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Christina seemed to be really worried this time about Mr. Thomas. Instead of starting an argument with Charles and Sarah, she just answered in a calm and helpless tone. “Still in surgery.”

Emma stood up and sobbed, “Brother... Dad’s condition is dire this time, will he be ok? Charles, I’m really worried about dad!”

Charles patted her shoulder to comfort her, but Emma, who was even more insatiable than usual, held Charles’s waist and cried out to him, “Brother, I’m so afraid, I’m afraid he won’t make it, will he be ok?”

Sarah felt so ridiculous when she saw her acting like this, but she could do nothing but sneer silently, Emma was really a shameless person. Even at a moment like this, she still remembered to try to take advantage of the situation, so brazen!

Christina just stood there and looked at them with a slightly triumphant smile, consenting to Emma’s behavior.

Charles had no choice but to comfort Emma since she looked genuinely grieved and depressed.

Sarah figured that this was not the place to argue with Emma as it would be very disrespectful if the two of them entered into a power battle right now. She decided to ignore Emma’s actions for now and persuaded herself that it was useless to argue with such an ignorant person.

The door from the operating room opened, and a doctor wearing a face mask walked out. Everyone expected the surgery to be over, so they all were about to gather around the doctor to listen to what he would have to say. But given that only one doctor came out, they knew that the surgery wasn’t over yet. Sarah recognized the doctor as Daniel, and walked over to him and asked, “Daniel, is that you? Are you the main surgeon?”

Daniel was surprised to see Sarah since she hadn’t been there when Mr. Thomas was first brought to the hospital and figured that they had just arrived. Surprised, he answered. “You’re here. The head of cardiology is the main doctor. I’m just an assistant!”

“How is Mr. Thomas?” Sarah asked anxiously.

Daniel comforted her, “Don’t worry. The surgery isn’t over yet. We should trust the surgery team. I’m on my way to getting another surgical instrument; I need to keep going. We can talk later!” He added and quickly left.

Sarah felt upset and was really worried about Mr. Thomas’s wellbeing.

Suddenly, Christina mocked Sarah. “So close to him? Do you remember who you are?”

Sarah didn’t know how to answer, but fortunately, Charles came to her rescue and replied in a cold tone. “Mom, is it time to argue? Dad is still in the operation room! Sarah is worried about him and tried to get some information. I don’t care about it, so why are you complaining?”

Christina glared angrily at Charles, “You…” but she stopped herself there as she hadn’t expected Charles to respond to her. Frustrated, she sneered again but remained silent, knowing that it was not a proper time to argue. They all stayed silent.

Sarah was grateful for Charles’s support and walked to him, and to hold his hands. Charles also squeezed her hands tightly, as if he was vowing his support to Sarah, even if Christina was against her. Sarah clearly felt his love radiating through the warmth of his hands.

Witnessing this scene, Emma couldn’t help feeling upset and a little enraged. She looked to her mother as if they were conspiring something together, but everyone was at their spot, leaving a heavily charged atmosphere.

Finally, after waiting for another half an hour, the surgery was done. As soon as the door opened, they all rushed toward the leading surgeon, who had stepped out with several other doctors. Christina asked anxiously. “Dr. Bart, how is my husband?”

Dr. Bart wiped his sweat and answered. “The operation was a success, but he arrived here in a severe condition. If he had arrived just 15 minutes later, we wouldn’t have been able to save him.”

Sarah and Charles looked at each other. They both felt remorseful and responsible for their actions, especially Sarah.

Christina, on the other hand, was happy to hear that he was better. Closing her eyes in relief, she murmured, “Thank God. As long as my husband is ok, I am grateful.”

However, Dr. Bart wasn't finished yet, and continued with a serious tone, “Mrs. Thomas, I need to tell you something else... Despite Mr. Thomas's strict instructions not to tell you, given the current situation, I have no choice but to inform you of his real condition.”

“What?” Christina looked at him, nervously.

Dr. Bart continued. “Your husband does not only suffer from heart disease, but he also has advanced, end-stage liver cancer. He didn't want me to say anything to you because he doesn't want you to worry... but now, because of his conditions, I have no choice. I don't know how long Mr. Thomas will survive!”

Christina suddenly looked extremely pale and collapsed, her whole body was shaking.

Everyone was surprised at her reaction. Emma jumped to support her from behind and called out. “Mom, mom, mom...” As she gently helped her toward a chair to sit down, Christina didn't answer as she had lost consciousness. Dr. Bart, who was still with them, called a nurse to arrange a bed for her in the ward until she recovered.

Emma was crying, now worried about the health and safety of both of her parents. She helped the nurse to transfer Christina to the ward, leaving Charles and Sarah alone in the waiting area. Charles was still in disbelief about the real condition of his father and said in a low, sorrowful voice. “My father... diagnosed with end-stage liver cancer... really... hopeless?” he paused for a while and resumed, “Or, is there somewhere a medication that we need to get? We will do everything as long as you can help him, no matter the price.”

Sarah walked toward him to hold his hand in comfort, also looking at Dr. Bart with a worried expression.

Dr. Bart slowly shook his head and sighed, “I know you would, but you know how end-stage cancer works. There is no medicine available for a cure. If we had detected it early, he might have had a chance, but we discovered it too late... there is nothing left that we can do for him...”

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Charles loosened his hands suddenly from Sarah's hands. She was standing beside Charles, also feeling helpless. She lowers her head slowly and silently. Mr. Thomas was always so kind to everyone, how could he be so ill without anybody knowing about it? Now he was dying soon.

She suddenly recalled something he had said before, which told Sarah that Mr. Thomas had already known about his condition at that time, but had not been willing to let his family know about the seriousness of his disease. Perhaps he had supported her marriage to Charles because he wanted to see him married and happy before his time was up. Mr. Thomas had always been so kind to her, but she couldn't do anything for him now. He would be leaving them soon.

Charles addressed Dr. Bart again, "How much time does he have left?"

"At most two months." Dr. Bart responded with a sad look, shaking his head and sighing continuously. He tapped Charles's shoulder and continued. "I have known your father for a long time, Charles. Don't make your father angry again. Although he wasn't always there for you when you were younger, you have to admit that he did many good things for you over the years. Especially when you first started your own business, you succeeded because of your father's support. So, don't forget what he did for you, your father always supported you from behind! He really did so much for you!"

Charles didn't know what to say, just stood there, staring straight at the operating room door with a blank stare. No one was able to tell his real feelings.

Dr. Bart ordered that Mr. Thomas be pushed from the recovery room to the ward, several nurses on his side. Charles finally seemed to come back to his senses and followed Sarah into the private room to his father.

Mr. Thomas was still asleep from the anesthetics, with an oxygen mask and an IV drip. Seeing his pale and bony face, Sarah felt very sad. Her own father had passed away when she was still very young, and she had hardly ever known any fatherly love. Mr. Thomas had treated her like his own daughter, whether it was because she married Charles or out of pure kindness. Sarah felt very grateful for him. Feeling helpless, she started to cry.

After Mr. Thomas was settled into the ward, Sarah and Charles walked out and closed the door. Sarah was still crying. Charles embraced her tightly to comfort her, tapping her shoulder.

“Your dad has always been so good to me. Charles, we must do something for him.” Sarah sobbed.

“I know,” Charles answered in a low voice.

“What did he want?” Sarah asked.

Charles didn’t answer. After a long time, he said, “A grandson. He wanted a grandson as soon as possible.”

Sarah paused for a while, almost letting go of Charles to look at him. Not that she thought that something was wrong with what he said, but because it was impossible to achieve.

“But my father only has two months.” She said defeatedly.

“If we can let him know that you are pregnant before he leaves, that will be enough for him,” Charles replied,

Seeing how serious he was, she didn’t refute, just lowered her head and sighed. “I hope so. It seems that that is the only thing I can do for him, but God has the final decision...”

As they were talking, they heard footsteps approaching from behind. Sarah turned around and saw that Emma was coming back and stopped talking. Charles asked Emma, “What’s wrong with mom?”

“Thanks to the doctors and nurses, she’s fine now. She fainted because she couldn’t bear to hear the bad news about dad.”

“Does she also have some hidden illness?” Charles asked doubtfully.

Emma shook her head in denial, then suddenly started to cry and wanted to embrace Charles. “Brother... what should we do? Dad... he...” She cried.

This time Sarah stopped Emma by stepping close to Charles, preventing Emma from coming too close to him. Emma reached out her hands to him, but she wasn't able to embrace him. Emma was glancing at Sarah.

Sarah stared straight back at Emma. She wanted to make Emma feel embarrassed and retreat on her own.

Charles finally realized that something was going on, and he reached to hold Sarah's hands as he said, "We should go buy something to eat. We've been busy all night, and it's almost morning by now, and we need to eat something. Now that mom is also sick, we will be even busier."

Sarah nodded in agreement. After talking with Emma for a little while, Charles left with Sarah.

Emma didn't understand why Charles was so quick to leave her this time, given that he had been so kind to her before. She was unwilling to give up but couldn't do anything about it. She curled her lip and clenched her fists, resentment building up in her heart.

After Sarah and Charles walked out of the hospital, Charles asked Sarah, "Have you had any trouble with Emma? I noticed that you two were acting against each other just now."

Sarah hadn't expected that Charles would notice it, but it turned out that he was not numb to the situation, he knew that something was not right. However, she was reluctant to discuss it with him and just said dismissively. "No, is there a problem?"

"Is it because I told you that she told me that you pushed her aside and that you were against her?"

Sarah frowned at Charles, then asked in a severe tone. "Am I? Do you still think I am against her?"

"I know Emma treated you as usual. Just a few days ago, when she came from Australia, she came to surprise you by cooking something for you, but you seem to be against her now. I don't actually mean to blame you. After all, Emma wouldn't be happy if she knew we were speaking ill of her, but we're family. Everything will pass. You can't let it bother you all the time!"

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“Me?” Sarah pointed at herself and looked at Charles in disbelief. She was getting offended by him, thinking that it was the biggest joke in the world. Once again, he was trusting the wrong person, while she, the innocent one, was being misunderstood again.

“I thought you knew everything, but I must be wrong. If I really had been against her before, I would say nothing now. But I didn’t do anything to her. She framed me against you, why should I make apologies for that? And did you think that I was against her just because she spoke ill of me? Charles, did you really see anything from her?”

Charles started to get irritated, especially after standing outside the ward for a whole night. He was tired and sleepy and not in the mood to argue with Sarah at all. “Stop! You always have your own reasons. You win, okay? Stop here. I don’t want to talk about it anymore. I just thought you shouldn’t care about the same thing for all this time!”

His response irritated Sarah, and she wouldn’t just let it go now. Pulling his arm, she asked. “Am I? But for Emma being against me all the time, should I care about that? Charles, I finally understand that you will always favor her over me anything involving Emma. You always take her side, have you noticed it? Who is your wife? To keep a harmonious family, on whose side should you be?”

Charles started to feel uneasy. He shrugged her hands away and turned around, biting his lips. Hiding his unfriendly tone, he said. “Do you still want to buy breakfast with me? If you are angry, you can go back to the hospital, I will buy the food alone!”

He walked down the stairs, leaving Sarah standing alone. Sarah looked at his back. Unwilling to go with him now, she stood at the top of the stairs and watched him walk away. She was so angry at him and felt like a complete fool, always unable to deal with these kinds of confrontations. Every time she ended clashing with Charles.

Perhaps Charles would not think her to be considerate and that Emma was indeed better than her.

Sarah really didn't know how to get along with men. She had always thought men and women to be equal and that if there was a problem, it had to be solved, but did every problem need to be spelled out to men to address it? Why should women play up to men? What was more, she hadn't asked anything from Charles, so why should she be tolerant of him?

She remembered her conversation with Lee at the pastry shop. Lee had called her arrogant. Maybe men liked arrogance at the beginning but got tired of it after some time, especially men like Charles, who were used to having many girlfriends and mistresses. Men like him would not tolerate arrogance for a long time, Lee had warned her.

Was it true? Was Charles tired of her? And given that there was another woman after him whom he saw as more tender and better at playing up to him... Sarah didn't know why, but she suddenly started to feel very unconfident in her own abilities.

Was she really that bad and unable to keep a man? She was not willing to let Charles be snatched away by Emma, she wouldn't allow it. He was her husband, and she was going to fight for him.

As Sarah was thinking about it, she became more disappointed in herself. She still couldn't deal well with these things in her marriage. Carrie had warned her not to make a scene in front of Charles, or else he may push him away. Back in Houston, she had felt more confident and had dealt with it well, but now she had screwed up again. Was it really because of her character? Now that Mr. Thomas was seriously ill, she had only Charles left to support her. If she couldn't keep Charles's heart, then, maybe... their marriage would not survive.

Sarah laughed bitterly. She hadn't expected herself to have such a weak position in this family where only the men supported her!

Sarah didn't follow Charles nor go back into the hospital. She just kept standing at the hospital entrance waiting for him to come back.

Charles was surprised to see her standing at the same place where he had left her when he came back. Sarah just looked at him silently. She was no longer angry but had a rather dull expression on her face. Charles was still mad at her after their fight and walked straight by her and up the stairs, looking down to not face her.

When Sarah noticed that he was ignoring her, she followed him without complaining, also looking down to watch her steps as she sped up to catch up with him. She took his hand to help carry the breakfast he had bought.

Charles turned to look at her with an ironic, or maybe an arrogant look.

Although having been wronged, Sarah didn't want to continue to clash with Charles here at this time. With a soft tone, she gently asked him. "Are you still angry at me?"

Charles raised his eyebrows and countered, asked. "Are you not angry at me?"

Hearing his negative tone, Sarah decided that it was better to suppress her anger for now. She figured that to get along with Charles, she needed to be softer with him. Maybe Carrie had been right that women should always be sweet with their husbands.

Sarah held his arm tightly and leaned her head in his arm as she responded. "Charles... I was wrong. I am just an impulsive person. Can you forgive me?"

Charles looked at the woman in his arms. He raised his eyebrows, wondering if she was submissive to him. Sarah had never been like this before ever since they had gotten married. He sometimes wished to find Sarah submissive to him after he came back from work, but she had always been a strong woman. After all, men love to see their wives catering to them, it gives them a sense of conquest.

Was Sarah somehow enlightened about that fact today?



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For the sake of the rare and charming moment, Charles cooled down and responded to her surprise. "If you were always like this, maybe I could take down the stars from the sky for you."

Puzzled, Sarah looked up at him, "What?" She was unable to understand why his behavior had changed so quickly.

Charles finally reached out and pulled her into his arms. "Woman, don't you understand? What I mean is that I like it when you're flirtatious with me. After all

these years, you have never been one to let go so easily of something. You are always more of a tit-for-tat person, but I like to see you more relaxed, it makes me feel much better too. If you cater to me like this, I will always spoil you!”

“Yes?” Sarah still didn’t understand exactly what he meant. “Am I really mistreating you? Would you really do everything for me if I fawn over you?” She said and asked, still puzzled.

Charles shook his head and sighed as he helplessly pointed at her. “You’re not an easy woman to get along with. Once again, you’re showing your true colors. Why is it so difficult for you to just let go occasionally?”

“Aren’t you the one angry right now? If yes, that’s ok. Come on, let’s go, they’re hungry and have been waiting for a long time!” Sarah pushed him away and walked away with breakfast.

Charles looked at her walking away and sighed. He really didn’t know what to say. Why had he fallen in love with such a complicated woman? He liked to have fawned over and catered to, but even though his ex-girlfriends and mistresses had always played up to him, he had never felt as accomplished as today when Sarah had done it. Was he masochistic?

Sarah, on the other hand, was thinking about how useful Carrie’s advice turned out to be. Men loved to have their way. Ever since her parents had passed away, she had been so independent, never needing to give in to others’ demands. Usually, it had been her sister who had to listen to her, but Sarah herself had never been in a relationship where she had to be the submissive one.

To her surprise, Carrie’s advice turned out to be true, and Charles loved her being submissive to him. Knowing this, it may come to be useful for Sarah in the future. Though it was flirtatious, the effect was noticeable.

Christina had regained consciousness and was starting to feel better. Emma was sitting beside her, helping her drink water. When Christina saw Charles and Sarah coming back with breakfast, she didn’t say anything; they just all ate together quietly without any complaint.

After breakfast, Christina wanted to talk with Charles. Sarah felt the atmosphere very uncomfortable as if she didn’t belong. It was so evident that Christina and

Emma excluded her. Not wanting to clash with her mother-in-law, she said, "I will go to visit your dad for a while, you go on." She walked out with a sad look on her face.

Charles wanted to say something, but Sarah opened the door and walked out, so he just kept silent. Emma and Christina smiled discreetly when they saw Sarah walking out.

Sarah felt disappointed, she still felt like an outsider. No matter how hard she tried to be considered a member of this family, Christina refused to accept her, and she had also conspired with Emma against her, and now Emma hated her.

Sarah sighed as she walked away, thinking about how hard it was to get along with them. She felt powerless and didn't know how to deal with Christina, so she might as well just stay away from her whenever possible.

Sarah went to Mr. Thomas's ward. He was still unconscious with an oxygen mask and IV dripping. She adjusted his pillow, tucked him in, and sat down beside him, and whispered. "Dad, get better soon!"

Her father-in-law was the only person who had accepted her as part of the family. If Mrs. Thomas passed away, Charles would be her only support. But given that her relationship with Charles was also unstable and that Emma was back, there were bound to be plenty of misunderstandings and betrayal in front of her. Sarah felt lost, just thinking about what the coming days would bring.

Even though Sarah was trying to listen to Carrie's advice, she found it difficult to have trust in her marriage. Nothing is forever or sure. Love can dissolve over time, not to mention if there was a mistress involved in their marriage.

Lost in her own thoughts, Sarah suddenly heard a voice coming from the door behind her. Turning around, she saw Charles come in. Sarah stood up in surprise. "You... You're already finished talking with your mom?" It was less than 15 minutes since she had left them.

Charles closed the door behind him. "Emma is with her. I was worried about you, so I came here to be with you."

"Your dad is still in a coma, I can take care of him alone if needed."

"Don't you want me here?" Charles giggled.

Sarah looked at him silently and sat down. Charles sat down beside her, holding her hands tightly.

Looking at him, Sarah saw that he was grinning, he seemed happy. Surprised by his unusual behavior, she asked, “What’s wrong with you?”

Charles answered in a sweet tone. “You are really special!”

“Why?”

“There’s nothing special per se, but I feel that you are so different, and I can’t help looking at you endlessly!”

Sarah was even more surprised at his sudden change and said, “You... are you sick? You are behaving so different today?”

Charles burst into laughter and pulled her into his arms, “Fool, I’m just trying to show you how much I love!”

“Huh?” Sarah looked up at him a little bewildered.

“You really seem to be numb towards the expression of love. Looking at your reaction, it looks like you have never been in a romantic relationship before. I will teach you everything about love in the future!”

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He was right. Although Sarah had been in two previous relationships, she had never really been in love before. She was still in high school when she had her first boyfriend, and both had still been very young and naïve. Although they had liked each other, it hadn’t been love, so when he cheated on her, she had broken up with him without much difficulty.

Her second boyfriend had been in college. At that time, she had loved him, but she had been inexperienced and didn’t know how to deal with a man, and she never overthought about love at that time. Since she was busy with her studies, trying to land a job, and taking care of her sister, she had neglected him, and ultimately, he had cheated on her too. Although she had been sad at that time, she had forgotten about him soon.

With Charles, it was different. When she met him at work, she felt herself really falling in love with him. Although they had their problems at times, their love was stronger, which had helped her in keeping their relationship this far.

Regardless, Sarah felt a little shy when Charles was so openly flirting with her. She pushed him aside with her shoulder and said, “Nonsense, your dad is here. Can’t you be serious?”

Charles still laughed again. “So what? Maybe my dad likes to see me happy!”

Knowing Charles’s playful nature, Sarah just ignored him. Charles took her hand again, and after a while, he said in a cautious tone, “Just now my mom told me to stay here during this time. Dad is seriously ill this time, and we should be near him and take care of him. She told me that she is also getting old and that she wants me to take care of the company here.”

Sarah looked up and asked. “Won’t you be very busy then?”

Charles shook his head. “Not that much. Emma will help me this time. After all, she just graduated in economics, she can help me in that department!”

Sarah was shocked. “Does that mean Emma will work with you?...” she paused for a while and then continued. “What about me?”

“You just take care of my dad and of our home, and maybe soon we’ll have a child, then you need to stay home and raise our baby. Right? Isn’t it good for us to divide our work this way? You don’t need to work outside the home. Having a baby should be our priority now!”

Charles was speaking in a warm tone, but Sarah didn’t know why she felt his words were filled with irony and a little pessimistic. He was telling her that he expected her to stay at home alone, meaning that she would only see him late at night after he came home from work.

Emma, on the other hand, would spend all day every day with Charles. If something were to be happening between Emma and Charles, she wouldn’t be able to do anything about it.

But she couldn’t refuse because of Mrs. Thomas’s condition, he was seriously ill and needed someone to take care of him. How could she say no? Just because Emma was trying to destroy her marriage, she couldn’t abandon the only man who

had shown her fatherly love and acceptance in their family. She had no choice but to accept the plan Charles had laid out for her.

Sarah grinned bitterly. “Well, since you seem to have already made that decision, just go ahead. I have no other ideas now. I just hope your dad lives long enough to see our baby, that would make everything worth it.” Perhaps if Charles were to betray her one day, Mr. Thomas would still be there to support her and give her hope.

At Christina’s request, Sarah and Charles moved back to Los Angeles. Their focus was soon shifted to adjust to their new life, with Sarah walking to and from the hospital every day to take care of Mr. Thomas as Charles was busy at work.

Christina was handing the company over to Charles and Emma since she had fainted at the hospital. Their Los Angeles-based business was much larger than the one in Houston, which Charles and his friends had established. Though there were many other stockholders, the Thomas family had the largest shares, leaving Charles as the biggest shareholder, needing to be involved in many things.

Sarah was distressed seeing that Charles worked so hard and tried to lighten his burden at home. Despite her effort, if Charles continued like this, he would have no time for his family if they had children, which worried Sarah.

Sarah realized that it wasn’t necessarily a good thing to be born into a wealthy family. Though they were allowed many luxuries, family ties seemed to be weaker in wealthy families compared to average families.

Every day Charles went out with Christina and Emma to work, leaving Sarah at home with the house help. After cooking and cleaning were taken care of, Sarah would go to the hospital to take care of Mr. Thomas. Most days, she didn’t get to see Charles up until late in the evening. Sometimes she felt that she spent less time with Charles than Emma since they went out every day together to work, laughing and chatting happily.

Sarah became envious and worried about Emma and what she may be doing behind her back with Charles.

Sarah was much busier in Los Angeles than she had been in Houston. She had become more cautious for fear of making a mistake and giving Christina a handle on her. Over time she had become exhausted, both physically and mentally.

Mr. Thomas had woken up from his coma but was still at the hospital. His body was gradually becoming weaker as he lost weight, adding to Sarah's distress. Since everyone was informed about the seriousness of his condition, he resigned himself with a sigh. "You had to know sooner or later. I'm sorry!"

"Dad, why do you apologize? You did nothing wrong. But why did you hide it from us all this time?"

Mr. Thomas sighed again. "Even though you're my daughter-in-law, sometimes you are closer to me than my own kids."

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Sarah was the only one who stayed with him over the last few days. She felt sad for him because the rest of the family usually only came to visit him at night. In their defense, she said, "They're all busy at work. I'm the one who is free at home and can come to you more often. Mrs. Thomas is very concerned about you. Otherwise, she wouldn't come to visit you every night!"

Mr. Thomas smiled bitterly. Sarah was unsure if it was an approving or denying smile. Instead of continuing to talk about them, he changed the topic casually. "Is Charles running the company now?"

"He has been very busy these days but hasn't explained to me in detail what he does. But whatever it is, I'm sure he can deal with it. He has always run his own company, and he's outstanding in the business."

"Aren't you bored at home? Don't you want to work there too?" He asked.

Sarah didn't know what he meant, so she paused for a moment before she answered. "I want to help, but someone needs to take care of the family, and... After all, I didn't study management and can't hold a candle to Charles or Emma, so my presence there wouldn't be of much help." She said, distressed.

Mr. Thomas tapped her hand. "Girl, I know you want to work, and I know what my wife thinks about it. Although I'm sick, I can see clearly what my wife has done. Emma is my daughter, but you are also my child. I treat you all the same without preference for anyone. If anything, I prefer you, given that you and

Charles are married after all. No matter what they do behind your back, I'll support you as long as I'm here. I won't allow such things to be done!"

Sarah looked at Mr. Thomas in surprise. She didn't really understand what he meant, did he know about what was going on between her and Emma?

When Mr. Thomas saw her reaction, he tapped her hand again in comfort. "Don't worry, I will deal with Emma and Christina. You don't need to be afraid!"

It seemed that he knew more about what was going on. Sarah didn't know what to say. She needed the support, but given how sick her father-in-law was, was it appropriate to burden him with her concerns? What would happen if he knew everything?

Not knowing what to do, she just remained silent and looked down to avoid looking at Mr. Thomas's face.

In fact, Sarah was worried about seeing how close Charles and Emma had become these days since they worked together. If she confronted Charles about it, she would be the jealous woman. If Sarah was angry, Charles would withdraw from her. If she made a scene, Christina would interfere.

Sarah had no choice but to wait and see. If anything happened, she'd have to deal with it at that time. What Sarah really wanted was to work with Charles. If she were always on his side, he'd not get as easily distracted by Emma.

Later that day in the afternoon, Mr. Thomas's old friends came to visit him. With several older gentlemen chatting in one small room, Sarah felt that her presence was not needed. When Mr. Thomas saw how bored she looked, he encouraged her to go home.

Leaving the hospital, Sarah was thinking about how monotonous her life had become. Besides, from walking to the hospital and taking care of the family, there was nothing left for her to do. Although she had not worked in Houston after getting married, Charles had been less busy and had come back from work much earlier, and they often went out at night to different places.

Even if they stayed at home, they enjoyed each other's company. Ever since they had moved to Los Angeles, Charles was tired when he came home from work late at night and didn't really spend much time with her.

Now that she had nothing to do in the afternoon, she went to the mall to look for a tie for Charles. To her surprise, she saw Charles in the mall with a few people in business and Emma on his side.

Charles had come to inspect the mall or to discuss a project. They seemed to be discussing a project in the mall. He was wearing his business suit, making him stand out and look superior to the rest of the group. Emma, who was also wearing a formal suit, was standing beside him like a queen, holding a folder in her arms.

They all looked very formal, and the other men seemed to regard Charles as their big client, doing their best to please Charles in a very formal way. Emma suddenly noticed something and walked into one store. She took a tie from the display and waved it at Charles with a big smile on her face, appearing very happy. Charles had no choice but to walk up to her with the rest of the men following him. Emma whispered something in Charles's ear, trying to charm him. She tried hard to tie the new tie for him. Emma's action made Charles feel awkward, given that they were working and with people in business standing there looking at them, but he had no choice but to cooperate with her. It was evident that the attending men also felt awkward and out of place.

Emma wanted to buy the tie for Charles, disregarding that they were there for work. Seeing Charles's intense facial expression, she stomped her feet with stubbornness, giving Charles no choice but to accept her gift. Feeling accomplished, Emma laughed out loud and walked to the counter to check out.

The businessmen seemed to get impatient as one lowered his head and coughed to hide his chuckle. Charles pretended not to care, and when Emma came back from the counter and grabbed for his hands, he didn't scold her but instead smiled at her when she said something to him. They looked like a couple based on their interactions.

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Sarah was standing on the second floor in the mall and witnessed the whole episode. Standing there and looking at them from a distance, she remembered that when she had been Charles's secretary, they had gone out on similar business trips. She had often secretly bought gifts for her sister when they were in the mall. But when they came back to the office and Charles saw it, he would scold her for doing

personal business while working. His attitude had been entirely different from today with Emma.

Once again, Sarah came to the conclusion that Charles always indulged Emma and believed in Emma, punishing Sarah for the tiniest mistake, even if it were made by Emma, he'd think that it was her fault. Why was he making this difference? He was married to her, after all.

Sarah started to feel bad. The clerk from the store she was in came to her telling her that he had finished packing up the tie she had picked. "Miss, your tie is packed and ready. You can check out at the counter!"

Sarah looked at the box and wanted to refuse it. Emma had bought the same tie for Charles that she had picked. Why should she buy another one? But looking at the salesman's eager face and the readily wrapped tie, and was too shy to refuse it now and just went to pay for it.

What should she do with the tie after buying it? She didn't want to give it to Charles anymore, so she placed it into her bag to hide it. Once she came home, she forgot that it was in her purse. When Charles came home that evening, he was smiling at her like always.

Sarah helped him to take off his jacket and asked. "Why are you so happy today?"

"Because today we closed a big project." He told her proudly.

Sarah was about to take off his tie but suddenly stopped. She stared at his tie for a long time, the scene at the mall whirling in her mind.

Charles noticed her movements and asked with a slight laugh. "Don't you think this color of tie matches the suit? Emma bought it today. This girl really knows my taste. Today, in the middle of discussing the project at the mall, she suddenly ran into the store and bought me a tie. I didn't like it at first, but when I saw the color, I gave in.

"Thanks to Emma, I got a great boost of confidence when seeing how good it fits me, helping me in negotiating the project details, which went very smoothly. I didn't expect her to be so good at her job, given that she just graduated, I guess I underestimated her. She has a gift in business...."

Charles kept praising Emma without noticing Sarah's reaction. Sarah kept silent as she carefully hung up his suit and tie for him. She felt that his performance over the last few days was subtly influenced by Emma so that when he returned home, he always talked about her. He mentioned Emma every time he spoke about any work-related issues, always ignoring Sarah's feelings. Sarah felt depressed and uncomfortable, not wanting to talk at all when she remembered Emma's behavior at the mall.

As Sarah took a bath towel and gave it to Charles to take a shower, he suddenly pulled her into the bathroom and pressed her on the wall, teasing her. "Do you know why I came home so early today?"

"Why?" Sarah asked in a light voice.

Charles smiled ambiguously and pinched her chin. "Don't you miss me?"

"Huh?" Sarah was still confused and startled by his fast reaction. Charles lowered his head and kissed her slowly before he said, "No matter how busy I am, I will never forget my wife and my duty toward our baby! My wife, let's start work on it tonight!" He kissed her again, his hands moving on her body.

Sarah knew his intention, but she wasn't in the mood and kept pushing him away. "No, I'm tired tonight. So, NO!"

Charles thought she was just being shy and laughed again in a low voice. "I know you like it!" Then he kissed her more passionately, putting his hands behind her shirt to touch her body. Sarah felt both itchy and angry but couldn't refuse him. She knew that even if she weren't in the mood, he'd force her. Thinking about it, she suddenly got angrier and pushed him aside, shouting. "Are you a beast? Didn't you hear that I'm not feeling well tonight?"

Both were stunned by her sudden outburst of anger. Sarah didn't expect herself to be so angry, and Charles was surprised because Sarah had never acted this harshly and refused him, but now she pushed him away with anger. He failed to understand her.

Sarah looked at him with anger and turned away. To her own surprise, she felt more comfortable after shouting out her feelings.

Charles thought she was losing her temper when she yelled at him and responded angrily, "Fuck!"

They ignored each other for the rest of the night and went to sleep without talking.

After waking up the next morning, they continued ignoring each other's presence and got dressed silently, both not wanting to be the first to break the silence.

Sarah washed her face and then applied her daily make-up in front of the mirror. She saw Charles standing behind her at the bedside, using her mirror to tie his tie. He wasn't used to doing it himself and struggled to adjust it properly. Sarah had no intention to help him, and he was too stubborn to ask and did it himself.

Sarah discreetly glanced at him but kept ignoring him. Once she was done, she turned around to grab her bag and leave for the hospital but remembered that she had forgotten her key and walked back into the living room to get it.

Charles saw her walking past him without saying a word. He hummed angrily, venting his discontent. He really didn't understand why Sarah was so angry and hadn't spoken to him all night. Why was she so upset? Was it because he had tried to force her last night and that she couldn't stand it?

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They had already been married for a while now and had done it many times, so why was she so angry?

Charles finished with his tie and turned back to pick up his jacket from the bed when he saw Sarah's bag wide open. He peaked in and saw a delicately packed present inside her purse. He picked it up to look at it more closely, it was Zegna's tie. He couldn't help wondering what it was.

Hearing footsteps behind him, he quickly put the present back into the bag and pretended to still be working on adjusting his suit.

Sarah came back and thought his behavior was a little strange. She glanced at him but didn't see anything unusual. Without further paying attention to him, she continued searching for her key.

Charles became more optimistic, thinking that the gift was apparently for him, but maybe Sarah didn't give it to him yet because of their incident and her being angry

last night. Why didn't she give it now as an excuse to make up? There was no big deal after all, and no need to continue the quarrel.

He buttoned his suit jacket, straightened up properly, and said to Sarah, "I'm going out."

Sarah had no idea why he suddenly broke the silence by talking to her. She paused a little and then replied in a low voice, "Yes."

Charles looked at her. Just yes? Wasn't she going to say something? Wasn't she going to give him the tie that was in her bag? Was she collecting ties?

Insinuating, he asked, "Do you want me to bring you something? Recently I haven't bought you any gifts. What do you want?"

He was quite obvious, and courtesy demands reciprocity. Sarah should know it! He intended to give her a gift, so she had to give him a gift in return.

But Sarah still remained calm, "No, there's nothing to buy. You can go to work now!"

Charles felt annoyed. Didn't she notice that he was trying to make peace? Raising his eyebrows, he asked. "That's all?"

Sarah saw him pacing back and forth in front of the door. She was ready to go, so she grabbed her bag and just said. "I am going to the hospital to take care of your dad now!" And walked out without further hesitation.

Charles watched her walking away, indifferently. Once the door was closed behind her, he cursed in frustration, "Fuck!"

He was so irritated that he didn't know what to do. Sarah must have entirely misunderstood him! He picked up his briefcase and went out, also ignoring her. He didn't care about the gift anymore!

Sarah didn't know that her indifferent behavior would make Charles even angrier. She couldn't give up her pride to make concessions, but she always managed to intensify their negative feelings and continue the quarrel.

Carrie had advised her to be gentle to get along with Charles, but she couldn't calm herself down enough to be considerate to him after seeing how affectionate and

intimate he was with Emma when out working with her. She couldn't agree with Carrie's advice.

It was Charles who didn't pay attention to his words and actions. It was him who didn't care about her feelings and kept close to Emma no matter what. Why should she back down? Why should she be gentle to him? Why would she hurt herself like that? Why?

Sarah was convinced that nothing good could come from a woman who always gave in first. It just made men more arrogant, and they started to despise them. Sometimes a little temper was appropriate. Charles needed to know that she had her own principles, which was why she was reluctant to give in to Charles repeatedly.

Thinking about what she had seen yesterday and how Charles had indulged Emma's immature behavior, she compared his actions with his serious attitude toward her when working together, and she felt quite wronged by him. Subconsciously, Charles was always very lovely to Emma no matter what she did, he would tolerate her, but he had never been that tolerant with Sarah, even after they had gotten married.

Sarah became extremely agitated and even more reluctant to just let it go this time.

As she was walking lost in her thoughts, a car drove from behind her, honking the horn a few times. Given that they were in a wealthy neighborhood and the roads were narrow, she didn't want to get into trouble and quietly retreated to the small corner, making way for the car to pass.

But the car slowed down. Looking up, Sarah saw Emma sitting in the passenger seat, shouting at her. "Sarah, are you going to the hospital alone? Would you like my brother to drive you there first before going to the office?"

Sarah finally realized that it was Charles's car. Emma was smiling sweetly at her. Although she called her by her name and sounded kind, Sarah saw her perky face as if she wanted to say. "Look! I'm going to work with Charles in his car while you are walking alone, even though you are his wife. I'm still closer to him than you."

Sarah was very angry at Emma and her superior expression and decided to ignore them and continue walking on her own. When Charles saw her still walking, he got

angrier and shouted to Emma. “Just ignore her. Let her go!” And stepped in the gas pedal, driving away.

Sarah still heard Emma’s false concern when she asked Charles why he was so angry at her sister-in-law, noticing a hint of triumph in Emma’s undertone.

Sarah couldn’t help cursing, “Fuck!” Even the politest woman would start cursing when seeing her husband driving with his mistress arrogantly sitting right beside him. She turned around the opposite corner and walked away in her high-heeled shoes, unwilling to follow the same road they had been driving on.

After this incident in the morning with Emma, Sarah felt depressed all day. She felt sick, just thinking about Emma’s happy and smiling face. She didn’t talk much after arriving at the hospital, and Mr. Thomas was reading a book, so she just peeled him an apple beside him without interrupting him.

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It was almost lunchtime when Mr. Thomas suddenly requested to have a specific kind of chicken soup, which Sarah was to buy for him. Walking out of his room, she didn’t know where she found that kind of soup in Los Angeles since she was not familiar with the place yet. Not knowing who to turn, she called Daniel to ask him for directions.

Daniel told her that he would be off work at noon and that he’d take her to the place during his lunch break. After just a few minutes, he came to accompany her to the restaurant.

Sarah didn’t want to bother him and ask just to give her the directions, but Daniel insisted on taking her to the place himself, stating that it was too far to walk there.

After taking off his white coat, Daniel was ready to go with her, dressed in casual sportswear. Sarah thought that maybe he intended to exercise after working based on his attire. Though he was 28 years old, he looked much younger and energetic in his sports clothes, like a college student. With his bright smile, he seemed very gentle, making everyone feel comfortable in his presence. Sarah started to feel better when seeing him and smiled at him. “You were so quick to change! I’m sorry to bother you!”

“Not at all,” Daniel said. “I’m off work now.” He led her to the garage and drove off in his car.

While driving, Daniel turned on some relaxing music in the car, making Sarah feel more comfortable. He talked and laughed with her with such ease that Sarah’s anger gradually disappeared. She thought that she was more relaxed with Daniel, at least felt more at ease with him than she did with Charles. She couldn’t help saying in a light tone, “Thank you!”

“Thank you?” Daniel was surprised. “Why is that?”

“You’re still as humorous as ever. I’m always laughing when I’m around you.” She answered

“You know I’m good, don’t you? Some of the nurses in the hospital secretly call me “The most handsome man in the hospital” You should know that I’m a good catch, right?”

Sarah hadn’t expected him to make a joke out of it and laughed out happily before she asked. “By the way, where is your girlfriend? You’re 28. When will you introduce me to my future sister-in-law?”

“Future sister-in-law?” Daniel turned to look at her with a faint and inexplicable light in his eyes. Sarah didn’t understand him. He looked strange but attractive as if she could be sucked into the light of his eyes.

Daniel turned back to look at the road and continued. “I haven’t fallen in love with anyone yet, I don’t want to have a family yet.”

“What kind of person do you like? Maybe I can introduce you to someone?” Sarah added.

Daniel looked at her again but kept silent this time. He kept driving for a long time. After turning around a corner, he suddenly stopped the car and said, “Here we are!” without answering her question.

Sarah had to get off to walk into the restaurant to buy the food. She also brought some soup for Daniel, given that he hadn’t had lunch yet either. Walking out of the restaurant with her hands full, she sighed. “They’re too many people here. I had to wait in the queue for a long time.”

Daniel took the bags from her hands and opened the car door for her. He then suddenly laughed and said, “If you want to look for a girlfriend for me, you can be the criteria.”

“What?” Sarah looked up at him in confusion.

Daniel laughed again. “I’m joking. I don’t need you to introduce me to a girlfriend, forget about it!”

Sarah finally understood what she was saying and laughed too. He was right. Apart from his family not being in the same social status as Charles’s family, he was just as eligible as Charles in all other aspects. He was a remarkable young man. Why should he need help finding a girlfriend? She was overthinking!

“You also bought food for me?” Daniel asked after getting back into the car.

Sarah buckled up her seatbelt and said, “Yeah, you didn’t have lunch yet, did you?”

Feeling a little shy, Daniel responded. “I don’t like this food; actually, you can keep it all for yourself!”

Sarah said, “Don’t you like chicken soup? I’m sorry. It’s such a classic that it didn’t even cross my mind to ask you first, or else I’d have bought something else for you. After all, you drove me out all the way here so I could buy it for my father-in-law.”

“If you really appreciate me helping you, you can give me something else but soup.”

Daniel was just joking, but Sarah took it seriously. She thought about it for a while and suddenly remembered that she had the tie still in her bag. She took it out and said, “Or I can give you this instead?”

Daniel was joking, not expecting her to take him seriously and give him a gift. He looked at the tie in surprise and asked. “You... are you really going to give me a present? Is that for me?”

Sarah figured it was useless to keep the tie, so she nodded to Daniel, although she felt that it wasn’t right to give it to him after having bought it for Charles since she couldn’t give it to Charles now. Maybe it wasn’t very polite toward Daniel if she

gave it to him, and she was about to take it back and said, “Hmmm... it’s actually not a good idea, I’ll give you another present on a later day.”

But Daniel didn’t know the history behind the tie and was happy when Sarah was about to give him a gift. He would never refuse a gift from her. He grabbed it and said with appreciation. “It doesn’t matter. The tie looks great. Even if you give me gold tomorrow, it won’t be more beautiful than the first gift you chose. I want this one. I like everything you give me!”

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“Um... ” Sarah wanted to explain that she couldn’t give it to him but was unable to find the words when she saw how much he liked it and decided not to say anything. Charles hadn’t seen the tie yet after all, and Daniel didn’t know where the tie came from, so there would be no problem, given that she was the only one who knew the real story behind it. Nothing would happen if she herself didn’t say anything.

Daniel looked at Sarah’s gift with great happiness. After looking at it carefully for a while, he said, “The tie is wonderful. Zegna is a big international brand; this tie must be at least around one thousand dollars. How can you say that it is not good? I’ll give you something in return later!”

“Ah... There’s no need to give me anything in return, really.” She quickly refused.

But Daniel remained firm. “No, I must. As the saying goes, ‘Give peaches in return for a plum.’ I have to give you in return!” Daniel was actually just looking for an excuse to give her a present. He wanted Sarah to have one thing given by him.

Sarah noticed how stubborn he was and didn’t refuse any longer. They drove back to the hospital, unaware of how many problems they would get into in the future because of this tie.

Though the restaurant was not that far away, they spent half an hour driving back to the hospital because of traffic. Sarah was afraid that Mr. Thomas would be waiting for her and that he’d be hungry, and went quickly upstairs after getting out of the car when she unexpectedly heard Daniel yell behind her. “Little girl!”

Sarah looked back in amazement because Daniel had not called her that for a long time. He had always called her “little girl” back in the days when they had been little.. Unexpectedly, he called her that again now. She turned around and looked at him.

Daniel laughed and said, “Thank you for your gift. I’ll wear it to work tomorrow!”

Daniel smiled at her. “Thanks for your gift. I will wear it tomorrow!”

Sarah smiled and waved at him before she hurried to bring the food to Mr. Thomas. Unexpectedly, she found the door to his room wide open, and Mr. Thomas was nowhere to be seen. Knowing that Mr. Thomas was too weak to get out of the bed, Sarah didn’t know where to look for him. Placing the food on the table, she was about to look for him when a nurse came in and confronted her. “Where were you all this time? We looked everywhere for you. While you were out, Mr. Thomas suffered another heart attack; he’s in the operating room right now!”

Sarah felt like someone was hitting her on her head. She stared at the nurse in shock. Not wanting it to be true, she asked bewildered. “What?” and rushed to the operating room without giving the nurse time to answer. Running, she shouted, “Dad!” but when she reached the room, the door was closed, and the doctors were busy trying to save Mr. Thomas’s life. Sarah was at a loss at what to do. She knocked on the door in desperation and called out to him. “Dad, dad!”

She blamed herself for leaving him alone and, at the same time, was worried about his condition. She shouldn’t have talked with Daniel for so long, leaving Mr. Thomas alone in the room. How could she have done that? It’s all her negligence to leave him behind.

The nurse came to stop her and tried to calm her down. “Ms. Sarah, they already started the operation, you shouldn’t disturb them. Let the doctors concentrate on their job!”

Sarah realized that the nurse was right, and she probably shouldn’t be so loud, but she was so anxious and worried about Mr. Thomas that all she wanted was to be on his side so he wouldn’t be alone. Realizing that she shouldn’t distract the doctors, she grabbed the nurse’s hand and asked in a desperate voice, “How could he have another heart attack so sudden?”

The nurse took her hand and pressed it gently. “We don’t know the exact reason. We heard the beeper going off, and when we reached his room, he was already on the floor, unable to say anything. All we could do was rush him into the operating room and have faith in the doctors.”

Sarah couldn’t help but blame herself for leaving Mr. Thomas alone for so long. The nurse squeezed Sarah’s hand again and left.

Pacing back and forth for a while, Sarah thought that she should call Charles. Although she wasn’t happy to call him after the scene with Emma this morning, she had no choice but to call him and inform him about what had happened, given that it was a life or death situation.

To Sarah’s surprise, Charles was already informed by the hospital and was on his way to the hospital with Christina and Emma.

Sarah sat outside the operating room in the waiting area and waited for Charles to arrive. When she saw them coming in, Sarah quickly stood up and walked towards them. Before she was able to say anything, Christina asked in a cold and indifferent tone, as if she was scolding Sarah. “What’s wrong?”

Feeling uncomfortable, Sarah answered. “I went to buy some food for dad at noon because he asked for chicken soup, but when I came back, I found that he was in the operating room. I don’t know what happened.”

Christina became extremely angry, looking like something possessed her. Unexpectedly and to everyone’s surprise, she suddenly slapped Sarah in her face. Everyone in the area looked at them, including the doctors and nurses, stopped and stared at them, curious about what was going on.

Shocked, Sarah covered her face with one hand, staring at Christina in disbelief. It had never occurred to her that Christina would slap her in public, especially in a situation like this.

