

# My Dreamy Old Husband Chapter 1171

After Linus finished eating, he returned to his workshop where he spent some time in his own thoughts. At midnight, he got up abruptly and went to Villa No. 8.

Since he had the entry card to the place, and his fingerprint was also recorded, he was able to enter the house easily. Going down to the basement, he found Quinton who was not yet asleep either.

How could he have fallen asleep like this?

Linus grabbed a chair and sat down in front of Quinton with the glass between them.

Quinton's hair fell messily above his eyebrows, making him look rather unkempt.

The two locked eyes and neither said a word for several minutes.

Another few minutes passed before Linus softened his gaze and let out a sigh. "You used to study medicine. Why don't you try to find a way? I don't want Sophia to be alone in the future, nor do I want to see Carmen lose her father."

Quinton ruffled his disheveled hair. His face, which was very similar to Theo's, revealed the weariness of a turbulent life.

He was silent for a long time, then he finally spoke. "I was told that when my biological father passed away, he had suffered injuries that were past the point of saving. Before he passed away, though, the hospital wanted to freeze his body and send him back to Bayside City so he could be saved when better medical equipment existed. But, because local technology was not well-developed at the time, the freezing failed, and my father never made it back."

A realization dawned on Linus. With a glimmer in his eyes, he prompted, "Are you saying we should freeze Michael now, then take him out later when we find a cure?"

This method was probably the best solution for Michael right now. They could freeze his body to preserve its current physical condition, then take him out later when they had more developed technology.

Quinton went on. "To my understanding, many influential people now choose to freeze themselves when they're at the brink of death with the hope that they can be brought back to life when technological advancements permit it. I assume you're also aware of this."

Undoubtedly, Linus knew about this technology. The demand for freezing bodies among aristocrats was getting larger. Many of them had lived a life of glory and wealth, and were not willing to let it end so quickly. They wanted to prolong their lives over many more generations. In part due to its necessity in space exploration, the technology for low-temperature dormancy used in freezing bodies was being developed rapidly. This technology was known as cryopreservation.

Standing up abruptly, Linus turned around and started to leave with haste. Just then, Quinton called from behind, "Hey, I have something for your dad. He is definitely going to like it."

"What is it?"

Linus felt perplexed as he turned back around. After Quinton was captured and taken there, he was stripped of his clothes and was only given an undershirt to wear.

Lifting the corner of his shirt, he removed the plaster that was attached to his waist and revealed a QR code that had been tattooed into his skin.

"What is that?"

"You'll know once you scan it."

Linus scanned the QR code and found a download page for a zip file.

Quinton insisted, "You must give it to your father. He will love me to death. If my brother dies one day, your father might be my father too."

With a scoff, Linus downloaded the file to his computer as he was heading back out.

"In a few days, I will find a good time to send you back to Africa. You have also contributed to the research and development of this virus, so perhaps you can provide some help."

Linus and the experts in Africa spent all night in an intensive discussion. After two days, they were able to give Linus a definite answer—cryopreservation was possible, but it naturally also depended on Michael’s willingness.

Not everyone was willing to freeze themselves.

Alas, Linus mustered up the courage to tell Michael about his idea.

“Cryopreservation...”

It sounded like a term that he would only ever hear in science fiction movies. He did not think that it would have anything to do with him.

Michael gave a bitter smile. “Let’s talk about this later. It’s not time yet.”

There was still a multitude of things left to be done. How could he feel at ease being frozen during this time?

Carmen was still young, and Sophia had not achieved her dreams yet. He could not be absent from their lives now.

Linus was filled with self-blame. He felt a wave of helplessness and despair wash over him.

If only we could turn back time... Sadly, time will only ever move forward.

Over those few days, Linus grew haggard trying to find a cure for Michael.

Quinton’s arrival instilled a sense of urgency within him. He had to pay for his sins, but unfortunately, Michael did not want to carry on with the procedure now.

Who knew what would happen after his body was frozen? What if a mishap occurred midway?

If he closed his eyes now, who knew when would be the next time he would open them again? Would the people he loved still be around?

“Ha! So you guys were here!”

Sophia jumped out of nowhere and saw both Linus and Michael in a serious mood. I wonder what they were talking about.

Michael and Linus quickly changed the subject. For the time being, they still had to keep this a secret from Sophia to keep her happy.

Sophia seemed to have just gotten off work. She came home today with an unfamiliar corgi. Placing it in Michael's arms, she announced, "This is our new dog. I'm going to call it Peach. Peach, meet your new dad."

Michael frowned.

B\*tch? Why did she give it such a vulgar name?

He pulled a long face and asked, "Where did it come from?"

"I stole it!" She gloated, "I passed by the Yard Residence on my way home today and noticed that no one was home except for this dog, so I took it."

She's proud of herself for stealing a dog!

While Sophia was in the shower, Michael held the dog, and the two looked at each other.

It looks exactly like a loaf of bread. How ugly.

At that moment, Linus stood up. "I plan to send Quinton back to the lab in Africa. You should bid him farewell when you can."

With his head lowered, Michael kept petting the dog and did not say anything.

When Sophia came out of the shower shortly after, she turned the whole place upside down trying to find Carmen.

"Where is Carmen? Where did my baby go?"

Michael had been deep in thought. When he snapped out of it, he also realized that Carmen, who had been playing beside him the whole time, was no longer in sight. The nanny said that she had slipped away in a blink of an eye.

In a short moment, the entire house was in chaos as they searched everywhere for Carmen. Fortunately, they were able to find her within a few minutes.

She must have wandered off while playing.

Michael let out the breath he had been holding. When the new dog was brought home, Carmen had gotten more than excited and even laid her little snacks out to feed it.

While no one was looking, Michael headed down to the basement to talk about the idea of cryopreservation with Quinton.

As soon as he went to the basement and saw Quinton, however, he exclaimed, "Carmen came by here?!"

Quinton responded, "No, not even a single fly came through."

Michael lowered his gaze. "Then, who did your nails for you?"

Quinton was in sandals. His toenails that were poking out the front were painted pink. It was obvious that it was Carmen's work!

She even stuck crystals on them! I've never gotten such special treatment before. Hmph!

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Quinton was locked up inside, but a gap had been left underneath so food could be given to him easily. Earlier, Carmen had gone down to the basement and asked him to stick his feet out of the gap so she could paint his nails.

Pulling his feet in, he asked, "Why are you here? Are you inviting me to eat dinner with you guys?"

"Nice try," Michael answered.

If he were to show up now, Cooper would tear him into pieces right away. Moreover, Sophia was not too keen to see him either. But Quinton was not expecting to receive her forgiveness; his main priority in returning this time was to check up on Celine.

The people who had used those stimulants at the same time were all exhibiting side effects, but each person had different symptoms, and he wanted to see the state that Celine was in. Another reason he had returned was that he wanted to give Cooper the thing he had on hand. For some reason, he was very interested in Cooper even though the latter was not his own father. It's probably because he's her father.

On the other hand, Michael also had conflicting feelings toward Quinton. Looking at the carbon copy of Theo, he realized that even the lines and edges on Quinton's face were exactly the same as the Theo in Michael's memories. Michael's eyes filled with pain as he let out yet another sigh. How great would things have been if Quinton had been born into the Fletcher Family?

After taking a good, long look at Quinton, Michael eventually got up to leave. Before he left, he asserted, "In two days, I will send you to Michel Town in Africa."

Once Michael was gone, the small space returned to being dead silent. Looking down at his feet while still in his seat, Quinton stared blankly at the pink on his toes.

Meanwhile, the whole family had dinner together in the dining room. They were having salamander soup again tonight. Celine was excitedly scooping out some soup to give to Quinton. Carmen also handed Justin some jelly and chocolate to give to him.

On the other hand, Sophia kept acting as though she did not know Quinton was locked up in their basement. After dinner, she simply went to pet the new dog.

Once Michael was done with his meal, he saw that Sophia was still in the living room with the dog and went to join her. While petting the dog, he also petted her. Even though she did not talk, he knew that she was not happy. In fact, she had not been happy ever since Quinton returned.

Grasping her shoulder, he murmured, "What's wrong? You don't look happy."

She shook her head. Ever since Quinton returned, she kept having this premonition that something had gone wrong, but she did not know what.

Michael continued, "Why don't we go to the spa on the weekend?"

She nodded. The spa sounded pleasant. Her period had also ended just in time. Looking up, she kissed the corner of his mouth while her arms were wrapped around him tightly. Although she did not know what was going to happen, she just wanted to hold him tightly in her arms now and in the future.

In the basement, the moment Justin left after giving Quinton his food, Carmen came in. While Quinton was eating inside that confined space, Carmen sat outside and drank her milk. Watching her drinking her milk made Quinton feel like he could easily eat two more bowls of rice.

When she was halfway through her milk bottle, she asked, "Uncle Quinton, why did Daddy lock you up in here?"

Quinton drank every last drop of the salamander soup. As the thought of how delicious the food was crossed his mind, he answered, "Because I didn't listen to him and did something bad. That's why I got locked up in here. You can't be like me, Carmen. You have to listen to your dad, mom, and grandpa."

Carmen nodded as if she understood his words. After that, she asked him to watch 'Where Are We Going, Dad?' with her again. Before they reached the end of one episode, however, Sophia came down to look for Carmen.

"That's enough. You can continue tomorrow. It's time for bed now. You still have to go to school tomorrow." Taking Carmen's small hand in hers, Sophia walked out of the basement as though she did not see Quinton locked up right next to her.

Carmen waved at him. "Bye, Uncle Quinton." She left the tablet behind and said, "I want to leave this for Uncle Quinton to watch."

Sophia did not say no. Besides, the tablet was not connected to the internet, and it only contained some of Carmen's films.

From the moment Sophia stepped in until she brought Carmen out with her, she did not utter a single word to Quinton. There was nothing left to be said between them. She got a divorce because of him, and she also lost her sight because of him. Any animosity between them had been settled, so they were better off as strangers.

Quinton did not speak to her either. Indeed, there was nothing more they could say to each other. They were practically strangers now. He knew that she was not his and that he was always just being forceful. The fruit that he attained by force was not only tasteless, but it was also bitter—so bitter that it was hard to swallow and even filled him with regret.

He could not face her anymore. Even though Sophia was oblivious, the truth would come out one day, and she was going to find out about everything. When the time comes, she might just kill me.

In the living room, Michael was playing with the new dog while Cooper and Linus were watching television on the couch. The second season of 'Where Are We Going, Dad?' concluded last week. From this week onward, they would not get to see their adorable Carmen on television anymore. Cooper, in particular, was a bit disappointed.

Linus picked up the dog that looked like a loaf of bread from Michael's embrace and commented, "This dog looks rather familiar..."

Suddenly, Maria rushed in. "Mrs. Yard is at the gate. She says her dog is here and has come to pick it up. She also wanted to drop in to pay her greetings to Mr. Cooper."

Dog? They all turned to look at the corgi.

Sophia had just placed Carmen down to sleep when she heard that Anna had come to their front gate. In a fit of anger, she called Callum right away. "Wow, you ratted on me just because I stole your dog?"

Callum retorted, "Sophia, maybe look before you steal next time? That was my mom's dog! It was a gift from the Queen of the United Kingdom."

Sophia hung up the phone. She looked at the surveillance footage and saw Anna's car parked at their entrance. Her bodyguard was currently having a talk with their security guard.

When Cooper heard about Anna's arrival, he started heading up the stairs. "I'm going to sleep."

Sophia did not want Cooper to have any more to do with Anna, either. Turning to Maria, she instructed, "I didn't see a dog. Tell her to go look somewhere else."



After the security guard passed on the message, the surveillance camera showed Anna's car driving away. Once Anna was gone, Sophia let out a sigh of relief but she also felt rather guilty. Thinking about it, however, Callum had stolen all their pets while she only took one of their dogs. It's give and take. Yes, that's how it's gonna be.

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Anna left in low spirits. As the car drove off, she kept looking back in the direction of The Imperial's Villa No. 8. There were two reasons she came by today. The first was to get her dog, and the second was to see Cooper.

She did not know why she wanted to see him. Was it because of his influence? If she got to work with him, he could help her get out from under Jordan's control sooner. For some reason, his image kept surfacing in her mind.

On the third floor of the villa, Cooper only closed the curtains after watching Anna's car leave. Sitting back down at this table, he tried his best to erase Anna's shadow in his mind before turning on his computer. His mailbox showed that he had received a new email. It was from Linus and read, 'Dad, this is very important. You have to look through all of it.'

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Very important? Does it have something to do with the business?

When Cooper opened the document, he saw that it was an unnamed zip file with a large video file that was more than ten gigabytes. He proceeded to download the file.

Since Sophia often played games, the internet at Michael's place was very fast, and the large file finished downloading in an instant. With a cup of coffee in his hand, he looked over some work documents while the video was being played.

When the video started, the quality was very poor. It looked like it was taken on a camera from decades ago. Judging by the background, the place seemed like a laboratory of some sort.

The subtitle read, 'February, 199X'.

That was how Cooper used to record dates. For example, 'Invented USB flash disk, age 18, 198X'.

He still used the same format now. 'Carmen Sophia Fletcher, age XX, 200X'.

Glancing at the timestamp, he instinctively translated it as: 'When Sophia was 5 months old.'

In the video, a man in a white lab coat was talking to the camera. Because the video was recorded a long time ago, the audio was not very clear. Cooper had to turn the volume up all the way to be able to get several audible sentences out of it.

"...mindwiping can cultivate completely loyal soldiers. After they lose their memories, we can mold a new personality into them as we please. It produces faster and more effective results compared to traditional methods. Traditional mindwiping techniques use torture to make people forget, which will inevitably cause physical damage to the test subject. My method, on the other hand, uses electric currents to damage memory nerves in the brain and cause permanent damage in order to achieve memory loss and reconstruct personality."

"But, the experiment is not complete yet. We still need a large number of test subjects to carry out clinical trials."

Cooper's eyes narrowed. This person is Quinton's mentor, the previous Phantom Wolf.

During that time, he had only met him once.

He was the person who invented those mindwiping techniques that caused Sophia, Celine, and Annabel to lose their memories.

After that, the video cut to two blond men who were bringing a thin girl into the frame. On the screen, the subtitle read, 'Test Subject #19, female, age 19'.

The thin girl had her back against Cooper. She had black hair and looked Cethosian.

The moment the girl turned around, he was able to see her face. It's her! It's Annabel!

He felt as though he had just fallen into an ice cellar. All the hairs on his body were standing on their ends.

It's my Annabel!

It was exactly the same girl in his memories, except she looked skinnier, the bones on her face were protruding, and the color on her face had turned ashen.

From watching the video, he immediately knew what was happening—Phantom Wolf was about to brainwash her.

She's going to lose her memories!

At that point, Cooper almost slammed his laptop shut.

He could not get himself to watch that scene. He knew that it was, undoubtedly, a very painful process.

Especially since both his daughter and the woman he loved had endured that pain!

Right before his laptop closed, however, he heard a pristine voice.

"Leon... Did you meet Coop in Cethos?"

Cooper's hands stopped moving.

What was that? Annabel just called me! Coop...

That name sounded like a name from a previous life.

He thought he would never hear it again.

Slowly opening the laptop back up, he saw the face that now only existed in his memories on the screen, and his eyes welled up with tears.

Annabel, did you come and look for me?

That person called Leon must have been the previous Phantom Wolf. He was the confidant of the Yard Family and was bestowed the Yards' family name by the ancestors.

Phantom Wolf's voice was heard in the video, but he did not appear on screen again.

"Yes, I saw him last month in Cethos."

That was true. That year, Phantom Wolf had come to Cethos and met Cooper once.

He wanted to seek technical assistance from Cooper in his attempt to create terror in Cethos and engage in the illegal arms trade, but Cooper rejected him. They met several more times after that, but Cooper continued to reject him firmly.

When Annabel heard that Leon met with Cooper, she burst into a radiant smile, and her eyes filled with happiness—just like how he remembered her.

Looking at that smile put him in the depths of misery.

Who would have known that she would become the cold and heartless Anna Yard today?

Annabel inquired, "Is Coop doing okay? Did you explain my situation to him? Even though I lurked around him to bring him harm at first, I really do love him, and I've never actually hurt him before. He will understand. He will come back and get me!"

She became delighted. "I am a descendant of the Imperial Yard Family. We are a great match. No one will oppose our relationship again! Is the Mitchell Family also aware of my identity? Did they approve of me and Coop being together?"

Suddenly, her eyes darted around cautiously, and she whispered, "Did you find my children? I have twins; a boy and a girl. The older twin was born twenty minutes earlier. I gave my son to a nurse at the hospital so she could take him away discreetly. My daughter must be with her father now. I'm afraid that Jordan will do something to my children. I want to send them away secretly. You have to inform Coop so he can find and bring our children home!"

She kept asking about her children and Cooper repeatedly—as if Leon was her last resort.

Leon gave her ambiguous replies while he was busy preparing the machines to brainwash her with.

At that moment, she was probably still under Jordan's control. She did not know that she was just one of Leon's test subjects.

It looked like she had trusted Leon as she even begged him to send word to Cooper in Cethos.

She thought that Leon would help her.

It was all just wishful thinking.

She thought that because she was a descendant of the direct line of the Imperial Yard Family and the successor of the Ronney Group, she was a good match for Cooper, the future head of the Mitchell Family.

Once Cooper hears that I'm alive, he will look for our children, and come to get me. The Mitchells will not stop us from being together anymore. I can spend the rest of my life being happy with Coop.

But in reality, when Phantom Wolf met Cooper, he did not tell him anything about Annabel.

Annabel was deceived!

Unfortunately, she had no idea what she was about to face and was still waiting for Cooper like a fool.

Staring at the screen, Cooper felt like his heart was being stabbed over and over again.

Annabel looked very weak. Leon had to support her to the operating table and attach various devices to her. They shaved off a part of her head and stuck on numerous electrode pads.

Looking at the machines with fascination, she asked, "Leon, will my uterus really be fixed after this procedure?"

He lowered his head to hide his expression, but his voice came out eloquently. "Yes, this uterus can be transplanted flawlessly. I guarantee it will be a success."

She smiled again. "You're the best, Leon."

His head was still lowered, but he did not say another word.

Then, he promptly began the operation for Annabel's 'uterus transplant'.

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Annabel was never going to know that the perfect future Leon had promised her was all a lie—what with giving her a uterus transplant or bringing Cooper to her.

Sadly, she would never know that she was deceived because she lost all her memories after that.

Everything she knew—Cooper, her children, Leon, Jordan—was going to disappear from her mind.

She would turn into someone that even she, herself, did not recognize. From then on, there was no more Annabel, only Anna Yard!

Lying on the operating table, Annabel dreamt of the perfect future she longed to have.

Once the operation was over, her dear Coop would come and get her with their two children, then they would live happily ever after. All the while, she was completely unaware of the ordeal she was about to go through. Cooper closed the laptop gently and the video got cut off.

He could not bear to watch any more of it. He already knew what happened next.

After the computer shut down, the world became quiet in an instant. Hanging his head down, he realized that his face was already covered in tears—tears that had turned cold and were falling onto his laptop, droplet by droplet.

It's all my fault, Annabel. It's my fault. What was I doing the whole time?

Going back to that point in time, he believed that Annabel had died. He was even less aware of the existence of his two children. Gathering up a great amount of strength within him, he

swallowed the pain that Annabel's death brought him bit by bit. He closed himself off and trained himself to become stronger.

Seeing the world again through a pair of stone-cold eyes, he realized that the world had always been callous. Everything true, good, and beautiful was no more than an illusion that people used to fool one another.

Almost overnight, he went from the lighthearted and untroubled young Cooper to the future head of the Mitchell Family. His wisdom, foresight, and extraordinary boldness allowed him to become a perfect leader. He guided the Mitchell Family to conquer one peak after the other, but he stepped down at the prime of his life and faded away.

Henceforth, there was no more Cooper Mitchell in the world, only a Fass Michel.

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At ten at night, Carmen was fast asleep, but the lights in the living room were still on. Sophia was watching television while petting the new dog and making out with Michael—her hands were full.

Out of nowhere, Cooper rushed into the family's elevator and headed downstairs. He walked past the living room and out the door as though he did not see the two people who were entangled in each other's embrace.

Normally, he would have glared at them if he caught them being intimate in front of him.

"Dad!" Jumping up in surprise, Sophia quickly chased after him. "Dad! Where are you going at this hour?"

Cooper did not answer her. After he put on his shoes and opened the door, however, he found Linus already standing outside. It looked like he had been there for quite a while from the snow that had piled up on his hair.

The moment the door opened, their eyes met and Cooper froze momentarily. In a grave tone, Linus asked, "Are you sure, Dad? Are you really going to go look for her?"

Linus had seen that video so he knew what was in it.

Cooper was silent as he stood in the doorway. His eyes shone in the night, but it seemed like he was harboring a great uncertainty in his unwavering body.

He was also aware of what would happen once he revealed himself to Anna.

Meanwhile, Sophia had come running out after putting on her coat. "Dad, what's wrong?"

She saw the both of them standing at the main entrance with the same grim look on their faces.

Something must have happened, but what could make Dad this serious?

After a brief silence, Cooper turned to Sophia and said, "Darling, bring that corgi to me."

Sophia was baffled, but she still went to get the corgi. With the corgi in his arms, Cooper forged ahead into the snowy night.

She stared at him from behind for a while before it dawned on her. He's going to look for her.

Is he going to reveal himself to Anna? But, if he tells her, she will know that Linus and I exist. Will she go against us like she has against her two younger sons? After all, we will also have the right to inherit the Ronney Group.

However, Sophia had not even begun to consider a mother-daughter relationship with Anna.

Michael also watched Cooper leave in silence and did not say anything.

Linus patted Sophia on the shoulder. "Don't worry. Dad knows what he's doing."

"Cooper? What are you doing here?"

At the Yard Residence, the whole family had heard the doorbell ring. Both Callum and Cade came running out of their rooms when they heard that Cooper had dropped by late at night.

Callum had bought the house next to the pigsty and was living there with Anna and Cade. Their two younger brothers lived in another big house.



The two struggled with each other as they went to take a look at the surveillance video where they saw a man standing at their front door. Even though he was dressed in a long down coat that was in an awkward shade of blue, he still stood out and looked like a model. Beneath his hat was a cold and stoic face that showed no emotions.

He even had a corgi in his arms.

Callum and Cade looked at each other.

They had gone to look for Cooper before, but they were always rejected without exception. Other than the last time at the Fletcher Residence, it was impossible to meet him any other time. Even if it was Anna, she could only dream of it.

Why did he come here in the middle of the night?

He even claimed it was to bring the dog back.

Did he really come here to return the dog in the middle of this heavy snowfall?

Anna had not gone to bed yet and was also extremely taken aback by Cooper's arrival.

Even though she did not know the reason for his visit, he had already come up to their door; they could not leave him waiting there. She had the servants escort Cooper to the parlor room first while she went to change her clothes before going downstairs. Without realizing it, she changed into a prettier outfit and even combed her hair.

"I'll get it!"

"I'll go! I'll go!"

Callum and Cade fought each other as they raced to open the door for Cooper. The both of them wanted to meet the distant and legendary figure again.

The more they found out about him, the more they worshipped him.

Two decades ago, he made Bayside City surrender at his feet. Two decades later, he came back and was still able to make Bayside City succumb to him.

Ten minutes later, Cooper and the Yards were all seated in the living room while the corgi was back in Anna's embrace.

There was nothing unusual about Cooper. He was still the same with his standoffish tone, but he was not pushing people away like he used to anymore.

"I wasn't expecting such a late visit from you, Mr. Cooper. It's a pleasure to have you here. Please drink some tea." Anna greeted him.

Cooper took a sip of tea. "I returned late today. On my way home, I saw this dog running around outside. When I found out that it was yours, I thought I'd drop by to bring it back."

He did not sound too nonchalant or eager, and his gaze remained composed. It did not give off the impression that there was anything different about him.

Callum had a thought.

Sophia was the one who stole this dog. How did it end up running around outside? If Cooper came all the way here to return the dog in the middle of the night, could it be because he wants to... bed my mom?

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The brothers looked at each other in horror.

Because Jordan's identity had never been made public, and both Callum and Cade were test-tube babies, the public had always thought that Anna was single. Many intended to become the Yards' live-in son-in-law, so there were many people that wanted to go out with her.

Maybe Cooper is trying to court Anna too? Maybe everything he did in the past was just a trick he pulled to attract her attention—by pretending to be cold and then taking the initiative to approach Anna?

If this is the case, then Cooper is indeed a master!

Callum's expression was incomprehensible. Secretly, Cade fished his phone out and sent Sophia a text message.

'Is your dad trying to bed my mom?'

Sophia: 'Bed your ass!'

Cade: 'Sophia, you might become my sister tomorrow. Watch your words.'

Sophia: 'F\*ck off!'

Cade put his phone away and took a sip of tea as he pricked his ears up to focus on the conversation between Cooper and Anna.

There was nothing unusual about the conversation.

"It's just a dog, and I still have to bother you to send it back in the middle of the night. I'm really sorry. Why don't..." Anna let out a chuckle and continued, "I treat you to a meal tomorrow."

After all, Anna had always wanted to talk about the company's business with Cooper. But, the most important reason was that she wanted to get to know him better. There was something about him that made her feel like having a meal with him would be interesting.

Unexpectedly, Cooper rejected her. "I'm sorry. I have an appointment tomorrow."

Checking the time, Cooper found that he had been staying for almost fifteen minutes. Quickly, he got up to his feet and said, "It's getting late. I should stop bothering you now. Goodbye."

This was what Cooper was supposed to be like.

Now that Cooper had decided to leave, Anna didn't try to keep him. Standing up, she sent him to the door.

The moment she opened the door, a gust of snowy wind came rushing into the house. Subconsciously, Cooper went to the front and protected Anna, who was thinly dressed, from the biting cold wind.

“There’s no need to send me out. It’s cold; you should go back.”

He did not turn around and merely stood by the door as he said that. As soon as he finished speaking, he walked into the night quietly.

Piece by piece, the snowflakes that fell gradually made the night colder. They fell onto Cooper’s eyebrows and the tip of his hairs, but he didn’t seem to have noticed it.

He walked alone under the light of the lonely street lamps. His shoulders were covered with snow and dim lights, but his heart was a mixture of cold and warm.

As he walked, he found his face turning numb from the coldness, and he felt cold tears all over his face when he touched it.

Looking at the inky night sky above, he observed the never-ending snow that fell from the sky. They landed on his face like a knife cut. Every snowflake was like cuts on his skin, but he could only feel the pain in his heart.

He recalled the short meeting with Anna earlier. He remembered every word she said to him, and her smile was engraved in his heart. Countless times, he felt like he could not resist confessing at the very next second.

He had forgiven everything about her. She was just a lonely, weak woman. She did not want to live under the control of others, and she had her own hardships.

Suddenly, he remembered that night that was as cold as today. The both of them ran away from Bayside City to the south. While they were inside the green train, he noticed that something was wrong. Someone seemed to be watching them.

Anna took him away and they hid inside the train’s bathroom.

Inside the cold and dirty bathroom, they held onto each other tightly to keep one another warm. They did not dare to sleep throughout the night. Anna was determined to find a seat close to the bathroom because she knew that the killer was coming.

The killer was there to kill Cooper.

In the middle of their trip, they decided to change their plans and went to a place that was not part of their initial plan: the Ancient Town of Scarlett.

That was because Anna had leaked their plan to Jordan in advance. Therefore, no matter where they went, the killer would have found them.

So, Anna had to change their plans.

They thought that once they reached that place, no one would be able to find them. They had not expected that a postcard to check in with their family would expose their whereabouts—it was a terrible mistake in hindsight.

It's all fate...

Cooper looked up into the sky. His boiling tears turned extremely cold the moment they fell from his eyes.

Anna, are we not destined to be together in this lifetime?

The floor-to-ceiling window in the balcony separated the world into two. Standing inside the warm room, Anna's eyes were fixated on Cooper as he left in the snowy night.

She stared straight at his back—as if the sight would never bore her. After he left, she felt like he had left with a piece of her heart. The farther he went, the more intense the pain became. After the agony had reached its maximum, with a thud, Anna's heart went numb, and she could not feel anything else.

She watched as he left, and when she finally came back to her senses, she found her face damp with tears.

What... What is happening?

While Anna wiped her tears away, she looked at the gradually whitening street in a daze...

The snow was getting heavier and a while later, they would cover up the footprints left behind by Cooper.

Sophia had been waiting for her father at home for a while now. Just when she was about to go out searching for him, he came back covered in snow. His limbs were freezing, and his eyes were dull and empty—as if something shocking had happened.

“Dad, what’s wrong with you?”

Looking at the state of her father, Sophia was shocked. She quickly gestured Cooper into the living room. After removing his damp jacket, she found him a dry blanket to keep him warm before holding his cold hands to warm him up.

However, Cooper just held the blanket and went into the elevator to return to the third floor. With an emotionless face, he said, “Just leave me be. I need some time alone.”

Staring at the closing elevator door, Sophia was so anxious that she felt like a cat was scratching her heart, and her tears couldn’t help but fall.

Dad looks like he’s overwhelmed. Did something happen?

Did Anna hurt him?

Did something happen just now?

Immediately, Michael held her in his embrace and comforted her. “It’s okay. Everything will be fine.”

When he stared at Cooper, he felt like he saw the person he once was.

The person who once loved him no longer remembers him.

And he was the only one with that painful memory engraved in his heart.

He could meet her, but could not hold her; he loved her, but she had forgotten him...

After a sentimental moment, Michael was pleased all of a sudden.

You deserve it, Cooper!

Haha!

After the meeting with Anna, Cooper seemed to have returned to normal. He went to his studio at Villa No. 2 every morning, came home for dinner, and slept at night.

He petted his dog and cat, and played with his grandchildren like he always did—it was as if that night had never happened.

However, Sophia knew that his heart had been cut countless times. However, no one could help him.

It was a dead knot.

During the weekend, Michael brought the whole family to a spa resort on Reverie Mountain to take a hot spring bath as planned. Before leaving, he went to check on Cooper.

“Dad, are you coming with us?”

Judging from his look during these past few days, he might not want to go.

However, unexpectedly, Cooper threw him a cold glance. “Am I not welcomed?”

Instantly, Michael chickened out. “Of course, you’re welcome to join us.”

The family departed to the spa resort on Reverie Mountain and was welcomed by Daniel with open arms.

The business of the spa resort had been particularly good. It was making good profits. It became a place where all the rich people in Bayside City visited during the winter. There were even natural sulfur springs that were very popular amongst the customers. The fact that Daniel had booked them one of the empty pools was considered to be very generous of him.

What Sophia didn’t expect was that the moment she stepped into the resort, she saw Callum, who was wearing an underwear with frog motifs, eating ice cream.

If Callum is here, Anna would be here too...