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Seeing that Skylar hadn't taken off her coat, the germophobic Tobias couldn't help but started, "I'll help you take off your coat. It's just too dirty coming back from the hospital in it. It must be full of bacteria by now."

Skylar didn't want to move at all. She lay in the bed like a dried and worn-out sponge with her hand tugging tightly at the quilt as she shook her head.

With much difficulty, Tobias suppressed his impulse to drag Skylar up to change her clothes. Then, he turned around to open the wardrobe instead but found it empty within.

He suddenly remembered that when Skylar moved out, she packed everything and left nothing behind.

She had so few clothes that she couldn't bear to leave any of them here and once she left, she had no plan of returning.

"Don't sleep just yet. I'll go prepare the medicine. Take them before you sleep." Tobias took the medication out and read the instructions carefully.

Skylar shook her head and answered, "I don't want to take them. It's awful, Meredith."

As she was half-awake, she mistook the person who was taking care of her when she was sick as Meredith.

Tobias paused briefly in his tracks and then left to get some warm water for her to be taken together with the medicine.

When he returned to the room. Skylar was already curled up in the quilt, with only her puny yet pale face showing underneath. Nevertheless, she was still strikingly beautiful.

"Be a good girl and take the medicine." He put the glass on the bedside.

Then, he lifted Skylar's shoulder up effortlessly and let her lean in his arms. He could feel her skin still burning.

Taking the glass and placing it near Skylar's lips, he said, "After you take this medicine, I need to go to bed as well. I still have some business to attend to before noon."

Again, his deep and soft voice coaxing her gently was exceedingly pleasing to the ears. Tobias, who hadn't slept for over three nights was a little exhausted as well.

He noticed that sometimes, he could get some good and peaceful nights of sleep around Skylar. There were certain days when he even doubted if Skylar had drugged him.

Skylar was now immune to Tobias' rare tenderness, and she shook her head. "It's too bitter and hard to swallow. I'll take it later."

It suddenly dawned on Tobias. What am I doing here? Coaxing a child? He despised troublesome women. But here he was, putting up with Skylar so patiently.

Frowning as he looked at Skylar's sickly pale face, which was the result of her fever and yet, she was still as spoiled as a child, he ordered, "Take it."

Skylar ignored him totally.

Tobias took the glass and take in a mouthful. Then, his other hand pinched on her jaw and made her take the medicine together with the warm water.

Skylar, who was almost asleep, opened her eyes instantly as her mouth was filled with the taste of the medicine. She looked like she was going to throw up and before she knew it, Tobias sealed her lips with his.

When their lips parted, Skylar started retching.

It was definitely the most bitter kiss she had ever had.

Yet, her face was lifted by Tobias and he commanded, "Swallow it. How can you recover if you don't take the medicine?"

With a long face, Skylar swallowed the medicine with some difficulty.

Looking at Skylar's pitiable post-medication face, he kissed her lips and said softly, "Sleep for a while and you'll be okay. I'll be accompanying you here."

There was still a bitter taste in Tobias' mouth. Their kiss just then was so deep that he could feel the wild longing coming from his heated crotch.

Taking in a long breath, the yearning in his eyes deepened and he was struggling forcibly to repress his desire.

It was the next day's afternoon when Skylar woke up. Her clothes were soaked in sweat and her temperature had returned to normal. She had been perspiring profusely.

Her hair was squishily sticking on her face and there were a few strands of them on her lips.

She patted softly on her head which was still aching and got off the bed. Her steps were still giddy as though she was stepping on cotton and her heels felt weak.

Coming down from the second floor, she saw Tobias talking to the phone with a stern face in the living room, with one hand on his hip.

The buttons on his shirt were loosely fastened and his sleeves were crumpled up to his elbow. The perfect and sleek curves of his muscular arms outlined the vigor of men.

Skylar couldn't help taking a few more glances at him. He's clearly aging but still so incredibly sexy. Men in their thirties never failed to charm women.

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Tobias was the perfect illustration of the charm time bestowed on men. He was like a vintage wine which, without having the need to taste and only by whiffing, made one hopelessly tipsy.

Skylar mocked herself. I'm indeed a shallow woman who judges a man by his looks and worse, I'm admiring him as if I'm appreciating a piece of artwork!

After getting to know that Tobias would not get married, the greed within her mind started surfacing and creating some indeterminate ripples even though she knew all too well that one would be beyond redemption for falling in love with such a man.

Tobias could feel the gaze from behind him so he turned around and found Skylar.

Her face was still as white as a sheet. However, she looked much energized and the usual she who liked to talk back to him had returned.

Tobias hung up the call even before his secretary finished reporting to him.

“Why don’t you sleep more? You need more rest to recuperate.”

Skylar put on a bright smile on her pallid face. “Do you also rest when you’re sick?”

With his eyebrows furrowed, Tobias answered placidly, “I can’t remember. I think so.”

A faint smile appeared on Skylar’s face. How can anyone forget something like this?

Tobias reached out and put his palm on Skylar’s forehead. It was cool.

“That’s one of the perks of being youthful – a speedy recovery. I’m going out. You rest well at home and don’t need to hurry back to school. I’ve applied for sick leave for you.”

There was tenderness in Skylar’s eyes. She could still remember clearly what happened last night. Rubbing her eyes, she asked in an innocent tone, “Where are you going?”

Tobias raised his arm and run it down Skylar’s cheek gently. This little girl has improved. She has even learned to ask about his whereabouts!

“I’m going to the company and then to Wesley’s.”

With a brief gaze at Tobias, Skylar yawned and then replied, “Forget it. I’ll ask for the money myself. Just proceed with your business.”

Tobias snorted. Skylar can be overly confident sometimes. If she has this ability, she wouldn’t have been pestered by others.

"Why are you treating me so well?" Skylar called out to Tobias who was preparing to leave.

After a brief pause, Tobias eventually smiled and replied, "I have a sudden impulse to get into a romantic relationship. I've never had one before!"

Skylar only regarded it as some made-up story. He even has a fiancée! How could he have not been in any romantic relationship before?

He must have never really loved any woman and only learned to lead them straight to his bed. And she was one of them.

Skylar received a notice for an audition. Daryl Williams would be coming to her school for casting.

She didn't quite believe that such a fortune would come her way.

"How long will you be staying over here?" Holding the mop, Laura was looking at her indifferently.

Skylar put away her phone and leaned back on the sofa as she yawned. "Who knows? Why? Have I been an impediment for you to bring your friends over and have fun? You can treat me as if I don't exist though."

Laura's real intention was exposed. She didn't want to entertain some unidentified woman with an unknown background either.

If I have the chance to meet Ms. Hanson, I would be sure to list all the despicable deeds committed by this woman.

How can a wicked home wrecker compare to the legitimate fiancée of Tobias?

Tobias did not return for lunch. Looking at the oatmeal on the table, Skylar threw the spoon into her bowl, splattering the oatmeal all over the table.

She had not much of an appetite. She had a sore throat and everything felt tasteless in her mouth. She didn't want to eat something so bland.

Laura squinted at her and said, "This is specially made for a patient like you. Sick people should eat unseasoned food."

Skylar asked her, "Is there any canned food? I want to eat something like that. When I was sick in the past, my grandma used to buy me tins of peach slices."

Laura answered impatiently, "No. Mr. Ford asked me to take care of you and serve you personally so I'm not supposed to leave. If you want to eat it so much, you can order food delivery."

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Skylar would save herself from the trouble of arguing with Laura. As it was already past noon, she wondered about the progress with what Tobias was doing.

She was a little worried. Hence, in the end, she took her coat from the sofa and hailed a cab to Wesley's house.

As soon as she stepped in, Skylar heard Sharon's crying. She whimpered as she said, "My daughter is only twenty years old. Her life would be ruined if she is married to such a scumbag."

Wesley agreed and said, "We didn't accept this three hundred thousand at will. Skylar's opinion was sought and she agreed to it."

Tobias sat on the sofa like a host and looked at the couple shedding their tears indifferently.

Seeing as Skylar came in, Sharon finally stopped crying. She looked at Skylar as though she had just seen her lifesaver.

"Skylar, you've finally come. Quick, go and talk to Mr. Ford. He wants Eva to marry Jackson. How can that be?"

Skylar turned to look at Tobias with amazement. He seems to know our background very well. He's even aware that I have a cousin, Eva.

Talking about this cousin of hers, she was only younger than Skylar by a few months. Yet, she had been Skylar's nightmare since young.

Eva had always been that child that everyone couldn't stop praising. She had been performing very well academically since young. In addition, she was very pretty. Therefore, everyone in the neighborhood liked her very much.

After high school, she was admitted to one of the renowned universities and Meredith always talked about how promising a youth Eva was and how well Uncle Wesley and Aunt Sharon had raised their child.

Sharon was crying so hard that even her eyes turned misty. Never would she have thought that such a good marriage arrangement would turn out this way.

The man brought home by Skylar was actually Tobias. No one would have expected Skylar, who usually looked dispirited, to have such great capabilities.

Neither did they ever dream of a titan like Tobias visiting such an ordinary family as theirs.

Skylar turned to Tobias with an inquisitive look.

However, Tobias turned to face the couple with a calm expression. "Aren't you two extremely satisfied with this marriage arrangement? Then, isn't it good that I'm making your wish come true? It's okay if you don't agree with this marriage. I've heard that the productivity at the factory where the both of you have worked isn't satisfactory. Maybe it's time to lay off a batch of workers."

There was only one word popping up in Skylar's mind right then— sinister.

Tobias was threatening Wesley and Sharon. He knew all too well what it meant to them to be laid off by a state-owned enterprise and he was trying to cut off their financial resources.

Wesley looked like he would be kneeling down before Tobias any second then. He was sighing and looking at Skylar with his pleading eyes, signaling her to speak for them.

Skylar took the opportunity to state her condition. "You return the three hundred thousand to the Zimmer family and I have no other requests."

Both Sharon and Wesley were reluctant about the money so none of them spoke in a while.

Tobias lit up a cigarette unhurriedly. Then, he placed it between his lips and exhaled a long puff of smoke.

“It’s okay if you don’t want to return the money. It’s not a huge sum after all. Call your daughter back and focus on preparing for the wedding in the meantime. I’ll get someone to guard your house in this period until the wedding day.”

Skylar stared at Tobias’ Adam’s apple, which was moving up and down, and she was at a loss for words. This man can cause chills to run down others’ spines by just sitting there in his most composed and placid face.

This move of Tobias is brilliant and entirely ruthless. He’s making them opt between their jobs and their daughter.

If Eva doesn’t get married to Jackson, their entire family will be living on air.

“Skylar, I’m your uncle. Is this how you come against me?”

Skylar raised her eyebrows and replied, “I didn’t do anything though. Uncle Wesley, wasn’t it you who said that getting married to Jackson Zimmer is a blessing? I’m only opening up this great opportunity to someone else.”

She was well aware that her Uncle Wesley would never really agree on this.

Tobias looked at Skylar from a distance and found that she had recovered pretty well. Not even a wee bit of her looked like that overly pampered girl lying in his arms last night.

Sharon took out a passbook from the wardrobe. Even her hands were trembling which just showed how unwilling she was to return the money.

“Three hundred thousand is only dirt in your eyes. Why must you trouble some poor people like us?”

The burning cigarette’s end was reflected as a tiny red spot in Tobias’ eyes as he chuckled softly, “Poverty and ignorance are correlated.”

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Tobias added with disdain, "You're quick to sell Skylar for barely three hundred thousand. Why haven't you ever thought about improving your relationship with her? The perks you might have gotten now that Skylar is together with me should exceed far beyond three hundred thousand, don't you understand?"

Realization suddenly dawned on them. Wesley and Sharon could never be more regretful in their life.

The wealth Tobias possessed could even rival that of a nation and he was a known spendthrift. Thus, what he could give to Skylar was unquestionably greater since rich men like him would easily spend millions just for a wristwatch.

Then, in front of Skylar, Sharon made a call to Lily to cancel the wedding and return all the money to her.

Even from this side of the phone, Lily's loud and irritable voice could be heard clearly. "What's going on? My son has since locked himself up in his room after returning home last night. Isn't it too late for you to mention canceling the wedding now?"

Wesley grabbed the phone and spoke aggressively, "Cancel means cancel! That's for the well-being of my niece."

Skylar was relieved. Meeting Tobias' eyes, she realized with him around, any difficult situation could be easily solved and she would never have to endure it alone.

Coming out of Wesley's house, Tobias took her in his arms and his deep voice came from beside her ear. "I can unravel all kinds of mess for you so just relax and stay by my side. I don't require much from you as long as you behave and listen to me."

Skylar asked in response, "What kind of a relationship is this?"

Tobias replied gently, "You can treat me as your boyfriend. It's up to you how you want to treat it."

"I don't know. I can't answer you for now. I was already preparing to spend the rest of my life alone." Skylar was at a loss.

Tobias gave her a faint smile. "How old are you? You sounded like someone who has seen through the temporality of life. Anyway, there is certainly some progress since you're not so firm on your stance anymore. That leaves me with some hope."

Tobias could surely meet up to all women's fantasies about men. He was good-looking, mature, wealthy, assertive and possessed the charisma that a mellow man should have.

Skylar was clear about the fact that Tobias couldn't give her the sense of security she needed. He was just like a sweet dream that one had to wake up from eventually.

You can never really get into a circle where you don't belong. At the end of the day, you're only shaming yourself and making it difficult for others.

Tobias said that he was starving so Skylar followed him to the shopping mall nearby.

The assets and properties of Ford Group were everywhere in the city. Even a shopping mall they found at random was owned by Ford Group.

When they passed by the flagship store of Hermès, Skylar didn't even care to take a glance inside.

Her reaction intrigued Tobias.

"Isn't it the case that all women like bags? Don't you want to go in and have a look?"

Skylar looked at her reflection on the glass and mocked at herself, "With my financial status, even if I carried Hermès, people would regard it as some counterfeit products so why should I waste the money? I might as well just buy a counterfeit one."

Tobias could somehow understand Skylar's consumption view. Different upbringing would contribute to the different consumption views of individuals.

She might still be clueless about the extent of satisfaction he could provide her. To Tobias, money was merely a number.

All the women who had been together with him would barge into Hermès store as soon as they saw it. And then, very subtly, they would express how much they liked the bags or other products within.

He took Skylar's hand and clasped his fingers tightly around hers. "You're always carrying this backpack around wherever you go. Others would probably think that I'm dating a high school girl, and that makes me look so much older."

Skylar held on tightly to the backpack in her hands. It was actually a present from Jeremy.

There was a discount at the Nike store back then and it cost less than two hundred. It was the most expensive bag she had ever had till then.

It was Skylar's first time entering a luxury retail store. In the past, even if she passed by, she wouldn't even dare to stop a little longer at the door.

Just as they stepped in, Tobias' phone started ringing. He pointed towards the store's exit and told Skylar that he needed to answer a call.

Skylar nodded and with that, Tobias left, leaving her alone in the Hermès store.

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Standing amidst the plethora of luxury goods, Skylar felt like a fish out of water, fully aware of how underdressed she was at the moment.

Suddenly, a high-pitched voice came from the distance. "Skylar? Oh wow, it's really you."

Her heart practically stopped when she saw who the voice belonged to. "Hey, you there? Did you forget me? I'm Erica." The lady waved, plastering a seemingly cordial smile on her face.

Of course I remember you, Erica Fox. Skylar's face instantly darkened as a wave of unpleasant memories came flooding back.

Erica was Skylar's high school classmate. But far from being chummy buddies, Skylar avoided Erica like the plague. Her disdain for the girl was simple – Erica was an egocentric school bully who thought that she could do anything she wanted just because she had a rich boyfriend and a pretty face.

If any girl offended her, she swore to make life hellish for the person. Unfortunately, Skylar happened to be one of those girls.

The incident began when Skylar was rushing for class, only to bump into Erica by accident. Consequently, the latter girl's coffee spilled everywhere. "Jeez. Do you have no eyes? Clean this mess up, now! With your mouth, that is." The steadfast Skylar refused to submit to the threat.

A fight thus ensued, and the result was a two-month hospitalization bill for the outnumbered Skylar. Erica had her gang with her, while the poor victim had no one.

Her grandmother confronted the school management, hoping to get some form of justice for the piteous grandchild. Unfortunately, they merely turned a blind eye to the issue. That was when Skylar decided once and for all that she was going to work hard and be successful in the future, so that she did not have to suffer from such indignance anymore.

"No reply. Tsk. Rude as ever." Erica's annoyance brought Skylar back to reality.

The lady grimaced internally. Of all people I can meet... Why must it be her? Skylar had absolutely no intention to greet her ex-classmate.

As she was unable to elicit any reaction from Skylar, Erica turned to her boyfriend instead. Skylar recognized the man to be the same boyfriend Erica was dating since high school. "This is Skylar Jones. We were high school classmates, and she went to the Southwood Film Academy after we graduated." Then, with a scoff, she continued, "Don't you think that's hilarious? Someone with no money or background trying to make it big in the entertainment industry, daydreaming about buying a Hermès... I really pity her grandmother. It's not easy for her to raise such a foolish grandchild."

Yup, this person hasn't changed a single bit. Skylar began plotting a thousand ways to leave this conversation, but Erica's boyfriend gave a response that stopped her.

The spindly, but otherwise handsome man eyed her from head and toe and complimented, "I guess the saying is true – the arts academies are where all the beautiful ladies gather... "

Skylar inadvertently felt flattered, though the man's indecorous eyes lingered on her body for longer than she liked. On the other hand, his girlfriend was evidently trying her best not to combust in public.

Erica had always regarded Skylar as a manipulative vixen who only knew how to bewitch men with her good looks. Now that her boyfriend had joined in on the plaudits, she could not help but feel nettled.

"What use is there for beauty if she's penniless!" Then, turning to Skylar, she sneered, "I doubt you can afford anything in this place. I can't believe you had the confidence to even walk into this store in the first place."

Skylar had long been immune to such attacks. Equably, she replied, "Is there a problem with window shopping? I don't recall it being illegal... Unless you own the store and prohibit customers from doing so?"

In terms of verbal sparring, Erica was no match for Skylar. She hissed, deciding to humiliate Skylar another way. Turning to her boyfriend, she purred, "Babe, can you get me that Hermès bag over there? I've been eyeing it for a really long time."

Without qualms, her boyfriend fished out his stacked wallet and pulled out his platinum card. However, he then flaunted his card deliberately before Skylar, even winking at her at some point to get her attention.

This made Erica even more livid. The more riled up she was, the more cruel her words became.

"As you can see, Skylar Jones, this store is better suited for people like us. As for you, maybe try dressing better the next time before fooling your way into stores like these. This store's owner may be kind enough not to evict you, but you can't say the same for the others."

Skylar's cool demeanor finally cracked.

Pointing at the Hermès handbag the man was holding, she bellowed, "You haven't paid for that right? I want it!"

He paused, skepticism and displeasure written all over his face. "Um, do you know how much this costs?"

From the side came Erica's unrestrained laughter. "Dude, you're going to go bankrupt."

"Yeah, sure thing." Skylar rolled her eyes and proceeded to retrieve the black card that Tobias gave her. Passing it to the cashier, she ordered with the utmost composure, "Get this wrapped up for me."