

Chapter 11 - Saving Nora Full Story Book Free by Josh Williams

The bar on the first floor was already bubbling with people's voices by now.

Anthony was quite well-known in California. Under the power of his summons, his friends brought more friends along and filled up the place.

The lights in the entire bar were blurry, and men and women were twisting their bodies fervently on the dance floor.

Angela, who wore a long red gown, was sitting in the corner with a drink in her hand and her cheeks rosy. Next to her, her group of fair-weather friends was complimenting her.

"Hotel Finest's not cheap, Angela. Anthony must have big plans in mind, right? Is he... going to propose?"

"He must be proposing! I'm sure of it! Isn't your sister back? I heard that even the marriage certificate has been torn into pieces. With that, their engagement can officially be considered annulled!"

"It's all that damned fatt... damned woman's fault! If it hadn't been for her hiding abroad for so many years and refusing to come back and annul the engagement, Angela and Anthony would have been married long ago!"

"Hey, why is that woman here?!"

With these words, Angela also looked at the entrance.

Nora was still dressed just as casually today. Jeans and a black T-shirt set off the skin around her neck, making it look so fair that it was glowing white.

She was expressionless, her eyes were slightly lidded, and she gave off a world-weary feeling, yet her looks were eye-catching and beautiful. As soon as she entered, she immediately attracted the attention of everyone around her.

The moment she walked in, a waiter rushed to the back. "Mr. Gray, she's here!"

Anthony stood up immediately and walked forward. "Get ready!"

The loud music in the bar gave Nora a headache, and overwhelming irritation filled her.

She looked up. When her indifferent gaze located Angela, she walked over to her.

Before she had even gotten near, she heard a pretentious Angela say, "Why are you here, Nora? Anthony will never agree to meet you."

As soon as she said that, her unsavory friends also spoke.

"Nora, are you here to make a scene because you caught wind that Anthony's going to propose?"

"You were the one with immoral conduct, sleeping with some guy and getting yourself pregnant before marriage. That's why Mr. Gray dumped you. Yet you're here to harass him now? Where's your sense of shame?!"

"Even if you've become pretty, it won't change the fact that you're saddled with extra baggage! Why would Mr. Gray ever pay any attention to you? Is there any point in pestering him so persistently?"

"..."

Due to the deafening music, the commotion here didn't reach far.

Nora didn't care what others said about her. She looked at Angela. "Tell me, where is that child?"

Angela approached her with a sardonic smile. She pointed to the sofa next to her and spoke in a voice that only the two of them could hear. "Nora, sit down obediently, watch tonight's exciting show in its entirety, and give Anthony and I your blessings after that. If you do that, I'll tell you."

Nora understood now.

She wanted to use the marriage proposal scene to humiliate her. However, the private investigators didn't have any leads at all. As long as there was a glimmer of hope, she was unwilling to give it up.

Nora sat on the sofa and leaned back. She closed her eyes, her long eyelashes casting shadows on her cheeks as she uttered, “You sure have nothing better to do.”

Angela stared at her fiercely. Things had already reached this stage, yet her sister was still so calm. It made her look like some kind of clown.

She clenched her fists. Suddenly, she started to mock Nora. “Say, Nora, if you hadn’t been fat and had always been this pretty, would Anthony have broken off the engagement?”

Nora’s eyes suddenly flew open, and a sharp glint appeared in her cat-like eyes. “What do you mean by that?”

Her obesity had been due to the mistaken use of hormonal injections.

Even though she had worked so hard to lose weight and suffered so much, it was useless. Her body needed to slowly repair its bodily functions.

Judging from what Angela said, could it be that...

Seeing that her expression had finally changed, Angela laughed arrogantly. With a venomous look in her eyes, she said maliciously, “We’re both Smiths, so why should you be the one to marry into the Grays? But what if you were a fatty? Take a look at what’s happening now—sure enough, Anthony has fallen in love with me!”

“So what even if you’ve slimmed down? It’s too late! What a waste of that face of yours. If you weren’t saddled with extra baggage, you might have been able to find another man... But now? Tsk, tsk.”

Anger roiled in Nora’s eyes.

To think her stepmother had been so vicious just for the sake of an engagement! She was only five when she was injected with hormones!

She was just about to lose her temper when...

... All the lights in the bar suddenly went out, and the music came to an abrupt stop!

Two seconds later, a white spotlight shone at the center of the dance floor!

Anthony was wearing a white suit and he looked handsome and elegant. He held a guitar in his hands. The moment he appeared, the audience screamed.

“Anthony! Anthony!”

Regardless of whether they were male or female, everyone cooperated and shouted his name.

Anthony smiled. He stretched out a finger and gestured for the audience to keep quiet. The place instantly became completely quiet.

He strummed the guitar a few times and a melody formed smoothly. Meanwhile, he also hummed the most popular love songs. Although it wasn't a celebrity-class performance, it was bearable.

Angela stood up excitedly, her tears flowing with emotion.

Anthony was so handsome!

After finishing a song, Anthony put down the guitar. Then, he held the microphone and said, “I booked this whole place and got so many friends over today because I would like to tell a certain girl something. From the very first moment I laid eyes on you, I've thought that you are a very extraordinary girl.”

“Wow! Anthony! Anthony!” Everyone cheered again, livening up the atmosphere to a climax.

Anthony gave a wave. Immediately, a few “pops” sounded, and the balloons on the ceiling burst, scattering a shower of roses from above!

This is so romantic!

Angela covered her mouth. Her eyes were filled with surprise.

She turned to the side excitedly and said sarcastically to Nora, “Did you see that? Anthony was so dismissive toward you back then, but he's putting in so much effort for me today!

“Even ten of you can't compare to a single toe of mine!”

Angela felt invigorated.

Especially when she saw the envy in the eyes of the girls around her. Her heart felt like it was going to burst from happiness!

Then, she saw Anthony slowly walking step by step toward her with a bouquet of roses in his hands...

The surrounding crowd voluntarily stepped aside, as if building a bridge between them.

Angela straightened her back. She couldn't help but take a few steps toward him. She felt like this day was the highlight of her life!

She didn't notice that there was only one person in Anthony's eyes at the moment.

Even in this dimly lit bar, the woman sitting on the sofa was dazzling and eye-catching. There was no one else—including Angela—in his eyes at all.

The only thought on his mind was that this was dramatic enough even for a proposal, so the beauty would probably give him a chance again, right?

Angela stopped after taking a few steps forward. Seeing Anthony coming nearer and nearer, her smile blossomed uncontrollably.

Anthony would probably get down on one knee in front of her next, right?

But unexpectedly...

Angela watched Anthony pass her by to finally stop in front of Nora.

He bent down and offered her the roses in a gentlemanly manner. "Miss Anderson, may I have the honor of becoming friends with you?"

"..."

Angela's eyes widened in astonishment as she stared at the scene in disbelief.

The light in the bar was a bit dim, which made her feel as if she was dreaming. Why had Anthony gone up to the damned fatty?

Nora didn't expect such a dramatic twist, either. She had only met Anthony twice, yet he had dumped his prospective fiancée to woo her?

But when she saw how surprised and furious Angela looked—to the extent that it made her look rather savage—her anger from just now calmed a little. The corners of her lips curled upward with great interest into a mischievous smile.

Her smile, which was as bright and dazzling as a blooming sunflower, made Anthony's eyes light up.

He was about to say something, but Angela couldn't control herself anymore. She screamed, "Anthony!"

It was only when he heard her voice that Anthony finally noticed Angela standing beside him. He frowned and asked, "Why are you here?"

Angela was still fantasizing that perhaps Anthony had mistaken someone else for her because of the darkness, but his question had shattered her last vestiges of hope.

She glared at Nora angrily. "You bitch! You're so shameless!"

After she shouted, she raised her hand to Nora.

Anthony immediately stopped her. With a sullen look, he snapped, "What are you doing, Angela? Don't make a scene here like a shrew."

Angela's eyes flushed angrily. "Are you actually defending her? Do you know—"

"Enough!" Anthony interrupted her. "Take a look at yourself now, Angela. Can't you take a leaf out of Miss Anderson's book and pick up some of her lady-like air and charisma?"

Angela was stunned. "W-who did you say she was? Don't you know who she is?"

Anthony was taken aback by her question. "She's Isabel Anderson..."

He turned to the side to see Nora seated leisurely on the sofa. With her lips curled into a smile, she said lazily, “Isabel is my middle name. I also have another name—Nora. Smith.”

“...”

The whole bar suddenly fell quiet for a moment. The situation had confused everyone.

Anthony stared at her in disbelief. “Y-you...”

He was so shocked that he couldn’t say anything even after stuttering for a long time.

Angela managed to react, however. “She’s tricked you, Anthony! She’s tricked us both! She did it on purpose just to take revenge on us and make us a joke!”

That damned fatty had ruined her proposal. She hated Nora’s guts now.

Angela shouted to everyone around her, “What are all of you still in a daze for? Beat her up! Beat that woman to death!”

Everyone in the bar was friends of Anthony and Angela. Upon hearing her shout, everyone surrounded Nora.

At the sight of so many people throwing their lives away, Nora stretched and loosened her muscles to warm up.

Meanwhile, at the entrance to the lobby.

Justin entered the lobby. He was about to go to the elevator when he suddenly heard the noise in the bar.

Through the glass walls, he immediately spotted the woman on the sofa. There was a little more frostiness on her usually distant expression.

There was malice on the faces of everyone around her. From the looks of things, it seemed like she was about to be assaulted by the group of them?

Seeing that they were about to start, Justin suddenly turned and entered the bar.

“Stop!”

His deep, cold, and fierce shout made Nora, who was about to jump into action, pause. Then, a group of well-trained bodyguards swarmed in. In no time, they had surrounded the bar.

The elegant man at the entrance wore a luxurious bespoke hand-tailored suit. The mole at the corner of his eye exuded a sense of chilliness. His cold eyes swept across the place and he slowly said, “Group fights are prohibited in Hotel Finest!”

“ ... ”

Nora, who had only just gotten into the mood to fight, lost interest in an instant.

Gee.

That man sure had a lot of rules. It was affecting her performance.

Intimidated by the aura around him, everyone else also stopped moving. Anthony, the one calling the shots, braced himself and asked, “Who are you?”

Lawrence, who was following closely behind Justin, answered, “This is Mr. Hunt.”

Mr. Hunt from Hotel Finest... Justin Hunt? That man at the top of the golden pyramid?!

Anthony had heard that he was here in California on a business trip. His family had given him a thousand and one warnings and told him not to mess with him.

Everyone’s expressions changed drastically.

Lawrence didn’t understand why his boss was suddenly being nosy, but since he had set the rules, they had to implement them.

He cleared his throat, raised his chin, and ordered, “How dare you fight at Hotel Finest? Are you sick of living? Get out!”

Everyone hurried out as if they were fleeing.

When Nora saw that Angela was also preparing to leave with the crowd, a sharp look flashed across Nora's eyes. She grabbed Angela's arm. "Angela, there's something you haven't said yet."

Angela was already in a panic and at a loss at this point. She glanced at Justin fearfully, wishing only to leave quickly. She lowered her voice and retorted, "What are you going crazy for? Let go!"

"Okay." Nora obediently let go of her arm.

Angela heaved a sigh of relief. Just as she turned away and was about to leave, a huge force suddenly struck her from behind and kicked her into the air.

Bam!

Angela hit the table in front and fell to the ground. She felt as if all her internal organs were aching.

After kicking her, Nora walked over and grabbed her by the hair. In a fervent tone, she said, "Do you remember what you wanted to tell me now?"

Angela's eyes widened. With her eyes red, she shouted, "She's being violent, Mr. Hunt!"

Justin frowned. That woman's kick just now was unexpectedly forceful. She seemed to have some pretty good moves, which made him seem as if he had been too much of a busybody.

Before he even spoke, Lawrence reprimanded her. "Group fights are prohibited in Hotel Finest, Miss Smith. Do you have no regard for Mr. Hunt's rules?"

Nora looked up slightly. Her looks made her look well-behaved and sensible. She replied softly, "I'm alone. I'm not in a group."

"..."

Her words shut Lawrence up.

When one thought about it, there indeed wasn't anything wrong with what she said.

Stunned, Angela screamed, “Help!”

Seeing that someone was about to come over, Nora glanced over coldly and asked, “Are you trying to gather a group of people?”

“ ... ”

Seeing that no one dared to come over anymore, she looked down at Angela whom she was pressing down on.

Originally, on account of how they were sisters, after all, she had only wanted to know the whereabouts of her son and hadn't intended to make things so ugly. But injecting hormones into her when she was only five? Such a grudge had removed all of her restraint.

Smack!

She slapped Angela ruthlessly across her cheek. When she saw her cheek visibly swelling, she slowly said, “If you continue to keep silent, I'll beat you up so bad you won't even recognize yourself anymore.”

A trembling Angela couldn't hold it in anymore. She burst into tears and said, “I'll talk, I'll talk! That child—”

“That child... Dad was the one that handled it. He never told me. I don't know anything...”

The sobbing Angela's speech was unclear. As the others were a distance away from her, they couldn't hear her clearly.

Nora frowned slightly, frightening Angela so badly that she spoke again. “I really don't know! I swear! If I'm lying, then let my face become pockmarked! Sob...”

Angela had always been vain since she was a child. The fact that she had sworn such a vicious oath showed that she really didn't know.

Nora couldn't hide her disappointment.

She couldn't be bothered to waste any more time, and she stood up and walked out slowly.

When she passed by Justin, Nora thought of how she had ultimately been violent just now and ended up embarrassing Justin.

She wanted to explain, so she looked at Justin.

The man was also looking at her, his eyes deep and unfathomable.

Nora thought for a while. After she thought of what to say, her lips parted. However, the moment she opened her mouth, she couldn't help but yawn.

Justin was rendered speechless.

Next to him, Lawrence was furious. Never mind that she had hit someone, but she's even yawning so arrogantly at Mr. Hunt now? Was she showing off?

As soon as the thought appeared in his mind, the expressionless woman spoke. "I definitely wasn't trying to provoke you, Mr. Hunt."

The corners of Lawrence's lips spasmed a little. Only a fool would believe that!

He was just about to give her a sarcastic reply when he heard his boss' icy-cold reply: "... Uh-huh."

Lawrence was confused.

After explaining, Nora walked past him slowly.

Justin stared at her from the back and narrowed his eyes.

The woman's actions just now had been decisive and straightforward and hadn't been sloppy in the least. They were wild and fervent.

But it seemed like she hadn't gotten what she wanted, and she looked a little sad. Her listless appearance unexpectedly made him want to help her.

As soon as the thought appeared, he heard Lawrence, who was standing behind him, complain, "It's a good thing that you forbade them from fighting. Otherwise, judging from Miss Smith's skill, that group of rich kids would have been beaten up by her."

" ... "

Lawrence said to himself again, “But surely she didn’t misunderstand and think that you were saving her, right? She’s already currying favor with Pete to get close to you. If she misunderstands, it’ll become even harder to shake her off!”

Justin gave him a frosty look. “You’re too noisy.”

Meanwhile, at the cafe.

Cherry wore a small T-shirt, overalls, cowboy hat, and sunglasses, and she looked as if she was dressed in an endearing hip-hop style.

She bounced into the cafe and picked up her cell phone to find that Chesty had sent her several text messages.

“Are you here yet? You’re already ten minutes late!”

“Surely you didn’t run away because you’re really a super cute girl?”

Cherry was about to reply when she received a call from Chesty. She picked up and said, “I’m here, Chesty! Table 25... 26... 28!”

An awfully bored Chester was already seated there with three empty glasses in front of him. “Yep, yep, Table 28, that’s right. You’re here? Where are you?”

“Look down.”

He looked down and saw a cowboy hat.

His gaze continued down past the hat to see his nephew, Pete’s, incredibly familiar face.

Chester was perplexed.

He rubbed his eyes and opened them again—the person in front of him was still there.

He became even more confused, and he subconsciously said into the phone, “Leader?”

“I’m here, Chesty.”

Beside him was his young nephew's childish voice.

Coming from his cell phone was the familiar young girl-sounding voice.

The two voices overlapped, causing Chester to collapse into the chair as if he had just seen a ghost.

He looked at Cherry incredulously and stammered, "L-l-leader?"

Cherry blinked her big, round eyes. "Uh-huh, that's me."

She didn't expect Chesty to be her uncle, either. The two of them had even had pizza with her father!

Cherry hung up, climbed onto the chair opposite, and sat down. Then, she said to the waitress, "A glass of milk, please. I'm still growing up, so I can't drink coffee. Thank you."

Her adorable self melted the waitress' heart into a puddle of goo. "Sure, kiddo. Just a moment."

Then, she quickly ran off to get the milk.

Chester felt as if the sky was falling.

Was this really his nephew that had always been clumsy with words?

He really was just pretending when he went against Justin all this time!

Also! It was more than enough to have just one member who was derelict in his duties and playing games all day long among the Hunts. Pete was the one and only grandson! He was Justin's only son!

If Justin were to know that he had been playing games with Pete... Chester swallowed hard. He felt as if he could already see himself in his grave.

Chester shuddered. Suddenly, he thought of something and jumped to his feet anxiously: "Sh*t! It's already half-past eight! Justin will be back soon! Hurry and go back up to do your homework, Pete! Otherwise, Justin's gonna kill us both!"

He threw \$30 onto the table, picked up Cherry, and ran out as if he was competing in a 100-meter dash race.

But as soon as he ran to the entrance, he immediately saw Justin exiting the bar with a group of bodyguards and waiting for the elevator.

Chester was shocked.

He put down Cherry and promptly said, "Go up the stairs to the second floor while I stop Justin. After that, hurry to the top floor! Don't let anyone find you!"

Without waiting for Cherry to reply, Chester rushed toward Justin as if he was all prepared for his death. "I need to have a talk with you, Justin."

Justin asked, "... What kind of talk?"

Chester braced himself against his icy gaze, bit the bullet, and said, "A... h-heart... heart-to-heart talk."

"I'm not free," Justin said coldly and entered the elevator.

Chester followed him in. In order to buy more time, he pressed the elevator buttons for every floor in a panic. "I-it'll only take a little of your time, Justin..."

Justin narrowed his eyes and said with mild displeasure, "You'd best really have some kind of trouble that you want to talk to me about."

"Justin, I think I..." Chester racked his brains, but he couldn't think of any troubles that he had. Finally, he forcibly said, "I don't like women?"

As soon as he said that, even he himself was dumbfounded.

What the f*ck?

What did he just say?

When he saw the contemplative look in Justin's eyes, he panicked. "No, that's not what I meant, Justin. I..."

A rambling Chester said a whole lot of things before he finally made it past the hurdle. When they reached the top floor and opened the door, upon seeing Pete sitting obediently at the desk and studying, he breathed a sigh of relief.

When he saw that Justin had entered the study, he sneaked over to Pete and winked. “For your sake, I’ve been totally misunderstood...”

A question mark slowly appeared in Pete’s mind when he heard his inexplicable words: ?

Had Uncle Chester gone mad?

Downstairs.

A puzzled Cherry, who watched her father and uncle enter the elevator, ran after them with her short little legs. Unfortunately, she still missed the elevator.

Did her uncle tell her to go to the top floor just now?

Wasn’t there only two presidential suites on the top floor?

As it turned out, Daddy was the dummy next door that Mommy had mentioned?!

She was going to the top floor to look for her father and ask him why he had driven Mommy and herself downstairs! Didn’t Daddy like her anymore?

With that in mind, she entered the elevator, tiptoed, and pressed the button to the top floor.

Hotel Finest’s management was very strict, and one needed room cards in the elevator, too.

Cherry’s room was not on the top floor, so she couldn’t light up the button for the top floor even after she swiped the room card through the card reader.

She pouted unhappily. After thinking about it, she decided to return for now to the 38th floor where her room was and go up the stairs after that.

But as soon as she got out of the elevator, she ran into Nora.

Cherry instantly suppressed her desires.

She could still look for Daddy tomorrow, but Mommy was obviously a little depressed and needed her very much now!

Nora had called several private investigators, but there were still no leads. After all, if even Angela didn't know where her son was, then her father might be the only one who knew the truth.

But to negotiate terms with her father... He was no simple-minded fool like Angela.

Just as she was lost in her thoughts, a small figure jumped over and hugged her leg. "Mommy, I love you so much!"

Her thoughts interrupted, Nora rubbed her head and asked softly, "Where did you go to have fun with Mrs. Lewis?"

Cherry looked at her fingers. She didn't dare to look at Nora's eyes when she lied. "We just strolled around in the hotel. It isn't any fun here at all. Mommy, I'll sleep with you."

Nora let out an "Okay" and opened the door.

Then, she turned around to see Cherry leaning against the wall and striking a handsome pose. "Mommy, if you miss my brother, then you can just look at me. He probably looks just like me. We're twins after all!"

Nora chuckled. "Boy-girl twins are fraternal. Just like ordinary siblings, it's very difficult for them to look exactly the same."

Cherry hung her head in disappointment. "Is that so? I thought he would look just like me."

Nora laughed and brought her into the room.

After taking a bath, the two were lying on the bed when Nora's cell phone rang—it was from the Smiths. She cast her eyes down and contemplated for a moment. Then, she turned off the cell phone and went to bed with Cherry.

When she woke up the next day, Cherry had already quietly gotten out of bed and was playing with Mrs. Lewis outside.

She took a look at her cell phone. Aside from dozens of missed calls from the Smiths, there was also one from her paternal aunt.

Her paternal aunt had been the kindest to her during all these years. Because of that, her relationship with Lisa was also pretty good. Thus, she returned the call.

Someone picked up very quickly, but it was her father's voice that rang out instead. "Here I was, thinking that you've already left the family, Nora!"

Nora lowered her eyes lazily and got out of bed to get something to eat. "What's up?"

"What kind of attitude is that? I have something to ask you—did you shamelessly sabotage Anthony's proposal to your sister yesterday? And even hit her when the sabotage failed? Also, you have been saying that you wanted to annul the engagement. Now that you've gotten your way, why are you trying to seduce Anthony again? He's your sister's fiancé!"

"..."

It had always been like that ever since they were children. The moment she and Angela had a disagreement, Henry would blame her for it without even trying to find out the truth.

Nora was already used to it. She slowly said, "He doesn't seem to be her fiancé yet, right?"

"He was going to be very soon, but you've messed everything up now! Come back right away and apologize to your sister! Otherwise, don't blame me if I disown you!"

"Do what you want."

Nora was about to hang up after giving a frosty reply when she heard Henry yelling angrily, "You ungrateful woman! Not only are you disobeying me, but do you also not care whether your aunt is alive or dead?!"

Nora paused. "What's wrong with her?"

"What's wrong with her? She has a brain tumor! If you have even the slightest bit of a conscience, then come to the hospital in town. Otherwise, you won't even be able to see your aunt for the last time!"

“...I'll be right over.”

After hanging up, Nora quickly washed up, changed, and went out.

When the elevator arrived, she entered to see that there were already two professionally dressed female elites inside.

Nora closed the doors after she entered. Her eyes were closed on the way down. She overheard the discussion between the two behind her:

“Isn't it inappropriate for us to treat the little mister like this? This is corporal punishment.”

“What nonsense are you spouting? We were sent by the old madam. Besides, didn't you see that the little mister didn't even cry after he was hit? He doesn't talk very much, either. I heard that he's autistic.”

“What? No wonder he looks dull and slow-witted. I'm telling you this secretly, but I felt a little good when I saw him being reprimanded. So what even if you're rich and prestigious? In the end, he still has to listen to us obediently! But what if Mr. Hunt finds out?”

“It'll be because he didn't finish his homework, then. Mr. Hunt is very strict with the little mister. Fathers would be at their wits' end once their children cry or kick up a fuss, but Pete only knows how to stubbornly endure it... Even if I don't give him lunch, I betcha he won't even say a word about it at night.”

Ding!

When the elevator arrived on the first floor, the two tutors walked out and went to eat in the hotel restaurant.

Nora, who exited along with them, frowned. She felt exceptionally uncomfortable.

Those two had come from the upper floor, so they could only have come from the presidential suite on the top floor. Therefore, the 'little mister' whom they spoke of must be Justin Hunt's son?

Nora cast her eyes down and decided to mind her own business.

The cab she booked had already arrived. She was about to get in the car when she heard a commotion behind her. Sure enough, it was Justin who had come out with his bodyguards.

Nora looked away and got into the car.

Before the car started, the sight of the child that had buried his head into Justin's shoulder while being carried by him suddenly flashed into her mind.

Although she didn't get a clear view of his face, he looked about the same size as Cherry, so he was likely about the same age as her.

Ire welled up in Nora. She suddenly opened the car door, got out, and walked straight towards Justin.

She was stopped by the bodyguards before she even got close.

Lawrence had already noticed her wandering around the entrance just now. He said mockingly, "Miss Smith, I know you're intending to express your gratitude to Mr. Hunt for his help yesterday, after which you'll then ask for his contact information. We've already seen these methods a million times. Can you put in a little more effort and use a more novel pickup line?"

Nora was puzzled.

In the distance, Justin, dressed in a black suit, kept his eyes straight and entered the Bentley sullenly. He didn't see her at all.

At the sight of the car starting, Nora's eyes narrowed angrily. This was a rare moment where she decided to meddle for once, yet she was being misunderstood in such a way?

She turned around to leave. After taking a couple of steps, unable to suppress her anger, she turned back and went up to Lawrence. She repeatedly tried to hold back her anger, but still failed in the end. She said, "Mr. Zimmer, you should have Mr. Hunt visit the neurology specialists when he's free. Narcissism is an illness. Get it treated."

Lawrence was confused.

It was only after she snapped at him that Nora finally got into the cab as if nothing had happened, and went straight to the hospital in town.

There weren't many people in the hospital.

Nora went upstairs and entered the VIP ward.

She hadn't even seen her aunt yet when Henry walked toward her furiously and threw the contract in her face. "Nora, you have to sign the ownership transfer agreement today, and also apologize to your sister! Otherwise, don't dream of saving your aunt!"

Nora frowned. Before she could answer, a gentle but anxious voice reached them. "Are you trying to drive me to my grave, Henry?"

On the hospital bed, a gentle middle-aged woman wearing a hospital gown struggled to get out of the bed. Her hair was all shaved, and she looked frighteningly skinny due to her illness. Her cheeks were sunken, but it nevertheless couldn't hide her gentle personality.

She was Irene Smith, her aunt.

Nora took a couple of quick steps forward and sat on the edge of the bed. She held her hand and greeted, "Aunt Irene."

Irene looked at Nora up and down for a moment. Then, her eyes turned red. "You look so much like your mom after you've slimmed down, Nora."

Her voice trembled as she spoke. "You've had such a hard time outside all these years."

During the five years when she lived abroad, Henry had never given her a single cent. It was instead her aunt who always sent her some money as living expenses.

Although it wasn't much, it was her way of showing her kindness.

Nora's heart was warmed.

At this point, her stepmother, Wendy, said, "Nora, your aunt has been pretty nice to you ever since you were a child, right? She's sick now, and you're the only one that can cure her! You won't watch her die, will you?"

Nora frowned.

A brain tumor...

She casually tugged off the medical report and CT scan next to her and started to read them seriously.

A naggy Wendy said, "Your aunt's operation is too difficult, Nora. A moment of carelessness and she'll suffer brain damage, so no one in the hospital wants to do it. Dr. Larson, the head of the Department of Neurology in this hospital, is Angela's professor at the School of Medicine in her college. If she begs him to do it, maybe he'd be willing to take the risk and give it a go."

Wendy sighed at this point before continuing. "But now, Anthony's saying that without the company, he'll never get engaged to your sister. Your sister is terribly upset and in a bad mood. You can't possibly ask someone for help in such a gloomy manner, right? So, as long as you give your sister the company, we'll let Angela beg Dr. Larson for help. Whether your aunt's operation goes through or not completely depends on you now."

When Wendy finished speaking, Henry shouted angrily, "You must also apologize to Angela for sabotaging her marriage proposal, seducing Anthony out of spite, and for hitting her!"

Wendy, who was pretending to be the good guy, said, "We're a family. What are you saying all these for? Sigh, Nora, your aunt's illness can't be delayed any further. Why don't you sign the agreement immediately?"

While the two were putting on a joint act, Nora finished reading her aunt's CT scan.

It was indeed a little tricky. The tumor had enveloped the blood vessels, so the slightest carelessness would lead to mistakes and cause her aunt to die in surgery.

Not many doctors would dare to take on a surgery like this even in New York, let alone Dr. Larson in California.

Well, aside from her, that was.

Irene yelled angrily after hearing what they said. “Henry, that company is the only thing that Nora’s mother left for her. How can the two of you be so shameless?!”

Wendy smiled. “That isn’t quite right, Irene. What do you mean by she left it for Nora? Henry and Nora’s mother were husband and wife at that time. That’s their joint property.”

“You’re so shameless...!” Irene looked at Nora again. “Don’t listen to their nonsense, Nora. My illness is incurable. Even if you sign the agreement and have them perform surgery on me, there’s a 90% chance that it’ll fail anyway. Hurry and go!”

“Okay. I’ll visit you again when I have time.” Nora put down the medical record and turned and walked out.

Her aunt was in serious condition, and it indeed didn’t brook any further delay. What was important now was to contact the hospital and borrow their equipment and facilities first.

Henry and Wendy didn’t expect that she would just up and leave like that. Moreover, she even disappeared from the ward in the blink of an eye.

Henry cursed, “She’s a total ingrate. Your kindness toward her was all in vain!”

Wendy also spoke sarcastically. “You were so kind to her, Irene. But in the end, she didn’t even want to stay a moment longer here with you!”

Irene bit her lip with her eyes red. “Finding me a doctor had nothing to do with Nora from the start...”

—

In the top-floor presidential suite of Hotel Finest.

“Why didn’t you finish your homework from noon, Pete? This section is completely blank! How are we supposed to proceed with the afternoon syllabus if you do that? Finish your homework.”

With a chilly look, Pete looked at the assignment that obviously hadn't been given to him at noon and was already beyond his syllabus.

He didn't speak but instead stared at the tutor just like that.

The tutor curled her lip. "What are you looking at me for? I heard that your father completed all these lessons effortlessly when he was your age. Don't you even know how to do this question? If that's the case, then it must be your mom who lowered your IQ genes!"

It was only when he heard the word 'mom' that Pete finally reacted. His jaw was taut as he picked up the pen. Then, he started to write silently on the workbook.

He already knew how to solve these problems a long time ago.

His mom wasn't stupid!

But as soon as he finished answering it, the tutor said, "It's wrong. Why didn't you include the problem-solving process? I've already told you so many times! Stretch out your hand!"

Is including the problem-solving process even necessary for such a simple question?

Pete didn't move.

The tutor immediately grabbed his hand, took the ruler, and struck his palm hard a few times.

Smack! Smack! Smack!

The pain made Pete's eyes widen, yet he pressed his lips together tightly and refused to speak.

"This is punishment for not attending the class seriously. Now, your punishment is to attend class while standing!"

Pete stood for two hours until even his calves were sore. Only then did the tutors end the afternoon lesson. The two tutors were still whispering between themselves when they left:

“He really can’t speak?”

“Alright, don’t talk too much. The old madam has instructed us to take good care of the little mister!”

“Okay. We’ll come again to report to Mr. Hunt in the evening. We must make him sound a little more stubborn and misbehaving. Children who don’t do their homework aren’t good children!”

After the two of them left, Pete looked at the homework assigned by the tutors on the table. He knew that his answers were definitely “wrong” again.

Even if he had completed them, they would still say that he didn’t complete his homework.

But even so, he didn’t want to speak. If he spoke... He pressed his lips together tightly when he thought of the consequences.

All he wanted now was to talk to Mommy and the little girl next door who was great at playing games...

The light in his eyes dimmed again when he thought of that.

Unfortunately, the lady next door had been driven away and she had moved one floor down.

One floor down...

Pete suddenly stood up. He put on his clothes and quietly left the room. It was impossible for him to take the elevator because the bodyguards were all standing guard there.

He went along the wall toward the corner and slipped into the stairwell. Then, he opened the door and darted in.

At the same time.

Downstairs, Cherry took advantage of the opportunity while Mrs. Lewis was preparing dinner to also slip out quietly.

She didn’t manage to go there yesterday, so she would go upstairs to look for her father today!

The tiny form of Cherry, who was wearing a cool children's outfit, entered the stairwell. Her short little legs climbed up the stairs with great effort.

As she walked, she suddenly heard footsteps coming from above.

As soon as Cherry looked up, she saw Pete walking down.

“ ... ”

Their eyes met, and for a time, the air was incredibly still and quiet.

Due to it getting late, the light in the narrow stairwell was rather dim.

Pete stared at Cherry in shock.

Her eyes were widened as round as grapes and her mouth slightly ajar. The two stared at each other for some time. Cherry was the first to speak. “Why is there a mirror in the stairwell?”

Pete was puzzled.

The corners of his lips spasmed. “This isn't a mirror.”

Cherry was dazed and dumbfounded. “Why do you look exactly the same as me, then?”

The stairwell fell quiet for another few seconds. Then, a hesitant Pete said, “Are we... twins?”

Tiny Cherry, who finally reacted, leaped forward and hugged Pete excitedly. “Wow! I found my brother!”

“ ... ”

Pete, who had always refused physical contact with others, stiffened.

Blood relations were simply so peculiar. For example, physical contact with people such as one's mother and younger sister would give one a very heartwarming feeling.

But as it turned out, had Mommy hugged him and eaten dinner with him because she mistook him for someone else?

This realization made Pete turn pale. He sounded a little sad as he asked, “Why did Mommy abandon me?”

Cherry let go of him and hurriedly explained, “Mommy didn’t abandon you. It was our horrid grandpa who sent you away. The reason why we came back to the States is so that we can look for you!”

“Really?”

Afraid that her brother wouldn’t believe her, Cherry nodded repeatedly. “It’s true! It’s true!!”

Her soft hands grabbed hold of Pete and she dragged him down the stairs. “Let’s go find Mommy. She’ll definitely be very happy to see you, and then she’ll take us home!”

Pete was taken aback. “But what about Daddy?”

Cherry paused. “Oh, that’s right. Mommy definitely won’t want Daddy.”

“Why?”

“Mommy thinks he’s trouble and that his familial relationships are complicated, so she finds him very bothersome! Does Daddy like Mommy?”

With an awfully complicated expression, Pete replied, “Daddy seems to hate my mom.”

“What do we do?”

“ . . . ”

A minute later, the two little cuties sat on the steps together. The two of them looked just like peas in a pod as they tried to think of countermeasures with their faces, which still had baby fat on them, propped in their hands.

“By the way, my name is Cheryl Smith! You can call me Cherry. What’s your name?”

“Peter Hunt. You can call me Pete.”

“I want both you and Daddy, Pete. And, I can’t leave Mommy, either. Do you have a solution?”

“...Yes, I do.”

Cherry suddenly jumped up excitedly. “What is it?”

With a solemn look, Pete replied, “If we get Daddy and Mommy to fall in love with each other, they won’t despise each other anymore.”

The two children leaned their heads against each other’s and talked about it. When they finally separated, Cherry suggested,

“I wanna play with Daddy. Can I pretend to be you tonight?”

It just so happened that Pete also wanted to spend some time with his mother, so he nodded with his eyes shining brightly.

Harboring the noble mission of reconciling a broken family, the children then quietly sneaked back to each other’s residence.

—

Nora contacted the hospital after she left the ward. The dean agreed to her request immediately.

Anti was known as the top surgeon in the world. Several of her surgical videos had become classics in many hospitals and medical colleges.

Having her perform surgery in the hospital was undoubtedly the hospital’s honor.

However, he made a few irrelevant requests—he wanted a few people from the hospital to be assistants so that they could observe and learn from the operation.

Nora, who didn’t mind, acceded to his requests.

Next up were the operation site and facilities. The hospital's equipment was outdated and couldn't meet the demands of such a sophisticated operation. As such, she could only borrow a few from New York at last-minute notice.

As the relevant procedures involved were cumbersome, by the time she was done with the calls and settled all the arrangements, more than two hours had already passed.

Only then did she return to the ward, intending to comfort her aunt.

She thought that Henry and Wendy would already have left by then, but unexpectedly, she immediately heard a dispute in the ward as soon as she arrived.

Henry was very arrogant. "If you want Angela to ask Dr. Larson to perform the surgery, then get Nora to surrender the company! Which is more important—that lousy company, or her aunt's life?"

Irene's breathing was unsteady. "Angela, I've always treated you well since you were a child. This is also what I would like to ask you—is the company or my life more important?"

Angela curled her lip. "When have you ever treated me well, Aunt Irene? You obviously favored that damned fatty. Back when you were a seamstress, you would make the same clothes for us. But you must have used more fabric for hers, right? If you had really treated me well, then you shouldn't have made any for her at all!"

Her words angered the thin Irene lying on the bed. "Angela, you—"

A dissatisfied Angela went on. "Also, although you gave us the same presents during Christmas, did you think I didn't know that you always gave that damned fatty another one in private?! Hmph, she's more of a niece to you than I am, isn't she? In your eyes, what do you even see me as?"

Irene clenched her fists. "I was giving them to her in her mother's stead!"

Angela curled her lip. She was just about to say something when suddenly...

Clap!

Lisa grabbed Angela's hand. She must have been crying for a very long time because her eyes were all swollen. "Please, Angela. Put in a good word for us in front of Dr. Larson and save my mother!"

Right after she spoke, she fell onto her knees and pleaded, "Please, Angela!"

Angela shook her off and stepped away. "Don't think that I'll relent just because you're doing this."

Wendy also said, "Oh, Lisa, what are you doing? You should be begging Nora for help instead!"

This immediately caught Henry's attention. As though he had just thought of a good idea, he said, "Heed your aunt's advice, Lisa. Go to Hotel Finest now and get down on your knees at the entrance, and beg Nora to save your mother!"

"Isn't Nora staying at Hotel Finest because she's hoping to snag a good husband there? If she doesn't want to be embarrassed, then she'll definitely agree to sign the agreement! "

"..."

Outside the door, Nora's downcast eyes were filled with an icy look.

When she was a child, she had simply thought that her father was partial to her sister because he had misunderstood her. But now, she suddenly understood that he had understood everything all along. There was actually no real reason for his partiality.

He could even bring himself to say such horrible things in such a justified manner.

"Henry!" Irene shouted sharply, "How can you treat Nora like that?!"

She turned to Lisa and ordered, "I forbid you to go over!"

The blood on Lisa's face drained little by little, and she wept silently on her knees.

"Don't beg them anymore. Get up, Lisa." Nora's uncle, Will Black, suddenly shouted. He pointed at the Smiths and yelled,

“Get out of here, all of you! You’re all ingrates, all of you! Irene had given her all for her nieces, yet not a single one of you is a decent human being!”

He picked up the bouquet of flowers at his hand and threw them at Henry. When he drove the three of them out, he happened to see Nora and he paused.

Nora pressed her lips together, intending to tell him about the operation. “Uncle Will...”

Will’s eyes were already red at this point. He snapped, “You’re just as much of an ingrate. Get lost!”

The door of the ward was then shut. However, one could still vaguely hear the conversation inside:

Lisa said, “Dad, Nora is—”

“Don’t speak her name! How kindly did your mother treat her? She treated her like she was her own, but how is she any different from Henry now? She’s holding on so stubbornly to the company and just standing by as your mother dies!”

Irene said, “Don’t say that about Nora. She’s not doing anything because she knows it’s useless even if she lets go of the company. Don’t vent your anger on someone else...”

“I know, but I feel so awful when I see her so indifferent!” Will suddenly couldn’t hold it in anymore, and he started to sob bitterly.

Nora, who was standing outside, could feel their helplessness and anger even through the glass windows.

“Don’t you feel bad?”

Henry stood behind her. “For the sake of a company, are you really going to disregard your aunt’s life?”

Their disputes here were too loud, and it had attracted a circle of onlookers.

Nora looked down and sent a text message to Lisa on her cell phone, telling

her to get ready and that someone would be coming to operate on her aunt in a few days.

After sending the text message, she ignored Henry and the others' angry castigation and turned to leave calmly.

Nearby.

Justin stood there with Lawrence. A relative had happened to be hospitalized today, so he had specially come to visit. However, he didn't expect to encounter such a situation.

Lawrence said, "The Smiths are certainly shameless, but isn't she a little too callous? No wonder she looks so unfeeling."

Justin frowned and said, "Check if there's anything that can be done about her aunt's illness."

This wasn't anything hard to find out. By the time they were in the car and on the way back to the hotel, he had already found out everything.

"Her condition is indeed hard to operate on. There are only two experts in the States who can do it, but the success rate is only 50%. Coincidentally, both experts are currently employed in our hospitals."

"..."

Seeing that the icy Justin wasn't speaking, Lawrence couldn't help but say, "If Miss Smith knows what she's doing, then she'll use this as an opportunity to approach you."

When the car arrived at Hotel Finest, as luck would have it, Justin spotted Nora getting off the cab. Additionally, when she noticed their car, she even stayed where she was and did not enter the hotel.

Was she waiting for them?

Nora had indeed spotted them.

She didn't understand what was going on. She obviously had nothing to do with that four or five-year-old child, but she simply couldn't help but feel uncomfortable the moment she thought of him being abused by his tutors.

They misunderstood and thought that I was pursuing him this morning. If I go over now, I'll really be seen as a stalker.

Nora lowered her cat-like eyes slightly. From the corner of her eye, she caught a glimpse of Justin walking past her, surrounded by bodyguards.

Nora suddenly spoke. She said, "I have something to say, Mr. Hunt."

As expected.

Justin stopped and looked at her with a deep gaze. His exquisite features exuded an aggressive air of heroism, and the mole at the corner of his eye gave off a feeling of slight interest. "What can I do for you, Miss Smith?"

He had already given her a chance, so she would probably start begging him pitifully, right?

In a slightly deep voice, Nora asked, "Are your son's tutors professional, Mr. Hunt?"

She had only heard what the tutors said in the elevator, and hadn't seen anything with her own eyes, so she had no way of judging whether or not their words were true. Thus, she merely gave him a subtle reminder.

Justin frowned, however.

Why was she keeping quiet about the doctors and talking about the tutors instead? Was it because she was too embarrassed to ask him about it, so she decided to talk about something else first?

Justin was a straightforward man, so he went straight to the point. He asked, "Do you need me to introduce two doctors to you, Miss Smith? Do you want to speak with Dr. Lane or Dr. Wright?"

Nora was confused.

Although Dr. Lane and Dr. Wright were the most famous neurosurgeons in the States, the success rate was only 50% if they operated on her aunt. Why would she go to them?

Besides, she was talking about the tutors. Why was he bringing up doctors?

Nora replied impatiently, "No, I don't. Please show more concern toward your son instead if you're free!"

If the tutors really were abusing him, then the responsibility would lie only on Justin. He must have been neglecting the child.

For some inexplicable reason, she was a little angry, as if it was her son that was being abused instead.

She left immediately after saying that.

Justin stared at her from the back with a slightly stunned expression, but he quickly came back to his senses. Anger welled up in him, and his countenance turned a little colder.

Lawrence couldn't help but say, "I had thought Miss Smith was so indifferent to her aunt only because she was at her wits' end. I didn't expect that she really was leaving her to die. She's too heartless!"

Without surgery, her aunt was doomed.

However, if she went through with the operation, then she would at least still have a 50% chance of survival.

The choice was obvious. But that woman was actually so crazy and heartless, and had rejected his kindness?

Forget it, he would just take it that he had unnecessarily meddled into someone else's business and misjudged her!

Justin entered the elevator with a sullen look.

In the top-floor presidential suite.

Cherry stealthily returned to the room. She was just about to enter the study when she turned and saw a stern-faced woman walking toward her with a ruler in her hand. She said viciously,

"How can you bring yourself to loiter about elsewhere when you haven't finished your homework, Pete? Judging from how stupid and dull you look, you must have taken after your mother! Oh, wait, that isn't quite right because you're a little bastard without a mother. Hold out your hand; I'm going to teach you a good lesson today!"

Cherry was confused.

How dare she insult her mother? And, she was even hitting her brother?

The soft little girl immediately transformed into the hot-tempered little girl from her gaming time. With her hands on her hips, she was about to hurl insults back at the tutor when the door suddenly opened.

She turned to see her handsome father, who had the potential to be bossy, cool, affectionate, or reassuring, striding in.

Cherry immediately forgot what happened just now. Her tiny form leaped forward as if she had wings, but it was at this moment that the tutor caught her by the arm.

Justin took off his jacket after entering. As per usual, the first thing he did was to ask how his son was doing. "How was Pete today?"

The tutor sighed. "He's not doing his homework again. Because he didn't reinforce what he learned, he doesn't understand when we delve into more complicated topics. He's awfully stubborn and refuses to listen to us. As a result, his progress is now lagging behind his cousin's by two semesters' worth of lessons!"

A troubled Justin frowned when he heard her report. Although his son's IQ was excellent, he was introverted and autistic and had trouble expressing himself. He really didn't know how he should communicate with him!

He walked up to Cherry, squatted down to face her, and asked patiently, "Why didn't you do your homework?"

Wow, looking at him up close, Daddy looks even more handsome now!

Cherry couldn't answer him for a moment there.

Seeing her silent, the tutor secretly scoffed. He was indeed a dimwit that didn't cry, kick up a fuss, or know how to complain about others.

Relieved, she started to spin more lies. "We're really at our wits' end, Mr. Hunt. We can't discipline or scold him, so your only option is to employ certain special methods of educating now."

Cherry, who was currently captivated by her father's good looks, thought to herself, What? They couldn't discipline or scold me?

Just as Cherry was about to speak, Justin frowned and asked, "What kind of special methods?"

The tutor sighed and replied, "Pete was born autistic. He doesn't like to talk nor does he know how to communicate with others. If this goes on, it'll impede his development. I think you can consider either sending him to medical specialists for treatment or to a school for children with special needs."

Her eyes shone after she spoke.

Once Pete was sent to a school for children with special needs, he would be diagnosed as being mentally handicapped. With that, they would be able to ruin his future!

Cherry was confused.

That teacher was horrible!

She looked at Justin. Should Daddy agree, she would stop seeing him as her father and would get Mommy to save Pete from their clutches.

Hmph.

Justin's expression instantly darkened. He retorted fiercely, "Pete is fine. He doesn't need to attend a school for children with special needs! If you can't teach him, then I'll find someone else! Lawrence!"

"Yes, sir?"

Justin ordered, "Settle her wages immediately. She doesn't need to come in anymore tomorrow!"

The tutor was shocked by his sudden wrath. Justin was usually very polite to them, which made her forget how domineering a man Justin really was.

She had made a mistake.

She shouldn't have said something like that. She should have taken it slow.

Seeing that she was out of a job, in order to complete her mission, the tutor put on a sincere and earnest expression and said,

“I am the top domestic tutor in the States, Mr. Hunt. My advice is undoubtedly in your son’s best interests. Since you refuse to listen to the truth, then take it as if I didn’t say anything. I enjoyed myself very much during my time with Pete. Goodbye.”

Her speech was very in line with what an exemplary teacher would say.

Justin’s anger faded a little and he said, “Give her an extra half a year’s wages.”

The tutor was ecstatic. Half a year’s wages were a lot of money! Together with what that person had given her...

Cherry, who was listening to them intently, was very satisfied.

Daddy hadn’t given up on Pete. He was indeed protective of him. However, he had been deceived by that teacher!

As she watched the wicked teacher walk happily toward the door, Cherry’s big grape-like eyes swiveled a little and she asked, “Daddy, am I a little bastard without a mother?”

Justin was taken aback. He looked down suddenly to see his son looking up at him trustingly. His young, childish voice made what he said next sound particularly heartbreaking: “Am I really very stupid and dull? Did Mommy lower the quality of Daddy’s genes?”

Justin was stunned. His son rarely spoke this much.

However, the content was especially shocking to him. He restrained his overwhelming fury and asked gently, “Who told you these things, Pete?”

Cherry stretched out her arm and pointed her chubby little finger at the door. “She did!”

At the door, the tutor's legs went limp the instant she felt Justin's murderous aura and anger. She said fearfully, "Stop spouting nonsense, Pete—"

Cherry hid behind Justin and hugged his leg. She stuck out her tongue at the tutor and said, "Please don't hit me again. I'm sorry!"

The tutor was taken aback.

Was this really that little dimwit who didn't talk?!

At the sight of how fearful his son looked, Justin didn't give the tutor a chance to explain anymore. He ordered, "Bring her out, Lawrence!"

"Yes, sir."

Lawrence grabbed the tutor and pushed her out.

Justin rubbed Cherry on her head comfortingly and said, "Can you play by yourself for a while, Pete?"

The upcoming scene was too bloody and unsuitable for children.

Although Cherry wanted to be with her father, he needed to deal with the vicious teacher now. It was just like how Mommy would also blindfold her and tell her to count sheep whenever she fought others when they were abroad.

She nodded. "Okay, Daddy!"

Justin only left the room after seeing Cherry pick up a toy without any significant fluctuations in his emotions.

Lawrence was a very efficient man. By then, he had already interrogated the truth out of the tutor. With his head down, he said, "... It's your uncle and his family that bribed them. They wanted to make Pete into a stubborn and problematic child so that their own children can take over the corporation. The two tutors were sent by the old madam, so were negligent and overlooked it."

The old madam doted on Pete the most. Who would have imagined that the tutors she sent harbored ill intentions?

Justin clenched his fists and asked, "What did they do to Pete?"

At the mention, Lawrence's head lowered even further. He answered, "They punished him by making him stand, hitting his palms, and reprimanding him. Also, they didn't teach him seriously. They didn't dare to do any kind of physical abuse worse than that; because they were also afraid that someone would discover what was going on."

Justin looked at the trembling woman kneeling on the ground and kicked her in the chest. The blow caused her to immediately cough up blood.

His dark and overcast countenance made him look as if a demon. He ordered, "Throw her out."

Lawrence's heart trembled upon sensing Justin's fury.

However, even he himself was furious, let alone Justin who had always loved and doted on Pete. It was just that his way of expressing it wasn't quite right.

Justin returned to the room. When he saw Cherry's tiny little form sitting on the sofa and playing with the toy car, his heart tightened with guilt.

Pete had been with him since he was an infant. He had personally nursed him and changed his diapers, but even until he was one and a half years old, he didn't speak at all. When they saw a doctor, he was told that Pete had slight congenital autism.

Grandma said that it was because the boy didn't have a mother and thus, had no sense of security. They mustn't have him, a grown man, taking care of him anymore, so she had arranged for babysitters, family doctors, and tutors for him.

As Pete slowly grew up and became able to have short conversations with people, it convinced him that Grandma was right.

Pete was a stubborn boy and always went against him. He often made him so angry that he almost wanted to give him a good thrashing. Despite that, he continued to think that this was a phase that all normal children went through.

That was, until that incident last week...

It was all his fault.

Justin walked over slowly. He sat beside Cherry, softened his voice, and said, "Daddy is sorry, Pete."

Cherry stretched out her little arms and hugged her handsome father. "Everything will be fine as long as you can acknowledge your mistakes and turn over a new leaf, Daddy!"

Justin sighed. Then, he said seriously, "We won't engage any more tutors. I'll personally teach you in the future."

The happy Cherry was instantly petrified. What??

She hated having to do homework the most! Help, Pete!

Downstairs.

When Nora returned to the room, she found her daughter sitting on the sofa and looking at her obediently instead of playing games like she usually did.

She walked over and kissed Pete on the forehead. "You're so well-behaved today, baby."

The soft lips pressed against his forehead, causing Pete to freeze. Yet at the same time, a sense of anticipation also arose in him.

Mommy's so soft and gentle.

He looked at Mommy longingly and subconsciously stood up and followed after her. As he did, he suddenly found his mother stopping and looking at him with a half-amused smile. "Are you intending to take a bath together with Mommy, Cherry?"

Only then did Pete realize with a start that he had followed her into the bathroom in the master bedroom!

He was about to retreat, but Nora stooped over and picked him up. She said, "Forget it, let's bathe you first."

Alarm bells rang in Pete's head.

Wouldn't his identity as a boy be revealed if she were to bathe him?

Pete blushed. “No, no, it’s fine, Mommy.”

Nora chuckled softly and said, “Cherry’s a big girl now.”

Pete ran away in a hurry after Nora let go of him.

He stood outside the door to the bedroom and listened to the movements inside. The sound of running water, the sound of someone in the bath, and the sound of Mommy walking around in slippers after she was done bathing.

After confirming that Mommy was dressed, he opened the door and saw her lying on the bed. With her eyes closed, she said, “Mommy has a very important operation in two days, Cherry. I need a crazy amount of sleep for the next few days, so I’ll go to bed first, alright?”

“... Okay, Mommy.”

His sister had told him before that Mommy had poor health and that her hobby was sleeping. She was usually either asleep or dealing with troublesome issues so that she could sleep.

Therefore, he mustn’t disturb Mommy.

Two minutes later, when he heard steady breathing coming from where the bed was, Pete tiptoed over to his mother. His tiny little form climbed onto the bed. Then, he found a spot in Nora’s arms and curled up there. Before he knew it, he had fallen into deep sleep while listening to her heartbeat.

How wonderful.

He also had a mother now.

As a result, he didn’t see the SOS messages from Cherry on the cell phone in his pocket:

“Help, Pete!”

“Let’s exchange our positions again, Pete!”

“Sob, I don’t love Daddy anymore!”

Downstairs.

Cherry took advantage of the opportunity while Justin was pouring a glass of water to send another text message to her brother on her cell phone. When she saw that he still wasn't replying, she could only give up and start tackling her assignments.

She bit her pen and stared at the textbook, her face all wrinkled as she frowned.

She, who had grown up abroad, was still at the literacy development stage. She couldn't understand the questions on the papers at all!

Justin sat next to her when he returned.

It had been half a year since he last tutored his son. As such, he didn't know how far their current progress was. He pointed at the simplest question and asked, "Do you know how to solve this?"

Cherry's big eyes were completely blank.

Justin fell silent for a moment. Then, he flipped back to syllabus from half a year ago. "What about this?"

Cherry shook her head hard.

"..."

Justin stared at her. He wanted to ask Pete why he couldn't solve the question now when he could do it half a year ago. Also, was he really shaking his head when he hadn't even read the question?

Cherry wordlessly suggested, "Why don't we learn about history instead, Daddy? I'm very knowledgeable in that."

"... Alright."

Justin flipped open the textbook. "Who's the first president of the United States?"

Cherry's eyes lit up. She raised her hand and said, "I know this!"

Justin breathed a sigh of relief. His son had fallen behind in his mathematics, but it would also do if he was doing well in his history classes.

As soon as the thought formed, he heard her yell, “Tom Cruise!”

“... It’s George Washington!”

Cherry blinked. “Oh right, I must have remembered it wrongly. Next question please, Daddy.”

“Which American politician was assassinated in 1963?”

“Leonardo DiCaprio!” Cherry immediately answered.

“...”

Justin took a deep breath and told himself not to get mad. His son had just started talking a little more. He mustn’t lose his temper. He decided to try again. “Who invented the light bulb?”

Full of confidence, Cherry answered, “Keanu Reeves!”

As Justin looked at his son’s usually stern countenance that seemed more alive and animated today, he couldn’t help yelling, “Peter Hunt!”

Cherry looked up, her expression as though she was eagerly seeking praise. “Aren’t I great, Daddy? There’s still a lot more that I know!”

Justin was perplexed.

But when he saw how his son looked, he immediately reined his temper in.

The tutors were the ones who had taught him all these, so what was he losing his temper at the kid for? He would just ‘reward’ those two tutors even handsomely!

Justin said glumly, “Let’s continue tomorrow.”

“Okay, Daddy!”

Cherry heaved a huge sigh of relief. Seeing Lawrence poking his head into the room every now and then because he probably had something to talk to her father about, she carefully climbed down from the chair and said, "I'm going off to play now!"

"..."

Justin rubbed his temples as he watched her run off.

Lawrence entered the room. With a complicated look, he said, "Pete seems to be doing worse than how the tutor had put it. If this goes on, he'll probably fall to the last place in the year-end assessment, right? Do you want to quickly contact a few other tutors? There's still time until the end of the year..."

The Hunts held assessments for the children at the end of each year.

Pete always took top place in the past. That was how he became known among outsiders for having a high IQ.

Yet his grades had deteriorated so badly in just half a year.

No wonder it was said that even though children had good memory, they were also prone to forgetting. Once they stopped learning, their grades would suffer immediately.

Flames of fury flared in Justin's eyes. He closed his eyes and pondered for a long time before he finally sighed and said, "Forget it. Let's not force him to do it anymore."

It was exactly because he had placed too much emphasis on education in the past that he always fell out with his son.

But when he saw how he smiled and how he cried and kicked up a fuss, it was then that he realized that his son's mental health was more important than anything else.

Even if his son were to really forget everything that he had learned and take the last place in examinations every time, he could just live from day to day in the future. He would pave the way for his son's future.

Justin, who had always been bold and resolute when facing the unscrupulous commercial world, hesitated for a moment. Then, he asked, "Do you find Pete very different today?"

The abuse had been ongoing for a very long time, but his son had never once mentioned anything.

Yet not only had he spoken up today, but his personality seemed to also have become a lot more cheerful?

For some reason, Justin suddenly thought of what that woman had said downstairs... How did she know that the tutors were problematic?

Had Pete been keeping in contact with her all this time?

A pondering Lawrence also said, "Could Miss Smith have counseled Pete? Speaking of this, she's really not a simple woman. After all, so many women have tried to gain Pete's favor in order to get near to you, but all of them have been unsuccessful."

Lawrence couldn't even keep count of how many of Justin's suitors he had had to handle in the past anymore.

He thought for a while and asked, "Do you want to consider giving Miss Smith a chance to get near you if she really has a positive influence on Pete?"

Justin hesitated for a while before he asked, "What is she doing now?"

A hesitant look appeared on Lawrence's countenance again. "When the cleaners went to clean the room just now, they heard from the nanny that she's asleep, and she forbade them from disturbing them. Her aunt's life is still in limbo, yet she can still bring herself to sleep?"

A person who could do that was too unfeeling.

Justin's expression darkened. "Don't let her make contact with Pete so often anymore."

"Yes, sir."

Lawrence wanted to say more, but Justin suddenly noticed that the little fellow had fallen asleep on the sofa.

He gestured to Lawrence to keep quiet. Then, he walked over and picked up Cherry, intending to carry her into the bedroom.

A dazed Cherry suddenly placed her arms around his neck and said,

“Mommy, I’ve found my elder brother. He looks just like me…”

Justin paused and frowned.

Justin stared at the young child in his arms. Her murmur reached his ears. It seemed like she was calling out for her mother... The light in his eyes dimmed.

Pete rarely asked about his mother.

But as it turned out, to his son, his mother was such an important figure.

He lowered his eyes, hiding the complex emotions within. Then, he carried Cherry into the bedroom, took off her shoes, and tucked her in.

He gazed at his son’s young, sleeping visage for a long time before he quietly exited the bedroom.

The next day.

“Sorry, I fell asleep last night. Did Daddy scold you last night, Cherry?”

Cherry lay on the bed and sent her brother a voice message back. “Nope, because even though I don’t know much about mathematics, I’m awesome at history! Daddy was so moved that he canceled my homework!”

Pete believed her. He said, “Okay. Don’t forget our plans today.”

Cherry was about to reply when the door opened.

Justin pushed the door open and walked in to see his son on the bed with his butt perched high into the air while texting on his cell phone.

At the sight of him, his son turned off the cell phone screen in a slight panic. Then, with a guilty conscience, he blinked with his big cute eyes and exclaimed, “You look even more handsome today, Daddy!”

Justin couldn't help but smile when he heard the little fellow complimenting him. "...You're a handsome fellow, too."

"No, that won't do." Cherry corrected him seriously and said, "'Handsome' is used to describe boys. I'm going to be pretty when I grow up!"

Justin was perplexed.

Cherry flipped the quilt aside and climbed out of the bed nimbly. Then, she held his large hand with her own small one and asked, "Wanna have breakfast, Daddy? Cherr... Cherry Pit is really hungry!"

"..."

Justin glanced at her hesitantly again.

Grandpa was the one that had named him Peter, in hopes that he would be as resilient and down-to-earth as a rock. How did that become 'cherry pit' instead? It sounded a little sissy.

He took Cherry to the dining room.

The presidential suite was bigger than 5,000 square feet. It had four bedrooms, two studies, a living room, a lounge, a gym, a kitchen, and a dining room.

While they were eating, Justin instructed, "Get the family doctor here."

Cherry ate slow, so Justin got the nanny to look after her after he finished. Then, he entered the study with the family doctor who had hurried over.

As the doctor stood there, he saw his employer's expression changing again and again before he hesitantly asked, "Is it possible to tell a five-year-old child's sexual orientation?"

During the history quiz the day before, all the names that his son had mentioned were good-looking and attractive men.

Moreover, his son's wish to become 'pretty' and how he had called himself 'cherry pit' this morning was rather worrisome.

Was Chester being a bad influence on him?

When the family doctor saw how serious he was, he replied solemnly, "One's sexual orientation is generally already decided at birth. But if you have concerns about this, I can prepare a test for Pete."

"...Okay, get the test ready."

After giving the doctor instructions, Justin exited the study. The moment he returned to the dining room, he saw Chester and his son's arms slung across each other's backs while they spoke with each other in low voices. His face immediately sank.

"Why didn't you log on to the game last night—"

Chester was stuffing bread into his mouth and speaking with a muffled voice when he suddenly felt a chilly aura coming toward him.

He turned his head slowly to see the tyrant standing behind him. The look in his eyes was as if he wanted to kill him.

Chester was so frightened that he jumped up from the chair. "A-are you okay, Justin?"

Justin retracted his scrutinizing gaze and walked in between Chester and Cherry. He said, "No one's living next door. You can move in there instead."

Chester was confused.

Why was he sensing acute disdain from the tyrant?

When Cherry was full, she walked over and put her arms around Justin's leg. Then, she looked up and asked adorably, "Can you accompany me to the movies today, Daddy?"

Just as Justin was about to refuse, his son wheedled, "C'mon, Daddy! Pretty please?"

That tone...!

Justin bent over and picked Cherry up. "Don't plead with others so lightly, Pete."

Cherry's big round eyes blinked. "Will you go, then?"

"... Alright."

In order to make it up to his son, he had already postponed all his work and meetings today. Since he wanted to go to the movies, he would accompany him.

The two picked an afternoon screening for a cartoon film. Before leaving, Cherry secretly sent a message to Pete: "All set, Pete! What about you?"

Pete replied very quickly: "We've already set off."

How could Nora possibly reject the request? She was always sleeping, so she was already spending less time with her child than other mothers. Thus, as long as the request wasn't too much, she agreed to every one of Cherry's requests.

As she had to perform surgery the next day, she had slept all the way until 2 pm. Then, she took Pete to the movie theater while yawning.

At the entrance of the movie theater, the corners of her lips spasmed a little as she looked at Pete. "It's just a movie, Cherry. Is this really necessary?"

Pete had a mask on. "...It's to prevent being infected by contagious diseases."

Nora held her forehead with her hand. "And the shades?"

Pete pushed them up a little and replied reticently, "It looks good."

"...If you say so."

After Nora bought some popcorn and cola, she took his hand and led him into the movie theater. After taking their assigned seats, Pete took out his cell phone and sent a text message to his sister: "Are you here yet?"

Cherry was currently following Justin into the movie theater sulkily.

She wanted popcorn, but her father had adamantly refused to buy her some, saying that it was unhealthy. He was horrible!

Justin intensely disliked large movie theaters like this. Not only were there a lot of people, but the air was also very dirty. But because his son wanted the experience, it wasn't quite appropriate for him to book the whole theater, either.

He entered the cinema sullenly with Cherry in his arms. When he reached the seats assigned to them based on the tickets that his son had bought online, he immediately spotted the woman already seated there.

The theater was very dark, but she was so fair that it dazzled one's eyes.

Her eyes were lidded and she seemed very sleepy. Her arms were comfortably crossed and she was currently asleep.

Justin's expression darkened.

He had been wondering why his son suddenly wanted to come to the movies and even bought tickets. So, in the end, it was all still that woman's scheme.

He wanted to turn around and leave, but when he thought of his son's mental health, he suppressed his impatience and placed Cherry between the two of them in the end.

He would never give her a chance to get close to him again.

The two cuties, who both had masks on, exchanged a look with each other. How were Daddy and Mommy going to fall in love with each other if they didn't sit together?!

The movie started at this point.

The theme song of Frozen started to play. With just a glance, the movie instantly grabbed Cherry's attention and she started to watch it with her eyes widened.

Half an hour later, Cherry suddenly smelled popcorn. Engrossed in the cartoon, she subconsciously nudged Nora and said,

"Popcorn, Mommy!"

Nora, who was dozing off, let out a dazed "Okay". Then, she picked up a piece of popcorn, took off Cherry's mask, and stuffed it into her mouth.

Pete was astounded.