

Chapter 1 Bear a Child for a Stranger

“Ms. Baker, according to the contract, I’ve brought 25 thousand dollars cash over. Your down payment is in this bag.” Amanda Conley, Russell Hooper’s secretary, picked up a military canvas bag with a leather handle and handed it to Debra Baker.

“Considering that you’re just a student, my boss picked out this Herbag as an additional present. It isn’t showy and suits you better. He expects you to fulfill your agreement.”

In the van, the curtains were drawn. Debra opened the bag and looked inside.

The heavy weight of cash felt more secure than the numbers on a card. Debra clenched the bag and took a deep breath.

“I can do this. As long as I get pregnant, Mom can have a healthy kidney. When I return from studying abroad, nobody will know about the deal.” She chanted to herself inwardly.

Seeing that Debra didn’t reply, Amanda carried on saying, “When you arrive, you can clean up. I’ll pick you up tomorrow morning.”

Debra took a shower and put on the white silk dress in the bathroom. Then she sat on the bed and caressed her face. Forcing a smile, she put on the blindfolds. Her world became dark and the room was so quiet as if she was in a dream. Debra started looking back upon the past three days. She received her mom’s critically ill notification. In desperation, she even went to the black market, trying to sell her blood and kidney. Just then, a strange woman approached Debra. She scheduled a check-up for Debra and asked Debra if she was willing to bear a child with a healthy man. Although the man insisted on remaining anonymous, the offer was too good for Debra. She couldn’t turn it down as she was about to give up all hope.

Russell walked into the bedroom and saw a woman sitting rigidly on the bed in a white silk dress and a blindfold. Her long black hair was still damp from the shower. Fingers fiddling the corner of the silk comforter, she looked like a spooked animal.

Russell towered over Debra and looked her up and down. He wondered why Debra was so worried. They had signed a contract and she knew Carmen Grace, her mom, was under treatment.

As the heir of the Hooper family, Russell had been on top of the food chain for a long time. He wasn't a saint, but he would never stoop so low as to take advantage of a common woman in trouble. However, when Russell visited his grandpa in the hospital, his grandpa told him that he wanted to have a great-grandchild before death. Marriage wasn't really Russell's thing. Or, he wouldn't have resorted to surrogacy.

Amanda thought of Debra, the girl she had run into in the hospital the other day. At that time, Debra was notified that she had to pay her mom's hospital bills or the doctor would discharge her mom. Figuring Debra would be a good choice, Amanda asked the hospital staff for Debra's information and gave her file to Russell.

Debra was fragile, alone, and at the end of her rope. But she was also pure, young, and healthy.

Russell took two glances at Debra's picture and agreed to pick her.

In Russell's view, everything happened so naturally. He didn't understand why Debra was so scared. Feeling intrigued, Russell sat down next to Debra. "H-hello, sir..." Debra stuttered as she felt the heat of Russell's body. She clapped up immediately, lost for words. She had mentally prepared herself for the past few days. She knew Carmen was being taken care of. The only thing she needed to do was to get pregnant and have a child to pay off the debt.

"Relax. I won't do anything unnecessary."

Debra was surprised by the man's gentle tone. His voice was low, but he sounded young, totally different from the old man in Debra's imagination.

She pressed her lips into a line, trying to stay calm.

"I had a check-up a month ago. I'm as healthy as you." Other than worrying he would step out of line, it was the only reason Russell could think of for Debra's fear.

For some reason, Russell didn't want Debra to be afraid of him.

One second later, Debra's nostrils were filled with a wooden scent. She felt the bed sink slightly, and she was pressed against the man's warm body. "Don't be afraid. I'll make you happy."

Before Debra could react, she was pinned to the bed.

Debra's heart almost stopped.

Biting her lip, she couldn't help shaking. She wasn't sure whether it was because of nervousness or fear.

Her long hair fanning on the grey-blue cover and her fair body trembling, Debra looked like a delicate flower that was asking for plucking. If one could have s*x simply by a look, Russell would've done it with Debra a thousand times with his aflame gaze.

Russell leaned down and, with great patience, kissed Debra's forehead, nose, and cheeks. Gradually, he reached her lips. Debra was still biting it hard. Panicked, Debra gaped. Before she could recover from the shock, Russell swiftly shoved his tongue in.

Their breaths entangled.

A blush crawled on Debra's cheeks.

She had watched similar scenes on TV. But not until she experienced it herself, Debra didn't believe a kiss would give one goosebumps and make one boneless.

She thought, "I can't do it anymore. I can't breathe!"

As if Russell had caught on Debra's discomfort, he pulled away slightly. He stared at Debra as she tried hard to catch her breath and chuckled.

Debra was indeed pure.

She was as innocent as a newborn cub.

Seeing Debra subconsciously stick out the tip of her pink tongue, Russell felt desire surging up in him. He captured her lips again.

Russell decided that he needed to teach Debra how to enjoy it from zero.

Right now, he was more than happy to be her tutor.

Debra felt she was a boat floating on water. Sometimes, she was rocking slowly with a gentle wind. Sometimes, she was soaring into the sky with the push of a strong wave. The mysterious man had led Debra through a wonderful journey.

She felt as if her soul had left her body.

In the end, she totally forgot about time and place...

Chapter 2 He Comes Again

Debra screamed as a black snake wrapped around her body. The thick silk curtains were down, leaving the room dim-lit. It was hard to tell whether it was day or night. "It's a dream." Debra moved her sweaty body and struggled to sit up.

"Is it really a dream?" Debra stared blankly at the ceiling. Suddenly, she felt like she was no longer herself as if something inside her had flown away and she had lost it forever.

Without a sign, tears ran down her cheeks and soaked her fan-out hair.

Debra was sad, but she couldn't cry out loud. She knew she had no right to do so.

As Debra almost ran out of tears, the door was opened. Amanda walked in with a cart.

"Have some breakfast since you're up."

"Thanks." Debra noticed the big breakfast on the cart, surprised by the good treatment.

"You need to start a balanced nutritional diet. Your every meal will be designed by a nutritionist." Amanda's tone was gentle, but she looked distanced. It was obvious that

Debra was a means to an end for

Amanda.

Debra nodded and slowly sat up.

"About the school, I've asked for sick leave on your behalf."

Debra was taken aback because of Amanda's thoroughness. The term had just started.

Although Debra didn't have a tight schedule, it was hard to say when she would get pregnant. Coupled with the time to

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carry the baby until she could give birth. Debra needed to be away from school for a long

time. She was worried about how to explain to her school before.

“Thank you.”

“We made arrangements for your mom. About your dad...”

“There’s no need to contact him. We don’t talk.” Debra’s biological father had been out of the picture since a long time ago. Her mom married Vincent Masefield. And Debra had a stepdad and a stepsister who was older than her. Since then, Debra was sent to a boarding school. So Debra wasn’t close to Vincent or her stepsister Libby.

Vincent wasn’t in town when Carmen got sick. And he disappeared off the face of the earth after paying the first hospital bill. Libby wasn’t on speaking terms with them as she insisted they pay for her overseas tuition despite her poor grades.

“You’ll stay here during this time. As long as you don’t leave this yard, you can go everywhere in this building. Please contact me if you have to go out.” Amanda made sure Debra knew the precautions and left.

Debra washed up and left the room. It turned out she was in a three-story mansion. The garden was big. And she could see the glints of the water and green trees through the gate.

The nutritionist, the cook, and the cleaning lady didn’t live in the mansion. They merely showed up on time and stayed a few hours for their respective jobs every day.

Debra tried to engage them in conversations to figure out where she was. But they all seemed to have been warned. Every time, they would change the subject or excuse themselves with work. In the end, Debra gave up. She thought, “Since I can’t leave this house anyway, I should fout the media room.

For the next few days Debra’s life was at peace it was until she was told to wait in the bedroom with a Nimboid that she realized that the man was coming over

“Do you like the meals? Are you used to long here monx tone was as tender as lust time Russell’s

Although Debra didn't understand why it concerned him, she could tell that he meant well

Russell leaned against the doorframe and observed Debra. It seemed she had gained weight. So the nutritious meals worked. On their first night together. Russell was hurt by Debra's bone. He sensed that Debra was too thin. The doctor said that it was bad for preconception, so Russell immediately sent a nutritionist afterward.

Since Russell had been silent for a while, Debra was at a loss for what to do. "Are we..." Debra tilted her head in confusion. Russell watched her and suddenly felt her cute. He walked over and ruffled her hair like he was petting a small animal.

Debra's breath hitched.

He peppered her with kisses. His lips trailed from her forehead, her nose, her cheeks, and down to her lips. It was just like the first time.

Debra wondered if this was his habit or if every man would do the same. Russell had started the foreplay with such gentleness and respect. It kind of felt like a ritual.

Russell slowly lifted the cover as if he was unwrapping a gift. When Debra's fair and smooth skin came into full view, it glowed brighter than the finest silk.

Russell fixed his eyes on Debra's body. She flinched as if she had felt

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the heat of the gaze.

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"You can't be scared of me," Russell said solemnly and cupped Debra's face. "And you can't dodge."

Debra bated her breath and froze on the spot, not daring to move a muscle.

Though Russell had been nice, she knew he couldn't be a kind man as he had manipulated her life easily.

She thought. "How can I not be scared?" In Debra's opinion, his tenderness was like a

pastime of a beast after a great meal. And she would be a fool to expect it would last. She just wanted this nightmare to end as soon as possible.

Chapter 3 A Brand-New Start

Debra was asleep on the plane, her head leaning on the cabin window. The sunlight shone through the cloud and landed on her eyelashes. Next to her was Jordan Odom, who carefully observed her. Debra was as pale and fragile as five years ago. And she had treated Jordan in the same distanced and polite manner. Suddenly, Jordan felt the need to thank himself for making the impulsive choice five years ago. Back then, Debra applied for an exchange program after taking a leave from school for almost a year. Jordan applied for the same school the moment he heard it, for he had a secret crush on her. In Jordan's mind, the closer he was to Debra, the bigger chance he had of finding happiness. Right now, Debra's hands were merely 30 centimeters from him.

"Debra, wake up. The plane is landing." Jordan softly nudged Debra and woke her from her chaotic dream.

Debra lifted the eyeshade. Due to the bright light, she had to squint to see the airport's runway out the window. The plane was slowly landing.

Debra thought, "It has been five years. In the end, I'm back."

"What happened between me and that man is in the past. He had played me like a fiddle, while I had no choice but to accept. After giving birth to his child, I was finally able to leave."

"Now, I'm back from studying abroad. I would try my best to take my future back into my hands and make everything right."

Jordan watched Debra as she stared out the window. With a chuckle, he said, "Stop looking and put on your coat. You can enjoy the view after we get off the plane. My mom said that Afulen has changed a lot."

Chapter 3 A Brand New Start

Since we've studied overseas, we should be able to find a nice job."

Debra heaved a sigh. Then she put on the coat she had used as a blanket as told. Jordan was satisfied with her compliance. She had been the most beautiful girl in school since she was little. If Haley Odom, Jordan's sister, wasn't Debra's friend, Jordan wouldn't have had the chance to befriend a star like Debra. Five years ago, when Debra was leaving the country, Jordan's parents happened to be planning to send Jordan abroad. So he seized the chance and went to the same school as Debra. And he had happily taken up the job of taking care of Debra with Haley's repeated requests.

Maybe because of luck, the men who tried to court Debra were either driven away by Jordan or turned down by Debra directly. For five years, Jordan was the only male friend

by Debra's side. It was understandable that Jordan got his hope up. His parents noticed his feelings for Debra a long time ago. They had no objection since Debra was smart and beautiful. Even before Debra and Jordan returned to the country, Jordan's parents urged him to ask for Debra's hand several times.

"Debra! Over here!" Haley waved excitedly at Debra at the gate of the airport. Debra walked toward Haley with a smile. Parted for a long time, they couldn't help giving each other a big hug.

"Didn't you coop up on a plane for more than ten hours? Why do you still look so good? What skin products do you use? Come on. Tell me your secret!" Haley started bubbling enviously, paying Jordan no mind when he caught up with them.

"Of course. You can go over everything in my makeup bag. It's in the suitcase." Debra didn't take Haley's tease to heart. But Jordan defended Debra swiftly, "Stop it. We had a long flight. Debra is exhausted. Let's go home."

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Jordan's words weren't a surprise to Haley. She glanced at Debra with an interested look. Debra shrugged and acted like she was fine whatever

On their way home, Haley and Debra sat in the back seats. Haley poked at Debra and whispered, "What is it? Are you saying yes to Jordan?"

Debra thought for a moment and whispered, "He has been taking good care of me these years."

"Tsk." Haley dismissed Debra. "If there's a handsome and sweet man, I'm more than happy to take care of him. Jordan likes you. It has been five years. What about you?"

Debra smiled and gave no reply.

Jordan was a good man. Debra and he had known each other well. Without the deal five years ago, Debra would take Jordan as her boyfriend. Although she tried hard not to think about it, the deal was always a thorn in her heart. From time to time, she would feel the prickle, and the wound would reopen and start bleeding again.

Debra thought, "Can I love someone now?"

Life went on whether Debra moved on or not. She was determined that she would have a normal life when she decided to return to the country, Jordan never hid his feelings from her. And he had been treating her more attentively for the past two years. Debra hesitated as she stared at Jordan's back.

Jordan's parents, Terrance Odom and Shanna Odom, prepared a feast as a celebration. So, they went straight to the Odom's home from the airport.

The smile never left Shanna's face as Debra entered the house. Seeing that Debra had

turned from an awkward young girl to a beauty, Shanna

Chapter 3 A Brand New Start

was pleased with Jordan's choice of a girlfriend.

When Haley dragged Debra to her room for the skin products, Shanna drew Jordan to the balcony and shoved a large bouquet of roses in his arms.

"Take it." Shanna watched the stunned look on Jordan's face and poked his forehead hard. "Debra is a great girl. You should put a ring on her as soon as possible. Do you know how many single men are there in our neighborhood? Go. I'm rooting for you,"

With a flushed face, Jordan knocked on Haley's door with the bouquet, nervous and excited.

"Is dinner ready? That's fast," Haley muttered and opened the door. The moment she saw Jordan, she jumped with a start. Then she turned to Debra confidentially. "Girl, you got a visitor."

When Debra walked over out of curiosity, she was shocked by the bouquet too.

Subconsciously, she took a step back. "You..."

"Debra," Jordan found the courage to speak. "I like you. Will you be my girlfriend?"

Chapter 4 The Past

At that moment, Debra was surprised to find what she actually yearned for was a home that wasn't broken. It was an unattainable dream in her miserable life. In a stupor, she seemed to see herself going to the fair with her parents when she was a kid. She rode on the carousel whilst the lights spanned and flickered. Suddenly, Debra caught sight of a bouquet of red roses, which reminded her of the kid, her only family in the world, who had turned five now. Debra wondered if the kid was cute and how her father treated her.

The fragrance of the roses brought Debra back to her senses.

"Yeah Jordan knows nothing about my past. I can't lie to Terrance and Shanna because of my own desire. I can't ruin their happy family," Debra stared into Jordan's eyes and said steadfastly. "Jordan, I..."

“All right. Debra just got off the plane. Let her eat and have some rest first. This thing can wait,” Shanna stood at the door and said. Hearing it, Jordan put down the rose bouquet and went downstairs.

In the Odom family, Terrance was the cook. The lunch was already served. There were garlic shrimp, braised pork tenderloins, roasted asparagus, baked beans, and crab cakes. On the table also sat a bottle of homebrew plum wine.

Debra remembered when she was young, her parents went to Afulen to work and brought her alone. They lived in a ten-square-meter apartment in the suburbs. Her father was a taxi driver, and her mother found several part-time jobs at the factories nearby. To make more money and support the family, her father had worked double shifts for years. When her father went home from work, her mother would cook the same dishes. Having dinner together became the happiest moment

Chapter 4 The Past

for the three of them

Occasionally, Debra’s father would pour himself a glass of wine. He rubbed against her little cheek with his stubbled chin and gushed. “Debra, when you grow up, I will use my savings to pay for your college. I will take you to travel around the world.” Before Debra graduated from primary school, her father died in a car accident. She and her mother lived off compensation for years. Later, her mother married a divorced man who had a daughter, so Debra went to a junior high school and only came home at weekends. Then in senior years, she chose a boarding school.

Debra sometimes wondered, if she didn’t push her mother away, would she realize her mother wasn’t happy? If she hadn’t buried herself in work after college, would she find her mother had kidney disease sooner?

Five years ago, her mother had a successful kidney transplant, but it developed some serious complications half a month later. At that time, Debra was pregnant less than three months. She suffered from severe nausea and vomiting. She also lied to her mother that

she worked in a large company and advanced her salary to pay for the surgical expenses. Her mother was getting bloated day by day. When her mother passed away, Debra was having prenatal tests with Amanda.

Debra gripped Amanda's hand when she received the call from the nurse. Her voice was shaking. "Please, take me to the hospital. My mother, she..." Amanda realized what was going on. On the way, she didn't drop Debra's hand and even asked the chauffeur to run two red lights.

Russell arranged for Debra's mother in a private ward. The vital machine beeped apathetically as if life was ticking away. Debra sprinted to the ward, her legs giving out. "Debra..." Her mother opened her eyes with difficulty and wanted to say something. But Debra couldn't hear it under the respirator mask. Tears rolled down her face as she remembered her mother's last words. She held her mother's bloated hand tightly empty,

Chapter 5 A New Choice

"Mr. Hooper, Ms. Baker's mother just passed away," Russell's secretary reported. It was so sudden. After Russell knew about Carmen Grace's condition, he immediately pulled some strings, got Carmen into the best hospital in Afulen, and found her a kidney. However, it was still too late.

"Mr. Hooper, except for helping Ms. Baker plan a funeral, what else do you need me to do?" Amanda didn't know what was on Russell's mind. Even though her boss was young, he mellowed a great deal because of his family, and he had certainly done a lot to this girl who he had a contract with.

Russell went silent for five seconds. Amanda started thinking about whether she should ask this question.

Suddenly, Russell felt sorry for this girl. Before Russell's grandfather passed away a few months ago, he held Russell's hand and mumbled how desperately he wanted to see his grandson get married and have kids. Russell walked down the stairs, annoyed and stupefied. Then he heard a girl begging her uncle to pay for her mother's medical bills. In retrospect, Russell found what had happened was so absurd.

"Wait for my order." Russell needed to calm down and think it over.

Debra didn't know if she could finish holding her mother's funeral without Amanda.

Vincent picked up Debra's call and only came to the hospital to sign the death certificate three days later. Joining him was Debra's stepsister, Libby Masefield. When Libby saw Debra, she said plainly, "Sorry for your loss." While Vincent contacted the funeral home, Amanda told Debra, "Mr. Hooper just learned your mother passed

for he

away He was giving his sincere condolences Considering you're pregnant, he asked me to help you plan the funeral" Debra looked up in a daze. She stared at Amanda and thanked her

Three days later, Amanda accompanied Debra home to pack her mother's belongings. Vincent went on a business trip Libby watched Debra put Carmen's clothes into a suitcase one by one and asked casually, "What are you going to do now?"

Debra froze. She lost both her parents. She didn't know what she should do. Libby took a glance at Debra's hands and said. "When my father said he would marry your mother. I was dumbstruck just like you. I thought about running away from home and starting a new life"

Debra didn't answer. Libby walked closer and continued. "For this, I didn't speak to my dad for a year. Later, he agreed to let me study abroad, but I need to cover my own living expenses. I thought about it. and it was good for both of us. We are already old enough to let our parents stop worrying about us, aren't we?" Debra looked up, meeting Libby's eyes. Libby was a talented painter, but her family couldn't even afford one expensive canvas.

"Libby is right. When my father was gone, Vincent raised me. I need to be independent now," Debra thought to herself. After Amanda answered a call, she signaled Debra to speak privately

Debra led Amanda to her childhood bedroom. After Debra closed the door, she asked, "What do you want to talk about?" Amanda said. "In light of what happened to your mother, Mr. Hooper would like to know if you want to give up the kid. If you do, you will only reimburse 25 thousand dollars in three years. If not, according to the contract, we will pay for your tuition fees and living expenses for five years after you give birth."

It dawned on Debra that she had nowhere to go in the future. She wouldn't call her stepfather and stepsister a home. Vincent saved his

wwwxx kw 1*bhx mot for her The wouldn't even be happy to pay for her wwwx moral expenses Debra Was dreading to think how selfish Yaw was so she had no choice but to remme the contract. "I won't spy the And Amanda patted Debwa's shoulder "Since you made a O sunt put a busten on yourself Everything will be arranged"

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se helpot Debra apply for temporary absence from school and AXA ANOX As a college and major for Debra.

AAOK Nussell sat behind the desk, browsed the file that A passat over, and asked.

Amanda replied, “Yes. The regular

wwwson suggests Ms. Baker in healthy. In addition, I followed your order and got her a kitten. She loved it very much.”

Kasoll couldn’t help but imagine the girl curled in his arms, purring

Rea katton. It soothed him to listen to her muttering in sleep. At first, Ra s s e l l let the villa after Debra fell asleep, but then he woke up from Amanda’s call. Probably, he wanted a wife, a son, and a family. For hum, such a normal life was out of reach.

“Do you want to see the baby during the prenatal test?” Amanda had years of experience being a secretary, and she knew her boss was wanting for this suggestion.

“Yes Schedule it for me.” Russell thought the embryo had developed. into a baby. He didn’t care if it was a boy or a girl as long as it fulfilled his grandfather’s wishes.

Chapter 6 Effectiveness of Contract

Chapter 6 Effectiveness of Contract

In the seventh month, the baby in Dobra’s belly was getting more and more active. It turned out life was this amazing! Debra wondered if she would also kick her mother like this. This unprecedented feeling was so strange and blissful.

During the prenatal test, the doctor suddenly added a few more tests. Debra didn’t doubt him. Putting on the eye mask, a familiar feeling wrapped her whole body around, and in the dark, she could almost see the doctor gently stroking her belly.

This time, the ultrasonic B-mode examination seemed to have taken an extra long time.

“Doctor, how is the baby?”

“Your baby is healthy. We can see its head and limbs. It’s eager to get out and see the world.” Debra was delighted to hear it. “That’s good. There are only two months left.”

Debra felt the hands on her belly gone. Meanwhile, she heard some rustling sounds.

“Who is the baby’s father?” An idea popped into Debra’s head, but when she remembered that the contract forbade her to see her kid after it was born, she realized the answer didn’t matter. That man didn’t love her. He only took care of her because of the baby

The baby was due. During the day, Debra felt waves of pain, and the contractions were so intense that it was almost going to tear her body apart. Amanda held Debra’s hands and told Debra not to be afraid. Debra closed her eyes, attempting to rest. “Was my mother also in agony when she gave birth to me?” Debra grabbed the sheets and broke out in a sweat.

When the uterus was three centimeters wide, the nurses sent Debra to the delivery room.

Russell was pacing around in the lounge next door

Chapter 6 Effectiveness of Contract

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On the desk spread out the documents that Amanda brought. “How did it go?” Russell saw Amanda returning and asked anxiously. “She is in the delivery room. According to your instructions, the doctor will give Ms. Baker anesthesia to relieve her pain.”

It was the first time for Debra to deliver a child. She knew nothing, and the pain she felt was excruciating as if her body was no longer hers. After the nurse anesthetized her, she was in less pain. “It’s almost over.” Debra couldn’t feel her lower abdomen. She panted heavily and thought about her mother again.

The baby’s cry echoed in the room. Debra turned her face around and saw the nurse holding her baby whose skin was stained with blood and hair was wet and stuck together.

“Congratulations, your baby is healthy.” Yes, that was her baby. “Can I hold my baby? Is

it a boy or a girl?”

“Have some rest first. You can see your baby later.”

“Later? If I can’t see my baby now, I will see it never.” Debra struggled to get up and touch her child. It was so tiny. Ten months of pregnancy had built a connection between them. But Debra was too tired to raise her arm. The nurse held her baby and walked out, leaving Debra staring blankly behind.

It was the first time for Russell to hold a baby. He carefully took off his eyeglasses, watch, and rolled up his sleeves, for fear of hurting the baby. The baby was so small and soft. Its eyes were still shut.

“Congratulations, Mr. Hooper. It’s a boy!” Amanda wondered what else she should say beside congratulate her boss.

“How is she?” Russell held the kid while the kid was trying his best to open his eyes.

“Ms. Baker is resting. I also arranged postpartum recovery for her. Due to the fact that Ms. Baker can’t lactate, I hired a

specialist to take care of the kid.” Amanda was very competent at her job. Russell said, “Look after Ms. Baker for me and follow my instructions

Many times. Debra couldn’t control her urge to ask Amanda for a picture of her baby. She was willing to keep the biggest secret of her life and live on. She longed to see her child again, even from a distance. In the following month, Debra had been searching for news about which wealthy man had a secret child. She wanted to know more about her baby’s biological father. However, it turned out she was on a wild goose chase. How would a rich man easily expose his secret to the public?

Amanda sent Debra to the airport. In the past year, Debra had grown attached to Amanda.

“The money has been transferred to your account. Under no special circumstances, you can start fresh,” Amanda smiled. “Is there anything you want to say to anyone? I can help you relay the message. If you aren’t accustomed to your new life, feel free to contact me.” Debra gave Amanda a smile and said. “Thanks for looking after me in the past year.

Best wishes to you. One last thing, Amanda, can you tell me if my baby is a boy or a girl?”

Amanda’s eyes flickered as she heaved a long sigh. “It’s a girl. She’s cute and very healthy.”

When Debra stepped into the airplane, she took a look at the city where she lived for 20 years. Her past life flashed before her eyes. Here, she lost her parents, spent a year living with a stranger, and had a daughter with him. She remembered the first time the man touched her hands and held her from behind, and the first cry of her daughter.

“Can he raise my baby girl on his own?” Debra’s heart ached when she realized that she couldn’t see her girl learn to walk, hear her girl call her mom, or she couldn’t even meet her baby girl again.

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Debra blamed for herself to let her life spiral out of control. Maybe one day, she could sit face-to-face with that mysterious man and have a proper chat about her kid. Hence, Debra made up her mind that in the next five years, she would write her own destiny.

Chapter 7 She Doesn’t Recognize Him

A week before returning to Afulen, Debra was eager to start looking for a job by sending out her resume. During the five years she had been away, she had spent countless late nights crying about her academic life and her livelihood. It was her desire to change her fate that motivated her to persevere. Finally, the day to return home was upcoming.

Jordan was the same major as her. He actively accompanied her to the interviews with the excuse of “gaining experience”. She felt sorry for staying at the Odom’s home, so she packed up her interview schedule.

Yesterday evening, both of them were notified to participate in the prestigious Telzon Group’s interview. They both took it seriously and went out early after lunch.

Telzon Group had a named building downtown. The cold reflection of the glass curtain wall was frightening.

Jordan and Debra were twenty minutes earlier, and they were sitting to pass the time in the cafe on the ground floor of the building.

“Nervous?” Jordan watched as Debra poked an ice cube in her latte with a straw.

“If so, take a deep breath with me.” “I’m not. Instead, you’re all sweating.” Debra opened her bag and handed him a tissue. “Hey! Ms. Baker, you take this bag with you today? Sure enough, it’s the only bag you take when it’s some important occasion.” Debra looked at the bag in her hand. During these five years, whenever she needed a good quality bag for an important occasion, this was her best choice.

Although Amanda gave her a large amount of money on behalf of the child’s father, after she buried Carmen, she chose to leave one-third to

Vincent and Libby for those few years’ sake. In the past five years, she had been working and studying, and she had saved certain money. She wanted to work hard and use the money to buy a small apartment and live a new life of her own.

“Let’s go. It’s about time. Let’s go up there.” They arrived at the interview site of Telzon Group. There were four interviewers in total, who were representatives of the Human Resources and Business Departments. After interviewing a famous graduate, the four interviewers gave up the position in the middle. Outside the room, the graduates lined up to apply were buzzing, saying that the group CEO might be here out of the blue.

“Next,” one of the interviewers said.

“Hi, everyone. I am Debra Baker, a graduate of the Design Department of Beckersfield University, and I’m here for a job in the Design Department. My understanding of the position is...”

Russell showed up for the interview on a whim. He didn’t expect to see someone he knew here.

At the age of 24, Debra was no longer that immature and had developed very well.

Everything about her, including her figure and her smile, exuded a unique kind of woman. Every night five years ago, she was shivering under him, being conquered by him. He thought. “She still holds the handbag I gave her five years ago? I thought I had paid her enough. How come it seems that she hasn’t been doing that well?”

He stared hard at Debra, his eyes deep and complex, trying to figure out her experience in the past five years.

“That’s my answer, interviewers,” Debra answered a few interview questions and saw the serious man in the middle staring at her resume. He wore rimless glasses on the bridge of his stiff nose and frowned slightly

Debra didn’t know what she did that upset him. She figured that perhaps she should look away now, but it seemed that her body was getting out of control. She met his eyes.

Debra forced herself to be firm and brave. This was an interview.

She looked into his eyes, even though the way he stared at her scared her a little.

“Do I need to answer anything anymore?” She was defeated. She couldn’t keep looking at him.

One of the interviewers turned to look at Russell. Seeing that Russell showed no intention of posing any more questions, the interviewer said, “No need. You may go back and wait for our notice. Next, Jordan Odom?”

Debra stood up and walked out after a bow. Russell stared at her back. Seeing how unskillfully she was wearing high heels, he thought of the time when they first met. She was so cautious back then. He couldn’t help but smile.

“Hi. I’m Jordan Odom from Beckersfield University. I’m here for a job in the Design Department. My understanding of the job is…” Jordan began to talk about the words he had prepared for the interview.

“You went to the same school as the last interviewee?” Russell suddenly interrupted him.

“Yes. She and I were classmates when we were undergrads and postgrads.” Jordan felt

strange, as he was not prepared for such a kind of question. He wondered, “Is having two graduates from the same college in one department in Telzon Group unacceptable?”

“How is Ms. Baker’s performance in school?” Hearing Russell’s question, one of the interviewers from the Human Resources

Xyxatment asked “She studied hard in school, kept a low profile, and cooperated highly. She did part-time jobs when studying and won scholarships many times,” Jordan replied cautiously.

the thought. “Wait Debra loves working in the Design Department.” He suddenly summoned up courage and said. “Actually, I am more interested in the work in the CEO’s office. I was the head of the Organization Department of the Student Union before I went abroad. I hope you can give me a chance.”

Chapter 8 A Great Challenge

After the interview, Debra and Jordan came back to the Odom’s place in a state of preoccupation. Terrance and Shanna weren’t off work yet, and only Haley was in the living room listening to music while preparing the meal. Seeing Debra and Jordan, she rushed over and asked. “Yeah? So? How did it go? Did you pass the interview? Are you in the second round?”

“I’m afraid having graduates from the same school in the same department is unacceptable for Telzon Group.” Jordan shrugged helplessly. “When I was interviewed, their CEO happened to show up out of nowhere. The atmosphere was very serious, and I didn’t feel very optimistic.” Debra walked to the table and help Haley prepare for the meal.

“Well, I’m glad that I reacted quickly. I told the interviewers that I wanted a job in the CEO’s office. I think Debra and I will make it. We have to believe in ourselves!” Haley didn’t bother to respond to him. Instead, she was more interested in the CEO.

“I heard that Mr. Hooper of Telzon Group is very handsome. Is it true?” Haley asked

curiously.

“He was dressed like the CEO in the TV series, with a suit and tie and no smile. Yet if you meet him at an interview or at work, I bet you won’t think he is handsome at all. In real life, no one ever falls in love with their boss, right?” Debra remembered Russell’s silent stare at her, with his lips pressed together, and the inexplicable tension came back to her.

Jordan’s phone rang. “Yes, this is him. OK. Sure! Tomorrow morning? Will do!

“It’s the Human Resources Department of Telzon Group. They informed me to go to the second round tomorrow!” Before Jordan could finish, Debra’s phone rang, too.

“We’re both lucky!” Debra smiled at Jordan and Haley. “I heard from them that there will be almost twenty candidates for the interview tomorrow. The competition hasn’t been over yet. We need to work hard till the end!”

Telzon Group was a well-known comprehensive enterprise in Afulen, which started from real estate. After more than 30 years of struggle by Sam Hooper, the founder, the group was currently mainly engaged in commercial property and large-scale amusement park development. In those years after Sam passed away, the group had been run by his grandson, Russell, and had recently been expanding into toys, food, and other businesses around amusement parks. It was said that it could become Celleland’s Disney.

After the second round of interviews, five graduates were left, including both Debra and Jordan. They looked at each other, and he asked her how she wanted to celebrate later.

The staff from the Human Resources Department brought them a contract to sign. Debra flipped through it and saw that the probation period was one year, and if she was determined as qualified after the examination, she could be the group’s official employee. Her internship salary was 800 dollars a month, and the group provided various benefits, including insurance and bonuses. She planned to leave the Odom’s place as soon as possible. After all, she had been staying there for almost half a month now.

“Take a look at your contracts. If there’s nothing else, you may sign. By the way, starting

this year, interns will work in different departments in turn. Jordan Odom will be in the Design Department, Debra Baker will be in the CEO's office, and Sabrina Leopold will be in the Accounting Department..."

"What? The CRO's office?" Debra was thinking of contacting an agency to rent a place while suddenly hearing that she was going to be an intern in the CEO's office. She looked up at once, wanting to confirm with the stall of the Human Resources Department. After getting a positive answer, she was confused,

"Since we are about to work in different departments in turn, I might as well try out working in the Design Department for you. It'll be easier for you to work there when the time comes!" Jordan was over the moon, texting his family to tell them to go out tonight for a celebration.

Debra had a dream about Russell the night before she went to work. He got angry in the office, raised the papers, and slammed them on the desk for her to redo. She was so nervous she was going to cry, and she bit her lip. He said sternly, "Given your work ability, you do not deserve to work at Telzon Group. You're fired!"

The night before Debra came to work at the CEO's office, she was all Russell dreamed about. He didn't want to have anything to do with her, the woman he hadn't heard from five years ago, yet he met her in the interview yesterday. He was extremely curious about her and wanted to know how she had been doing while living abroad for the past five years. Many times he regretted the absurd agreement he had signed, and he wanted to go to her, but he was afraid of disturbing her already peaceful life. And now, fate had brought her to him once more. What should he do?

It was Debra's first day of work. She got up early especially to put on light makeup. She smiled at herself in the mirror. Starting today, she was about to take on a great challenge. She would never forget the vow she made five years ago. When she turned independent enough, she would negotiate with the mysterious man.

All morning, Debra's colleagues in the CEO's office had been handing her over. She held

her notebook and took notes for fear of missing anything important. Telzon Group's CEO's office was on the top floor,

and Russell's office had the best view of the whole floor.

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Debra's phone rang just after her lunch break. "Come in." A low and deep voice rang out.

She recognized at once that the voice belonged to the man in the office. "Sure. Mr.

Hooper. I'll be there in a second!" She trotted all the way

"Tomorrow, I will go to the amusement park in Cristown on a business trip with those from the Design Department. You will come with us."

"Business trip the next day I become an intern? Gosh!" While nodding non-stop. Debra felt uneasy. Russell stared at her back for a long time. Thinking that she had had sex with him so many times, he couldn't help but feel a bit hot.

Chapter 9 Her First Business Trip

Debra thought, "This is my first business trip. What should I do now that my boss suddenly brings his child along?" She thought she was perfectly prepared, but she was taken aback by the unexpected. The driver was carrying Russell's suitcase, followed by a boy bouncing around. "What's going on? He is married? And he has a kid already?" She was confused.

She was glad that Jordan was here as well, and he was with his superior from the Design Department. He asked the boy naturally like they had known each other for a long time, "Hey there. What's your name?" "Austin Hooper." "How old are you?" "I'm four." The boy looked up proudly, holding the toy in his hand.

Debra had mixed feelings when it came to kids. Her daughter was five years old and was probably a bit older than Austin. She wondered if her daughter still lived in Afulen.

"Uncle, I want to sit with her later," Austin said.

So, it was Russell's nephew. "But my seat is in economy class," Debra refused

subconsciously.

She clearly underestimated Telzon Group's power. Russell got her an upgrade.

The flight would cost more than two hours. She had no idea how to get along with Austin.

“Are you taking care of me because you want to marry my uncle?” Austin suddenly asked her a jaw-dropping question, which shocked Debra. She turned quickly to explain and was glad to see that Russell's eyes were closed. Maybe he was asleep.

Chapter Her First Ruime Trip

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“Many beautiful women take care of me just to marry my uncle. I know!” Austin said with certainty.

“Austin, are you hungry? Or thirsty? Do you want to watch cartoons?” Debra just wanted to get Austin occupied. It never occurred to her that taking care of a child was part of her job.

Russell had his eyes closed. Listening to Debra taking care of Austin in frantic haste, he suddenly felt the happiness of being a part of a family. His parents divorced when he was a boy, and his father had always been on a racket. He was raised by Sam. Not long after Austin was born, however, Sam died. Sam, on his deathbed, asked him to take over as the CEO of Telzon Group and simply gave his father an official post on the board with very little to do. His father fell out with him and refused to accept Sam's will. By the time he got over the crisis, Debra had gone abroad under Amanda's arrangement. Later, his father knew about Austin's existence and scolded him, claiming that Austin was a bastard and refusing to recognize Austin. And so, Austin kept calling him Uncle.

Telzon Group's travel arrangements were highly efficient. They got off the plane and went straight to the amusement park to investigate.

In addition to taking meeting notes, Debra took time to show Austin the children's area at the amusement park.

“I don’t want to walk by myself. There are so many people here. I can see nothing!” The amusement park was full of people. Austin insisted on being held by her.

To her surprise, Austin was kind of heavy. She held him tightly, and after a few steps, she felt that her arms were getting numb. She had never held a kid. The incident seemed to be so close to her that she had a natural fear of kids.

“Am I heavy? Why don’t you put me down? I’ll ask my uncle to carry

Chapter 9 Her First Business Trip

me later.” Austin was a sensible boy indeed. She found a restaurant for children and sat him down.

“Debra, I don’t think this place is fun.” “What do you want to play?”

“I want an amusement park where I can play with my parents.” Austin had a rosy, delicate face and spoke like a grown-up. Debra pinched his face dotingly and said, “You should ask your uncle to build you one.”

“When it’s done, can you play with us?”

Debra suddenly thought of her daughter. She thought, “If I hadn’t signed that ridiculous deal, maybe I could have taken her to some amusement park already. Or maybe I should just try to move on and start a normal relationship again? If my boyfriend knew about my past, would he still be with me?”

They finished their afternoon investigation. The operator of the Cristown amusement park attached great importance to Telzon Group’s visit and arranged a dinner for them that night.

As Debra was with Austin, she only had a few drinks before taking him back to Russell’s room. Austin asked for darkness when sleeping, so she could only turn off most of the lights, leaving only a wall lamp, and take a nap on the sofa in the living room of the suite. After a day of taking care of Austin, she was exhausted. Worried that her superior might have other instructions, she could only try her best to stay awake.

At almost 11 o'clock, Jordan called her, telling her that the dinner was over, and Russell was slightly drunk.

Debra glanced at Austin asleep in bed. She wasn't sure whether a drunk man could take care of Austin and figured that perhaps she should take Austin to sleep in her room.

The room door opened. Russell came back. Debra got up quickly and was about to turn on the light.

Russell was indeed drunk. In a daze, he seemed to see the girl in his dream again. She was wearing a white silk nightdress and was blindfolded, her fragrance tempting him. Guided by the dim yellow wall lamp, he muttered something, stumbling and groping to hold her.

Debra felt that she heard Russell calling her name. She stood up, lost her balance, and fell into his arms.

The air-conditioning in the living room of the suite was on full blast. but his body was hot. He staggered to his feet, and the warm smell of wine enveloped her. "Mr. Hooper..." she exclaimed and reached out to help him, and yet she stumbled. They bumped into the wall together.

They were in such an intimate posture, and she couldn't help but recall the words Austin had said. He told her that many women tried to get close to Russell with other intentions. She frowned. As Russell was drunk, his body turned heavy. She couldn't push him away. They were like this for a few seconds, and as their bodies were rubbed against each other, gradually, something changed. It seemed that the room was getting hotter.

Russell held the girl from his dream and greedily got on top of her body. He bit her lips with his teeth gently and repeatedly, trying to swallow her. His lips were burning.

With a sudden start, Debra thought of the man from five years ago. Back then, his kiss was the same overbearing and forceful. He put his arms around her waist tightly, not allowing her to resist. Russell's kiss turned into faint murmurs that were heard by her, making her feel itchy. She thought of the man again and how he conquered her. She was

under that man's control totally, and she figured that she was about to give in now.

Chapter Her Fast Business Trip

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The doorbell suddenly rang. "Mr. Hooper, are you OK? Jordan and I got you some pills and honey water to make you feel better." It was Jordan and his superior from the Design Department that were outside.

Debra was suffocating because of the kiss. Hearing Jordan's voice, she regained certain consciousness. She pushed Russell away hard and said. "Mr. Hooper, I'm Debra. Jordan is looking for you."

"Debra?" Hearing the name that had haunted him for five years, Russell felt like his body was going to explode. He reached out a hand and unbuttoned his shirt.

Chapter 10 Don't Go

Dobra's phone kept ringing. Jordan was standing outside the door, and she had to pick up the phone.

She was completely awake. She regretted that she had just been ridiculous enough to mistake Russell for the man from five years ago.

"Don't go. I was wrong," Russell grabbed her hands, put them behind her back, bent down, and kissed her hair, repeating it over and over in her ear. It was her last chance to stop everything from happening. Russell was drunk, and his body reaction was so strong. She wouldn't stand a chance to defend herself.

She didn't think keeping struggling would be helpful. She pushed him away with all her strength. Purchase completed bring you pills to make you feel better, and Austin is asleep in the bedroom. I'll get the pills for you." She ran quickly to the mirror to tidy up and then ran to open the door

Jordan was outside the door. Seeing her, he was relieved. "Mr. Hooper came back and woke Austin up. I was coaxing Austin." Debra had no idea why she would lie. The head

of the Design Department stared at her with a half-smile, and Jordan hurriedly said, “You are a girl, and it won’t be appropriate for you to stay in there alone. If Austin is still awake, I’ll go coax him together with you.”

The dim yellow wall lamp emitted an unreal light. Russell’s body was tall and slender, with his black shirt half untied and his tight muscles faintly visible. “Water.” He finally calmed down and only felt extremely thirsty now.

Jordan quickly went over to support him, handed the water to his mouth, and he drank it in a daze.

Chapter 10 Don’t Go

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The night was utterly long.

The next day, when Russell took Austin downstairs, they happened to bump into Debra and Jordan, who were having breakfast while sitting face-to-face.

“Did you two drink too much yesterday?” Russell said first. He didn’t know what he was thinking either.

“I was OK. Mr. Hooper, you had a lot. We brought you some pills later...”

“I was taking care of Austin the whole time...” Debra stared at Russell’s thin lips.

Recalling the intimate scenes last night, she was a bit shy.

“Uncle, when did Debra leave? I had no idea. I was asleep.” Austin looked pitifully at the fried chicken on Jordan’s plate. “Would you like some? Let’s grab some for you, OK?”

Jordan took Austin to fetch some more fried chicken.

“I had a bit too much last night. I didn’t cause you any trouble, did I?” Russell said coldly.

Debra found it hard to breathe normally, panicking under his gaze. She thought, “Did he still remember what happened last night? He didn’t think that I deliberately stayed in his room last night to seduce him, did he?”

“Not at all,” she said hurriedly. “Jordan and the others sent you back yesterday, and then you went inside your room to rest, saying that you were tired.” She wasn’t exactly a good liar, and her ears were already red. She actually just wanted to blur this matter over, hoping that he might as well forget what had happened.

Jordan was still staring at her face without blinking. His gaze shifted from her eyebrows to her eyes, and then from the tip of her nose to her lips.

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He suddenly asked with great interest, “Is Jordan your boyfriend?”

“No. Mr. Hooper. We are just classmates,” she denied it at once.

“Really? Why would he go abroad following you and then apply for the same company as you?”

“She and I are just classmates. I have been asking her to be my girlfriend since six years ago, but she has never said yes,” Jordan showed up out of nowhere and answered Russell’s questions with a grin

Debra just wanted to get out of here as soon as possible.