

They didn't sleep in the middle of the night and went out to look for people.

After Christina found out about Crystal's whereabouts from Lucy, she couldn't fall asleep and decided to go out to find her immediately. "Crystal is at the fountain in the center of Crescent Garden square. I'm going to find her now."

Patrick didn't know who disturbed his rest plan at night. However, he gave in and accompanied his wife to go out with his wife reluctantly.

"You don't have to get me involved."

Charles, who was driving, was innocent and helpless. He looked at the road ahead upset. When he received a call from Patrick and heard his order which asked him to come over immediately, he knew that he had no choice at all.

Christina, who was sitting in the back seat, held Patrick's hand and said angrily, "Why did you call Chandler just now?"

Now Christina felt very angry when she heard "Stephenson". Crystal ran away from home because of the unscrupulous oppression of the Stephenson family.

"If Chandler was a real man, he should go to Crystal himself. I got the news, why do you use it to help that bastard?"

Christina looked angry and showed a tough attitude. "Listen, if Chandler says anything unpleasant to Crystal later, I'll hit him."

Charles, who was holding the steering wheel in front, felt surprised and thought, "Why did she take it for granted even she wanna hit someone?"

Patrick looked calm. He reached out and gently caressed her long hair, and said calmly, "Let them deal with their own business."

Charles chose to remain silent and continue driving. There was no intention of stopping his wife.

Chandler was also very nervous. After receiving Patrick's call, he immediately drove over and ran a few red lights. From the other direction, he arrived almost at the same time as Christina's car.

"Chandler is worried too."

Charles was a peacemaker. When husband and wife quarreled, it was better to help them bury the hatchet, cause they always went well soon.

Christina glared at Chandler, who was in the dark blue BMW car next to her. She still didn't show any easy look.

Late at night, the lights in the square were dim because there were only a few streetlights on.

They started to look around the large square. Because Crescent Garden was Derek's current apartment complex, Christina knew the environment here better. She found the fountain in the square as soon as possible.

As expected, in the dim and boundless quiet night, Crystal wearing a thin and light-colored dress, and a light yellow suitcase was at the right hand side. She sat by the fountain, looked down, and her hair was messy blown by the night wind, even the face was a little cold and pale.

Christina walked closer and looked at her eyes, which were bloodshot from crying.

Christina felt a little depressed when she saw how sad Crystal was, but she also knew that she was not good at comforting and she couldn't think of anything to ease her mood.

As she approached, Patrick followed behind her. Soon Crystal heard footsteps and she looked up at them as if she was frightened.

Christina didn't want to scare her or embarrass her. She pushed Patrick and asked him to turn around. Then she pretended to be calm and asked, "Crystal, you blow me off today."

Crystal looked at Christina for a long time and tears welled up in her eyes immediately, as if she had been holding back all day and finally saw a friend who could rely on for a while.

She stammered incoherently, "I, I, I'm sorry... I have something to do, so I didn't go shopping with you..."

As Crystal spoke, she couldn't help crying.

"Hey, why are you crying!" Christina could not see others crying and she didn't know how to comfort others. Instead, she spoke in a harsh tone and taught her a lesson.

Crystal was such an honest person. As long as she did something wrong, she would feel extremely guilty. If someone else made a mistake, she would easily let it go and forgive it immediately.

"You're going to sit here foolishly all night?! Even if you want to hide, you have to find a cozy place to eat and sleep in..."

Crystal cried even harder when she heard Christina say that.

Christina sighed and sat directly next to her. Crystal directly lay on her shoulder, wetting her clothes.

"I know I'm stupid..."

"Christina, I don't know what to do."

Crystal was choked up and she said in a low voice, "They asked me if I could abort this baby because they are afraid that Geoffrey would not be able to accept me with a second child. I, I don't know how to refuse... I really want to tell them that I want this child, and I want to give birth to it and raise it myself..."

Christina gritted her teeth after hearing this. At this moment, Chandler, who was standing not far from the fountain, stood there. He didn't dare to approach, and his gentle face was somewhat at a loss.

Charles was really worried that Christina would hit Chandler hard and lead him to the hospital. He walked over and forced a smile. "Anyway, go home and talk it over. It's too windy here. It's bad to catch a cold."

Crystal heard Charles's voice, she sobbed and tried to stop her tears because she did not dare to make a fool of herself with outsiders present.

Crystal let go of Christina, but she still cast down her eyes. Christina knew Crystal was easy to be timid, so she looked at Charles and said, "Crystal, let's find a place to rest first. We'll talk about it tomorrow." Then she motioned Charles to give her the car keys.

"Crystal, let's go home."

Chandler knew that Christina was going to take crystal away. He was a little anxious and walked forward quickly.

Crystal shook slightly. She did not turn her head, but she was surprised to hear Chandler's voice because she did not expect him to come to her.

She had always lived a plain life. After her marriage, her life was also considered peaceful, and she never expected to quarrel with her husband and leave home. She came to this square aimlessly, silly sitting, thinking a lot, and she even felt a little regretful that she should not quarrel with Chandler, or she could try other ways to communicate with him. She only blamed her own not being good at words.

"I, today... Today, I suddenly received that B Ultrasound picture and I couldn't believe it. I was too excited..."

Chandler talked intermittently, probably because Patrick and Charles were present, and he felt worse when he saw Crystal crying so sadly.

He had been tired of looking for her all day and was in a daze. Christina slapped him at noon, but he didn't mind much. The news of Crystal's sudden pregnancy surprised him more. The couple would make love at night but they had taken full contraceptive measures. This pregnancy was an accident and it was beyond his plan. Most importantly, he never thought that he would have his own child.

Charles looked at Chandler who was so unconfident now, he immediately remembered the time when Chandler's brother died, Chandler was also so depressed.

"You guys go home first. Calm down and discuss what you need to do. There's nothing that can't be solved between a couple." Charles said at the right time.

Crystal hesitated when she heard Charles say that.

Chandler walked over and held her hand tightly. He turned to her and looked at her gently. "Let's go home."

These words melted the ice in Crystal's heart for many years. Her mother got married for the second time and she was living in her stepfather's house. She had no ambition in her life and she only hoped to have her own home when

she grew up.

Tears welled up again. Her cheeks, which had been blown by the night wind, were cold. Chandler held her hand so tightly, which made her feel more secure.

It was the first time she had run away so willfully, and she had been very uneasy all day.

She was not as strong as those career women who always called for divorce. She did not want to divorce and tried very hard to protect her family. She was careful not to make others unhappy because she cared too much about her family.

But she insisted on having a baby.

On the other side, Christina looked angry and shouted at Chandler, "Things haven't been settled yet. Don't think about taking her back..."

Seeing that Chandler ignored her completely, Christina ran over and wanted to snatch Crystal away, but Patrick stopped her in time. Christina kept going forward, bared her teeth and hands, and lost her temper following Chandler's car. "Hey, Chandler Stephenson, stop!"

Chandler's dark blue BMW started the engine and quickly disappeared into the quiet night.

"Don't you know that Crystal is a timid girl? How can you watch her go back?" Christina was so angry that she punched Patrick on the shoulder.

"You'd better not meddle in their family affairs."

Charles said slowly, "And the Stephenson family is a scholarly family, so the whole family is very reasonable. It will be fine."

Christina glared at him angrily. "They're forcing Crystal to have an abortion now. Is that fine?"

"This matter, Stephenson family was indeed wrong," Charles added. "But you'd better not interfere if they have children or not. Do you want the couple to divorce just like that? Marriage is a serious thing, and Crystal should never have thought of divorce. Christina, don't teach her a bad lesson. Not everyone is the same as you, Miss Dickens."

Crystal cherished Chandler a lot and the Stephenson family knew it well.

Christina's face darkened but she did not speak again.

No matter how close friends they were, they shouldn't interfere in each other's marriage. Otherwise, things might get worse.

"Lucy is right. Why do women get married? They only suffer!"

Christina was furious. Looking at Charles and Patrick, she immediately vented her anger on them strode into the car.

Charles followed her to be the driver, and said to her, "You can't say that. It's good for women to get married."

"Bah."

Patrick walked at the end, his eyes first fixed on a small black shadow in the grass. It was a black cat squatted there very upright and it did not move. Its golden eyes and pupils looked a little unusual and strange. It seemed to understand what they were saying and its tail occasionally swung.

It was just a cat. Patrick didn't care.

Inside the car, Christina and Charles were still arguing about the pros and cons of a woman getting married. Patrick suddenly thought of another thing and asked, "Are you very familiar with Lucy?"

Christina in the car was caught off guard by his question. She wanted to make an excuse guiltily and dodged his eyesight.

"Meow!"

The black cat in the grass walked out slowly and gave a sudden cry in the quiet square.

Christina immediately pointed out the window and changed the subject. "There's a cat!"

Charles drove the car and replied, "A cat. Why?"

"It seems a little familiar."

Charles complained, "Cats all over the world look alike."

"I feel it coming out of the grass and staring at me..."

"Christina, you're thinking wildly."

Patrick called Charles out because he didn't want Christina to go home in a bad mood because of Crystal.



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It was almost morning. Christina returned home to rest in the early morning light.

She couldn't just stand by and let her best friend suffer alone from marriage problems, so she dragged in lots of people in the middle of the night to look for Crystal. Christina had not planned to persuade Crystal to go back home but intended to take her to the Hopkins family, where the Stephenson family dared not to act rashly.

"It's about someone else's family matters."

Patrick was not interested in interfering in other people's family problems, but he did not explicitly forbid Christina to do that. He just reminded her to keep within proper bounds.

As soon as Christina lay down on the soft, king-size bed, she immediately closed her eyes, pulled the covers over her head in a daze, and drifted off to sleep.

She mumbled in her sleep, "Crystal is like a sister to me. Chandler Stephenson, you're a bastard..." Her grumbling and swearing voice gradually sank to a whisper. Soon, she fell completely asleep on her side.

Patrick didn't want her to dash around at midnight and couldn't take a rest until dawn. With a disapproving frown on his face, he bent over the bed and gently drew down the covers that Christina had pulled over her head.

Purely from his standpoint, Patrick did not appreciate Crystal's weak personality. Of course, Crystal was not his employee, so he would not be hard on her, nor did he have any opinion about her considerate behavior. But she was Christina's friend, he must know something about her.

Christina didn't have a lot of friends. This was probably because she had been close to Derek since she was a child. Derek was really outstanding. Most men did not dare to compare with him, whereas women would usually take Christina as a rival in love.

It was normal for Patrick to stay up all night. He tucked Christina in. Seeing that she was breathing evenly and sleeping soundly, he walked out of the bedroom with light steps.

As he walked, he took out his phone and sent a text message to Chandler, "Make this right."

It was obvious that Patrick was pressuring Chandler with these pithy words.

After a while, Chandler replied, "I know."

They had known each other for more than ten years, so they could understand each other well just by saying a few simple words. That was a classic example of the friendship between two men.

Though Patrick had put pressure on the Stephenson family, after a private discussion between Chandler's parents, they still felt that it was not the appropriate time for Chandler and Crystal to have a child of their own.

"They had gone too far!"

Mrs. Stephenson was in her bedroom, talking to her husband. Contrary to her usual practice, she had now a look of anger on her face. "I can't believe Patrick just looked on unconcerned as Christina slapped Chandler."

"She thinks she can be domineering just because she's the granddaughter-in-law of the Hopkins family? Have the Dickens family and Hopkins family never taught her to behave herself? Even if we are at fault, she shouldn't have slapped our son in public. If this gets out, how humiliated will Chandler be?"

Mrs. Stephenson was a professor from a famous university. She was knowledgeable and approachable, frequently communicating with her young students. Her manner of speaking was normally polite and humorous.

However, no matter how well-bred she was, she couldn't restrain her anger when her son had to endure the indignity of being slapped.

"Earlier, when I heard that they were good friends, I have told Crystal not to get too close to Christina. They have very different characters and family backgrounds. Our family can't compete with the Hopkins family, and we are not interested in making friends with someone of a higher social position."

Mrs. Stephenson looked angry. She felt that Crystal had been indiscriminate in making friends, and Christina was abusing her power and meddling in the domesticities of the Stephenson family.

"Okay, stop being mad."

Mr. Stephenson sighed and comforted his wife in a low voice.

Mrs. Stephenson's grievances, as she reflected on what had happened, were increased by every review of it. People usually said that she had a harmonious and intellectual family. Her girlfriends were always envious of her happiness. She herself felt very content with her life too.

But Christina had spoiled the whole thing. It looked like her family was inferior in every aspect and she had to be humble.

"I saw my son being bullied. How can I not be offended? Chandler is our only child now!"

As Mrs. Stephenson spoke, her eyes glistened with tears. She thought of her elder son, who had died young, and her heart ached.

Mr. Stephenson's face was also filled with grief. The death of their elder son was a bitter pill to swallow.

Their elder son was named Mark. The Stephenson family had been teachers for generations. Mr. Stephenson and his wife were also professors in famous universities. Mark, inherited from them, was especially gentle and liked to read books. He was hired to teach at a famous university at a young age.

Chandler was different. Although he looked as elegant as his brother, he found it boring to read ponderous books and do academic research. He preferred commercial activities and started his own business. That's why he had made friends with Charles, Patrick, and other business tycoons.

Chandler was lively and outgoing. He liked to spend time with Charles and other businessmen and often went abroad. Mark, on the other hand, enjoyed a quiet life and spend most of his time at home, so naturally, the parents preferred their elder son.

One day, unexpectedly, Mark insisted on traveling abroad like Chandler. But he did not return alive.

How could they ever get over the pain of losing their young beloved child?

Everyone in the Stephenson family was depressed for a long time. After that, their younger son, Chandler, changed a lot. He developed his business domestically, settled down, and gradually became a family man. Later, the birth of Geoffrey finally created a happier atmosphere in the family.

But there was still one problem: Chandler's marital troubles.

"If Mark were still alive, there wouldn't be so much trouble in our family. Mark was so filial." Mrs. Stephenson sighed and wiped her tears on her sleeve.

Mr. Stephenson patted her on the shoulder and gently comforted her, "There, there."

Mrs. Stephenson raised her head and looked determined. "I did not oppose Chandler when he wanted to divorce Erica and marry Crystal..."

"But Geoffrey is too young. He is just in primary school now. Crystal has a good character, but once her own child is born, she will definitely be partial. When I visited Mark's grave, I have sworn to myself that I would die to make Geoffrey happy."

Mrs. Stephenson held her husband's hand. "Let's discuss it with Crystal. They can have their child in a few years. This one is not meant to be."

Mr. Stephenson lowered his head. After a long time, he nodded.

The door was not closed tightly. Crystal stood outside the door with a pale face. She had heard their words clearly.

"Bang, bang, bang." An orange ball bounced over from the other side of the corridor.

Startled by the voice, Crystal looked up and saw Geoffrey in an exclusive light blue sportswear. He was trotting after the ball.

"How many times have I told you not to play with the ball indoor?"

Crystal blurted out and looked at Geoffrey. He was a handsome boy of five or six years old.

"Geoffrey, come over to grandma."

The elders heard the noise outside and immediately became vigilant. Only when they stepped out did they realize

that the door was not closed tightly. Crystal was standing in the corridor. She might have heard something.

As soon as they came out, they saw Crystal telling Geoffrey off. Their first reaction was to speak for their grandson.

"Crystal, don't scold him. Christina came here and made trouble yesterday afternoon. She scared the child. Geoffrey didn't sleep all night last night. When he got up this morning, he got dark circles under his eyes. It made my heartache."

Mrs. Stephenson stood in front of Geoffrey as if she was afraid that Crystal would abuse him.

"I'm not scolding him. I just think that children should be taught..." Crystal said in a soft voice, trying to explain.

Mrs. Stephenson emphasized, "Geoffrey is not in good spirits today."

They spoke in a friendly and polite manner, but the feeling of alienation was obvious.

Crystal lowered her head and said nothing.

She might not be smart, but she was sensible enough to know that Geoffrey was the spiritual sustenance for her parents-in-law. They spoiled him and took it for granted that she, Geoffrey's stepmother, should keep her mouth shut about it.

Looking at Crystal's injured look, Mr. Stephenson had pity on her and said gently, "Crystal, we are a family. If there is any misunderstanding between us, don't take it to heart. We know that you are doing this for the good of Geoffrey, but your mother and I will take care of the child's education. Don't worry."

Crystal forced a smile and nodded at him.

The elders were quite satisfied with Crystal because she was obedient and sensible.

"Crystal, your father and I want to say something." Seeing that everyone was here, Mrs. Stephenson got things straight.

Crystal was not difficult to communicate with. Basically, she would accept the elders' request.

Mrs. Stephenson took her hand and said kindly, "Crystal, what happened yesterday..."

Crystal looked pale and nervous. She didn't really want to talk about that.

"Mom, take Geoffrey out to play. I'll talk with Crystal first." Chandler said while striding over.

Crystal looked up at him, regarding him as her savior. She jerked her hand out of Mrs. Stephenson's and came to Chandler.

Looking at the young couple, Mr. and Mrs. Stephenson had mixed feelings. Mr. Stephenson beckoned his wife to leave them alone, but Mrs. Stephenson still exhorted. "Crystal, I know Christina and you are good friends, but it is

really not advisable for you two to get too close..."

Crystal's face turned pale.

Chandler put his arm around her trembling shoulders and tried to comfort her.

Mrs. Stephenson could tell that her son was affectionate towards Crystal, and she didn't want to make things too difficult for Crystal, so she added gently, "I'm not saying that you can't get along with her. I'm just giving you some advice. After all, I'm an elder and more experienced. I don't want you to get into trouble later."

Hearing her words, Crystal's face turned as pale as death. "I see."

Mrs. Stephenson was satisfied with her obedience. She nodded, held Geoffrey by his hand, and took him somewhere else.

Crystal and Chandler were left alone in the corridor.



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"Have you had dinner?"

Chandler changed the subject. He also avoid mentioning that she ran away from home yesterday, and specifically told his family not to mention it again, lest Crystal was thin-skinned and embarrassed.

Crystal was still a little awkward and just nodded.

For her, it was her first time running away from home yesterday. She was nervous all day, constantly reflecting and regretting, afraid that it would bring trouble to others.

However, whether she left the house or came back again, she was the only one who was uneasy. The Stephenson family elders didn't really care.

"Crystal, yesterday..." Chandler began to speak.

Crystal spoke quickly and nervously. "I know. You were too excited when suddenly received a B Ultrasound message. I should have told you earlier." In the end, she habitually apologized to him.

Chandler looked at her like this and felt even more complicated.

"Crystal, we discussed it when we got married. We won't have a child for a few more years," Chandler said eventually. "This baby was an accident. It's out of our plan."

Crystal's pale face turned a little livid. She looked at him in a daze, but she couldn't contradict it.

They had already discussed it when they got married. For the time being, they didn't want to have children. Considering that they were both busy with their jobs, they also considered that when Geoffrey would really accept her as a new mother.

"But, but... It's already there." Her voice was almost a quiver.

Chandler hesitated and glanced at her abdomen and said quickly, "Erica has moved out. If anything happens to her in the future, I promise you that I won't interfere too much. I will always be friends with her."

He felt that Crystal's unease mainly came from Erica, so he made a solemn promise at this moment.

"Crystal, believe it or not, I just want to live with you for the rest of my life." Chandler spoke with sincerity.

Crystal had to admit that she was touched.

She was not as beautiful as Christina, who had a cluster of admirers. When she was in college, she only had a normal relationship. She had never heard any sweet talk and even gotten married to Chandler without in dizzy.

Chandler was popular for women. She married into the Stephenson family which was beyond her reach. She had

always remembered that the two elders of the Stephenson family were reasonable, knowledgeable, and her husband was so outstanding. All of this made her cherish it especially.

Crystal lowered her head and said nothing.

Chandler knew that she was extremely susceptible to him, so he said softly, "We will have children in a few years. I will definitely love our baby very much."

Crystal subconsciously caressed her abdomen with her right hand for maternal instinct. She lowered her head and teared up a little.

This time, she did not nod or object.

It seemed that Crystal had agreed.

Chandler knew that he was forcing her, and he seemed to be complicated and agitated. He tried to keep a gentle tone. "I have some work to do tonight. I might be back later. You should go to bed first."

As he spoke, Chandler turned around and left. His footsteps were a little fast as if even he was avoiding the problem.

Crystal watched her husband leave in such a hurry. She had no excuse to leave him with her. She was filled with a sense of disappointment and resentment for her cowardice.

In fact, Chandler was not busy with work tonight but went to the bar to drink alone.

He really didn't know where to go. He felt unutterably depressed in the Stephenson family, the same as when he learned that his brother had suddenly passed away.

"Chandler, you drank by yourself." Amidst the loud music in the bar, a chipper voice came.

Charles was dressed in handsome white sportswear, which was the latest custom-made clothes by famous designers. He sat at the bar next to him, with a sunshine smile on his face.

Chandler ignored him and continued to pick up a large glass of German beer. He frowned and tried to drink it all as if he wanted to drink all his troubles.

Charles looked surprised. "Chandler, it would be suicidal that you're drinking so much after quitting drinking for so long. Do you want to go to the hospital?"

"Go play with someone else." Chandler waved his hand to signal him to leave.

Of all the friends, Charles was the one who he envied the most because he lived a relaxed life. He had three brothers, was the youngest son in the family. He ran a company without any business burden. Moreover, he was popular, which made him look like a duck to water.

Once he was here, he won't leave. Charles continued to press his elbows against the table of the bar and said, "Crystal always says you have a bad stomach and won't let you drink."

At the mention of Crystal, Chandler looked a little odd. He looked up at the bartender and let him fill another large glass.

Charles's eyes widened as he looked at him.

"Chandler, your brother has been dead for many years."

Patrick came out of the dim light. His voice was low and not loud, but Chandler at the bar counter heard it and got stiff.

Patrick motioned to the security guard behind him to let all the guests in this row of the bar go somewhere else. He found an empty seat and sat down casually and asked the bartender for a glass of orange juice.

Patrick pushed the freshly squeezed orange juice in front of Chandler. Chandler looked at it and did not refuse.

Charles, like their little brother, sat at the back and looked at them, sighing in his heart that Patrick was indeed the most efficient.

Then, Patrick said calmly, "Even if you want to have an abortion, you have to make it clear to Crystal that Geoffrey is the child of your brother and Erica..."

"What!"

Charles was the most excited. He immediately jumped up from his chair and glared at Chandler fiercely. "Do you mean you really want to give up your own baby?!"

How could such a cruel thing be done? At this moment, Charles was a little as indignant as Christina.

"Chandler, you can't be so heartless. It's a life. It's your child!"

Although Charles knew the things about the Stephenson family and heard from Chandler that it was impossible for him to have a child so soon after marriage, or that he would never have a child for the rest of his life, now that she was pregnant, it was still unacceptable that he admitted he wanted an abortion.

"Back then, the death of your brother had nothing to do with you, it was your parents' fault..."

Charles's face was congested with anger. "As Patrick said, your brother has been dead for so many years. Even if your parents are not willing to accept it, you can't mess around with them!"

Chandler's eldest brother, Mark, was mild in disposition. As a super scholar, his biggest hobby was to hole up in the library and specialize in ancient cultural relics and history. At the same time, he especially disliked social interaction and even had a social phobia. Basically, his life was to get along with his family.

However, Chandler showed no interest in books. He liked to travel around when he was young.

The two brothers had very different personalities, which was not a big problem.

But when Mark was thirty years old, the Stephenson family elders were worried that he was too introverted to find a wife, so they specially arranged for a few girls to go on a blind date with him.

Erica happened to be one of the girls who went on a blind date with him. Mark immediately fell in love with Erica, just like a new discovery in his life.

Erica matched the Stephenson family for identity and background, and both families were very interested in getting married.

When they were about to get married and hold a wedding banquet, Chandler was told to rush back to attend his brother's wedding banquet. Chandler was still young at that time. He traveled around and made a lot of friends. He was more energetic than many friends of his age.

Chandler and Charles knew a lot of friends, including Erica.

"You sent me a message that you were getting married. Are you going to marry my elder brother?" When Chandler returned home and looked at Erica, the future sister-in-law, he was shocked.

Because he had known Erica more than a year ago. Erica was a very bold and beautiful woman, and there were many men pursuing her, but she liked those men who resisted her passively.

"Your brother was nice as a bookworm. At least he's willing to marry me."

"Erica, what do you want?"

"Chandler, don't think you're too important after playing with Patrick and the others. I know I've been around you for the past year, but you don't hate me. You still like me, do you? Why don't you admit it?"

Chandler was furious. "Erica, you're crazy."

"During the time I broke up with you, did you really not miss me at all?"

"As long as you promise to marry me, I will cancel the wedding with your brother immediately."

Chandler replied to her with a cold face and warned her, "If you hurt my family, Erica, I won't let you go."

He turned around angrily and left. Erica stood there with a pale face.

As long as no one knew about their past, even if Erica married into the Stephenson family, it wouldn't be a big problem. However, that day, Mark was outside the door and he heard everything.

Mark was jarred by it. He proposed to cancel the wedding, and then suddenly went abroad to travel.

His first plan was to climb the snow mountain. For people who were not good at sports and rarely went out, climbing the snow mountain was a very wrong choice. Chandler stopped him immediately, but the more Chandler persuaded him, the more persistent Mark was.

As a result, Mark fell down the mountain because he was not feeling well on the way.

When the rescue team found him, his sportswear was in tatters, and there were many scars on his body. The blood in the wounds had already coagulated. He had multiple fractures, already frozen into a stiff shape in the snow and ice.

Chandler did not shed a single tear at his brother's body. He was unusually silent and could not say a word.

Chandler knew better than anyone why his elder brother suddenly went abroad to travel, climb snow-capped mountains, and why he died so tragically.

The two Stephenson family elders suddenly became much older for losing their beloved son. The whole family seemed to take on a bit of a darker hue.

However, there was a hope that Erica was pregnant.

It was Mark's child.

"If you want this child, ask Chandler to marry me." Erica paranoidly thought that she could keep Chandler around in this way.



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Chapter 507

In the bar, Chandler and Patrick were talking about Mark's accidental death. They all understood that Chandler was suffering huge pressure. They knocked one drink after another.

At this moment, in the Stephenson family, Crystal was tossing and turning in bed. Then she suddenly received a call from a stranger.

Crystal nervously looked at the ringing phone on the table and didn't know what to do.

The screen clearly showed unknown numbers.

Crystal had a good memory. She remembered that this number belonged to Erica.

Erica suddenly called her, but she was afraid to answer.

The woman on the other end of the phone was very bigoted. It was ringing over and over again as if she had to keep it until Crystal answered the phone.

"Hello?"

Crystal kept her voice as calm as possible lest it revealed any nervousness.

"Are you afraid to answer my calls?"

Erica's clear voice straightforwardly came to her guilt.

"No."

Crystal retorted too fast, making her even more diffident.

But she didn't want to show Erica that she had no confidence, even she had to pretend.

Erica went straight to the point, "Do you have time? Come out for a moment. I want to make some things clear to you in person."

"It's late now. I don't want to..."

Erica interrupted in a forceful tone, "It's only 9: 30 pm. Crystal, don't be so timid. I really hate your cowardice. I ask you out is not for eating you. Don't worry!" Her arrogant voice was full of disdain and ridicule.

Crystal felt as if she had been stabbed in the heart. She was indeed timid and cowardly. Even she despised herself.

"There is a Starbucks on the third lane behind the Stephenson family, don't keep me waiting too long."

Erica was used to the control the situation and quickly said a location.

Before Crystal could agree, Erica hung up the phone.

Crystal was holding her phone. She hadn't been sleeping well recently. So she was mentally weak, and even her face looked pale. Erica's words echoed in her mind, which was like a frozen computer and it took her a long time to react.

Her first thought was to call Chandler, but she remembered that Chandler had said that he had to work tonight, so she didn't want to disturb him.

She should ignore his ex-wife's sudden visit, but she couldn't.

Crystal grew up in an environment where she was used to being scolded. Living in other's family, she was seen as a maid by her stepfather and stepbrother, while her mother ignored all of this. She knew life was not easy from a very young age and learned to be obedient and compliant.

Because being obedient meant to be less pained.

Crystal stroked her baby bump. For the sake of the child, she didn't want to be an coward anymore.

Starbucks was very close to the Stephenson family, just 800 meters in walking distance.

"What would you like to drink, Miss?"

The waiter couldn't help but ask Crystal when he saw that she hadn't ordered for a long time.

"The white coffee here is delicious. Do you want to try it?" The waiter warmly recommended her with a smile.

Crystal looked around and found that Erica hadn't arrived yet.

She heaved a sigh of relief in her heart, looked up at the waiter, and shook her head, "Sorry, I can't have coffee now. May I have a cup of hot milk?"

Crystal always remembered that she was pregnant. She would subconsciously be vigilant about food that she couldn't eat during pregnancy. It seemed to be her nature.

A clear voice sounded behind her. "Irish coffee, tea latte, and a blueberry cheesecake, please."

Crystal stood nervously. The waiter glanced at Erica, who was so bright and dazzling, he immediately smiled and nodded, "Okay, please wait a moment."

"When I was pregnant, I ate everything, even drank and smoked..."

Erica glanced at Crystal's abdomen, but there was not much emotion in her eyes. She said calmly, "At that time, the Stephenson family were extremely nervous. Chandler was so angry that he quarreled with me every day. Of course, he apologized to me in the end."

Erica's tone sounded like she was talking about the past, not provocation. But when Crystal heard it, she was filled with sadness and bitterness.

Her pale face looked weak and sickly under the fluorescent light.

Erica looked at her and immediately said, "Take a seat over there, don't stand here dumbly. Crystal, I'm not as bad as you think."

Crystal could not answer such direct words. She looked at Erica, who was so neat as if everything she had done was aboveboard. However, she was so coy and made people annoying.

The waiter served them hot milk, coffee, and cake.

Erica didn't follow those socialites' routines to be elegant and calm. She picked up the coffee and took a big gulp. Then she put a big piece of cake in her mouth. Crystal looked at her warily, not even daring to drink the hot milk at her hand.

"I heard that after Chandler knew you were pregnant, you ran away from home after arguing with him. Then Christina made a scene in the Stephenson family..."

Erica said as if no one else was around, "Your friend is really bossy. She slapped Chandler in public."

Hearing this, Crystal's mood was fluctuating, and her expression was a little uneasy.

She immediately retorted, "Christina was just impulsive. She didn't mean to be like that..."

"Don't be so nervous. I didn't say anything about her. How dare I do anything to the granddaughter-in-law of the Hopkins family?"

Erica picked up a napkin and wiped the cream off the corner of her mouth. She looked up at Crystal and said, "It's also your fortune to have Christina back your up."

"I've been married to Chandl for five or six years. I know the Stephenson family and Chandler better than you. Crystal, let me be honest with you. I don't see you as a potential enemy."

Erica said in an imperturbable tone, not as combative as Crystal had imagined.

It made Crystal even less confident. She didn't know how to deal with it.

"I'm Chandler's wife now."

Crystal whispered as if it was a showdown.

Erica didn't seem to care at all, "So what? You can get divorced even if you get married, just like what I used to do with him."

Crystal clenched her fists under the table, trying to say something to correct her. She was Mrs. Stephenson now, but not Erica, who was an ex-wife.

"Crystal, I still want to emphasize that you don't have to be so jittery as you are now. I find it a little funny when I look at you."

It was impossible for Erica to take a rival like Crystal to heart.

"I asked you out today is for talking about your pregnancy."

"When I divorced Chandler, he personally promised me..."

Erica looked at her sharply, enunciating each word clearly, "Chandler promised that he would not have children with other women in the future. Geoffrey is the only child, the only inheritor to the Stephenson family."

Crystal's body was trembling, and her face froze.

"I know, as a woman, you'd be worried about losing him," Erica sympathized with Crystal, who was just a plain woman.

"We all know that Chandler is under a lot of pressure. I've been with him for too long. He was tired of the marriage and wanted to live a comfortable life when he met you, but his heart always belongs to me."

Erica's words were full of confidence.

"You did your best to take care of the Stephenson family. In fact, I am also grateful to you. These days, I have also reflected on myself. I quit smoking and drinking, and I am trying to learn how to cook and take care of the family. My relationship with the Stephenson family has eased a lot. Maybe I used to act too extreme, but now they accept me..."

Crystal's face turned pale. She didn't want to hear more. "Erica, what are you trying to say?" She hurriedly broke Erica's illusions.

Erica raised her chin and slowed down, "Then I'll tell you directly."

"Everyone knows that your marriage with Chandler will not last long. You married into the Stephenson family and tried to play a good role of daughter-in-law, trying to please the elder and Geoffrey, but it's useless for you to do this."

Erica looked at her with a look of contempt, "Even if you try every means to get yourself pregnant by accident now, Chandler won't let you give birth to the child. Geoffrey is the only son of the Stephenson family, and he will be the inheritor in the future. Don't think about giving birth to a child to contend with Geoffrey..."

Crystal stood up excitedly, "I never thought of fighting you for anything!"

Because of her sudden shout, everyone around her turned to look at them and whispered.

Erica felt embarrassed and waved her hand, "Crystal, I didn't ask you out to quarrel with you. Please don't be so emotional, okay? Even if your family has never taught you dining etiquette, you'd better be polite. No wonder Chandler didn't take you out."

Erica was not like those scheming women, but her frank words were always like a blunt knife stabbing into the heart.

Crystal's heart was full of scars, and her expression was confused. She could not say a word.

She stumbled out of the coffee shop with shaky steps.

Erica frowned and shouted at her angrily, "Crystal!"

"Did you hear what I said just now... I've been entangled with Chandler for so many years, and a plain woman like you can never interfere with our relationship at all. You'd better figure it out earlier. Don't think that pregnancy can change anything..."

Erica's angry voice came from behind her. She dumbly walked out of the coffee shop, the door closed automatically, which held those harsh words inside the shop.

They thought that being pregnant was her conspiracy.

They thought that she wanted to fight for the identity of the Stephenson family's daughter-in-law in the way of being pregnant.

They thought that she gave birth to a child was for competing with Geoffrey for the favor.

The night was dim. These back alleys were deserted. The disrepair street lights were flashing, which made the environment even more desolate.

The cold night wind was blowing her face. Tears slowly slid down uncontrollably. She lowered her head and did not reach out to wipe her tears. She trudged step by step in dazed, staying unfocused.

"Why did I marry into the Stephenson family?"

"Why did I humiliate myself to be a stepmother?"

"Why did I get involved in their relationship? Why am I so stupid..."

She sobbed to herself. She suddenly realized how ignorant and stupid she was.



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It was midnight again.

Patrick watched Christina get up angrily. She was nervously chatting with other people on the phone.

"What!" Christina suddenly gave a cry of astonishment and was not sleepy anymore.

"Are you serious?"

She couldn't believe what she had just heard from the other end of the line.

"Oh... I don't know." Christina, who had always been straightforward, was hesitant this time.

"Of course I will support you unconditionally. Don't worry!"

Christina subconsciously turned to look at Patrick while holding her phone. Patrick was also squinting at her, watching her like a hawk. Obviously, he was unhappy that someone disturbed their sleeping in the middle of the night.

Christina was not afraid of him at all. She ran into the bathroom, closed the bathroom door directly, and continued to talk to her friends on the phone.

"Crystal, are you really going to divorce Chandler?" Christina lowered her voice as if she was afraid that someone else would hear it.

Although she was very angry before, thinking that the Stephenson family are all scum. She even slapped Chandler and taught him a lesson. But if it caused their divorce, she would feel a little guilty.

"Christina, I'm outside now and don't know where to go."

Crystal didn't cry anymore. Instead, her voice was calm now, as if she was telling a very ordinary thing.

"Didn't you say that even if you wanted to run away from home, don't be silly enough to stay outside? Now I just want to find a place to sleep and have a rest. Christina, can you help me?"

Her voice became weaker as if her strength was about to run out. She rarely asked for help, but this time she was really at a loss. She could not think of anyone else who would help her except Christina.

"Okay, okay, I... I'll see what I can do!"

Christina could not stand standing aside when others were in trouble. She immediately agreed to help her.

"You probably won't like living in the Hopkins family. There are so many rules here, and Ms. Hopkins is really annoying... I've got it! Last month, Patrick gave me a villa. It's a big, single house. It's well furnished and equipped. You can live there."

If Crystal was determined to run away from Chandler, of course she couldn't live in a hotel. In that case, Chandler would find her sooner or later. If she wanted a quiet place, the private house of the Hopkins family was the best.

"I'll go find the address. I'll send it to you later... The community service there is good. I'll call them to get you the key."

"Okay, thank you, Christina." Crystal said in a low voice.

"You're welcome. By the way, Crystal, you haven't told me where you are now... Forget it. I can't sleep anyway. I'll go find you and pick you up, and then we'll go over there to show you around..."

"Thanks, but I can just go there by taxi."

Crystal knew that if she called Christina in the middle of the night, Patrick would be very dissatisfied. She had always been afraid of bothering others.

Christina, however, couldn't care less about her husband's dissatisfaction. She continued, "I'm telling you that it's really a good place. It's very close to a shopping center so it's convenient to buy daily necessities. There are also many food streets around."

"I've always said that the Hopkins family is too big and too cold, especially at night. It's like a haunted house and the atmosphere here is scary. The family environment is not as loving and caring as that of an ordinary family. But the villa there is good, with a small courtyard in the front of it. If we go there and live together, life will be very convenient and easy. All the appliances are new. The formaldehyde has already been removed beforehand, so you can have a good rest over there and nourish the fetus. You can call the property for help anytime you want..."

Christina gabbled on and on, finding that she also wanted to live in that house.

Crystal felt warm after hearing her words. She knew that Christina didn't know how to comfort people. She said a lot, trying to coax her not to be worried anymore.

"Okay, I'll live there from now on."

Crystal finally put up a smile on her face. She did not thank Christina this time. She knew that there was no need to say that again.

Christina let out a sigh of relief after hearing Crystal's words.

After hanging up, she walked out of the bathroom. Christina was thinking about taking how many clothes with her to live there. She also had to drive a car; otherwise, it would be inconvenient for them to go out. Why not she go over right now? She couldn't sleep now anyway. Crystal was not familiar with that villa.

"... Where did you hide her?" Patrick asked as soon as she came out.

Christina gave him a wary look, blushing guiltily, but refused to admit anything. "I don't know what you're talking

about."

Then she told him boldly, "I have something to do now. I need to go out for a while."

Then she went straight to the cloakroom, rummaged through the cabinets and took out a few sets of clothes. She stuffed them into the suitcase.

Patrick frowned deeply. Seeing that she was packing up her luggage as if she was also running away, he couldn't help but walk over and close her suitcase.

"... Don't get involved with the mess of the Stephenson family." His tone was serious. It seemed that he was a little angry.

Christina did not even raise her head. She bent down and continued looking for two pairs of her shoes. She was thinking about bringing a few more pairs of shoes over. Maybe Crystal would need them too.

"Christina Dickens!" Only when Patrick was furious would he refer to her by her full name.

"It's 2:45 in the morning. If you dare to go out now, I'll kick your friend out of my villa immediately."

Christina exploded when she heard this. She threw down her shoes, straightened her back, and argued with him, "You can't be so unreasonable. Accommodating Crystal in our empty house won't be a nuisance. In fact, it has nothing to do with you. Now she's pregnant, so she needs to have a good rest and live in a good environment..."

Patrick was really angry after hearing her words. "I didn't expect that my wife was so considerate. Why didn't you be so careful when you were pregnant?"

Patrick was selfish. He didn't want his wife to worry about other people all day long.

"I don't care. Crystal will live there anyway."

Christina knew that she was unable to defeat him by logical discussion, so she straightened her face, trying to be unreasonable.

"And, you," Christina said angrily, pointing her finger at his chest. "Don't try to help your friend Chandler. Now that Crystal says she wants to move out, none of you can force her to go back against her will."

Christina snorted proudly. "That's it."

"I can't sleep now. I'm going there and show her around." She dragged her suitcase and walked away quickly.

Patrick stood there with a dark face, watching his wife run away like that under his nose.

There was no way to vent his anger. Patrick picked up his phone expressionlessly and said in a cold and deep voice, "Find Chandler and tell him to deal with his family affair immediately!"

Charles, who was sleeping at that time, was aroused by Patrick's phone call.

Before he could answer, Patrick hung up the phone unhappily and turned to look at the empty bed. His was very depressed. If he couldn't sleep well, none of these guys were allowed to do so.

However, things did not go as smoothly as Patrick thought. His wife, Christina, had been packing up things in the past few days and moving them to the new house. It seemed that she was about to live there at any time.

Patrick looked at her with a gloomy face the whole time. Christina didn't feel any pressure at all and continued with her packing.

"I'm going to have dinner with Crystal today. I won't be back tonight." After a simple explanation, she dragged her suitcase and ran away happily.

Recently, not only the Stephenson family but also the Hopkins family and even Charles were depressed.

In the past, when Patrick and Christina quarreled, Charles always had no choice but to be on the receiving end of Patrick's bad temper.

But God is fair. Patrick finally got to know his feelings. But why, in the end, it was him who had to take care of all the stuff for him.

"Chandler, what have you been doing these days? You know that Crystal is staying at Christina's house Why don't you go find her?"

Charles advised earnestly.

"Think about it. If you let Crystal hang around with Christina for too long, she would definitely divorce you at Christina's suggestion. Then you are in trouble."

Patrick's face was cold and he said, "Christina didn't give her any suggestion."

Patrick had never liked to interfere in other people's private affairs. But this time, it seemed that he could not bear it any longer. He said to Chandler with a stern face and a serious tone.

"Crystal insists on giving birth to this one even though you don't like it. But she will try her best to do this secretly and she will leave you with your child. You will never see them again."

Chandler froze.

Patrick made a reasonable guess. Although Crystal was timid, nobody knew what a mother could do for her child. Before she decided to give birth to the baby, she must have been mentally prepared to break up with the Stephenson family.

Charles patted him on the shoulder. "Chandler, don't be so hesitant every time you deal with things related to your brother."

"You were married to Erica for a long time but all she wanted to do was to torture you. Do you really have a masochistic tendency? Now you've got rid of Erica and have your own marriage. Crystal is pregnant with your child. Happiness is just around the corner..."

Chandler lowered her eyes and was depressed, "People like me don't deserve happiness."

Patrick snapped, "Sure you don't deserve to be happy, but don't drag Crystal down with you."

Patrick's words were like a sharp knife that cut him open and brought out something really ugly in him.

Chandler was stunned and did not speak for a long time.

It seemed that even he himself had never thought about anything like that. When he married Crystal, he was actually dragging her down with him.

"... If you were a man, you should do your best to make your wife happy. Love her, and let her be carefree."

Patrick's eyes were sharp. After these words, he got up and left.



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Maricris Reyes

wow I love patrick words

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