

Chapter 351

Everyone in the banquet hall looked at Adina. "My sister is excellent at playing the piano." Dew smiled faintly and said, "Addy, everyone wants to hear you play. Come on and play a song." Adina curled her lips into a sneer. "I don't know how to play."

Dew broke into a sinister smile.

Adina really could not play the piano anymore. It was reasonable, since five years ago, Adina had been locked away for eight months. After that, she brought the kids overseas. She had been busy taking care of the kids and earning money every day. How could she have the time to practice the piano?

Once you abandoned a skill for five years, you would be unfamiliar with it if you wanted to pick it up again.

Knowing how to play piano and playing it well were two different things.

She would definitely beat Adina this time!

Dew suppressed her pride before she added, "Addy, don't be humble. We all know how well you played the piano when we took piano lessons together." "I haven't played it in many years, so I don't know how to play anymore," Adina said indifferently. She did not have to please Mrs. Winters or anyone in this banquet hall, so there was no need to go on stage and play the piano.

However, the more she refused, the more Dew was sure that she could not play the piano.

"But Addy, didn't you tell me last night that you prepared a performance as a birthday wish for Mrs. Winters?" Dew blinked. "This is a great opportunity. Just come and play a song for everyone. It's okay if you can't play it well. Your sincerity matters the most."

Many men had fallen for Adina's beauty, and they wanted to see how gorgeous this lady looked when she played the piano, so they also tried to convince Adina. "Yes, Ms. Daugherty. Just play a song for our enjoyment. It's okay to not play well. It's just entertainment." Adina smiled and put her wine glass aside before she walked over in her high heels. Then, she smiled faintly. "Since Dew keeps inviting me, I'm just going to make a fool of myself."

She walked onto the stage and casually tapped on the piano. It was just a general piano, and it had not been accurately tuned. When she listened to Dew's piano performance earlier, a few of the notes had sounded out of tune.

But non-professionals would not be able to hear the wrong tunes.

She sat down in front of the piano, and her fingers paused. "I'll just play the piece that you played just now."

Caloriin

When Dew heard that, she was happy. The difference could be heard clearly if they played the same song

Once that happened, Adina should not blame her for being stepped on.

The hall fell into silence, and Duke stopped talking. He raised his head and looked at the woman who was seated in front of the piano,

She was dressed in a snow-colored gown, and her long hair fell naturally. Her fair skin glowed under the light of the chandelier.

When her long, fair fingers flew over the black and white keys, delightful piano music echoed in the banquet hall.

Everyone was familiar with the piece. When Dew played it earlier, they thought she played it very well. It was like a sample song on a CD.

However, once Adina played it, they finally understood why some people could be enchanted by piano music.

They felt like they had been transported to a pristine field. The sky was clear, the grass was swaying, and the air was fresh. On top of that, deers and rabbits were prancing past their feet. The fact that it could conjure up such images showed that the piece was on a higher level. They moved along with the music, and in just four minutes, they had seemingly traveled across the pristine forest.

When the song ended, everyone in the banquet hall instantly forgot about the sadness in their life.

The hall was silent at first before a huge round of applause was heard. Everyone's gaze changed. "I haven't played the piano for a few years, so my skills have become rusty. Please forgive me." Adina smiled faintly and calmly walked down the stage. On the stage, Dew's complexion turned pale and blue. She looked strangely embarrassed as she stood there.

She could clearly hear the discussion in the crowd.

"Ms. Adina's piano performance was splendid. She really is better than Ms. Dew."

"Ms. Dew focused on her technique, but Ms. Adina focused on her emotions, which was how the piece resonated with us."

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"Ms. Adina is gorgeous, and she can even play the piano so well. She's truly impressive!"

Argh!

Dew secretly growled.

How could this happen?

Why would that b\*tch, Adina, be in the limelight again?

That was not her intention,

However, no matter how regretful Dew was, she could not change the men's sight in the banquet hall.

When a woman looked gorgeous, she could attract the attention of countless men. If she was talented, she would become popular.

After Adina got down from the stage, some men went over to hit on her.

But Duke got to her first. There was a different kind of gaze in his black eyes. "Why didn't I know that you could play the piano?" "You've never asked, have you?" Adina replied indifferently.

Did she have to tell everyone that she could play the piano? Besides, she was not very close to Duke.

Duke looked at her side profile and slowly asked, "I heard from Dew just now that you learned piano with her when you were young?"

Adina nodded. "You can say that."

She did not want to talk about the past. Her life before she turned 18 felt like a dream.

But Duke insisted on probing. "Did you study in Sea City High School?" Adina continued to nod. "Why do you ask?"

"Did you play the piano in Sea City High School?" Duke popped up the question that he wanted to ask the most.

When Adina played piano on the stage earlier, he could not help but think of the slender figure from that time.

He used to think that the figure was Dew, but when he thought about it, the figure seemed to resemble Adina more.

It would be great if it was Adina.

He did not know why he would have such a thought either.

Adina did not want to answer at first, but she sensed the man's passionate gaze. She pursed her lips, looked down, and said, "I was so stressed about my studies at that time, so I would go to the piano room every day to play for half an hour to relieve my stress."

Duke instantly felt relieved.

*It had to be Adina!*

*It had to be her!*

*The figure he had seen back then had to be her!*

*A strange emotion filled his heart, and he could not help but hold Adina's waist.*

*His hand was very warm, and the moment he touched Adina's waist, her body trembled.*

*His strong musky scent overcame Adina, which made her instantly recall that night five years ago.*

*She tried her best to stop thinking about it, but when Duke leaned over, all her nerves became tense. She could no longer control some of her emotions.*

*Her red lips trembled slightly.*

*Duke held her waist more tightly and asked in a low voice, "What's wrong?"*

*"Let go of me," Adina gritted her teeth and said.*

*Duke held her shoulder and looked her in the eyes. All he saw was fear.*

### **Chapter 353**

Duke recalled that whenever he got near this woman previously, she would look just as frightened

Was she afraid of him, or was she afraid of him getting close to her?

He pursed his gorgeous lips tightly. Just as he was about to speak, his phone vibrated in his pocket

He released Adina's shoulder and spoke in a low and soft tone, "The banquet hall is a little noisy. You can go to the balcony and get some fresh air."

After he said that, he brought his phone to a quiet place to answer it.

A strange accent came from the other end of the line. "Hi, Mr. Winters. I'm Catherine. I wonder if you've heard about me."

Duke raised his head indifferently. "Hi, Ms. Catherine."

His mother lived in Ascrialia, and she had a quiet life. Ms. Catherine would always go to the manor and keep his mother company.

In the beginning, he thought that Ms. Catherine had ulterior motives. But later, he discovered that Catherine was a psychologist with a background in social studies. She frequently visited his mother mainly because she wanted to explore the mental development needs of people in that age group. Since she did not harbor bad intentions, he just had a laissez-faire attitude about it. After that, his mother and Catherine also became very good friends despite the huge gap in their ages.

He

had thought about meeting this Ms. Catherine, but he was too busy, so he had postponed it for several years.

"I've prepared a birthday gift for Aunt Mabel, and it's outside the Winters family's villa. The sender doesn't have an invitation card, so he can't go inside. Can you go out and get it, Mr. Winters?" Catherine's accent was different, and she spoke for about a minute.

Duke answered the call as he walked outside. When he saw someone carrying the box and standing outside the villa, he ordered Mr. Brown to take the birthday gift inside. "Thank you, Ms. Catherine. Your birthday gift has been received."

He wanted to hang up right after he spoke.

“Wait!” Catherine said. “Can I add you on Whatsapp? I want to show you something.”

Duke appeared indifferent as he said, “Sure.” After they ended the call, the notification for a new friend message popped up on Whatsapp. Once he added the number to his contact list, Catherine immediately sent him a document.

“This is a report of the psychological needs that I’ve written using your mother as a sample. She’s been living alone in Ascrialia for so many years, and she’s longing for family and love. As an outsider, my heart also goes out to your mother. I hope that you can pay more attention to your mother’s psychological condition, Mr. Winters,” Duke tapped on the document to find a detailed report, He knew about her psychological needs, but... He pursed his lips and closed the document.

Living alone in Ascrialia was kind of his mother’s way of redemption. Those who had sinned deserved such psychological torment.

Adina stood on the balcony while she enjoyed the cold breeze. She stood there for less than three minutes before the door to the balcony was pushed open. Then, Dew walked in with two cups of coffee. “You don’t really want to have a cup of coffee with me, do you? It’s my treat.”

Dew placed the coffee on the balcony table.

Adina looked over with an indifferent gaze and stared at Dew’s exquisite makeup. “Dew, have you been able to sleep every night in the past four years?”

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““There’s nobody else here, NO Just say whatever you want to say *Don’t beat around the bush*” Dew smiled coldly “As I said before, as long as you leave Wa City, *lean give you anything*, That still holds true, so you better take that chance”

“I finally understand why you’re so afraid of me being in sea City” Adina twirled her red wine glass and sounded lazy. “When I returned, you resorted to all kinds of schemes to make me disappear. I always thought that you were afraid of me stealing the *position of the Daugherty* family’s heir, but it turns out, that’s not the case.”

Dew became tense,

She stared at Adina who sat across from her. She gritted her teeth and said, “*Didn’t you come back this time to take everything from the Daugherty family? I won’t give up.*”

“Haha!”

Adina chuckled.

She put down her glass of wine before she leaned forward menacingly.

Her voice became extremely cold. "Compared to the mistress of the Winters family, the heir of the Daugherty family is worthless. Dew Daugherty, aren't you afraid that I'll replace you as the mistress of the Winters family?"

"Stop dreaming!" Dew gritted her teeth in hatred. "You just look good, and Duke's simply having fun with you. Once he's fed up with you, he'll come back to me. I'm the mother of his sons, so he'll marry me."

"Is that so?"

Adina curled her lips, and her smile became brighter.

Her smile gave Dew goosebumps. She felt as if Adina could see through her.

"Are the young masters of the Winters family, George and Harold, really your biological sons?"

Adina slowly enunciated each word, which punched Dew's heart like a big hammer.

Her breathing suddenly became rapid. "Of course they're my sons. I gave birth to them after a ten-month pregnancy. You — "

Adina interrupted her relentlessly. "I'm very curious about how you fooled the Winters family. How did you make Duke Winters, a brilliant person, believe that you're the boys' mother? Duke just believed you because you carried the babies to his house? It wasn't that simple, right?"

Dew's body shook. Listening up to that point, would she still not understand?

Adina knew it. Adina knew everything. The trap that she had worked on for four years had been exposed. "Let me guess. You made Duke believe everything after you used my hair to replace your hair

in the maternity test "Adina's lips were full of mockery, "Unfortunately, the boys aren't your NaN therefore, no matter how perfect the lies you've created are, you can't conceal the few ties of their bloodline, Do you know that Harold has been calling me 'Mommy' for a

The color instantly faded from Dew's face, and she became terribly pale.

Since Harold became conscious of his actions, he had never called her "Mom," He had always hated her and felt annoyed toward her. He would constantly treat her like his enemy.

However, she had also seen Harold rush into Adina's arms intimately. He even kissed Adina on the cheek

That was what a real mother and son should look like.

"Adina, if it weren't for me, George and Harold would have died four years ago." Dew's lips trembled, and she was making her last attempt. "I saved both of them, so you owe me two lives. How are you going to repay me?"

Adina tapped her finger on the tea table randomly.

Every tap made Dew feel tense.

If Duke found out, she would be doomed. The Daugherty family would even be affected.

“Since you saved my sons, I’ll spare you for the time being.” Adina smiled faintly. “While I’m willing to spare you, that doesn’t mean Duke will agree to do the same.”

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Dew’s lips became completely pale

She had never been afraid of Adina She was just terrified of Duke

That man was ruthless and cold hearted He showed no mercy to his enemies, if he discovered that she had deceived him for four years, he would kill her

“Adina, help me.” Dew grabbed Adina’s hand and begged her in a low voice, Her dreams of becoming the mistress of the Winters family were broken Now she just *wanted* to stay alive and retain the Daugherty family’s wealth and prosperity, “Duke still doesn’t know about the kids,” Adina said Indifferently.

Dew sighed in relief. As long as Duke still did not know, there were still countless possibilities,

She tried to ask, “So, besides you, who else knows about this?”

Adina was aware of what Dew was planning, She scoffed and said, “Are you going to kill everyone who knows about this so that you can keep it a secret forever?”

Dew was stunned.

“I’ve already written an email, and a DNA report is attached to it. If something happens to me, that email will be automatically sent to the mailbox of all the Winters family members,” Adina

- said nonchalantly. “If you dare to hurt me, your biggest secret will be exposed.”

Dew shook in anger.

She had never felt that angry and anxious before. She wanted to strangle Adina to death so badly.

“I can help you keep this a secret for the time being, but the condition is you have to behave yourself and not hurt my kids.” Adina scoffed. “As long as you stay away from the kids, I can guarantee that Duke won’t know about it for now.”

Dew slowly calmed down.

She looked at Adina’s smile and slowly asked, “Why don’t you tell Duke about the kids? If he knows that you’re George and Harold’s biological mother, and he still has a son and a daughter, perhaps you can marry into the Winters family and become the family’s mistress.”

“Do you think everyone loves money and fame like you?” Adina fiddled with the coffee cup and coldly said, “I’m not interested in becoming Mrs. Winters.”

Dew narrowed her eyes. “You don’t like Duke?”

“If it weren’t because of the kids, I wouldn’t deal with him at all,” Adina said indifferently. “I’m keeping this secret because I don’t want to get involved in the conflicts of the Winters family for the children’s

sake. It just so happens that it will spare you from being held accountable by Duke in the meantime. It's a win-win situation. I hope you can suppress your urge to do bad things and not trigger me."

She did not want to expose the truth because she did not want Alden and Melody to be taken from her.

Before she came up with a solution, she would not let Duke know about the children.

Dew lowered her head and drank some coffee before she nodded in agreement.

As long as Duke had no idea about it, she was still safe.

She would be able to come up with a solution and get away.

Duke passed Catherine's birthday gift to Mrs. Winters.

The banquet had already ended by then. Most of the guests had left the banquet hall, and only a few people were still chatting there.

Mrs. Winters asked the servant to keep her birthday gifts. When she saw Duke turning around to leave, she perfunctorily said, "Wait, I want to ask you a few questions."

Duke looked at the balcony where Adina had been. It was empty. Where did the woman go? Had she gone back home?

"Is Ms. Adina Daugherty the woman you like?" Mrs. Winters' voice was sharp. "You don't want to marry the boys' biological mother, but you want to marry the boys' aunt?"

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Duke frowned. "Mother, when I met her, I didn't know that she was my sons' aunt

"Now that you know, you should give it up, yes?" Mabel said coldly "Daw the serond daughter of the Daugherty's family, gave you a pair of twins, but you want to marry the oldest daughter of the same family instead? 11 this news were to spread, people will mock u!"

"I love Adina, and it has nothing to do with her being the eldest daughter of the Daugherty family." Duke said plainly, "I will not break up with her just because she's from the Daugherty family."

Adina, who was bringing her two children downstairs, was caught *off guard when she* heard what Duke said.

She was both surprised and shocked. There were mixed emotions in her *gaze*

'Duke and I are dating, but we're not together because we're in love,

'But now, he's saying that he loves me right in front of Mrs. Winters. He even said that he would never want to break up with me...'

The wall that she had built around her heart crumbled a little.

Mabel heard some noises upstairs. She did not say anything anymore.



She turned and looked at Adina. Her gaze shifted to the two children. 'Earlier in the banquet hall, I heard a lot of people saying that the father of the two children of Sea City's most beautiful woman is Tyson Osborne. But it turned out to be baseless rumors...'

Mabel's indifferent expression softened when she saw Melody's cute little face.

Adina led the two children downstairs and said with a smile, "Mrs. Winters, it's getting late. I shall bring my children back home now." "Are these your children?" Mrs. Winters asked softly, "How old are they?"

After she spoke, she reached out to touch Melody's hair.

The little girl widened her eyes and she took a step back, looking horrified. She hid behind Adina.

"Mother, Mel is afraid of strangers." Duke frowned. "I'll send them home."

He bent over and carried Melody with one arm and pretended to rest his other hand on Adina's waist. The four of them then headed out.

Mabel leaned into the couch and frowned.

She looked up at Colin, who was cleaning up the mess next to her. "Colin, come here." Colin put down the things in his hand, came over, and asked respectfully, "Yes, Madam?" "Do the two children from the Daugherty family come here often?" Mabel asked softly, "How does Duke act around them?"

"For the moment, Ms.

Daugherty often comes over to cook dinner. Young Master Alden and Lady Melody don't usually go back right after dinner. Young Master George and Young Master

Harold adore Lady Melody. Young Master Harold, especially, wishes that she was his own sister," Colin said with a smile. There was a hint of sorrow in his gaze. 'If only Lady Melody can speak, even more people would adore her.'

Mabel pursed her lips in silence. 'I've never seen Duke ever carrying Hal. But earlier on, he hugged a child that's not even his...'

There was a mixture of emotions in her heart.

At that moment, her phone vibrated. Colin instinctively glanced at her phone and saw a name he had not seen for a very long time flash on the screen.

(Earl) "Madam, I'll go back to my other tasks now." Colin tactfully walked away. She grabbed her phone, got up, and staggered toward the study room.

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"I'll send you home," Duke said as he opened that car door, Adina smiled and shook her head, "I drove here. I can drive back on my own." Duke suddenly lowered her head and leaned into his ears. "Remember, I'm your boyfriend now, and it's perfectly reasonable for the boyfriend to send his girlfriend home."

Adina recalled what he said to Mrs. Winters earlier.

Her ears turned red. She pursed her lips and said, "What should I do with my car, then?"

Duke turned around and called for a bodyguard. He ordered him to drive Adina's car and follow him as he drove Adina and her children back.

He drove slowly, and they reached the Daugherty's mansion after half an hour. Adina carried her children down the car and said politely, "Thank you, Mr. Winters. Goodbye." Alden waved his hand courteously. "Bye, Uncle Duke."

Melody whispered, "Bye—bye, Daddy." The moment Melody said "Daddy", the emotion that Adina tried to suppress crumbled a little.

'I could've still faced Duke as normal if he hadn't confessed his feelings in front of Mrs. Winters earlier.

'But he said he loves me...' "Aren't you going to invite me in?" Duke asked suddenly. "I'm a little thirsty after driving for so long." Adina was speechless. "Isn't he being too blatant, barging into a single woman's house in the middle of the night?" Just as she was about to refuse, she saw Duke take her favorite puffer jacket and walk into her house.

She shrugged helplessly and walked in.

It was already nine o'clock at night, and it was Mel's bedtime.

Adina changed to her slippers and said, "Mr. Winters, have a sit. I'll give Mel a bath. It's already her bedtime."

She did not dare to look into Duke's eyes. She carried Melody upstairs into the bathroom.

Alden took a book and sat on the sofa. He had an indifferent expression. Duke took a glance at the book and frowned. "Are you still trying to be a hacker?" "That book is about advanced hacking. Generally, only graduate students of this major could understand it. How could a four-year-old child be interested in this book?" "I think hacking is very interesting," Alden said without looking up. "I can do a lot of things that I want without getting caught."

"That doesn't sound good. Many hackers go astray after making one momentary slip." Duke narrowed his eyes and said, "What exactly do you want to do without getting caught?" Alden pursed his lips. "I can't tell you that." He lowered his gaze and continued to flip through the book. He read through the book swiftly and seemed to understand every word.

Duke propped his chin up and narrowed his eyes. 'If I really want to be with Adina, Alden will be my son too. 'Since he'll be part of the Winters family, I need to guide him well. He might end up being a hacker on the Internet someday.

"But now is not the time...?"

After a while, Adina was done bathing Melody.

Melody was wrapped in a pink towel, looking like a soft pink burrito, looking fluffy, giving everyone a warm fuzzy feeling when they looked

upon her. Duke stood up and went upstairs. "Mel, do you want me to read you a story?" Melody's eyes lit up in excitement as she reached out and hugged Duke's neck.

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Adina was speechless.

I've raised her for four years for nothing! Now that she has her Daddy, she has totally forgotten about me!

I guess it's true when people say that a father is a daughter's first love...'

She twitched her lips and went downstairs to find Alden. When she noticed him still reading that late into the night, she said helplessly, "Al, you should wait until you're older to read such complicated books. You should be reading storybooks at your age."

She led Alden upstairs. "It's getting late. Go take a bath and get some rest. Do you want me to help you?"

Alden hurriedly shook his head. "No, thanks. I can do it myself."

He took a change of clothes to the bathroom and came out ten minutes after that. His hair was wet from the shower, giving him a good-boy look. Adina led him into his bedroom and said gently, "Do you want a bedtime story from me?"

"Okay."

Alden took the book that was placed at the head of his bed.

It was a book of idioms, one that was a little more on the esoteric side.

Alden leaned against the bed and read the book slowly. After three stories, Alden finally closed his eyes and fell asleep.

She switched off the light and tiptoed out of the room before gently closing the door behind her.

Just then, she saw Duke also coming out of Melody's room.

"Melody is asleep," Duke said softly as the two of them headed downstairs. Perhaps the night was too quiet. His voice sent tingles all over her. She clenched her fist slowly, and said calmly, "It's getting late. Mr. Winters, it's time for you to go back, yes?" "Didn't I tell you before to not call me Mr. Winters anymore?" Duke stopped, and his gaze darkened as he looked at her. "You can call me Duke or D."

Adina was at a loss. 'I

can't go back on my words. I'm the one who asked him to be my boyfriend.' She pursed her lips and said hesitantly, "I'll call you Duke, then." "What do you want me to call you?"

Duke got a little closer to her.

Adina subconsciously wanted to take a step back

A warm hand suddenly wrapped around her tiny waist. Before she could push him, he leaned

into her car and whispered, "Don't move. Someone is outside"

Adina stopped moving

She became really nervous. From the *corner of her eyes*, she noticed someone moving in the shadows between the trees.

'Did someone just sneak into my house?! "Perhaps I'm *too* concerned about things outside my house that I've let down my guard around Duke' Duke hugged her waist tightly as he said to her, "Let's move towards the window slowly."

Adina *nodded* and instinctively grabbed his arm. As she was doing it, Duke caught a whiff of her scent.

For an instant, an impulse rushed over his mind.

'I just can't resist her...'

Adina's focus was on the tree outside the window. She and Duke moved towards the window slowly as they stayed in each other's embrace, just like *two lovers* who were reluctant to part.

The closer she was to the window, the clearer she saw the figure hiding in the tree. As she was trying to figure out the nature of this intruder, she realized something was off.

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Adina was stunned,

'I'm not a small girl anymore I'm twenty three, and a mother of four

'An unidentified person is lurking in my yard outside, yet this man is.' Adina blushed as her pulse raced,

She gritted her teeth, raised her gaze, and glared at Duke

She looked gorgeous. Her eyes reflected the chandelier in the living room, looking like a starry sky. Duke could see his reflection through her dark pupils.

His arms turned warmer as he tightened his grip on her waist.

He lowered his head as his Adam's apple bobbed up and down. He was trying to resist his desire...

"You!"

Adina looked at him furiously. She wanted to say something, but no words came out,

She pushed his chest with all her strength, and finally broke free from the passionate embrace She was a very restrained person, but at that moment, she was flabbergasted. She turned and said word by word, "I'll give you a minute."

Nas a

- Duke had never encountered such a situation.

He felt like a shameless pervert.

He walked to the dining table and got a glass of cold water. The heat in his body finally subsided.

When he finally calmed down, he walked back to the window.

Adina had calmed down as well. She pursed her lips and spoke as if nothing had happened, "Let's go. I'll send you off."

She pushed open the door next to the window. The two of them walked through the veranda and headed to the courtyard through the side door.

After walking further, as they approached the huge tree, Adina realized that more than one person was hiding in the tree. What was more, they looked like they were skilled combatants.

She then whispered, "Can you take on one of them?" Duke nodded and replied, "You go in. I'll fight the two of them." "There's no way I'm going in. I can hold my own in a fight. I can easily take down one person. Taking down two people might be a little challenging. It's just the children are asleep in the house, and I don't want to take any risks. It's better to have Duke fight one of them."

Before she could respond, Duke suddenly grabbed her waist and stood in front of her.

Immediately afterward, he picked up the clothes pole at the corner of the mansion with his other hand and slammed it towards the tree.

Leaves rustled down, and the two figures were forced to get down from the tree,

These were two men in black clothes. They were also wearing black masks on their faces. Duke and Adina could only see their eyes.

Duke used the clothes pole as a weapon. He thrust it forward towards the right and left, hitting the two men's knees. Both of them slumped on the ground limply.

Adina stepped forward, raised her feet, and stepped on the men's hands.

She was wearing high heels. She stepped on them so hard that the two men in black almost passed out from the enormous pain. "Tell me, who sent you?" She glared at the two men as she asked sharply. "We... We were just passing by!" One of the men grimaced in pain, yet he still refused to tell her the truth. Duke swung the pole around as he smiled coldly.

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He walked over. He suddenly raised his foot, and the tip of his leather shoes came in contact with one of the men's necks.

He was so quick and brutal that the man felt immense pressure on his neck. His face turned pale.

"It looks like you won't behave if I don't put you in your place."

Duke sneered and pulled his right foot up again,

The man choked on his own breath. The blood vessels in his neck *were bulging* out, and he looked like he would faint any second.

He could sense Duke's murderous aura.

'If I don't do as he says, I could die right here...' "Okay, okay!" The men in black immediately surrendered, "Someone from the Osborne family asked us to sneak into this mansion and kidnap the two children!" Adina narrowed her eyes in suspicion. "Someone from the Osborne family? What's his name?" The man shook his head. "I don't know. He paid us a million dollars and told us to get it done in three days. From his accent, he doesn't sound like he's from Sea City..." Adina was still puzzled when she heard it. 'Someone from the Osborne family wants to kidnap my two children? 'It looks like I need to settle this matter quickly...?'

Duke already had someone in mind that could be the culprit. He kicked the two men coldly." Go!"

The two men instantly ran away. "I'll take care of the Osborne family," Duke said as he twitched his finger. "Don't worry." Adina's heart skipped a beat. She said hurriedly, "It's okay. I will talk to Tyson about this...?" "No man wants their own children to be strays. The Osborne family won't let this go easily." Duke said plainly, "The Osborne family is quite powerful. It's easy for them to make a move on a fragile woman like you. Just let me take over from here."

Adina pursed her lips.

'The Osborne family will stop pestering us if I show them the two children's paternity tests.'

But she could not bring herself to say that.

'Duke is the same. He wouldn't want his own children to be strays too.'

'If Mel and Al's identities were to be exposed, I won't be able to keep custody of them...'

"Duke, this matter is between Tyson and me. Let me handle this matter," Adina said softly. "What's more, he's their biological father. I don't want to make a huge scene out of this..."

Duke stared at her for a few seconds, without uttering a word. He began to walk toward the mansion. She followed him, not knowing what he was up to next. He went upstairs, checked the locks on the doors and windows in each room, the parapet around the mansion, and even called for his personal security to strengthen their patrol. He only drove off after everything was done. Adina could not describe how she was

feeling at the moment. 'For the past four years, I have been alone. No matter what happened, I always took the lead and resolved them independently. But earlier on, I was being protected by Duke.'

'Is this how being protected feels like..?'" Adina locked the doors and windows and walked into her bedroom. She then took out her phone and called Tyson. She soon heard Tyson's frantic voice from the other end of the call. "Good job, Adina. How dare you keep some random man in your house now?!"

'The men I sent wouldn't have failed to get my children back if Adina had not kept that man i