

《Nanny Returns 魔法保姆》

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内容简介

More than four million readers fell in love with Nan, the smart, spirited, and sympathetic heroine of the #1 New York Times bestseller *The Nanny Diaries*.

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Now she's back. After living abroad for twelve years, she and her husband, Ryan, aka H.H., have returned to New York to make a life for themselves. In the midst of getting her new business off the ground and fixing up their fixer-upper, Ryan announces his sudden desire to start a family. His timing simply couldn't be worse.

To compound the mounting construction and marital chaos, her former charge, Grayer X, now sixteen years old, makes a drunken, late-night visit, wanting to know why she abandoned him all those years ago. But how can she explain to Grayer what she still hasn't come to terms with herself? In an attempt to assuage her guilt, yet against every instinct, Nan tries to help Grayer and his younger brother, Stilton, through their parents' brutal divorce, drawing her back into the ever-bizarre life of Mrs. X and her Upper East Side enclave of power and privilege.

After putting miles and years between herself and this world, Nan finds she's once again on the front line of the battle with the couture-clad elite for their children's wellbeing.

With its whip-smart dialogue and keen observations of modern life, *Nanny Returns* gives a firsthand tour of what happens when a community that chose money over love finds itself with neither.

The Nanny Diaries was made into a major motion picture.

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在线试读部分章节

Grace barks sharply, jerking me awake from a dead sleep as she flip-twists onto all fours.

"Grace," I grumbly reprimand, squinting through the darkness to where she peers out the bedroom doorway, like our night is about to go Lifetime. I stretch to the microwave-serving-as-nighttable -- 1:23 a.m. -- fumbling for my cell. She resumes barking with a ferocity that lifts her front paws in little jumps. Ears ringing, I flip open the phone and it glows to life, illuminating a text informing me that my husband is currently tucked in at the D.C. Radisson. I put my finger over the nine, primed to dial for help, when I hear --

Zzzzzzz...Zzz...Zzzzzz.

"Grace!" I scream with exasperation, and momentarily stunned, she turns to me. "It's the doorbell," I explain, as if this should reassure us. I pull on yoga pants, tug Ryan's sweater over my slip, and feel my feet around for my Adidas.

Grace is squared protectively in the doorframe and, seeing me dressed and in motion, she scrambles for her throw rope and barrels to the stairs. "This is not a walk. We are not walking." She wags her tail with blind optimism. Holding my cell, I feel for the light switch. The bare bulb comes to life, illuminating the hall, the second-story landing, and the vestibule below.

ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ.

ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ.

"Crap," I mutter, nearly felled by my flopping laces as I descend the final two steps into the once grand, now puke green and linoleumed foyer. I pull back the crispy, yellowed lace covering the one of two narrow side windows fanning the door. A glimpse of a long-ashed cigarette smoking in a man's fingers jerks me back to the wall. Grace pants around her frayed rope as she stares intently at the bottom of the door, waiting for it to be opened. Not a chance. I glance at the deadbolt to confirm it's bolted and, with a dully clattering heart, back up to the railing.

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ZZZZZZZZZZ -- fitz! The light two stories above goes out. Bringing us to a last pair of working fuses. Fabulous. "Fuck," I hear from the front stoop. I stare at the door's peeling paint with an intensity rivaling Grace's. "Look, just open up," he speaks in a plaintive slur. "I left my wallet in the cab...and I just...I heard you...I know you're -- fuck." I hear a thump and then something sliding heavily down the other side of the door. Grace drops her head to sniff the jamb. I take a tentative step and ever so slightly lift the curtain. The streetlamp illuminates splayed khaki pants ending in shiny loafers. I make out slender fingers drifting open, releasing their grip on a black iPhone. My well-attired assailant is now slipping into unconsciousness? Death?

"Hey." My voice surprises me and sets Grace barking. "Stop." I put my hands around her muzzle to listen...Nothing. "Hey!" I slap the door.

"Yeah?" he coughs. "You're home."

"Who are you looking for?" I step around where Grace sits, ears squarely perked.

"Um..." I hear a scuffle; he's attempting to stand up. "I'm looking for a...Nanny?"

My throat goes dry. I peer back out through the frayed lace covering the pane between us. "What?"

"Yeah, Nanny. Are you -- "

"Stand in front of the glass. On your right."...Nothing. "Hey!"

"Yeah."

"Your other right."

Suddenly my view of the stoop is filled with a swerving face -- a man -- boy -- somewhere in between. Beneath the mussed blond hair, atop the faintly freckled nose are two bloodshot blue eyes. They look out at me from the striking bone structure that unmistakably conjures his mother. I push my forehead into the cold glass, feeling at once a hundred years old and twenty-one. "Grayer?"

• • •

"You know me," he states flatly, taking a half step back from the window.

"Grayer," I repeat to the teenage incarnation of my last charge.

He swerves out of view, sending me fumbling for the locks. Grabbing a restraining hold of Grace's collar, I dart outside just in time to hook his belt loops as he tips over the stoop wall and retches onto the garbage cans. Bending my knees to counter his heaving weight in the frigid night air, I note that the heat is the one thing that fully functions in the house looming above us.

"Okay...done," he croaks, and I pull him upright, his body loose like a harlequin, emitting a thick aroma of liquor and nicotine. He rakes the sleeve of his peacoat across his face and stumbles back to lean against the closed door, his eyes focusing as Grace growls through the wood.

"You're taller than me," is all I can say, realizing this is actually happening.

"You have, like, a pit bull in there?"

"A golden retriever."

"I had one...I was allergic...as a kid...had to get rid of it." His eyes roll back.

"I think you should come inside." I gesture to the knob. He nods, momentarily righting himself, and I awkwardly maneuver around him to open the door. Grace grabs her rope and jumps up to greet us.

"Woo. Hey." Grayer pats her down, reaching a hand to the banister and swinging himself in a large

arc to sit on the bottom step. I relock the door and turn to stare at him in the streetlight spilling through the transom's stained glass.

"Grayer," I falter, reaching far into my brain for the speech I'd once prepared for this very moment.

"I'm so, so -- "

"You a witch?" he asks, resting his head against the wall.

"What? No, I -- "

"Cooking meth?"

"Okay, I didn't just show up at your house puking."

"It's just..." He waves his hand around the decrepit foyer, which Grace takes as an invitation to wag over and lick the remnants of his upheaval off his coat.

"I'm -- we're, my husband and I are renovating." I cross my arms over Ryan's sweater. "How did you find me?"

"My mom's files. Some notes about the Hutchinsons and then, you know, Google."

I feel an unexpected burst of pride in this demonstration of his smarts -- immediately extinguished as he fishes through his pockets to draw out a pack of American Spirits. "No." Grace backs up, head down. "Sorry, but no, you can't smoke inside."

"This is inside?" He cradles the pack between his hands. "This isn't, like, the confound-the-mutants antechamber and those doors open to a fat pad?"

"No, this is...it has a lot of potential."

"Right." His eyes drift close.

"Grayer."

"Yup."

"Why are you here?"

"To tell you to go fuck yourself." He inhales in two quick sniffs, eyes still closed.

My stomach twists. "Okay."

His eyes flutter open, seeking mine in the dim light. "Okay?"

"Yes. I mean, yes, I understand. I -- "

"Okay?" He throws his hands out and jerks forward, his elbows landing on his knees. "Great! That's great! Because, you know, you talked a lot of shit to be someone I have to fucking Google. You wanted to give them the desire to know me, huh? But you walked out like the rest of them. So fuck. You." He drops his head and splays his fingers across the back of his neck.

"Grayer." I reach out to him, but he jerks away.

"What." His voice thickens. Oh my God, he's crying. I crouch to try to meet his gaze, but his long bangs hang thickly between us. "Fuck, I'm such a pussy." He burrows his palms into his eyes. "We got back from the country tonight and he's moved out -- for real, gone -- and she dug it up for evidence and I just watched it and the thing is, the thing is...I don't even know who you are." He reaches for his coat pocket and wrestles something out, the force of its release slapping my cheek. I reel from the sting. "Christ -- sorry. I didn't mean to -- " He drops the VHS tape and it clatters to the chipped tile between us. Holding my face with one hand, I pick it up and tilt it in the shaft of colored light to make out the faded "Nanny" written on its label in her controlled script.

The nanny-cam video. She saw it -- kept it...

"The things you said...and I don't know..." he murmurs, and I kneel down to reach my arms around

his grown-up frame, pulling him against me. "I don't know you."
"I'm Nanny, Grove, I'm Nanny." And he slumps into me, passing out.

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