you're done for."

"Oh, I went abroad, had nowhere to go, rented a small room. The landlord, seeing me alone and pretty, tried to force himself into my room one night to rape me. I resisted with all my strength, but my stomach hit the headboard, and blood gushed out..."

#### Chapter 974: Justin Xavier, I Don't Love You Anymore

It's been a few years now, and Leah Thorne could narrate the event with a voice that was extremely calm, "It was night, and I was lying in bed alone. There was so much blood that it immediately dyed the sheets red. The landlord was terrified and ran away. I couldn't move, my stomach hurt as if it was no longer my own, and the wet blood dripped down the sheets..."

Leah's voice suddenly stopped.

Justin Xavier exhaled a cloud of smoke and looked at her. Her face was pale, almost translucent, revealing small blue blood vessels inside. She closed her eyes, and her eyelashes fluttered like a dense brush.

Justin felt a suffocating pain in his chest, as if a giant hand was gripping it tightly. He had never experienced such pain; it was truly unbearable.

"If you don't want to talk, then don't." he said hoarsely.

Leah opened her eyes; there was nothing in them—no pain, no tears—just an empty look, "Deep into the night, the tenant next door returned, a warm-hearted old lady. Seeing the blood seeping out from the door, she quickly called the police, and then I was taken to the hospital. There, the doctor told me that I had a miscarriage."

Leah placed her cold, small hand on her flat belly, "At that time, I didn't even know what being pregnant meant. I didn't know when the baby was inside me. By the time I found out, he was already gone."

Justin remembered when she said her stomach hurt and asked him to rub it for her some time ago. He didn't understand then that once, inside her stomach, there had been his child. In a place he didn't know, she and the child suffered such pain.

On her 18th birthday, as if he were obsessed, she didn't know about pregnancy, but as a grown man, he did. Yet he didn't use contraception and never thought that she, just barely an adult, could get pregnant the first time, carrying his offspring inside her.

Recently, he suspected something but didn't dare to delve deeper, constantly denying it in his anxiety, thinking it shouldn't be this way.

He had never thought about... being a father.

But, his first child had already been here.

Her womb once nurtured his little life, the continuation of his bloodline.

"Is it because of that miscarriage that you can't get pregnant again?" he asked.

Leah nodded, "Yes, I was too young then, the major blood loss from the miscarriage, combined with the procedure, severely injured my body. The doctor said I could never get pregnant again."

Her infertility was his doing, after all.

Justin looked at her young face, a girl he had cherished and protected for over a decade, never willing to let her face any harshness, yet ultimately, he had covered her in scars.

A sharp pain pricked his fingertip; it turned out he hadn't smoked for a long time, and the burning flame had scorched his fingertip.

Justin dropped the half-smoked cigarette into the ashtray and reached out to caress her small face.

Leah didn't avoid it, tilting her snow-white little face and looking at him with her dark eyes.

Time seemed to turn back to years ago when she was still the pure and beautiful little girl by his side.

Justin stroked her small face, reveling in her skin, as smooth as egg whites, and said in a husky voice, "It's okay, Leah, we don't need children in the future, just the two of us."

He said, in the future, just the two of us.

Leah trembled, burying her little face deep in his palm. Like a kitten, she kept nudging the warmth in his hand, coquettish and longing, "But, I want to have children."

She said softly.

Justin stiffened suddenly.

"You don't want to have children, but I do. It's a woman's right, a choice in life."

"Serena already has three children. It was tough and painful for her during pregnancy, but she was so brave and strong because Hayden Crawford never let go of her hand, giving her all his love."

"Serena has many people around her. She has a loving mom, a strong dad, friends, supporters, and her own family. I thought back to when I was 18 and pregnant—I had nothing—alone, no one taught me how a girl should protect herself. All I saw were sympathetic, mocking, and malicious glances. I hadn't even grown up myself and foolishly became a mom overnight. Half of my life seemed like a long dream."

"I love children. Serena's three little geniuses are so lovable. I keep thinking, if I gave birth, my baby would also be adorable. A boy would be my little man, and a girl would be my little darling. My mom is the best mom in the world. In the future, I would be like my mom, becoming the best mother and living happily."

"But, all this is gone. I can no longer have my own baby. No one knows how much I regret it."

Justin felt his palm getting hotter. She cried, and the tears falling into his palm were hers.

He never thought that one day, the girl he raised would bury her face in his palm, crawling humbly like a wounded little beast, her face streaming with tears.

Justin finally understood that Leah hadn't changed over the years. She was still that bright and beautiful girl from the prestigious Thorne family, with love in her heart, always living in warm sunshine.

It was just that he had reached out and dragged her into hell.

He used to think that what the Thorne family owed him could be repaid with her.

But now, his palm was burning, and the pain was almost unbearable, making him want to fling his hand away.

"Brother~" At this moment, Leah in his palm raised her eyes, looking at him with tear-filled eyes, and called him "Brother."

Justin was stunned, forgetting to react. At this time, Leah, amidst her tears, curled her lips and said, "Brother, I love you. Do you know?"

She said, Brother, I love you. Do you know...

Justin forgot to breathe, looking at her in a daze.

"Brother, I love you, really love you, I have loved you for ten whole years. If you ask me what my biggest dream in this life is, I would tell you, to marry you, to be your Mrs. Xavier, and to have a baby with you."

"But you say that status and children are not something I can covet. So, you see, you personally destroyed my dream."

"In the ten years you cherished me, you spared me from harshness but also gave me a lifetime of frost."

"If this was your revenge on the Thorne family, then congratulations, you've won thoroughly. You taught me to go from love to not love, leaving my heart riddled with holes, devoid of any courage to love."

"Justin Xavier, from now on, I don't love you anymore."

Chapter 975: Leah, Let's Get Married!

Justin Xavier, I don't love you anymore.

This sentence exploded by Justin Xavier's ear, his pupils contracted sharply, leaving him stunned.

Actually, she loved him, he knew.

It's just that he didn't expect her to personally tell him at this moment that she no longer loves him.

Years ago, when he saw her in a red dress bathed in warmth at the entrance of the Thorne family's mansion, that moment became the beam of sunlight he longed for and wanted to hold in his heart.

She had loved him.

Now, she has taken back all that love.

Justin Xavier's heart felt as if it had been torn in two, the immense pain accompanied by panic and confusion. He finally realized that in the act of revenge, he lost her.

His reddened eyes slowly became wet, and Justin Xavier suddenly felt like an abandoned child.

Born into the dirty, vile Xavier family, he had never received love in his life. When she came along, he wasn't really sure if he had adopted her, or if she had adopted him, the independent stray.

Across more than a decade, she stayed by his side, and because of her, he had a home.

Now, she announced she no longer loved him, and the thing he'd desperately tried to hold in his grasp slipped away like fine sand.

He suddenly became terrified and anxious, not knowing... how he would live without her from now on.

Justin Xavier extended his large hand, gently ruffling her hair. He lowered his handsome eyes, his throat rolling several times before he finally said, "Leah, whether you love me or not makes no difference, because you will still be by my side, and no one can separate us."

Saying this, Justin Xavier's thin lips landed on her cheek, kissing her tears away bit by bit, "Leah, let's get married."

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When Leah Thorne opened her eyes, Justin Xavier was already gone. Last night, he smoked a lot of cigarettes before getting into bed to hold her while he slept.

He held her so tightly last night that she couldn't breathe, as if he was trying to meld her into his very bones and blood.

At this moment, there was a "knock knock" on the door, "Leah! Leah!"

Madame Goldie had arrived.

Madame Goldie came in a hurry, entering directly after knocking, "Leah, why are you still sleeping? Get up quickly, everything outside is going crazy."

Leah Thorne was pulled up by Madame Goldie, feeling a bit lazy and groggy, "Madame Goldie, it's rare for me to have a break, can't you just let me sleep a little longer~"

"Leah, at this time, how can you still think of sleeping? This morning, Xavier Corp released a statement on Weibo." Madame Goldie handed her phone to Leah Thorne.

Leah Thorne glanced down, and Xavier Corp's official statement had already gone viral on the hot searches. The statement was concise, the content revealing that the child Leah Thorne lost belonged to Justin Xavier of Xavier Corp. From today onward, Leah Thorne is to pause all work and focus on preparing for marriage. On the 15th of this month, Justin Xavier and Leah Thorne will wed.

Now the top three hot searches have reshaped, with the Xavier-Thorne wedding, the soon-to-be Mrs. Xavier Leah Thorne, and Leah Thorne Justin Xavier, these explosive news stories once again caused Weibo's system to crash, with billions of shares and comments.

"Leah, just now, President Xavier accepted an interview with the media, watch for yourself." Madame Goldie opened a short video.

Xavier Corp's statement sparked thousands of waves, pushing all public opinion to a peak. Given Justin Xavier's usual powerful and sharp methods, it would have been expected that he would heavily influence the hot searches and suppress the news. However, this time he did nothing but issue a statement, causing all the media's spotlights to fall squarely on him, completely surrounding Xavier Corp.

In the video, the photographers were jostling about, but with Xavier Corp being Bayside's richest, its security was first-class. Security personnel had drawn a cordon, controlling the journalists, when a long business limousine drove into view.

The private secretary respectfully opened the back door, and Justin Xavier got out.

Today, Justin Xavier was still in his well-tailored black suit, with a polite gold-rimmed glasses gracing his handsome face. Among his indifferent and chilly aura, there was a hint of abstinent frigidity, making people want to scream.

The security stepped forward, the private secretary clearing the way. Justin Xavier strode with steady steps toward the company's lobby.

As he passed, the crowded reporters made way for him, seemingly intimidated by his superior aura.

Soon, a daring reporter couldn't help but ask, "President Xavier, what exactly is happening between you and Leah Thorne?"

Other reporters immediately handed over their microphones, vying to ask,

"Everyone knows Leah Thorne is your sister, how could you have a child with your sister?"

"President Xavier, are you really going to marry Leah Thorne and make her your Mrs. Xavier? Is the marriage news true?"

"President Xavier, what kind of story is there between you and Leah Thorne?"

Justin Xavier's polished black leather shoes suddenly paused, he stopped. Turning around, his cold black eyes looked into the camera.

The originally noisy scene instantly quieted, Justin Xavier scanned the room lightly, then opened his thin lips slightly to say, "Leah Thorne is not my biological sister. If I tell you that from the first day I brought her home, I treated her as my child sweetheart, would you believe it?"

The reporters were speechless, "..."

"Some of you don't seem to understand black and white on paper, maybe you slipped through nine years of compulsory education or have vision problems. Let me say it once more, Leah Thorne's child is mine, Leah Thorne is also mine, we will soon marry, and she will soon become my Mrs. Xavier."

After saying this, Justin Xavier turned around and left in large strides.

This video exploded once again. Leah Thorne opened the hot comments, which were as follows,

"Oh my God, isn't President Xavier simply too handsome?"

"Rich people really know how to play; everyone disperse, Beauty Thorne has already become Mrs. Xavier."

"I want to write a book for Leah Thorne, titled 'The Celebrity Superstar Turned the Boss's Child Sweetheart, Watch Leah Thorne Navigate the Entertainment Circle and Successfully Enter the Elite.' This book would be a hit."

"Ehhh... I've already imagined many plotlines from a domineering CEO novel..."

Leah Thorne didn't continue scrolling; she put down her phone.

"Leah, what's really going on with you and President Xavier? Is he really going to... marry you?" Madame Goldie asked uncertainly.

Leah Thorne had a face full of indifference, "Oh, last night he seemed to mention it, saying let's get married. I didn't hear it clearly."

Madame Goldie was at a loss for words, "Leah, I want to congratulate you, but I can't help but feel that something's off about you. Will you actually marry President Xavier?"

Leah Thorne looked at Madame Goldie and shook her head, "No."

She had asked him if he would marry her, but she hadn't said she would marry him.

Chapter 976: Justin Xavier Kneels on One Knee

Alright, Madame Goldie is ready to watch and see how Leah Thorne and Justin Xavier will clash. Anyway, the Xavier and Thorne families are in a never-ending feud.

"Leah, take a good rest before the big wedding. President Xavier has ordered to pause all your work. Let others shoot their scenes in 'Fu Sheng' for now. Everything will be discussed after the wedding. With Xavier Corp's statement out this morning, brands that planned to break contracts with us last night have stopped.

Some even raised their prices, pointing to you for endorsement. Leave it all to me; I'll arrange everything well, so you don't need to worry."

Leah nodded, "Madame Goldie, thank you for your hard work."

Madame Goldie stood up, ready to leave, but before leaving, she suddenly asked, "Leah, do you really not love President Xavier anymore?"

Leah curled her lips, "From the moment I planned to use the child, I stopped loving him."

Madame Goldie nodded, "Leah, I hope you truly don't love him anymore, otherwise, hurting him deeply could mean you also suffer significantly."

...

Leah spent a day resting in the villa, sunbathing, and trimming the flowers, leading a peaceful and pleasant life.

She knew the outside world was already in chaos, with gossip and the Xavier family probably in an uproar, but these things had nothing to do with her.

Sometimes she even felt that Justin Xavier shielded her from all the storms, yet he was her stormy city.

At six in the evening, Leah sat on the couch in the living room watching a TV drama, holding a bag of chips, munching one after another, producing a crisp chewing sound.

Soon, two bright headlights shone onto the lawn outside, and the maid quickly opened the villa's door as the tall and handsome man stepped in with a chill in his presence; Justin Xavier was back.

"Sir, dinner is ready. Would you like to start eating?" the maid asked respectfully.

Justin Xavier changed his shoes at the foyer and then walked into the living room. He immediately saw Leah Thorne eating chips and watching a soap opera. Her eyes were on the TV, not once looking at him.

Justin Xavier took off his coat and handed it to the maid, "Has Miss Thorne eaten?"

"Sir, Miss Thorne didn't have much of an appetite today. She hasn't had dinner; no matter how we persuaded her, she just shook her head and only ate some chips," the maid said in a troubled tone.

"Got it." Justin Xavier responded indifferently, then walked with long strides into the living room.

He sat down beside Leah Thorne, leaned over, and kissed her cheek, "Why are you eating chips? They're unhealthy junk food."

Leah watched the TV without looking at him, "I like chips. Normally, Madame Goldie controls my diet, fearing I'd gain weight, so she doesn't let me touch these things. Rarely on holiday, I just want to eat some."

Leah had a naturally alluring figure, but she also managed her weight regularly. Maintaining body weight is part of a woman's self-cultivation, and both natural and acquired restraint contribute to a woman's most refined state.

Justin Xavier said nothing more, just opened his mouth, "Ah."

He implied she should feed him one.

Leah picked up a chip and fed it into his mouth.

Justin Xavier didn't think the chips were tasty. He chewed elegantly and lazily twice, then leaned back lazily against the sofa, his right arm casually resting on the sofa armrest behind Leah. He glanced at the TV drama being shown, and somehow felt that the male lead looked familiar. Oh, he remembered, it was that popular young actor Shane Young.

How coincidental.

Justin Xavier picked up the TV remote and directly switched the channel, changing the idol drama channel to financial news.

As Leah was engrossed in watching, she turned her head inexplicably and looked at him, "Why did you change the channel?"

Justin Xavier, "Don't you think the heirs of conglomerates in financial news are more interesting than the domineering CEOs in idol dramas?"

Justin Xavier almost said that he was better looking than Shane Young.

Leah was speechless; she really didn't want to engage with this man who came back only to eat her chips and snatch her TV remote.

"Then you watch the news yourself. I'm going upstairs." Leah got up.

But Justin Xavier wrapped his arm around her radiant shoulder, pressing her back onto the sofa. The next second, Leah felt a sudden chill on her right ring finger as something slipped on.

She looked down and saw a diamond ring.

Justin Xavier had put a diamond ring on her.

"Do you like it?" His tall figure leaned in, asking her softly.

Leah flickered her eyelashes, dissatisfied, "President Xavier, what does this mean? Your proposal lacks sincerity, not even kneeling on one knee!"

Justin Xavier glanced at her, then moved and stood up, slowly kneeling on one knee before her, "Leah Thorne, marry me."

He was quite perfunctory; he just did what she wanted, knowing that the result was the same—she would be his Mrs. Xavier.

Leah listened to his dry proposal and dryly replied, "Oh, I don't agree."

The maid watching this scene inexplicably found it funny. She had seen proposals before, but such a casual one was definitely a first.

Justin Xavier's handsome face suddenly turned cold. He immediately stood up, "Leah Thorne, you've got to be kidding me. You won't agree, yet you tricked me into kneeling on one knee?"

The maid's eyes widened in shock because a man who flipped his temper due to a rejected proposal was also a first.

Leah looked at the Justin Xavier in front of her and slightly curled her lips, "President Xavier, if you hadn't knelt on one knee, how would I know whether to say yes or not?"

So did she mean his kneeling was what made her not agree?

"..." Justin Xavier was genuinely annoyed, so much so that he was at a loss for words.

At this point, Leah reached out, trying to take off the diamond ring from her finger.

But after several attempts, she couldn't remove the ring; it was already snugly fastened on her finger.

Justin Xavier gaze down at her with a chilled laugh, "Don't bother, this ring, once worn, can never be taken off."

What?

Leah didn't believe it; she clutched her finger a few times, and her fair hand soon turned red from the effort, but the ring remained unfazed, seemingly fused into her bones and blood.

"Are you hungry? Join me for dinner." At this point, Justin Xavier pulled her along into the dining room.

Leah shook her head, "I'm already full. You can eat by yourself."

Can she really be full just from eating a few chips?

Justin Xavier looked at her. Recently, she seemed to thin down visibly to the naked eye, her whole person languid and void of vitality. A sense of unease once again surged within him; he always felt... he was slowly losing her.

Justin Xavier suddenly softened. He extended his arms, pulling her into an embrace, his thin lips landed firmly on her long hair, "Don't be like this, Leah. Actually, I'm really sad..."

Chapter 977: J Love L

Justin Xavier didn't even know what he was saying. A flood of emotions was repressed in his heart. He could only hold her, brush against her hair, and in a hoarse voice, tell her he was actually very sad...

The maid watched the scene unfold, once again struck with amazement. The man who was as fierce as a tiger and oblivious to romance a moment ago suddenly softened like a child.

Being abruptly informed that she had been pregnant, and he had been a father, truly saddened him.

He needed comfort.

He needed to be embraced.

Leah Thorne's small hands hung by her sides without providing any response. She couldn't even heal herself, so how could she have the strength to heal others?

Justin Xavier held her tightly, rubbing his face against her hair and her cheeks, much like a... small puppy. After getting his fill, he slowly released her, "Is it because the food is unappetizing? I'll cook noodles for you, alright?"

"No." Leah turned to leave.

But Justin grabbed her, led her straight into the kitchen, and trapped her between the counter and his embrace, making her accompany him as he cooked.

As the eldest grandson of the Xavier family, Justin rarely set foot in the kitchen, his hands untouched by chores.

But back when Leah was still young, he had cooked noodles for her, and his noodle-making skills were quite impressive.

Rolling up his white shirt sleeves twice, he revealed muscular forearms and a luxurious steel watch on his wrist. Skillfully, he began to cook the noodles, stirring them with chopsticks as his other hand rested on Leah's slender waist, slowly moving down to her flat belly.

Leah noticed his actions too. He used to particularly enjoy touching her slender waist, but now he loved touching her belly even more.

His hand was large, nearly covering her entire midsection, tracing gentle circles as he lovingly caressed it.

Leah felt resistant to this motion, "President Xavier, wake up, there's no child in my belly now."

Justin's large hand hesitated for a moment but soon resumed its usual action, "I treat you as my child, is that not allowed?"

"... I once begged you to touch my belly, but you refused. Now, there's no need for such belated affection, which is worth even less than dirt."

Justin knew she was referring to an earlier event. That night, he desired her while she hesitated beneath him, asking him to touch her belly. He had lost patience and mentioned that there were plenty of women outside willing to bear his children.

He remembered how she looked at him with tear-streaked cheeks, sobbing, her lips trembling, weakly pleading, calling him brother, not to have children with other women.

Justin lowered his sharp gaze, his thin lips pressed against her cheek, his voice low and hoarse, "Leah, I'm sorry, I deeply apologize..."

Leah scoffed, "You think that saying sorry will have me say it's okay? Don't dream."

Justin kissed her cheek repeatedly, shifting the topic, "Leah, get some rest these days. I'm handling all the wedding preparations. You don't need to worry, though we need to discuss the design and decoration of our marital home."

With that, he drew out a design sketch from his pocket, pointing with his finger, "Here's the living room. Outside the living room is a large swimming pool. This is our room, and next door... I want to leave a nursery..."

Leah cut him off directly, "Is President Xavier giving me a heads-up so that you can have children with other women later?"

"I didn't mean it that way..."

"Then what's the meaning of showing a nursery to someone like me who's infertile, President Xavier? Please kindly explain it to me."

Seeing her cold and lazy demeanor, Justin slightly furrowed his sharp brows, and the atmosphere between them suddenly dropped.

Just then, a melodic ringtone sounded, indicating an incoming call for Justin Xavier.

He showed no intention of answering it, not even sparing it a glance.

"President Xavier, why aren't you answering your phone? Since you suddenly want to marry me, I would think your grandfather, your mother, and your father, who's on vacation, would be anxiously blowing up your phone."

Justin didn't deny it. Indeed, it was a call from the Xavier family, but he hadn't answered a single one.

"Leah, I know you hate the Xavier family. Haven't you always wanted to get back at them? Now is your best opportunity. Marry me, become Mrs. Xavier."

Leah admitted that his proposal was indeed tempting. Laura Xavier had once said she was just a mistress Justin Xavier supported outside, but now, Justin wanted to marry her.

The daughter of the Thorne family becoming the daughter-in-law of the Xavier family—Old Master Xavier, Hugh Xavier, and Laura Xavier would surely be infuriated to the point of smoking.

However, Leah slowly shook her head. She looked up at Justin with dark, alert eyes, "Do you think my revenge is over? No, this is just the beginning."

"Justin Xavier, I will not marry you. Don't act on wishful thinking. I won't wed you. I seek revenge, but not by sacrificing my happiness because you all aren't worth it."

"I hope one day, after uncovering the truth, I can break free from this filthy mire, to bid farewell to everyone and everything of the past, and embrace the sun, living well from then on."

Justin Xavier now realized that her heart had already wandered far. She was eager to turn him into someone from the past, into a past event. Her future no longer included him.

...

In the middle of the night, Leah had already fallen asleep, while Justin Xavier lay beside her, wide awake, looking at her soft, alluring face cuddled in his arms, and holding her small hand.

On her small hand was the diamond ring he gave her. She was intent on taking the ring off without closely examining it. Had she done so, she would notice the tiny English letters JloveL carved on the inside of the ring band.

JL are the initials of their names, and love stands for his love, a deep affection he never spoke out loud.

Previously, she had asked him, Justin Xavier, do you love me?

I do.

How could he not love?

His love had arrived long before hers, dormant in places unknown to her, woven into his very bones, thriving tenaciously.

All the answers she sought were within this diamond ring.

Justin rose and went to the adjacent room, switching on a wall lamp. He began molding those tiny porcelain dolls.

Unbeknownst to him, when she was pregnant, he always felt it was a son.

A son of him and her.

It was strange. Despite always thinking he disliked children, now his mind was full of thoughts about their son's image. He believed undoubtedly that their son resembled him, as if carved from the same mold, yet the son's eyes would be like Leah's—dark and bright, devoid of the Xavier family's darkness and coldness, facing the sun wholeheartedly.

After completing their son, Justin molded one of Leah, then one of himself, linking them hand in hand as a family of three.

#### Chapter 978: You Can't Escape the Palm of My Hand

Justin Xavier returned to the bedroom, where Leah Thorne was still asleep, her pale and delicate face had a hint of pink.

Justin placed a porcelain figurine representing the family of three into her small hand, then lowered his head to kiss her smooth forehead, "Leah, don't try to leave me. You are the compensation from the Thorne family, and you will never escape my grasp in this lifetime."

Leah was in a deep sleep, unable to provide any response to him.

At this moment, his phone chimed with a text message.

Justin opened the message, which informed him that Mort Thorne's whereabouts had been tracked.

...

When Leah opened her eyes, Justin was already gone. He had been very busy these days, preparing for the wedding and the new house.

He hadn't intervened in the online discussions anymore, and when Leah transitioned from a big star to a lady of a wealthy family, the public opinion became distant from her.

Even though she had made it clear yesterday that she wouldn't marry him, that she wouldn't go through with the wedding, he seemed not to have heard her, as the wedding day approached closer.

Leah, her eyes bleary, gazed at the crystal chandelier overhead for a while, then sat up, and at that moment, something suddenly fell from her hand onto the bed.

Lowering her eyes, Leah saw the porcelain figurine.

It was the first time Justin attempted such a craft. A naturally privileged young master, domineering CEO, accustomed to a life of luxury, was not skilled at shaping porcelain figurines—he had made himself and her look very ugly indeed.

In between the two of them was a very tiny figure, representing the child they had lost...

Leah's eyelashes trembled like finely braided feathers; deep inside, she felt as if she had been struck hard. She raised her hand, and her soft fingertip gently fell onto the little porcelain figure in the middle.

In these past few years since losing the child, she didn't even dare to think about anything related to the child.

It was a wound deep in her heart, slightly touched, it ached, aching to the point where she couldn't breathe.

But now, Justin had crafted a small porcelain figure and placed it beside her.

Is this her baby?

Oh, yes, this is her baby.

With trembling fingertips, Leah held the porcelain figurine in her hand, her eyes hot, and soon, large teardrops began to fall.

At this moment, she sat on the bed, clutching the porcelain figurine tightly in her hands, and cried uncontrollably.

...

The wedding day arrived, all the elites were in attendance, the entire room sparkled, and media flashlights kept flashing, as Justin Xavier gave Leah a grand wedding.

Leah was unwilling to marry, but it was evident that Justin didn't give her the right to refuse. She was brought to the bridal dressing room, where she was dressed in a pristine wedding gown and adorned with exquisite makeup at others' whims.

Outside, there was a clamor, "Sorry, madam, you are not allowed inside. President Xavier has instructed us not to let you see the bride; you are putting us in a difficult position."

"How insolent!" Laura Xavier's cold voice could be heard, "I am the mother of your President Xavier. Can I really not see the woman my son is about to marry? I want to see any of you dare stop me today!"

As she finished speaking, with a "bang," the door to the bridal dressing room was pushed open.

Laura entered, pushing a wheelchair in.

The staff behind looked at Leah awkwardly, "Mrs. Xavier..."

Being referred to as "Mrs. Xavier" for the first time, Leah wasn't quite used to it; those black crystal eyes of hers glanced over lightly, "It's fine, you all can leave."

Justin's employees handled matters very cautiously, so these staff members didn't dare to actually leave, "Mrs. Xavier, we will just stand outside the door, call for us if you need anything; President Xavier is outside greeting guests."

The staff exited.

Now, only Leah and Laura remained in the bridal dressing room, Laura unable to conceal her hatred and contempt for Leah, "Leah Thorne, have you no shame? Your mother seduced my husband, and now you want to marry my son. I feel like tearing off that wedding dress from you!"

Leah extended her hand to adjust the hem of her wedding dress, then stood up. She approached Laura, smiling, "Mrs. Xavier, I think you have it wrong. I didn't choose to wear this wedding dress myself, your son forced me into it. I would have been happy to be your son's mistress, but your son insists on bestowing me the title of Mrs. Xavier. Mrs. Xavier, what could a powerless woman like me possibly do?"

Laura's face twisted. She remembered the young Leah as very obedient, who would stay hidden in her room, too scared to come out under Laura's sharp-tongued tirades.

Now Leah had grown, was all thorns, and had developed quite a sharp tongue.

"Mrs. Xavier, I actually feel sorry for you. Do you know where you went wrong?"

"You keep making the same mistake. Your husband is unfaithful, and you only hate my mother. Your son is unruly and wants to marry me, and you came after only me, as if having me and my mother vanish would bring you peace and happiness. In reality, one is your husband, the other your son. Can't you manage them? A woman's happiness is never granted by others; it should be grasped in her own hands."

"Outwardly you seem domineering, but deep inside you're cowardly. You are in pain but lack the courage to prevent further damage. You keep blaming and hating others. The former Winslow family's distinguished daughter now lives as a mentally twisted old woman locked in her boudoir, and who should she blame for that? I see no one else to blame because you are the one who turned yourself into this pitiable state."

Laura froze, staring blankly at Leah, completely unable to comprehend what Leah was saying.

Soon, she processed it, her hands clasped into fists, emotionally yelling, "Leah Thorne, what right do you have to interfere in my life?"

Leah looked at her calmly, her red lips curling into a lazy arc, raising an eyebrow, "Mrs. Xavier, you have lost your composure, what is it you are anxious about?"

"I..."

"Shh." Leah suddenly placed a finger on her lips in a silencing gesture, laughing lightly, "Mrs. Xavier, listen, what do you hear?"

Laura, as though enchanted, held her breath to listen, but she heard nothing.

"Mrs. Xavier, did you hear it, that's the sound... of a dream breaking. Over the years, your greatest talent has been deceiving yourself. It is said we can't wake someone pretending to be asleep. Then today, I will personally shatter the dream you've woven for yourself all these years, Laura, it's time for you to wake up!"

On the final few words, especially "Laura," Leah suddenly raised her voice, and Laura felt a rush of stormy wind assault her. In that moment, she inexplicably shivered from a chill welling from every fiber of her being, originating from the unknown fear of the future.

Laura looked at Leah in shock and bewilderment, wondering what Leah intended to do at this wedding?

Chapter 979: Happy Newlyweds

"Leah Thorne, what are you trying to do?" Laura Xavier asked warily.

Leah raised an eyebrow, "What do you think?"

Laura had a very bad premonition, she felt that something might go wrong at the wedding.

At this moment, there was a respectful voice from the staff outside, "President Xavier, madam and the bride are inside."

The next second, the door was pushed open, and the tall, jade-like figure of Justin Xavier appeared in the sight.

Some staff members rushed to report the situation, which is why Justin Xavier appeared.

Today, Justin Xavier was wearing a well-fitted black suit, no different from his usual refined and abstinent look, yet subtly different. His handsome features were soft today, with bright, dark eyes, exhibiting an energetic spirit, tinged with a faint joy.

Ah, looking into those eyes, he truly was the groom today.

"Justin, you're just in time. Quickly cancel this wedding. Leah Thorne isn't genuinely willing to marry you. I suspect she's planning something bad for the wedding!" Laura exclaimed excitedly.

Justin Xavier did not look at Laura. His gaze fell upon Leah Thorne the moment the door opened, and it never left her.

Leah Thorne was wearing a wedding gown, custom-made for her from Aurelia; light feathers encrusted with luxurious diamonds, sacred, and dazzling. The strap and waist design perfectly outlined her youthful and slender figure.

Her long hair was already pinned up, revealing her soft and radiant features. Her dark eyes were lazy yet captivating. Today, Leah Thorne in her wedding dress was breath-takingly beautiful, making one forget to breathe at first glance.

Today, she was his bride.

The once self-proclaimed bachelor, Justin Xavier, felt a genuine sweetness this moment; his chest full to the brim. Suddenly, he had a sense of... belonging.

She gave him that sense of belonging.

Justin Xavier stepped forward, walked to her side, and said with a low, affectionate voice, "Leah, you look so beautiful today."

Leah raised her delicate eyebrows playfully at him, meaning to say, what are you speaking of, am I not usually beautiful?

Justin Xavier smiled indulgently.

Watching the two exchange flirtatious banter, Laura was fuming with anger, slamming the armrest of the wheelchair fiercely, "Justin, you're so disobedient. Sooner or later, you'll be ruined by this woman, Leah Thorne!"

Justin Xavier was in a particularly good mood today. He glanced at Laura, "Mom, if you're not feeling well, I'll have someone send you back."

"No! I don't want to go back!" Laura outright refused.

At this time, a staff member walked in, "President Xavier, it's time now. The wedding has to start."

Justin Xavier extended his large hand to wrap Leah Thorne's soft, boneless hand in his palm, "Leah, let's go, we're getting married."

He led her out with large steps.

Following behind him, Leah suddenly whispered, "Justin Xavier, you should listen to your mom."

Justin Xavier didn't stop, responding casually, "What?"

"You should cancel the wedding. This is your last chance."

Justin Xavier squeezed her small hand, "Don't say silly things."

Leah lowered her eyelash-like thick eyelashes, oh well, forget it.

...

Today's grand wedding was filled with distinguished guests. Justin Xavier led Leah Thorne onto the stage, instantly drawing everyone's attention, and they all drew in a breath,

"Oh my, the bride is so beautiful."

"Everyone has been speculating on who would win the heart of Leah, the most glamorous red rose. I didn't expect President Xavier to be the one."

"I can't believe President Xavier is getting married. The love of my life is now someone else's bedfellow, sob sob sob."

"President Xavier and Beauty Thorne standing together truly make a mesmerizing couple, a match made in heaven. Wishing you both a joyful marriage."

All the ladies from noble families cast envious glances at Leah Thorne. As the prominent figure of Bayside, reserved and refined, Justin Xavier had appeared in countless boudoir dreams, and now Leah Thorne officially entered high society, becoming the young mistress.

Of course, all the men looked at Justin Xavier with envy. As men, they had to admit that Justin Xavier was truly a master at living, marrying Leah Thorne, this red rose, was indeed a blessing beyond measure.

At this moment, the host went on stage, "Dear guests, welcome to today's wedding. Now that it's the auspicious time, would the groom and bride please..."

The host hadn't even finished when Leah Thorne suddenly said, "Wait a minute."

The bride suddenly spoke out, and all eyes immediately focused on her.

Justin Xavier looked down at the woman beside him, "Leah, anything you have to say, wait until the wedding is over."

Leah Thorne lifted her dark eyes to look at him, curling her red lips slightly, "Don't be nervous, I just feel that today is our wedding, everyone needs to be present. Your mother and grandfather are here, but your father hasn't arrived yet."

At the mention of Hugh Xavier, Justin Xavier's sharp brows furrowed slightly, which meant, why bring up something so unlucky on our wedding day?

After the last incident, Justin Xavier had sent Hugh Xavier abroad, living comfortably but also watched by his people. Hugh Xavier had no freedom, let alone the possibility of returning home.

"I've already invited your father back," Leah Thorne said at that moment.

Hugh Xavier is back?

Below, Laura Xavier's expression changed. She hadn't expected Leah Thorne to "invite" Hugh Xavier back.

Old Master Xavier's face was extremely somber, though he remained silent, his gaze murky and profound, contemplating something unknown. He merely watched the development quietly.

At this moment, with a "bang", the door to the banquet hall was pushed open, and Hugh Xavier entered.

Hugh Xavier really returned.

Laura Xavier immediately turned her wheelchair, "Hugh, how did you come back, how..."

Hugh Xavier wasn't alone. There were several law enforcement officers with him, handcuffing Hugh Xavier, making it obvious he was under arrest.

"Why... why are you arresting my husband, release him immediately!" Laura Xavier stared at the officers, dumbfounded.

At this point, an officer showed the arrest warrant, "Hugh Xavier is suspected of a premeditated rape case and a car accident manslaughter case from twenty years ago. We are arresting him in accordance with the law, taking him back for investigation."

What?

The whole room gasped, everyone questioning whether they were experiencing auditory hallucinations.

How could Hugh Xavier... break the law?

Laura Xavier's face changed dramatically, "What nonsense are you talking about, what premeditated rape, what car accident killing, I don't understand what you're saying?"

Laura knew Hugh Xavier had many mistresses, but he wouldn't do something like rape.

She didn't believe it.

Absolutely didn't believe it.

Justin Xavier frowned, at this moment feeling that the small hand in his palm had silently slipped away. Leah Thorne stepped forward, "Mrs. Xavier, can't you understand? Then let me explain it to you."

"Twenty years ago, Hugh Xavier had his driver buy a date-rape drug on the black market and covered my mom's nose and mouth with it, forcibly taking her to a hotel to attempt illegal rape."

## Chapter 980: Justin Xavier, Are You Afraid?

Laura's pupils contracted, looking at Leah in shock and astonishment. She quickly flew into a rage, "Leah, what nonsense are you saying? How dare you bring up those events from back then? Are you afraid others won't know that your mother was a home-wrecking vixen?"

That scandalous scene at the hotel all those years ago was a hurdle Laura could never overcome. She felt as if someone had stepped on her nerve, causing her entire body to tremble with emotion, her face contorting.

Laura forcefully pounded her legs, which had been useless for years, her eyes red, "Back then, it was your mother who seduced my husband into booking a hotel room. I got into an accident after that and became a cripple. The way I am now, neither human nor ghost, is all thanks to your mother, and now you dare to bite back?"

Leah tried to step forward, but a large, bony hand firmly clasped her delicate wrist. Justin Xavier looked at her with a hint of cold displeasure in his deep black eyes, "Leah, enough!"

Leah stopped in her tracks. She lifted her stunningly beautiful face to look at him, "Justin, are you... scared?"

Scared?

That word made Justin's handsome eyebrows furrow.

"Isn't it true?" Leah tilted her head slightly, blinking her eyelashes as she looked at him, "Wasn't pushing me into hell merely an excuse? Once you find out... that the daughter of the guilty one is actually innocent, what reason would you have to keep holding onto me?"

Justin's frigid black eyes quickly darkened with a thick, inky color, cold and dangerous.

At this moment, Leah gradually and firmly withdrew her wrist from his palm.

This dramatic scene left all the distinguished guests present in shock, and they began whispering amongst themselves,

"What on earth is happening here? It seems like there's a lot of history between the Xavier and Thorne families."

"You didn't know? More than twenty years ago, the Thorne family was a prominent political clan. Leah's father, Quinn Thorne, and her brother, Mort Thorne, were big names in Bayside. Then, one night, the Thorne family met its downfall, and the business upstart Xavier family adopted Leah, the Thorne's treasured daughter, Aurora."

Leah stepped off the stage and coldly looked at Hugh Xavier, her eyes dark, "Hugh Xavier, don't you have anything to say to your crazy wife Laura?"

Anticipating this, Hugh Xavier quickly protested his innocence, "I didn't do it. This is all a conspiracy. Justin, you have to believe me. Make sure to get a lawyer to bail me out quickly. I don't want to stay inside that kind of place!"

Hugh was an incredibly selfish person. Even now, he felt no guilt or remorse.

Laura looked resentfully at Leah, "Leah, did you hear that? My husband said he's innocent. This is defamation, a personal attack, and I'll get a lawyer to sue you!"

Laura quickly turned the tables.

Leah curled her red lips into a faint smile, "Mrs. Xavier, I knew you wouldn't believe me, so I brought someone here."

Who?

A man dressed in black stepped forward, removing his hat. "Madam, do you remember me?"

Laura looked at the man in black, startled, "You are... the driver, Barrett?"

Driver Barrett nodded, "Yes, madam."

"Barrett, where have you been all these years? After I lost my legs, I never saw you again. What happened to your hand?" Laura asked, looking at the empty sleeve.

Barrett was the exclusive driver for Hugh and Laura Xavier, known for his diligence and reliability. Laura had a deep impression of him, always riding in his car whenever she went out.

Though younger than Laura, Barrett had aged terribly over the years.

"Madam, I lost an arm. I've been hunted and suppressed all these years, and it's all... Hugh Xavier's doing!" Barrett angrily pointed at Hugh.

Hugh was quite wary of Barrett, avoiding his furious gaze by averting his eyes.

Hugh had dealt with most of the people from those days, except for the nanny, Nanny Diaz, who was hit and killed in an accident, and this Barrett, who was a loose end too.

Little did he know that Leah had found Barrett, and Hugh got nervous when the police came knocking.

Laura looked at Hugh, "Barrett, why would Hugh harm you? He... has no reason..."

"Because I was the one who bought the potent aphrodisiac from the black market, and I drugged Leah's mother, sending her to the hotel. I was a direct witness and an accomplice in that adultery scandal," Barrett revealed.

Laura was stunned, looking at Hugh, then back to Barrett, "Barrett, what nonsense are you talking about? Were you paid off by Leah? How much did she give you, you..."

Barrett directly pulled out the evidence, "Madam, here is the recording from when Hugh had me buy the drugs, along with screenshots of my transactions at the black market. Back then, I had the wit to leave a trail to protect myself."

Laura quickly reached for the screenshots and recordings. Her hands trembled as she looked at the screenshots, but she refused to believe it until she played the recording.

In it, Hugh's voice came through swiftly, "Barrett, go to the black market and buy some drugs."

Barrett, "Sir, what do you need drugs for?"

"Leah Thorne's mother, the Thorne family lady, I've had my eye on her for years. I knew her first, but she ignored me and became a high-ranking official's wife. I want you to drug her and send her to the hotel; I want to have her, haha," Hugh laughed lecherously.

"Sir, how can you do this? What if Mrs. Xavier finds out..."

"Why bring up Laura? If it weren't for the arranged marriage, I wouldn't have married her. I'm sick of her. Whenever I'm with her, I imagine myself pressing Mrs. Thorne under me."

With a "slap," Laura's recorder fell to the ground, her pupils contracting and expanding, a buzzing almost audible in her mind.

All these years, she'd believed Leah's mother was the homewrecker in her marriage, blaming her misfortune on the Thorne family. Now her deep-rooted hatred seemed more like a habit than anything else.

But everything was overturned now. It turned out the adultery scandal was nothing more than Hugh's premeditated act of assault.

Hugh had trampled Laura, his wife, into the dirt.

With bloodshot eyes, Laura lifted her head, glaring at Hugh, "Hugh, is this true? You caused me so much pain. Why don't you just die?!"

As she spoke, Laura pushed her wheelchair directly toward Hugh to crash into him.

But Hugh was no fool, swiftly and nimbly sidestepping out of the way.

With a crash, the wheelchair slammed into the wall, and Laura was thrown to the ground.

"Mrs. Xavier!" the crowd exclaimed in shock.