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I reached out a hand to hold her, but it was already too late. She tumbled forward as she fell down and knocked her forehead against the tombstone. Seeing that, I rushed over to help her up. As I bent down, I noticed the injury on her neck. My gaze darkened, and I lowered my eyes.

“Mom, are you okay?” My voice was full of concern.

“I’m fine.” Mom looked exhausted. She fell onto me weakly as soon as I helped her up. She panted heavily, trying hard to respond to me.

I glanced at Crystal, who was looking around beside us. However, I did not manage to ask her any questions in the end. After all, she was an outsider, so it was inappropriate to tell her everything.

I rolled up my sleeves to clean up the grave with Mom. Then, I put a bouquet of lilies in front of the tombstone.

On the tombstone was a picture of a handsome-looking man. He was smiling brightly, with a hint of mischief in his eyes. It was a charming and attractive smile. Uncle Robert must be famous back then!

I crouched and prayed inside my heart, Uncle Robert, this is my first time here. I’m sorry that I never showed up over the past few years. If you’re watching Mom in heaven now, I hope you can bless her with a happy life. That’s my only wish.

Suddenly, a drop of warm water fell on the back of my hand. I turned around confusedly and noticed that Mom was wiping her tears. She was trying so hard to hold herself back that I could not even hear her sobs.

It was such a heartbreaking scene and tears began to roll down my cheeks uncontrollably. I never understood how much Mom had suffered. Grandma used to tell me that Mom had a hard life, but I could not imagine her pain. Surprisingly, I could sense her agony right at that moment.

“Mom!” I stood up and wrapped my arms around Isabelle. “It’s okay, Mom. Everything will be fine no matter what happens. Don’t be sad. You still have me by your side. I’ll protect you, okay? I’ve grown up now.”

I sent Mom home after leaving the cemetery. Mark was the first person who appeared in my mind as soon as I walked out of the house. I had so

many questions that I wanted to ask him. What's going on? Why is he doing that to Mom?

I knew he was the one who did that. After all, no one else would dare to lay a finger on her. Molten rage rolled through me as my eyes reddened. I gritted my teeth hard, my body trembling in anger. Although Mark is my biological father, he doesn't have the right to treat Mom like sh*t. That's really too much. A couple will never do that even if they get into an argument.

Back then, Lyle hated me a lot, but he never mistreated me. How dare Mark do that? How can he?

"I'm sorry, Miss. You can't enter."

"Get lost!"

"Miss, you can't go up without an appointment. Please stop right here, or I'm calling the security guards."

As soon as I reached Goldstein Corporation, a man walked forward to stop me from going upstairs. I wouldn't have made a fuss under normal circumstances, but I was so furious right then I could not even think straight. I pushed him away hard and roared, "Do you know who I am? How dare you get in my way? Get lost!"

The receptionist got terrified upon seeing my vicious expression. She stood there with a helpless look, but she did not plan to move away. It was fortunate that I was considered famous in the company. After a man approached her to tell her my identity, she swiftly walked away.

I headed upstairs and walked toward Mark's office. Before I could push the door open, Christopher's voice sounded from the inside. My expression changed drastically as I stood still in front of the door.

"Mr. Goldstein, are you sure you want to get involved in this? I can ask Darius to stop pursuing this matter, but you can't hide it forever. Someone will definitely find out what you're doing right now in the future. If that happens, Eve is the one who's going to get upset. Why don't you give up now and stay away from all these crimes?"

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Crimes? I did not need to guess to know that they were talking about the incident at the border. The border in Yorksland was close to the delta.

There were many criminals, and it was the most dangerous place. Zachary told me before that John and his men used to sell some illegal drugs there.

However, Zachary had to listen to everything Wesley said. That was enough to prove that Mark was the mastermind behind everything. I had never brought it up because I did not know how to intervene in that matter. Although Mark treated me well, I could not find a good time to talk about it.

Hearing their conversation, I realized that Mark had dragged Christopher into that matter too. How can he do that? No matter what, I'll never allow that to happen.

"Young man, no, I should address you as my son-in-law. Although you and Eve did not have a wedding, you two have collected your marriage certificate. You're now part of my family. Since we are a family now, why don't we help each other and do something good together? I'm not getting any younger. I'm going to give every penny I earn to Eve, and everything that belongs to Eve's is going to be yours in the end," Mark replied casually. His tone was slow and gentle.

"But I don't wish to have a father-in-law like you. Mr. Goldstein, you use Eve to threaten me. Don't you think that's inappropriate? That's not what a husband should do." My heart started beating so fast when I heard that. I got so terrified that I did not dare to open the door.

"So, you're not joining us?" Mark's voice turned cold all of a sudden.

"It's not that I don't want to join you. Of course, everyone wants to get wealthier. But there are still other ways to earn money, right? Lane Corporation is now one of the biggest companies in Avenport. The amount of money I have is sufficient for Eve and me to live comfortably for the rest of our lives. The same goes for you, Mr. Goldstein. Why are you so obsessed with money? You're not going to bring them with you after you're dead. Besides, Eve will never want those dirty money."

Christopher was calm. I could picture his expression when he said that. He must be lifting his chin with a light, distant smile now.

"So, you've decided not to join us, have you?" Mark questioned again.

"That's right. I'll never accept your request, even though you'll stop putting in a good word for me and Eve in front of Mrs. Goldstein. I've promised Eve that I'll only marry her in my life, so I won't get myself involved in those matters. I told Eve that I'll stay with her forever. I don't want to spend my life in prison. I can't leave her alone."

In fact, I had heard him saying those countless times. Hence, I was already used to it. However, I got so touched that I began to cry upon hearing that through the door. He's the best thing that ever happened to me.

"Does that mean that you're seeing me as your enemy now?"

"No. Rejecting that mission from you is the only thing I can do for you. Mr. Goldstein, there's still time for you to give up now. Otherwise, Eve will only end up getting hurt in the end. It took her some time to reunite with her father. I don't wish to see my friend send my father-in-law to jail."

"Hmph! If you've already made up your mind, I don't want to waste any more time talking to you. From now on, you go your way and I'll go my way. Please leave, Mr. Lane."

"Oh, before I go, I have something to tell you. The higher-ups are aware of what you're doing. The son of a high-ranking officer was involved in the incident at the border. No one in Avenport dares to go against him, including my dad. If anyone plans to take the Goldstein family down, you're going to lose everything. Please reconsider your decision, Mr. Goldstein."

I silently left Goldstein Corporation. Neither did I open the door to interrogate Mark, nor did I see Christopher. What they were talking about was far beyond my reach. I could not stop them or make any decision for them. However, I was determined to stay by Christopher's side no matter what.

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"Mom, are you feeling better now? Do you want to go to the hospital for a checkup?" I carried a bowl of soup to the bed and cooled it down before passing it to Isabelle.

"There's no need for that. It's just a mild illness." Frowning, Isabelle shook her head and took a sip of the soup.

"Do you want to try a candied fruit?" I handed some snacks to her.

Isabelle waved her hand at me. Then, she held her breath and drank all the soup. She retched as soon as she turned around. The soup tasted terrible, but it was good for health. I patted her back lightly before wiping her face with a warm towel.

A moment later, Mom finally recollected herself. She lay down on the bed, saying nothing. Her face was ghastly pale, and her gaze turned blank as she stared at the ceiling in a daze. After pondering for a second, I asked softly, "Mom, are you having a fight with Dad? Can you tell me what happened?"

"It's just a mild conflict," Mom answered my question calmly, but her expression turned even grimmer.

"Are you sure? Mom, I'm your daughter. You can tell me everything. Are you hiding something from me? Tell me, please? I can help you." I pushed her arm lightly.

Isabelle turned around and stared at me. Her gaze was calm, and she did not even blink. She shook her head after some time and said, "Nothing. I'm feeling a little tired. You go on with your thing. I need to take some rest before attending an important social event tonight."

"What? You still plan to go out when you're already sick? Can't you skip it? I can attend the event for you if it's really that important." I tried to stop her.

"No. I have to go. I have to attend it personally." Isabelle flashed me a warm smile. "Thank you. I know you're trying to help me, but I'll be fine once I get some sleep."

I finished cooking and placed all the food on the dining table. There were plenty of dishes, but all of them tasted ordinary. I had not been cooking for some time, so my culinary skills had dropped. After moving to the Lane residence, I had lost almost all of my skills since I did not have to do anything on my own.

It tasted awful when I took a bite of the caramelized pork, so I thought of ordering some takeaways for Christopher. Right then, I heard someone unlocking the door. Immediately, I opened the door and threw myself into Christopher's arms.

Christopher was terrified when he saw me appearing in the doorway out of the blue. He spread his arms wide and pulled me closer upon seeing me. "Why didn't you tell me that you're here? I would have come back earlier if I knew you were waiting for me."

I shook my head and buried my face in his chest. My heart gradually calmed down as I smelled the faint scent of sandalwood and tobacco on his body. "It's okay. Work is more important. I can come back anytime. Just give me a call whenever you miss me."

"I can't do that." Christopher carried me up as he kicked the door close. Spinning around with me in his arms, he chuckled. "You're the most important to me."

"I've never seen myself as such a big shot," I mumbled with an upset look. I was still in a bad mood.

"You're my precious darling, so I have to come back earlier for you." Christopher planted a kiss on the tip of my nose. "I want to stay with you when you miss me. Otherwise, you're going to zone out on your own."

"Let's eat. I made all the dishes on my own, but they don't taste really good." I handed him a set of cutlery. However, he stopped eating after taking a bite of the caramelized pork. "Is it really bad? Should I order some delivery then? I haven't been cooking for so long that I'm going to become a useless woman."

"No. It tastes as good as before." Christopher pulled me over to the seat beside him. "Don't worry. You still have me, even if you turn into a useless woman. I'm determined to be a good husband. I can learn everything, except giving birth."

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I couldn't help but burst into laughter. "Well, giving birth is something we can learn actually. I'm telling the truth. We have in-vitro fertilization nowadays, right? If you do that, I don't even have to bother thinking about kids."

"You wish!" Seeing that I did not dig in, Christopher pulled me into his arms and fed me instead. "My children have to be birthed from your womb. Otherwise, they won't be the fruits of our love anymore."

That night, when I lay in his embrace, I felt a rush of calmness in my heart despite having so many problems troubling me. It had always been like that. Being wrapped in his arms could bring peace to my mind that I stopped thinking about everything and relaxed.

Slowly and gently, Christopher's kiss fell on my lips and trailed further down. Once he entered me, he gazed at me intently and uttered in a soft voice, "Eve, it's been some time since we stayed together in the house just like this. Looks like I have to find a way to marry you as soon as possible so that we can become a true married couple."

“Christopher, I only want you in my life! If I can’t marry you, I’ll never get married.” I responded to his advances with my open arms, trying to please him with all my might. After all, I was willing to do anything for him because he was worth it.

I didn’t bring up his conversation with Mark the entire time, as I was confident that he could solve it. Even if I did mention it, he would only end up getting worried.

“No, that can’t do. We’ve got our marriage certificate, and I even stole you from your husband. Holding a mere wedding ceremony shouldn’t be any more difficult than that.” As he blinked his eyes, his breathing grew heavier.

I wrapped my arms around his shoulder before turning around to sit on him, pressing his shoulder to stop him from moving. In reality, it was during such a moment that men would wish for the woman to take the initiative since they wanted to enjoy the feeling of being pampered as well.

“I guess only you can make such a shameless remark while sounding justified.” I was a bit speechless at that. When I noticed his rapid breathing, I leaned forward and opened my mouth without hesitation.

“Don’t!” Knowing that I wasn’t fond of doing it, he quickly lifted my chin to stop me. However, I pushed his hand away and bent over persistently. I was determined to show him that I was willing to do whatever I could to please him.

After satisfying his urges, he pulled me into his embrace. At that moment, I was already sweating profusely. Once again, I couldn’t help but admit that a woman’s strength was incomparable to that of a man’s. Christopher could always go for three rounds without taking a rest, yet I could only pant nonstop in his arms after only once.

“Chris.” After pondering for a while, I decided to tell him what I saw when I went to the graveyard early that morning. “I found many wounds on my mom’s body. Do you think she fought with Mark? Those wounds look severe. They looked like the results of serious domestic violence on television. Should I talk to Dad about it?”

“What?” Christopher exclaimed. He looked even more surprised than me. “Mr. and Mrs. Goldstein look so in love; I didn’t expect that to come at all.”

Hearing that, I smiled resignedly. “That’s what I thought as well, but Mom was so upset this morning. I could even sense a huge wave of despair from her just by looking at her. What should I do?”

“You’re worried that your dad didn’t treat your mom well, aren’t you?” Christopher was quick to point out what troubled me the most. Following that, he said calmly, “They’re adults, so we can’t just butt in without understanding what’s going on. Mr. Goldstein cares about you. If you ask him directly, he might feel humiliated. In the worst-case scenario, he might even take out his anger on your mom.”

His words convinced me. Despite how strong my grudge, anger, and the urge to talk to Mark were, I could only suppress them for now. Even though I had yet to call him “Dad,” deep down in my heart, I had acknowledged him as my father. After all, it was undeniable that we were blood-related.

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I went to find Lucas that afternoon, but he hadn’t been in the Goldstein residence recently. Due to his weak body, he was hospitalized once again after catching a cold from attending a party. When Christopher and I arrived at the hospital, he was flipping through his medical record. Upon seeing me rush in, he frowned. “Did the Goldstein residence catch fire? Why are you in a rush?”

“It’s something even more serious than that.” Seeing that he looked fine, I went straight to the point. “It’s about my mom and... Dad. How much do you know about them? Is there anything that I don’t know?”

Lucas was at a loss for words. A while later, he finally asked, “What do you mean? They are your parents. If you, as their daughter, don’t even know what’s going on, how the hell am I supposed to know? Are you out of your mind? I’m your cousin, not your biological brother.”

“But you grew up in the Goldstein residence, so shouldn’t you know more than me?” I was a bit desperate at that point.

“What do you want to ask?” Lucas asked. He knew I had some questions in my mind and his anxiousness rose when I couldn’t bring myself to voice them after a while.

I began to panic when I recalled hearing weird sounds from Isabelle’s side whenever I called her. Quickly, I turned to Christopher for help.

He patted my back lightly to comfort me before saying in a calm voice, “She wants to ask you about the relationship between Mr. and Mrs.

Goldstein. Are they enamored with each other? Or do they quarrel frequently behind people?"

Hearing that, Lucas cast me a meaningful gaze. "You should at least tell me the reason for asking me that out of the blue, no? Otherwise, I don't know what I should say."

I took a deep breath and forced myself to face the issue. "I found some wounds on my mom and I don't know what happened since I wasn't home these two nights. Did they fight?"

Despite struggling for so long, I only managed to utter those words. Lucas was amused. "Isn't it normal for a couple to quarrel? Why are you so nervous? It's because you and Christopher are still a new couple; that's why you two have never fought before. Haven't you heard of the seven-year itch?"

"But Mom is badly injured!" In actuality, I, too, felt strange for asking such questions, yet I couldn't stop worrying if I didn't ask.

"Uncle Mark is cruel, but he treats all the women around him fairly well. He's not interested in women. Your mom is the only woman beside him for years. He was madly in love with your mom when he was young. Now, do you still think that they are on bad terms? Don't be so paranoid. If Uncle Mark hears about this, he will surely be sad. After all, you're his daughter."

He then paused briefly before continuing, "Sometimes, people tend to lose control when they are too stressed out. It's just once in a while, so don't worry. I bet he's even more upset than you are right now. Instead of running your mind wild here, why don't you go back and take care of Aunt Isabelle?"

The meaningful gleam in Lucas' eyes went unnoticed as I was too concerned about Isabelle.

"It's odd to hear such words from you." I sighed. "Forget it. Perhaps I'm truly overthinking. You're my friend, so I trust you won't lie to me."

I was somewhat relieved at his reassurance. "Get some rest. I'll go back to take care of my mom then."

"How heartless! I'm sick and you didn't even ask me about my wellbeing. And you call yourself a friend? Am I a tool that you can throw away after using it?" A bitter smile crept onto his face as he looked at me.

Ignoring Lucas, I leaned closer to Christopher and exchanged a passionate kiss with him. After that, I walked out of the ward while saying, "I'll let Chris accompany you for a while. He's a busy person and his rate is more

than a hundred thousand each second. Now that he's doing it for free, you should feel honored."