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It was Jamie's turn to be shocked this time around. "Boss, he didn't recognize you, did he?" Elise replied, "No, but I guess we will definitely meet during the competition, but it's not a big issue." After all, in Alexander's eyes, she already had a new identity as Joy, so she assumed that he would not relate both women as one. She immediately headed to her room after taking a cab from the airport and checking into the hotel. Spending two hours on the flight had rendered her exhausted, after which she immediately crawled into bed and fell sound asleep after a shower.

Her nap lasted until the evening. Elise reached out for her phone and unlocked the screen. However, she saw two missed calls from a local number that she was extremely familiar with, which shocked her. My schedule this time is a complete secret. Who would have called me? However, she did not take it seriously and placed her phone aside. It was at this moment when the doorbell of her room rang. "Hi, room service," the voice greeted. Elise then opened the door and allowed the waiter to push a tray of scrumptious dinner into her room. After that, he elaborated, "Miss Sinclair, Mr. Keller has prepared this dinner for you. Please enjoy this."

As she looked at the scrumptious food in front of her, she couldn't help but think, Jamie is such a good assistant since he settles everything nicely for me. "If you need anything, feel free to call us anytime. See you." It was after the waiter exited the room that she walked over to close the door. The room opposite her coincidentally opened at the same time and Alexander's tall, slender figure entered her line of vision. As they locked eyes with each other, they saw their shock being reflected in the other's sight. She was growing slightly anxious by now. What kind of room did Jamie book?

Forget the fact that we're staying in the same hotel, but I can't believe that our rooms are directly opposite to each other! "Hi, Mr. Griffith!" Elise greeted with a perfunctory smile. People who knew her well were definitely aware that it was a forced smile. Alexander slightly frowned. He had never believed that there were such coincidences in the world; not only did they board the same plane, they even booked the same hotel. On top of that, they even stayed in opposite rooms. It was exceptionally unlikely for such occurrences to happen, but it did in real life nevertheless.

"I didn't expect to meet you again in such a short time." His voice was neither slow nor quick and it was void of all emotions. She couldn't tell whether he was happy or exasperated by the coincidence. As such, Elise could only bite the bullet and said, "It's a coincidence indeed." Then, she added, "Mr. Griffith, you haven't eaten anything, have you? I have just ordered dinner. Would you like to have some together?" However, Alexander directly rejected her invitation. He was already used to such obvious tactics and to him, Joy was no different from the other women who wanted to get closer to him.

To think that I thought she was quite special! I guess I overestimated her. "It's okay. I'm heading out anyway." It was just a casual invite from Elise as she didn't have any intention to have dinner together with him. Hence, she waved and responded, "In that case, goodbye for now, Mr. Griffith." With that, she directly closed the door. Alexander's gaze slightly darkened, but he didn't utter another word. After closing his room door, he walked along the corridor to the elevator and took it to head downstairs.

Meanwhile, Elise returned to her room and had dinner before she went out alone. She immediately hailed a cab to Julius' pub. Since it was only 9:00PM, there weren't many customers in the pub. Then, she walked around the main hall before she sat down to order a glass of whiskey, after which she popped Julius a text. He walked out of his rest area almost immediately. Although he was quite surprised, he had more or less expected it. He had already heard the news in Tissote—it was breaking news that Sue was returning to the industry by participating in the racing competition.

"You really are here." Elise hummed in agreement. "Julius, I remember that I left something at your place. So, I'm here to pick it up today." After he sat down, he responded, "I'll bring you to retrieve it later. Let's have a couple of drinks first." With that, he gently knocked his beer bottle on hers. "I heard that Noel went to Athesea to look for you. Are you guys alright?" Elise merely shrugged. "Nothing much. It's the same old." "Noel is an impatient and impulsive person." Julius smiled. "His way of speaking is straightforward; he doesn't know how to insinuate. I bet he had a tough time with you."

"Your business is not as good as usual." Although she attempted to change the topic, he raised his eyes and maintained his gaze on her. "Did you cause the matter that befell Charlene?" Even though it was a question, his tone was normal. Elise hummed in agreement and didn't deny his words. Julius nodded. "H, I know she was in the wrong for the incident back then. However, do you know why Noel chose to defend her even under those circumstances?"

It was the same question that Elise was puzzled on too. However, certain things became much clearer the moment the past incident appeared in her mind. The knowledge led to her eyes lighting up. As she met Julius' gaze, he broke into a smile. "I have no right to ask about Charlene's matters, but I hope you can do this favor for me." It was something that Elise understood. "As if I'm doing this for Noel?" Julius nodded.

"He has liked her for many years now. He has always taken care of her, protected her, and spoiled her. Even though I don't understand why he's loyal to her, I can't say anything about it." She felt that she had neglected something. "Forget it, let the past be in the past. We all have to move on, don't we?" "Thank you, H," he answered earnestly. After a pause, he continued, "It has been so long since that incident happened. When are you going to return? I listened to the new song you wrote for Jack. The quality of your work hasn't declined at all. Could it be that I'll see you around in the industry in the near future?"

Elise frowned before replying in a calm tone, "Maybe..." That simple word was enough to reveal her attitude. As Julius held the glass in front of him, joy surged through him. "H, this is a toast to you. I hope that you will return and dominate the industry soon." She gently brought her glass to cling with his beer glass in the

silence. Then, she gulped the alcohol and rose to her full height. "Let's get back my stuff." Then, Julius brought her out of the pub and took another elevator upstairs where they finally stopped at the 18th floor. Then, he took out a key and opened the door.

Elise walked into the room and saw the scene that she was once familiar with. She kept her emotions grounded as she directly walked to the bedroom. After opening the door, she headed for the wardrobe in front of the French windows and unlatched it to take out a box from within. There were a few car keys and items in the box.

She took out one of the keys and wore a black cap before she raised her eyes to look at herself in the mirror. In that instant, she seemed to catch a glimpse of her previous self. "I'll take these with me." Elise held the box in her arms as she walked out of the bedroom. Julius shrugged. "I'm just keeping them on your behalf. They will eventually return to you."

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"Thank you, Julius," Elise answered earnestly. However, Julius merely smiled. "We are good friends, so there's no need to be so polite." Right after they walked out of the room, she locked the room from inside before walking to the elevator. "I still remember the last time I left and even quietly thought that I would never be here again. Less than two years have passed and I'm here once again. It's quite emotional," she said slowly. He gently looked at her. "Actually, from the beginning, I already knew that you'd return. It's all a matter of time. Fortunately, I waited until this moment. All the best for the competition tomorrow. I will be there to cheer you on and I look forward to seeing your performance." Elise grunted. "The competition tomorrow will be among small groups and I will do my best." After she walked out of the elevator, she directly headed for the garage that stored her favorite car. Even though it had been parked here for around two to three years, there wasn't a lot of dust on it because Julius had asked people to regularly maintain it. Elise sat on the driver's seat where she seemed to have discovered the familiar past.

The moment she started the car, she floored the accelerator to drive the vehicle out. As the fancy sports car sped on the road, it had attracted many people's attention. However, she ignored them and drove all the way to the hotel. After she removed her cap, she casually left it on the passenger seat whereupon she started to tidy her hair before exiting the vehicle. The moment that she walked into the lobby of the hotel, she ran into Alexander, who was engaged in a call. It seemed that they had entered the elevator one after another, which now resulted in her standing right next to him.

"Settle this matter first. If there are any problems, contact me again." With that, he immediately hung up. When he looked at the reflection in the mirror, he was slightly repulsed by the coincidences he had with Joy. What he never expected was the woman to actually attract him and subconsciously made him desire to be closer to her. What the hell? "Did you just return, Miss Sinclair?" Alexander broke

the silence by asking. Elise initially planned on feigning that she didn't notice him. Now that he had taken the initiative to speak to her, she hummed in reply.

There was no further exchange of words after her response. When the elevator doors opened, she walked out first before they both returned to their respective rooms. As soon as she returned to her room, Elise entered the bathroom to take a shower. When she reemerged, she grabbed a towel to dry her wet hair before she stood in front of the French windows to gaze at the city's night scenery. The bright neon lights and the exciting night life were indeed difficult to resist. *Ding dong!* It was at this moment when her doorbell rang and aroused her curiosity about the person who rang the bell.

Who would look for me at this hour? She walked to the door and asked, "Who is it?" "It's me!" Upon hearing those two words being spoken in a familiar tone, she froze. Then, she opened the door with slight incredulity. "Mr. Griffith, why are you here?" Alexander asked, "Do you have hot water here? My kettle is spoiled." Elise blinked before answering, "Yeah, I do. Give me your cup and I will fill it up for you." Then, he passed the glass in his hands to her. After she took it from him, she went inside to fill it with hot water while he waited quietly by the door.

"Here you go, Mr. Griffith." Elise handed the full glass to Alexander as he stretched out with his hands to accept it. When he did so, his gaze involuntarily fell on her hands and saw a black mole on the back of her hand that was quite conspicuous. Without thinking much about it, he took the glass and responded, "Thanks!"

After that, she closed the door and returned to her room without thinking too much about the encounter. Somewhere deep in the night, Elise woke up with a violent cough after choking on the thick smoke. However, the smoke seemed to get thicker and made her realize that something was amiss, which forced her to immediately open her eyes.

Smoke was already permeating the huge room at this stage; it was as if the place was on fire. "There's a fire here..." The fire alarm rang outside along with the cries of men and women. She couldn't stop coughing because of the smoke and quickly snatched the towel to cover her nose and mouth while stumbling to the door. As soon as she opened it, she saw that people were fleeing for the safety exit along the corridor. Upon seeing this, she joined them. All of a sudden, many people from the hotel gathered together and ran down the stairs. Elise had no idea who pushed her, but she lost her balance and leaned forward against the wall.

She stopped walking for a moment as she inhaled deeply. As the crowd had been leaving one after another, there were only a few people behind her. "Are you alright?" Alexander's voice suddenly rang in her ears. She quickly nodded. "Yeah, I'm fine. Why are you still here? Quickly head down..." There was slight anxiety in Elise's tone as she subconsciously tugged his elbow while running downstairs. However, he was stunned to the point where he froze for a second, which gave rise to a familiar feeling when he saw such a sight. He didn't have the time to think it through and merely ran downstairs with her.

As he did so, he quietly held her hand. Both of them ran all the way to the ground floor from the tenth floor. She was panting for breath, feeling as if she had narrowly escaped death while the crowd chattered noisily. "Are you alright?" "Are you alright?" Alexander and Elise spoke at the same time, thereafter staring at each other. It was only at this moment when they realized that they had interlocked their fingers and released their hands almost instantaneously. "What is going on? Everything was fine. Why is there a fire?" Elise asked as she still panted.

She wasn't the only shocked person; those around her were questioning the same thing as well. He raised his head and looked at the fire above them. "When I was running downstairs, I saw the room next to us on fire. The fire was so massive that it nearly affected all ten floors of the hotel..."

Meanwhile, the fire brigade quickly drove to the venue one after another to extinguish the fire. As many voices were mixed together, it led to a rather chaotic scene. "What would happen to us for the rest of the night?" Elise asked as many people around her demanded a solution from the hotel. The hotel employees quickly attempted to pacify the crowd and said, "Please don't be anxious. We will think of a solution for everyone."

The fire was too sudden and it had happened during the middle of the night. After the firemen had spent around half an hour extinguishing the fire, the situation was finally under control. Fortunately, it was caused by electrical appliances and no one died in the accident. "Please be patient. We have already arranged a new place for everyone to stay, but there are limited rooms. Two people need to share a room together.

If you have any friends or know anyone, you can share the same room. You can request the room keys from me now." The moment the manager finished his words, many customers went to him in pairs to get their card. Since both Elise and Alexander were on their own, they wanted to look for another person to share the room. However, everyone had already left by the time they waited, which left them as the only remaining people there. They stared at each other before concurrently asking, "W-What should we do, manager?"

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Upon noticing the current situation, the manager was just as troubled. As the fire had been too sudden, they were forced to request for empty rooms from the neighboring hotels, so the number of rooms available were limited. Not that only Elise and Alexander, a single man and woman, were the ones left, it was difficult to make sleeping arrangements for them. "Miss, please don't be anxious. We will think of another way out for you two..." Elise hummed in agreement and waited for further arrangements whereas Alexander's eyes darkened as he maintained his silence.

The manager approached them with an apologetic look after making a few calls. "Sir, madam, I'm very sorry. We really don't have any other rooms." At this moment, Alexander decisively answered, "Give the room to her instead! I'll think

of another alternative." Upon hearing his approval, the manager quickly passed the last room card to Elise. "Madam, why don't you head to the room first?" Elise accepted the room card from him.

If she hadn't known Alexander, she would've taken the key card and left the scene. However, she had known him for a long time and he even helped her out before. Hence, she couldn't bring herself to leave just like that. After she thought about it, she asked, "Mr. Griffith, since other rooms are unavailable, would you like to stay in the same room as me for the time being?" However, Alexander rejected her almost subconsciously. "It's fine.

I will find another hotel to stay at." When she heard his answer, Elise was slightly disappointed for the weirdest reason. She was actually looking forward to sharing the same room as Alexander and once she realized her thoughts, she abruptly knocked on her head. What the hell were you thinking, Elise? On the other hand, Alexander was shocked by her sudden movement. "What are you doing, Miss Sinclair?" She quickly explained, "Nothing. Mr. Griffith, it's just that it's highly unlikely that other hotels will still have vacant rooms at this hour. Are you sure you want to leave?"

He slightly narrowed his eyes. "Miss Sinclair, is this an invitation?" Elise had the urge to bite her tongue off and immediately denied his question. "Mr. Alexander, you have misunderstood me. I just feel sorry that you have nowhere else to go; it's pitiful. It's only 2:00AM, so how are you going to spend the rest of the night?" The manager, who was standing beside them, finally realized that these two were acquainted with each other. Apart from that, she was extending a warm invitation to Alexander, which was an obvious indication of her interest in the man.

The guy is handsome whereas the girl is beautiful. When they stand together, they look compatible with each other. Hence, the manager also wanted to help these two out, so he couldn't help himself from saying, "Sir, the hotels near us are all fully booked right now. Only this hotel has the last room. I really think you should put up with it for one night." Elise was shocked that he would say something like this, but she could only turn her attention to Alexander to see his reaction. Alexander raised his head to meet her gaze and when they locked eyes, he actually thought he saw a glimpse of his fiancee when he looked at Joy in front of him.

He had no idea what had possessed him, but he gently hummed in agreement. As a result, both Elise and Alexander brought the room card to the hotel next door with one trailing after the other. No one had uttered a word throughout the entire journey; it was only until they arrived at their new hotel room that he suddenly returned to his senses, but he had no way out at this moment. "You should enter first," she broke the silence as she opened the door. His eyes narrowed slightly before he started to walk into the room. Once the door was closed, she pointed at the two beds in the room.

"You'll sleep on the bed closer to the door while I'll sleep on the inner one." Then, a self-conscious Elise climbed into her bed and tucked herself under the blanket so that she was tightly wrapped in the sheets with only her head being revealed. "Let's go to bed soon." It was as though she was trying to say aloud that she

wouldn't do anything to Alexander. He was amused upon seeing her reaction; even his facial complexion was much better compared to the moment when he had entered the room. He looked at the bed in front of him and casually lay on it.

After the long night, Elise was suddenly wide awake after her initial tiredness. She looked at the ceiling above her as she quietly counted sheep in her head. However, even after she had done so, it wasn't enough to make her fall asleep. "Mr. Griffith?" She tried to gently call him, to which a soft reply came. Although Alexander's voice was soft, she knew that he was still not asleep yet. "You can't sleep as well? Me too..." she said as she turned around to face him. He had no idea what had possessed him. For a man who was used to sleeping alone, he was unable to fall asleep now that another person was in the same room as him.

"If you can't sleep, just close your eyes and rest. You will fall asleep in no time," he whispered before he immediately closed his eyes. However, Alexander had no clue why he had suddenly remembered a scene from the party at the Lawson Family where he slept on the same bed as Elise. The familiar scene was forever etched in his mind, causing him to suddenly open his eyes a second later. Then, he looked like he was searching for an excuse when he uttered, "I'm heading to the balcony to have some fresh air."

With that, he immediately cast the blanket aside and got up to walk to the balcony. As Alexander stood on the balcony to gaze at the city deep in the night, he suddenly took out his phone. While staring at a familiar number, he actually had the urge to call Elise at this very moment. It is already so late, though. She is probably asleep. He tightly clenched his phone and paused before he returned to the room. "Mr. Griffith, is this your first time sleeping with a woman?"

a curious Elise asked casually while awaiting his reply. Alexander replied without thinking, "No." It was only one word, but it was enough to make her feel jealous. He said 'no'. It means that he has slept with other women. Maybe he even had intimate behaviors with them. As soon as Elise thought about this, she felt that even her breath became uneven. "Is it with your girlfriend?" As soon as she blurted out the question, she wanted to bite her tongue off again.

However, Alexander replied coolly, "Miss Sinclair, you ask too many questions." Elise couldn't help speculating about this. The embarrassment she felt earlier had now completely disappeared and in fact, it was replaced by her guesses on the woman who slept with him. Although Alexander looked at the ceiling above him, his mind was filled with Elise's face. Unexpectedly, a part of his body became slightly warm and his breathing became heavier. He was shocked by his reaction, so he quickly took a deep breath and cleared his messy thoughts.

It was only after he had done so that his body gradually returned to normal. "Miss Sinclair, sleep well." With that, he turned his back to her; when Elise saw this, she did the same and closed her eyes. She was sound asleep for the remainder of the night. When she woke up the next morning, Alexander was nowhere to be seen, which disappointed her as she looked at the wide room. The weather was perfect as sunlight poured through the window into the room. Then, she stretched before she got out of bed to brush her teeth. As a result of the sudden fire last night, the hotel suffered quite a huge amount of loss. Luckily for them, the fire was extinguished just in time to stop it from spreading—possibly something good out of the misfortune.

As Elise's room was not impacted by the fire, she took her luggage and decisively checked out after she returned to her original hotel room. Then, she directly drove her ostentatious sports car to the racing competition arena. The competition in Tissote would be held here tonight and she was looking forward to it for the weirdest reason. She parked her car in the basement parking lot and switched off the engine.

However, she couldn't locate her keys at this moment and looked everywhere. As she couldn't locate them, she thought that she had left it somewhere else. Since she figured that she had a spare key at home, she stopped searching for it. Unexpectedly, she heard a man's voice just as she was about to exit the car. "Are you sure that Alexander is also here?" he had asked. Elise frowned when she heard Alexander's name and subconsciously stopped all of her movements.

"He's here and my men have already obtained his schedule. I'm sure he'll appear at the racing arena tonight. We just have to do something to his car by then to ensure that he never returns." "Didn't our boss say that he just wanted to break Alexander's leg, though? He never mentioned wanting Alexander's life."

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"Hehe. We get his money in exchange for helping him put out a fire. It's such a dangerous racing competition that everyone has signed a death waiver. Even if there's an accident, it has nothing to do with us. Why should we take this opportunity to do the man a favor?" Several people agreed with this sentiment whereas Elise felt a chill run down her spine when she heard it. As she continued to watch, the group entered into their vehicles and zoomed off. Yet, her fists were silently clenched.

Never had she expected that she would hear such news simply by arriving earlier at the arena and walking around. Not only was their target Alexander, but it was also obvious that someone else had instigated them. Who was the real mastermind then? As Elise thought about it, she realized that no matter what, she had to warn Alexander. So, she pulled out her cell phone from her pocket to give him a ring. "Are you participating in a racing competition in Tissote?" she asked without beating around the bush.

There was an audible pause at the other end of the line before he grunted in acknowledgment and asked, "How did you know?" For a split second, Elise considered relaying the conversation that she overheard without omitting anything, but she realized that she would only be digging a hole for herself since she was supposed to be in Athesea at the moment. Instead, she quickly clarified, "Does Griffith Family have any enemies, Alexander?

Or, did you offend anyone?" Alexander naturally could already tell that something was going on. "What do you mean by these questions, Elise?" As her gaze darkened, she answered, "I'm worried that someone will try to harm you while you're at the race. Please take care of yourself." Upon seeing how worried she was for him, his heart softened. "Don't worry, I will." "Alright," she answered. "Have a good race and I look forward to your success." In the end, she couldn't

bring herself to tell him the truth. It was a good thing that she had glanced at the license plate and remembered its number before the group of men drove off.

Unfortunately, it was a fake number and even after searching for ages, she failed to locate anything. It was Elise's first time feeling defeated, but she didn't intend to throw in the towel. No matter what, she couldn't allow anything to happen to Alexander tonight. She had to foil the opponent's plot. This was Tissote's first time holding a national racing competition and it was undoubtedly a boon to those who liked racing. The entrance tickets had been sold out a long time ago; the area was already packed like sardines with spectators an hour before the race.

Elise had changed into her disguise and was dressed in a black-and-white casual wear that was complimented by a pair of Doc Martens, an old baseball cap, and a mask to obscure most of her face. Only after looking at herself in the mirror and determining that she didn't resemble her usual self did she feel safe enough to enter the arena. She bypassed the amphitheater and headed straight for the waiting area that was full of racers prepared to join the race tonight.

Upon noticing her, the stunned crowd stared at her before they finally burst into an uproar. "Sue? I can't believe she's here! I can't believe that she's come to compete! I always thought this was a gimmick by the organizer." "What kind of luck am I having to run into Sue today of all days? And I'm in the same group as her! Can I simply admit defeat now?" "Sue, will you sign my autograph?" One of the contestants rushed up and handed a pen to Elise.

With an apologetic smile, Elise apologized, "I'm sorry, I don't like giving out autographs." Yet, the person wouldn't give up. "You're my idol, Sue. The drifting skill you demonstrated in the French competition three years ago was *amazing*. It's been years and I haven't found anyone who's been able to drift better than you, or even as beautifully as you did." "Didn't you leave the racing industry, Sue? Why have you suddenly returned?" someone else asked. Elise answered calmly, "For private and confidential reasons."

Such an answer from someone else would have seemed arrogant, but it was simply par for the course from Sue. At this moment, Alexander walked in through the entrance and he was favored to win since he was a familiar face in the industry. His gaze darted around the moment he entered and his eyes brightened when he finally caught sight of Elise. Then, he headed in her direction with visible excitement. "Participants, please come over to draw lots," a staff member called out. When Alexander heard those words, he paused in his steps but decided to disregard the call in favor of approaching Sue.

He joyfully watched as the person in front of him and the figure from his memory overlapped with each other. "It's so nice to see you, Sue," he greeted. Unfortunately for him, Elise simply lowered the visor on her cap and she grunted in reply without saying anything else. Yet, the excitement on Alexander's face couldn't be hidden. The only reason why he had participated in the competition was that he knew Sue would be in attendance as well. While he assumed that there would only be a slim chance of her actually coming to compete, she was actually here against all his expectations.

All of a sudden, he felt like a humble fan meeting an idol. "Which group are you in, Sue?" he continued to ask. Instead of answering the man, Elise simply held up two fingers. Alexander smiled gently as he encouraged, "Good luck, then. I'll come to look for you after the competition." With that, he headed in the other direction. The thing was that Elise never expected that Alexander would be interested in Sue as well. While she was initially worried for his safety, she found it much more convenient now that he was paying attention to her. "For the first group of participants, please get ready to enter the arena," the same staff member announced, to which several participants headed out as a result.

Not long after that, several cool sports cars lined up neatly at the starting line and raced at top speed like an arrow shooting from a bow when the gunshot rang out in the air. The competition in this group was fierce; the top three cars were neck and neck with each other and refused to give way to the other. As Elise watched the race, her eyes narrowed as the burning familiar feeling of excitement started to return to her. "To the second group, get ready." Upon hearing those words, she turned, but instead of heading to her own supercar, she walked to Alexander and handed her keys to him.

"Use my car instead. I'll use yours." While he was slightly surprised by her request, he was hard-pressed to ask any questions in his idol's face. Thus, without concealing any of his awe, he took the car keys from her and handed his own to her thereafter heading in the direction of her car. While Elise clutched the keys, she entered his car without any hesitation. She accelerated and tested the brakes after she activated the throttle.

The basic functions seemed normal and the car was performing rather well. Immediately after she stepped on the accelerator, the car picked up speed and headed toward the starting point. The moment she readied her car in Track 4, the audience went into an uproar as one wave of cheers washed over the other, making it easy to see how popular she was. "Wow! It's Sue! She's here! She's making an appearance!"

"What a blessing for the racing industry to be able to witness Sue's return during our lifetime!" "Well, now the race will be interesting. Quickly stream it! Let everyone witness this momentous occasion." With that, many of the audience members pulled out their cell phones as they were ready to do a live broadcast. The majority of their lenses were focused on Elise.

She clutched the steering wheel and focused on the finishing line. As the cars raced off in unison after the gunshot, she maintained her gaze on the route ahead of her. Any thoughts of distraction vanished from her mind as she headed in the direction of the finishing line...

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Elise's ranking quickly increased to the top three of her group. As it stood at the current moment, Alexander was ahead of her. Since this was the preliminary stage where groups competed, she only needed to be in the top three to qualify

for the final round. Thus, she maintained her steady speed and had no thoughts of racing toward the finishing line. As she drove, she listened to the hum of the car engine where everything seemed normal and the fear in her heart was finally lifted. As the car crossed the finishing line, cheers erupted around her once again.

In the end, she came in first for the group stage and he followed behind her at a close second. Her gaze slightly darkened as she sat inside the car. Then, she alighted from the vehicle and upon noticing the on-site car mechanics, she waved her hand at them. "Please help me take a look to see whether the car is malfunctioning." Although she wasn't speaking loudly, the surrounding employees had heard her and began to look at her one by one. The lead mechanic quickly responded and started to inspect Elise's car. "Is something wrong with your car, Sue?"

"There can't be anything wrong with it, can there? You came in first! You're going to enter the final round. What are you going to do if something has happened to the car?" The crowd chattered, but Elise only pursed her lips silently and waited for the lead mechanic's confirmation after he was done with the inspection. "There's nothing wrong with this car." It was such a simple sentence, yet it was enough to cause her heart to sink. If the car wasn't in trouble, did that mean the other party hadn't made their move yet? If so, the final event... "I see.

Thank you," she replied before closing the car door. After that, Alexander made his way over to her while simpering, "Your keys, Sue." Now that he was facing Sue, he no longer had his usual attitude and instead gave off the appearance of a humble fan. His kind of uncharacteristic behavior had immensely surprised her. Nonetheless, Elise didn't reach out to accept the car keys; she only coughed lightly as she intentionally altered her voice before saying, "I still intend to use your car for the final round. Is that okay?" While Alexander had no idea why Sue fancied his car so much, he was only all too willing to concede to her request.

"Of course! You can have it for as long you want." "Thank you," she replied as she turned to leave. Then, he quickly gave chase. "Your return to the racetrack has left me surprised, Sue. I wonder if I may have the honor of inviting you out to dinner." Upon hearing his invitation, Elise frowned. She never thought that he'd chase after her only to ask that question. Alas, if she were to have dinner with him, he would see that Sue was actually Elise since she only wore a cap and mask today. Thus, she rejected him off the bat. "I'm sorry, Mr. Griffith, but I have to leave right away as I'm busy."

This time, Alexander was the one to be surprised. Sue actually knows my name. As he was caught up with that thought, she went farther away. He couldn't help letting out a small smile while watching her silhouette disappear into the distance. It was after many years that he finally had the chance not only to meet her but to converse with her in person. To him, it was a lucky day indeed. After leaving the race, a brooding Elise sat in the car. She had clearly heard the other party expressing that they intended to make their move today. Yet, nothing had happened at all.

That thought itself made her frown deeply, but the sound of her cell phone ringing in her pocket interrupted her at that moment. "Coming to the bar, H?" "Yup," she answered. "Give me 10 minutes." Julius understood what she meant.

"Alright. I'll wait for you here then." Once Elise arrived at the bar, she headed into the room upstairs, whereupon he immediately snubbed out the cigarette in his hand. "Your performance at the race today was excellent.

While I didn't get to witness it in person, I could tell from the live stream that you'll have no problem winning this championship. The only thing I'm curious about is why you would want to switch cars on the spot when you went through so much trouble to get a vehicle from me." Without explaining anything, she merely answered, "It looked good, so I wanted to give it a try." Of course he didn't think she was telling the truth since he had watched the race and saw Alexander driving her car. Moreover, from what he knew, she was currently staying at Griffith Residence.

Nevertheless, he didn't expose her lie and only quipped, "It's a pretty good car, but it doesn't perform as well as *yours* does." With a grunt, Elise gently answered, "I don't rely on performance to win my races." What she relied on was her skill. Nothing else mattered. As Julius appreciated her confidence, he acquiesced and began to look forward to the race tomorrow. The final round of the racing competition was even grander than the preliminary one. There were around 20 to 30 thousand audience members in attendance to the point where even Julius had secured a VIP ticket.

As a result of his ticket, he was directly ushered into the auditorium to await the beginning of the match. Over at the backstage, Alexander waved to Elise and held a bottle of water toward her the moment she arrived. Then, she accepted the bottle with a word of thanks before sipping it. There were only seven competitors for the final round, all of whom stood out during the group stage for their considerable skills. "Competitors, the race will begin in five minutes. Please head to the waiting area to get ready," a staff member stepped forward to announce.

As Elise stood up, she informed Alexander, who was next to her, "Let's go." He grunted in acknowledgment and closely followed her. There was thunderous applause from the audience the moment those two appeared. Everyone was so focused on her that he became nothing more than an accessory, yet he felt extraordinarily honored. "Good luck, Sue!" "We'll always support you!" "We'll be waiting for you at the finish line!"

The united cheers of Elise's fans brought the atmosphere to a climax and she scanned the audience with a small smile, finally locating Julius sitting at the front row and watching her expectantly as if in encouragement. "Get ready, contestants!" With that, each contestant went up to their own race car with Elise in Track 3 and Alexander in the neighboring Track 4.

As they all climbed into their cars, she tightly gripped the steering wheel and looked ahead. The moment the gunshot rang, she floored the accelerator and sped forward. It took less than half a mile for her to place in the lead, but despite the cheers from the audience that grew louder, her expression remained placid and her heartbeat steady.

She focused on the driving instead and steadily accelerated so that she could finish the race in one go. Meanwhile, Alexander was also driving quickly and in

second place, he had remained behind her but in front of the other races. By now, they were almost neck and neck, yet his car shuddered minutely at this moment. As he narrowed his eyes, he tightened his grip on the steering wheel, but the shaking only increased.

He quickly slammed the brakes only to discover that there wasn't the slightest bit of use. Instead, the car only continued to gain speed. "F*ck!" he shouted. By now, he had figured out that something was wrong with his car. Yet, he only had one concern, for he knew that he would lose control of the car sooner or later if he had no way of braking. As his car quickly caught up to Elise's, he forced open his car door and fought against the bite of the wind that hit his cheeks while shouting at her, "Get away from me! My car's malfunctioning!"

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Alexander spoke in a panicked tone, for he was deeply scared of crashing into Elise's car. Yet, although she hadn't heard him, she also suspected that something was amiss. How was it possible that even after switching cars with him, her car was alright but his was malfunctioning? Meanwhile, the audience around them was also shocked by the scene. All held their breaths as they stared into the arena. However, Elise couldn't care less at this moment.

She tightened her fingers around the steering wheel almost in the same second and made a hard turn to directly crash into Alexander's car. The two cars collided with a loud bang; the impact sent her body flying forward with the momentum before she was restrained in her seat by her seatbelt. The horrified audience stood up at such a scene. "What's going on?" "What has happened to Sue?" "Did she actually just drive into that car?"

As the audience gasped around him, Julius also stood up in horror; his heart sank when he caught sight of the mangled cars on the racetrack. The thing was that Elise was neither an impulsive person nor one who would simply run her car into others. Whatever the reason was, there was something more than what had just happened. Meanwhile, over in the arena, she opened her car door and emerged from the vehicle before she yanked open Alexander's door. "Are you okay?" Due to the impact from the collision, it took a dazed Alexander a moment to lift his gaze to meet hers.

"I'm okay..." It was only after saying that did he realize his legs were trapped. "Can you move your legs out?" she asked again, to which he shook his head. "No." The sudden turn of events had left the racetrack employees a little bit at a loss, but fortunately for them, there was already a medical personnel on-site who quickly dashed forward to pull an injured Alexander out of the car. "He has severe leg injuries and needs to go to the hospital at once," the doctor ordered before arranging for his nurse to wheel him off-site. Meanwhile, Elise found someone to tow the car and check it for faults.

Before he left, Alexander deeply gazed at her. He knew that if it weren't for her colliding her car into his to forcefully stop it, he would be in an even dire straits

now. "Thank you, Sue..." he murmured. The race ended prematurely as a result of that. Due to the collision, she lost the opportunity to win the championship and was instantly eliminated with the championship going to someone else. "What happened to the car?" Elise asked. As he lowered his eyes, the car mechanic answered, "The brakes were cut." It was a disgrace to the organizers that such a problem arose during a competition.

There were many media outlets on the scene as well, which made it impossible for the organizers to prevent them from reporting about the news. Meanwhile, Elise was incensed to learn that her knowledge that someone would tamper with Alexander's car didn't serve any purpose. Even though she had switched vehicles with him, it wasn't enough to prevent the accident. "Our apologies, Sue. It was our fault for overlooking something so major," a staff member sincerely apologized.

They dared not offend her without a doubt. "We never thought someone could be so bold as to tamper with a contestant's car and cause such inconvenience to you. We are deeply sorry." As Elise's gaze darkened, she sniped, "If there was any use in apologizing, we wouldn't be needing the police. I'm going to need you to account for what has actually happened here." While wiping the sweat off his forehead, the man answered quickly, "Of course, of course. Don't worry, we will investigate this incident thoroughly." She ignored him in response. Although Alexander was fine, the car was wrecked.

No matter what, she had to find out who the real culprit was or his life would be in danger. Elise strode away and left the arena to head toward the exit where Julius was already waiting for her. Without any hesitation, she opened the car door and climbed into his car. "To the hospital." He didn't ask anything; he merely started the car and sped off. After arriving at the hospital, she learned that Alexander had only experienced superficial injuries and that there were no severe wounds. "You're lucky to have only suffered contusions. If the crash had been more severe, it would have threatened your life instead," the doctor explained.

Then, he advised, "Racing is dangerous. It would be for the best not to treat your life so cavalierly and to avoid participating in such dangerous events instead." Upon hearing the doctor's words as she stood at the door, Elise finally relaxed. Nonetheless, she didn't enter the room and only turned to leave. When she returned to the car, Julius looked at her and asked, "Are you worried about this man?" "Let's go home," she told him without answering the question. He pursed his lips and maintained his gaze on her as he probed, "What's the matter? You've never been one to beat around the bush, H. Why are you avoiding my question now?"

"What do you want to know?" she asked. "What's your relationship to him?" His smirk broadened. "We're friends." The answer was stoic, but it was clear that he didn't believe her. "Just friends?" Elise raised her eyes and stared straight at him. "What kind of relationship do you think we have?" Julius slowly pointed out, "If you're just friends, you're surely treating him too well to be sacrificing the championship without any hesitation for his sake. Is he your lover, H?"

"You assume too much, Julius." Her response naturally made things clearer to him and he couldn't see any amusement to be gained from pursuing the matter

any further. "Alright, keep your secrets. You don't have to say anything for me to figure it out." As he said that, he started the engines and began to drive off to the hospital. "When will you return to Athesea?" "In a couple of days after I have visited Sutherland," she responded, watching the scenery flash by her window.

The news pleasantly surprised Julius. "You're finally going there? You might have not known this, but he's constantly complaining about how much he's taking on and how tired he is. He has been hoping to shift the responsibilities back to you." "No one is more suited than him to this role," Elise refuted. "Asking him to manage the entire company was the best choice." "Let me say, H, this is a business empire that you created with your bare hands. Don't you worry at all?" He didn't understand what she was up to, but she only smiled in response. Upon seeing that she wasn't going to elaborate further, he texted Arthur Sutherland.

Right at this moment, inside *Rise*, the most prestigious office building in the prosperous district in Tissote, Arthur had only just ended a meeting and he was rubbing his temples while remaining seated in his chair. He was about to relax for a bit when his cell phone chimed. Upon reading its contents, he sprang up from his seat and exclaimed, "My god! Boss is coming back!" It was a day he waited for many years that he was now on the verge of tears.

After all, Elise had left the company in his care for a few years now and he finally could catch a breath. Arthur immediately rang Julius and asked, "When will Boss be here?" As Julius glanced at Elise in the passenger seat, he answered calmly, "After an hour." "Tell her that I'll be waiting here," Arthur said and nearly leaped with joy.

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After hanging up the phone, Arthur hurried to gather everyone in the office. An hour later, the foyer was fully crammed with staff members, most of whom craned their necks to look outside the door. As the car slowly arrived at the familiar place, Elise felt her heart growing conflicted. Once the vehicle stopped at the entrance, a security guard immediately stepped forward to open the car door for her. "We're here. Go down and have a look," Julius gently said and she did as told.

The moment she stepped down from the car, Arthur sprinted forward and exclaimed tremulously, "You're finally here, Boss." Behind him were her company employees, who began to greet her warm-heartedly one by one. "Welcome back, President Sinclair!" As she watched her employees welcoming her, Elise suddenly remembered how easily and carefree it was to pass the burden to Arthur all those years ago. Yet, even now that she was back, she had no intention of taking over this burden. "Thank you, everyone. You may return to your work now," she told her employees, upon which they hurriedly dispersed.

Meanwhile, he was still updating her with excitement on the changes that the company had undergone during these past few years. He didn't even stop talking during their elevator ride to the top floor. It wasn't until she sat down behind the president's desk that an emotional Arthur questioned, "Are you back now to give

me a long vacation, Boss? You may not know this, but I've even postponed my *wedding* a few times throughout the years for this company." When Elise saw his pitiful look, she couldn't help saying, "Alright, I'll give you a month-long vacation."

"Only a month?!" His expression instantly fell. "Quit while you're ahead. Don't forget that I'll have to look for your replacement during your month-long vacation," Julius reminded. Although Arthur was still a little unhappy, he meekly accepted what was given since a month was better than nothing. "Of course, Boss. I'll do as you say." Nonetheless, he couldn't refrain from asking, "When are you coming back to manage the company? I can't handle things by myself here." The problem was that Elise hadn't actually considered that question; she was only here because the loss of a cash prize from the racing competition meant that she needed to take money from her company.

"Transfer ten million to this account later," she informed Arthur, to which he agreed without looking at the information. "I'll have the Finance Department do it in a bit," he informed. "It's best that you return, Boss. The company needs you." She gently shook her head. "You have to keep going. I believe in you; you can do it." However, he would no longer be satisfied with this platitude. After all, that was what she had told him all those years ago, yet she was being similarly evasive more than two years later! "One year!" Arthur held up a finger.

"One year at most thereafter you *must* come back." Upon realizing that her words couldn't placate him, Elise could only agree to his request. "Alright. We'll talk about it after a year then." Her words significantly made him relaxed, but he still lamented his misfortune. Nonetheless, with no recourse in sight, he could only roll up his sleeves and continue to work hard. "I feel better with that promise of yours, but you should still have a look at this quarter's financial statements." Arthur quickly instructed the secretary to bring the relevant reports to him.

The mountainous pile only made Elise want to slink away as there were so many documents that it would take her an eon to finish reading them. "I trust whatever you've seen, so I don't think I need to inspect it again." After Elise said that, she stood up. "I'm here today just to take a look. The company has been growing under your leadership while business has been booming, which makes me feel at ease to leave the company in your hands." With that, she glanced at Julius, who immediately understood her intention. Then, he offered Arthur a polite smile before saying, "We'll be leaving now."

For a moment, Arthur was tempted to stop Elise from departing, but he knew he would never be able to do so and decided not to give it a shot after all. As she stood at the entranceway and took in the familiar surroundings after exiting the company, she inhaled deeply. When she founded the company all those years ago, it was nothing more than a small workshop—his contributions were inseparable from how much the company had grown these few short years.

She gave the company to him as she trusted in him, but more than that, she believed in his ability to bring the company to greater heights. Her cell phone rang at that moment, which shattered her thoughts. "I found the information you need, Boss," Jamie announced at the other end of the line. As he continued to

speak, her gaze darkened. "I see," she told him. "I'll be back as soon as possible. Don't make any rash decisions before that." Upon hanging up the phone, she looked at Julius. "It looks like I can't stay here. I'll have to head back to Athesea." Julius agreed, "I'll send you to the airport then."

..... By the time she returned to Athesea, she had already swapped her disguise for the ordinary, unremarkable, and unbecoming Elise. The moment Elise exited the airport, she noticed that Jamie was already waiting at the gates. Upon seeing her, he alighted from his car and called out, "Boss!" After grunting, she instructed, "Get into the car before we talk about anything else." They entered the vehicle one by one, after which he handed her a document. "I looked into the rival families that had grievances with the Griffith Family but couldn't find anything.

However, one person stood out to me as a suspect more than anyone else." As she flipped through the document, her gaze darkened. "It's him?!" "Yup," Jamie said. "I was surprised as well. One would really have to be ruthless enough to try and kill their own brother. I don't know why he held back the first time, but the investigation shows that this matter is related to him." The conclusion made her tightly knit her eyebrows. Never did she expect that the person who would try to kill Alexander was Matthew himself. "Watch him covertly for now.

See whether he makes any new movements. I imagine he'll try again now that he has messed up, so we need to stay ahead of the game and keep him under our control." "Understood, Boss. Leave this to me. It's getting late and you must be tired from the flight. I'll send you back." Without further delay, Jamie sent Elise to the Griffith Residence, whereupon she was greeted by the sight of Jonah and Danny having a conversation in the living room.

Then, she said, "Hi, Grandpa!" Jonah lifted his gaze and gave a broad smile. "You're back, Ellie! Where were you these past two days? I haven't seen you at all." "I had some business to attend to," she could only explain. "The good thing is that I've finished attending to it." "That's good." He nodded.

"By the way, the shareholders' meeting for the Griffith Group is this Friday. Come with us." She stammered, "M-must I?" Next to Jonah was Danny, who stared at her. "You're a major shareholder who owns 30% of the stock in Griffith Group. What do you think?" A somewhat embarrassed Elise rubbed her head. "Alright. Of course, Grandpa, I'll come with you on Friday."

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After Elise said that, she went upstairs. Winter was approaching and it was rather chilly in the room upstairs, so she had to switch on the heater to warm up the room. The news that Alexander had sustained an injury when he had been in Tissote was well-hidden from the Griffith Family. He returned from Tissote a couple of days after that incident and immediately buried himself in work, so Elise didn't see him for several days in a row, up until Thursday evening. When

she had barely finished her dinner and was about to leave the dining table, she heard the sound of a car coming from outside.

Thereafter, the maid announced, "Young Master Alex has returned." Upon hearing that, Elise subconsciously slowed down her footsteps as she waited for Alexander to enter the house. Pretending to run into him, she murmured, "You are back." The weary look on Alexander's face was rather obvious as he had been working tirelessly for the upcoming shareholders meeting. However, the moment he saw Elise, he felt as if the fatigue in his body seemed to have dissipated. In the end, he hummed in response. "Have you had your dinner?" "I've just eaten. How about you?"

He hummed again, but the maid chimed in from the side, "Young Master Alex, you didn't inform us that you would be back for dinner, so we didn't prepare enough food. I'm afraid you may have to wait for a while." Upon hearing that, Alexander replied, "I'll go upstairs to attend a meeting first, then. Call me when dinner is ready." With that, he turned on his heel and walked up the spiral staircase, while the maid hurried into the kitchen to prepare dinner. Upon seeing that, Elise followed the maid to the kitchen. "Stella, let me help you." "There's no need for that, Miss Sinclair.

I'll be fine on my own. Young Master Alex loves noodles, so I'll make that for him." Nevertheless, Elise insisted, "It's not difficult to whip up some noodles, so let me help you with that. You have been busy for the whole day and you should take some rest." Stella initially wanted to reject her kindness, but Elise's enthusiasm reminded her of Jonah's words, so she changed her mind and handed the task to Elise. "Do take your time, Miss Sinclair. Let me know if you need anything." In the end, Stella left the kitchen. Thereafter, Elise looked at the ingredients in the refrigerator and took out a tomato and an egg.

She then skillfully made a bowl of noodles with just those two ingredients. As she looked at the tomato and egg noodle that looked wonderful, she felt the corners of her lips etch upward into a sweet smile. In the end, she brought the bowl of noodles upstairs. Currently, Alexander was in his study. When she walked closer to the door that was left ajar, she heard his voice and learnt that he was having a video conference. As it would be inappropriate to disturb him at that moment, she stood outside until the meeting ended before she knocked on the door.

"Come in." Alexander's voice was heard from inside, and Elise pushed the door open to enter the room. "I've made you a bowl of noodles. Dig in." Alexander was surprised when Elise entered the study with a bowl of noodles, so he quickly rose up to take the bowl from her. However, after a glance at the bowl of noodles, he immediately knew that it wasn't Stella's cooking. "You made this?" he asked and she nodded, feeling astonished by his observance. "Come and try it out. I'm not sure if it has become soggy, though." Alexander then used a fork and tasted the noodles.

He found that it was quite delicious, so he praised, "It's tasty. I never expected you to be so good a cook." Seeing that he was eating the noodles, Elise murmured, "It's just ordinary noodles. I'm glad that you like it, though. I shall take my leave if there's nothing else." Alexander hummed in response and Elise exited the study. The next moment, Alexander was left all alone in the study. Looking at the bowl of noodles, he felt warm inside and the corner of his lips

curved upward into a pleasant curvature. Then, he guzzled the noodles and soon finished it.

The portion wasn't exactly filling, but he considered himself lucky to have an opportunity to taste Elise's cooking. The next day was the day the shareholder meeting of the Griffith Group was held. Elise, who had taken leave from school in advance to attend the meeting, woke up and specially changed into a formal attire before heading downstairs. In the dining hall, Jonah was seated at the main seat, while the other young masters of the Griffith Family were seated at both sides. "Grandpa, I have other business to attend to, so I won't be joining the shareholders meeting," Jack started, and Danny chimed in, "I won't be going as well.

I have to prepare for the upcoming semester exams." Upon hearing that, Jonah didn't force them to be present. "Alright. You all can go about your work. Just leave the company matters to Alex." Alexander, who had been quiet, raised his eyes and caught sight of Elise, who came from around the corner. "Good morning, Grandpa!" Elise greeted Jonah and the latter responded with a grin. "Ellie, quickly come over to have your breakfast. Follow me to the office later." "Sure, Grandpa!" She then sat down. Meanwhile, Jack, who had finished his breakfast, stood up.

"Grandpa, I'll head over first. You all enjoy your meal." With that, he left the scene. Just then, Alexander took a piece of jam sandwich and handed it to Elise. "Try this out." Jonah, who saw what was happening, was so glad that he was unable to conceal the smile on his face. It seems like Alex is finally enlightened. Elise, on the other hand, took the sandwich and thanked him. Then, she took a bite and found that it was actually her favorite strawberry jam sandwich. She cast a deep glance at Alexander, wondering how he knew that she loved strawberry jam.

"Alex, would you mind taking Ellie to the office? I will head over slightly later." Unable to grasp Jonah's intentions, Alexander replied, "Grandpa, I have some work-related matters that I need to report to you." "There's no rush. We can talk about it at the office," Jonah suggested. Alexander, however, persisted because it was a rather urgent matter. "Grandpa, let me talk to you about it on the way there." Upon seeing how serious he was, Jonah was able to guess what he wanted to talk about. "Alright, then. We will talk on our way to the office."

As this wasn't something Elise should know about, Alexander turned to Elise and said, "I'll get the driver to take you there. I'll head over with Grandpa first." Elise naturally agreed since she wouldn't be playing any important role during the shareholder meeting later. "Okay, no worries. You may make a move with Grandpa first." Hence, Jonah and Alexander rose to their feet and they left the house together, leaving Elise alone in the spacious dining hall. After she finished her breakfast, the maid had already prepared her bag. "Miss Sinclair, here is your bag."

Elise took the bag and thanked her before heading out. As the driver had been waiting for her at the door, Elise immediately got into the vehicle, then grabbed a pen to do her homework. Thirty minutes later, the car arrived at the Griffith Group. Upon seeing the vehicle of the Griffith Family, Cameron, who had been anxiously waiting at the entrance, thought that Alexander had arrived. Hence, he

stepped forward to greet him, only to find that it was Elise who alighted from the car.

"Miss Sinclair? Where's President Griffith?" Elise was rather surprised by his question and she countered, "He departed together with Grandpa before me. Hasn't he arrived?" Upon hearing that, Cameron furrowed his brows. "I tried to call him a few times earlier but his phone was switched off. The shareholder meeting is about to begin, but I can't reach him." Puzzled, Elise fished out her phone to call Alexander, but the latter's phone was still switched off.

"Miss Sinclair, please head toward the lounge first. I'll wait for them for a little longer." Without giving it much thought, Elise took the lift up to the penthouse. Nonetheless, for some reason, she felt rather uneasy and her eyelid twitched hard. At that moment, an urgent ringtone was heard—it turned out to be a call from Jamie. "Boss, there's bad news. Matthew has struck again. A major road accident happened on the southern part of the Riverwell Highway and Alexander was in the car."

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At that moment, Elise felt as if her world was spinning out of control and her face instantly blanched. "What did you say?" She staggered as the four words escaped her lips, but Jamie continued, "Three vehicles collided and it was a total mess at the scene. I heard that Alexander has been rushed to the hospital." Elise could feel her hands trembling. "Which hospital? I'll go there right away." Jamie told her the hospital's address and Elise immediately rushed out of the building. When Cameron, who still had no clue about the incident, noticed Elise's pale face, he asked, "Miss Sinclair, what's wrong?" Elie grabbed his arm and she struggled to squeeze out even a few words. "Angelove Hospital. Take me there now. Something's happened to Alexander." As Cameron was completely clueless about the incident, he was left struck by her words. At that moment, he received a call that instantly caused the color to be drained from his face. After he hung up the call, he uttered in a hoarse voice, "Miss Sinclair, I'll take you to the hospital right now."

Cameron and Elise rushed to the hospital. At the hospital, Elise bumped into Alexander, who was sitting in the hallway with his clothes stained crimson and his face covered with bruises. At that moment, he seemed disheveled and dejected. "Alexander, are you alright?" Elise stepped forward and asked. At the same time, Cameron questioned, "President Griffith, how are you?" Alexander raised his eyes and met Elise's. At that instant, he had a sense of despondency in his eyes, an emotion she found unprecedented on him, which reminded her of something. "Where's Grandpa?

How is he?" Alexander then opened his mouth and muttered in a dry, hoarse voice, "He is undergoing emergency treatment inside." It was merely a few simple words, yet saying them used up all his strength. Upon hearing that, Elise felt that her heart skipped a beat. She raised her eyes and looked at the illuminated sign hanging above the emergency treatment room while inwardly

praying for Jonah. "Don't worry, President Griffith. Mr. Griffith will be fine," Cameron murmured, although he himself knew how futile it sounded. Alexander looked up at the ceiling while his mind kept replaying the moments when the accident happened earlier, and the scene when Jonah protected him.

At that thought, he felt his eyes redden and tears coursed down his face from the corner of his eyes. He tried to wipe it away with his hands. "Grandpa will be fine. I'm sure that he will be fine." Even Alexander was unsure whether he was comforting Elise or himself, but he could at least find some peace in those words. Just then, the lights above the door to the emergency treatment room were switched off and the doctors exited the room. Alexander and Elise quickly went up to them. "Doctor, how's my grandfather?" Alexander asked as he gripped on the doctor's arm.

The doctor removed his mask and sighed. "We've tried our best, but the patient's injury is too serious. He is going to take his last breath, so you may enter the room to bid him farewell." Upon hearing that, Elise felt her legs go weak while Alexander rushed into the room. "Grandpa!" Jonah, who had lost his usual vigor, seemed to be breathing his last few breaths. Upon seeing Alexander, he reached out a trembling hand. "Child, don't be sad. I'll be fine..." Alexander immediately grabbed his hand. "Grandpa, I'm sorry! It was all my fault!" "Silly child, why are you apologizing?

The company is now in your hands. You have to run it properly. I'll leave the responsibility of leading the Griffith Family to success in your capable hands." Alexander looked at Jonah with reddened eyes, but he tried his very best to keep his tears in check. "I understand, Grandpa. Rest assured, I'll make sure that the Griffith Group thrives." His words made Jonah feel much relieved. "I have something I wish to say, and I'm afraid that I won't be able to say it anymore if I don't do so now," Jonah uttered, coughing vigorously as he spoke. Upon hearing that, Alexander immediately responded, "Grandpa, you can tell me anything.

I'll definitely fulfill your wish." Jonah nodded, feeling comforted by his words. "Child, I know that you are good. This is also a decision that I made after much consideration." "Tell me; I'll always bear it in mind." Instead of replying to him, Jonah looked at the door and asked, "Is Ellie here?" Alexander nodded. "Yes, she's just outside. I'll ask her to come in now." He then rose up to go find Elise. "Come in quickly. Grandpa wants to talk to you."

And so, Elise entered the room. The moment she lay her eyes on Jonah, she couldn't hold back her tears any longer. "Grandpa..." She never thought that something like this would happen to Jonah, who had been as healthy as a horse when they had had a conversation this morning.

"Ellie, don't be upset. I'm fine..." Upon hearing that, Elise ran up to him and kneeled down. "Grandpa!" "Good girl, I know that the both of you are good children. I know that I won't be able to pull through this, but I have a wish that I need the two of you to help me fulfill." Puzzled by his words, Elise exchanged glances with Alexander, and the two of them reached a mutual understanding. "What is it, Grandpa? Just tell us."

A slight smile appeared at the corner of Jonah's lips as he gently placed both Elise and Alexander's hands together. "I hope that the two of you can be together and run the Griffith Family. Ellie, I'll leave both Alex and the Griffith Family to you." "Grandpa!" Elise sobbed, but Jonah smiled and mumbled in a trembling voice, "Alex is a fine young man. I'll be relieved if the two of you are together." Then, he turned to Alexander and said, "Alex, you have to treat her well and never let her down.

I... wish the best for the two of you... even after I'm gone." As Jonah said that, he was obviously at the verge of drawing his final breath. Tears drenched Elise's face. "Grandpa, don't leave us... Please, Grandpa!" Alexander's vision blurred too, but he still looked at Jonah and declared firmly, "I promise you, Grandpa.

I'll promise you this!" After Jonah heard Alexander's reply, he no longer had any regrets. His eyes slowly closed and his large hands lost its strength and fell. "Grandpa!" "Grandpa..." Cries of grief echoed in the emergency treatment room. At that moment, Jack and Danny, who had finally arrived at the scene, looked at the door to the emergency treatment room in disbelief.

The former then asked Cameron in a hoarse voice, "What exactly happened?" Cameron replied as he wiped away the tears at the corner of his eyes. "Mr. Griffith has left us..." Those few simple words made Jack stagger. He instantly rushed into the room and the next moment, he got on his knees with a loud thud. "Grandpa!" Danny came in after him and the scene made him sink into an abyss. "I'm sorry, Grandpa.

We came here too late." Jonah's passing was so sudden that it caught everyone off guard. The news of his death spread all over Athesea, and everyone knew that the head of the Griffith Family had passed away due to an accident. The moment Matthew received the news, he couldn't accept the fact and muttered to himself like a deranged man, "Why did it turn out this way? Why? Why was it Grandpa who died but not Alexander? Why?"

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"Young Master Matthew, it's no use crying over spilt milk since things have happened. Instead, we should contemplate our next step, especially on how we should handle Alexander in case he finds out about us." At that, Matthew wore a vicious smile. "You asked me to think of what we should do, but what can we really do? And what can Alexander do even if finds out about us? The blood of the Griffith Family still flows within me. Don't tell me he would choose to destroy his blood kin just to uphold justice?" Deep down, the assistant feared what Alexander would do, so he remained quiet for a moment before he responded, "Young Master Matthew, we should withdraw.

There's still a chance to turn things around if we manage to save ourselves." However, Matthew shook his head. "No, I'm not going anywhere; I will stay here and wait for him." Seeing that he was unable to change Matthew's mind, the assistant gave up. "Please take care, Young Master Matthew. We'll cross paths again if fate permits." With that, he left the room, leaving Matthew to sit alone in

his office. Matthew slowly closed his eyes as he knew that whatever that was meant to come would come.

... Jonah's funeral was held three days later, in which almost all the relatives of the Griffith Family attended. In these three days, Elise kept Alexander company in the mourning hall. The latter had been depriving himself of water and food for three whole days, which made him seem utterly haggard. "Alex, please eat something. You will collapse if you continue to act like this." Danny came over to try to talk some sense into him, but Alexander kept quiet. Upon seeing that, he tried to get Elise to persuade Alexander instead. "Boss, please talk to Alex! Grandpa has passed away, so please let him leave in peace! Life still goes on for the living."

Looking at Alexander, Elise understood how devastated he felt at the moment and any words said to him would be in vain. She gestured to Danny to leave, then said to Alexander, "Please eat something. Your body will break down if you carry on like this." Her words evoked some response from him. He raised his eyes and looked at Elise with eyes so deep that nobody could tell what was going on in his mind. "Let me go somewhere first. I'll eat when I get back." Then, he rose to his full height and marched out of the hall. Elise immediately called out to him in an attempt to stop him, but it was to no avail, as Alexander strode off without looking back.

Cameron, who was already outside waiting for Alexander, walked up to him the moment he caught sight of him. "Young Master Alex!" Alexander got straight to the point. "Did you manage to find out what I asked you to investigate?" At that, Cameron immediately handed him a document. "Yes. Everything is stated here." Alexander flipped through the document and the corner of his lips etched upward into a vicious curve. "It's him! Let's go and meet him. Also, send these to the police and get the best lawyer. I want him to rot in prison." "Roger that, Young Master Alex!"

After that, Alexander opened the car door and hopped inside, then the car sped off. When Alexander rushed to Matthew's office, there was nobody around save for Matthew, who stood alone before the floor-to-ceiling windows while looking into the distance. "You are finally here." Matthew's voice rang out and he turned to face Alexander. "You came earlier than I expected." Alexander marched forward and stood right before him. As their eyes met, the former exuded an imposing aura. "Was that your doing?" Matthew didn't deny and stated, "Yes."

The next second, Alexander reached out his hand and threw a punch at Matthew's left cheek. However, the stinging pain failed to provoke any response from Matthew, as he merely gazed at Alexander without even a hint of fear in his eyes. "That's right. It was all my doing. Yet, Alexander, what I wanted wasn't Grandpa's life but yours. Grandpa died for you." As soon as he said that, Alexander punched him again. "You b*stard!" Matthew grinned at him in response. "Go on, then. Hit me! I dare you to hit me to death!" As soon as Alexander heard that, his expression darkened and he threw punches after punches on him.

Matthew, on the other hand, didn't even try to avoid the strikes, as if accepting the pain would make him feel better inside. "Alexander, you can beat me to

death, but what's next? Grandpa is gone and this is a fact that won't change, even if you kill me." Matthew's words instantly put a stop in Alexander's attack. Alexander looked down at the other man from his height and scoffed, "You're right—it's a fact that won't change even if I wallop you to death. In this case, I'll make your life a living hell. Don't worry, I won't allow you to die so easily. I'll make sure that you will live the rest of your life in misery."

It was only then that Matthew started to feel fear. "Alexander, what are you planning to do?" Alexander, however, sneered without replying. The next moment, two men in uniforms walked into the room and used a pair of handcuffs to restrain Matthew. "Mr. Griffith, you are suspected of intentional homicide. Come with us." Matthew tried to break free but his efforts were futile. "Alexander, what are you doing? Don't forget that I'm also part of the Griffith Family. Don't you think that this is too much?" Alexander ignored him and watched as the latter was escorted into the police car.

It was only when the police car left the scene did he avert his gaze. Matthew wasn't sent to the police station directly; instead, he was sent back to the Griffith Residence. Looking at the familiar surroundings, he struggled non-stop. "Why did you bring me here? I don't want to be here! Let me go!" However, the policemen took him straight to the mourning hall, as though they heard nothing. In the hall, Matthew trembled involuntarily when all kinds of gazes were directed at him. He didn't even dare to look at Jonah's photo, instead keeping his head bowed the whole time.

"Matthew, you b*stard! How dare you show your face here?" Danny was the first to dash out from the crowd, but he was stopped by Jack. "Danny, don't do anything rash." Danny, however, couldn't care less. "It was him who caused Grandpa's death. He's a murderer!" Upon hearing that, Matthew trembled even more and shook his head non-stop. "It wasn't me! It wasn't my intention. I didn't mean for things to turn out this way." Elise peered at him with cold eyes, her fists tightly clenched by her sides. "Kneel and beg for forgiveness before Grandpa," she uttered, her voice filled with intense hatred.

Just as Matthew was about to get on his knees, someone kicked him on his calf, and he slipped before landing on his knees with a loud thud. Alexander's voice was then heard behind him. "Grandpa, I've brought him here. You used to tell us to care for our brothers, but who would have thought that it was him who caused your death?

Please forgive me for I won't be able to listen to you this time." After Alexander said that, he pressed his hand to the back of Matthew's head and forced him to kowtow at Jonah three times. Yanking him up, he thundered, "Take him away!" And so, the police took a devastated Matthew away. Before he left, he cast a deep glance at Elise beside, then slowly shut his eyes. ... After that, Jonah's funeral regained its peace and everyone returned to their daily lives, but Elise still felt uncomfortable with the sudden absence of a person in the family.

For instance, after she returned from school, she would subconsciously look toward the living room where Jonah used to sit and watch television or play chess. However, the area now became empty and she could never again see Jonah who had always loved and cared for her. At the thought of this, she felt a lump in her throat, but she soon averted her gaze and walked up the stairs.