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"If I don't see her with Luna from now onward, and if I barely see her when I work with Luna in the future..

"I'd tell the whole world that you, Joshua Lynch, aren't a man of his word, having promised to give this girl a job but didn't," sneered Thomas.

Yannie's expression morphed at this moment. She bit her lip while she clenched her fists tightly. She knew Joshua did not offer her a job because she was mature, honest, and could see the bigger picture.

He did it because he wanted to provoke Thomas.

When Thomas insisted on seeing her during his cooperation with Luna or he would tell the world Joshua was a liar, he did not do it to help her. Thomas wanted to let Joshua know he would always be on the lookout to make trouble for Yannie in the future because of Joshua's decision.

Yannie gnawed on her bottom lip. She wanted to say something but did not know what to say. It was as if her courage left her right after she challenged Thomas. At this moment, she did not know how to reject Joshua's offer as Joshua simply decided her job for her without asking her permission.

"Alright. She'll listen to Mr. Lynch's arrangement." While Yannie was in distress, Mrs. Flores sighed and grabbed her hand lightly. Then, she lowered her voice to whisper into Yannie's ear, "Why were you suddenly so aggressive? You've always been so calm."

Frankly speaking, Yannie could just ignore Thomas when he pointed at her to ask her opinion. Thomas was just a guest in the house and did not have the right to request Yannie to answer his question.

At that time, Mrs. Flores thought her obedient, smart daughter would never react to Thomas' question, but she was wrong. Not only did Yannie answer his question, but she even went with the topic and disparaged him!

As such, Yannie and Mrs. Flores ended up being Thomas' enemies. Even if they had decided that Mrs. Flores was going to resign today and stayed clear from the Lynch family, they were forced to listen to Joshua's arrangement at this point and be on the same side with the Lynch family.

Thomas was not about to forgive Yannie after how she disparaged him. If they could not seek refuge under the Lynch family, Thomas could easily make their lives a living hell!

With that said, they had no choice but to seek shelter from the Lynch family so that Thomas would think twice before attacking them.

"Mother..." Looking at Mrs. Flores' gaze and behavior, Yannie bit her lip and sighed sheepishly.

She, too, did not know what had gotten into her. Her usual self would just leave the scene without saying anything in this kind of situation.

However, she found herself unable to keep her calm when Thomas singled her out.

Maybe it was because of her baby...or maybe she did not want her baby to see what an awful person his father was.

"Please look forward to it, Mr. Howard." Joshua curled up his lips and made eye contact with Thomas." You can say anything you want if you don't see Yannie around Luna, but..."

He squinted. "If you dare to bully her, I won't let it slide."

Thomas curled his lips and smiled, shooting Joshua a contemptuous look. "She's that important to you, is she? Could this girl, Yannie, be your mistress?"

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Crash!

Yannie, in her shock, dropped the glass of water that Mrs. Flores handed to her when she heard Thomas remark. Her eyes widened as she stared at him, unable to believe the audacity of this man

'Did he seriously ask that question?' Yannie thought.

Just because Joshua wanted to take care of her by offering her to be Luna's assistant... Just because Joshua would not allow Thomas to bully her...

Thomas dared to say that she was Joshua's mistress!

That question humiliated not only her but also Joshua and Luna!

Yannie bit her lip in anger as she glared at the man sitting on the couch with a disdainful expression on his face.

'I was wrong. I thought he was a warm, gentle, kind, and handsome man like the character he portrayed on the screen!

She used to rub her belly when she was pregnant while telling her unborn child that their father was the most handsome man in the world, all while being the gentle and cutest person that he was.

Alas, she saw Thomas' true colors today.

He was a vicious man who disregarded the facts, talked without caring about other people's feelings, and always mistaken innocent people.

Thomas said Joshua and Luna were not good people and that they did not deserve to live. He also said that Yannie and her mother were the Lynch family's dogs.

He...unknowingly said to the woman who cared for and birthed his stillborn, she who wallowed in misery for two months, was Joshua's mistress!

Anyone but Thomas could humiliate her. He had no right to do so, not when she had carried his child!

Yannie felt a surge of emotions overwhelming her, and she had no idea what overcame her, but she inhaled sharply, rushed up toward Thomas, and

Slap!

The sound of a slap echoed in the living room before anyone could react.

Everyone was stunned at this sudden turn of events.

Luna's eyes widened at the sight, thinking she was seeing things.

'Yannie...slapped Thomas?!

Thomas did not expect Yannie would dare to run up to him and smack him across his face.

As the buzzing in his ear vanished, Thomas, in his shock, raised his head to stare at the woman before him. He felt his face burning and stinging in pain due to the slap.

The exquisite facial features on his face that had distinctive stern lines grew distorted.

"You... How dare you slap me?" snarled Thomas.

"Why can't I slap you?" Yannie bit her lip and pulled back her burning hand.

She stared right into Thomas' eyes. "You humiliated me and Mr. Lynch! You deserve that slap!"

She took a deep breath and ran away to hide behind Mrs. Flores. "I'm telling you right now that there's nothing between me and Mr. Lynch. He loves his wife very much.

"If I hear you saying this again, I'll slap *y*ou again!"

Thomas burst into laughter at Yannie's words and watched how she cowered behind her mother. Somehow, his anger vanished.

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Thomas sneered and covered his face to look as he stared at the head that popped out from behind Mrs. Flores' shoulder. "Why are you hiding when you so bravely told me you'd slap me again if I repeat my words?" he sneered. "Come out here now. I'm going to say it again."

Yannie bit her lip as she silently stared at Thomas.

Joshua squinted at Thomas as he indifferently remarked, "Mr. Howard, is your face not stinging at the moment? If you dare to say such things again, maybe I'd join Yannie in slapping you, too. Once I do that, you might not be able to sit comfortably and threaten her anymore."

With a smirk, he coldly added, "Thomas Howard, I advise you to stop while you still can. You've created enough chaos for my family this morning, and if you continue with your act, I won't let you leave so easily.

"You should know that the Lynch family and the Landry family are the ones in charge of Merchant City. If ! want to do something to you, no one can stop me."

Thomas narrowed his eyes upon hearing this, knowing that Joshua was more than capable of doing what he said. Thus, Thomas sneered and stood up from the couch. "If that's the case, I'll be taking my leave now. He who fights and runs away lives to fight another day. This is your territory, after all."

He squinted and looked at Joshua before he sneered, "Still, it won't be long until you and the Landry family lose control over this city. Just wait and see."

After that, he took his coat and strode to the door.

Joshua sat on the couch as he watched Thomas leave with a smile on his face.

When Thomas and his assistant were finally far away, Luna exhaled deeply and walked toward Yannie and Mrs. Flores, extending her hands to grab Yannie's hand. "Does it hurt?"

Yannie bit her lip and shook her head. "... It's fine."

Looking at how scared Yannie was, the scene when Yannie fearlessly stood up against Thomas crossed Luna's mind.

She sighed. "Yannie, I never thought you could be so brave against Thomas."

Yannie blushed instantly. She lowered her head to look at her still-reddish palm. It felt numb and warm, the aftermath of slapping Thomas.

Truth to be told, she, too, was baffled as to why she was a different person when she went up against Thomas.

Just when Yannie was spacing out as she stared at her palm, Joshua remotely piped in, "Are you so brave 'when you face anyone, or is it only against Thomas?"

Yannie and Luna were stunned at this.

"What do you mean?" Luna raised her head and looked at Joshua dubiously.

"I noticed that she'd be nervous around you and me, but against Thomas, she's nothing like that.

"She seemed angry, disappointed, and helpless. The way she looked at Thomas was different; it was full of emotions."

Joshua then fixed his sight at Yannie. "Do you know Thomas?"

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Meeting Joshua's cold gaze, it was as though his deep, dark eyes were about to see through every thought Yannie had in mind. His question was so sharp that Yannie was at a loss for words.

Yannie bit her lip and lowered her head to look at her feet, reluctant to say anything.

In truth, she was a coward, and she was afraid of Joshua's merciless gaze. That was why she did not dare to raise her hand and make eye contact with Joshua. She was scared that she would accidentally spill to Joshua that she had, once upon a time, carried and birthed Thomas' baby.

The stillborn was a secret, and none but Father Samuel and the obstetrician knew about it. She did not know if anyone else knew about the baby's existence. Regardless, she did not want people to feel pity for her or laugh at her like she was a hot topic for their afternoon tea session,

There was a reason that led to the way Yannie thought, she had read gossip related to Thomas before.

It was a gossip where the woman said sadly that she was pregnant with Thomas' child and even showed proof of her pregnancy result. However, the outcome was terrifying.

Before Thomas and his company clarified the gossip, Thomas' fans started to ridicule the woman by saying that she was a sl*t, saying the woman got what she wanted and still trying to gain more attention. They claimed that the woman deliberately got pregnant with Thomas' baby and that the woman wanted to gain fame and wealth through Thomas.

Some even said the woman was delusional and that she should be locked up in an asylum forever.

Yannie had read all of those mean comments as she held the pregnancy result tightly in one hand. Although she was not that woman, she somehow felt those comments...were aimed at her.

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In the end, the gossip was just nonsense. The woman was not pregnant with Thomas' baby, and Thomas had never seen her before. However, the cyberbullying comments were imprinted deeply in Yannie's heart.

She swore she would never tell anyone about her being pregnant with Thomas' baby nor delivering the baby to this world. Even if Thomas asked, she would never fess up.

"Yannie?" Luna furrowed her eyebrows when she saw Yannie biting her lip tightly and said nothing. Thus, she looked at Joshua with curiosity, then back at Yannie again. "Say something."

Luna pursed her lips and walked over to grab Yannie's hands. When she did, however, she realized that Yannie's fingernails had pierced deep into her palms, so much so that she bled.

Luna's heart pounded vehemently when she saw the blood.

In the next second, she bit her lips and stood in between Yannie and Mrs. Flores. Then she grabbed "Yannie's hand lightly to stop her fingers from piercing into her palms.

"You don't know Thomas, right?" Luna asked.

According to Yannie's reaction, she could confirm that Joshua's assumption was correct. Yannie knew Thomas. However, Luna could not bear to see Yannie torture herself because the question made her nervous. Thus, she sighed and decided to protect this young woman from Joshua and her mother.

"You don't have to be so nervous; Joshua is just curious. I believe that you only acted that way just now not because you know Thomas, but that you wanted to protect me and my husband, didn't you?" Luna explained on behalf of Yannie.

Yannie's heart finally felt relieved when she heard what Luna said. Then, she slowly raised her head to look at Luna, who was smiling at her, before nodding. "Yes, I... I just think that Ms. Luna and Mr. Lynch are

good people and shouldn't be slandered."

"It's okay" Luna sighed and turned to look at Mrs. Flores and Joshua. "Since we've said that you'll be my assistant in Thomas' presence, we'll make it so. Il bring you to the studio to have a look. Is that alright with you?" After that, Luna looked at Mrs. Flores with a smile.

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"Is it alright if Yannie starts working today? Do you have any concerns?" asked Luna.

Mrs. Flores was startled at first, but she quickly recovered and nodded. "It's no problem at all! You can let her start work anytime you want; I'm fine with it."

She then turned and looked at Yannie solemnly. "Yannie, you have to work hard. Treat your work seriously, and don't think about slacking off."

Yannie pursed her lips and nodded. "Understood."

Once Luna got Mrs. Flores' permission, she grabbed Yannie's hand and dragged her out of the house." Let's go."

After they left the house, Luna and Yannie got into the car where Luna instructed the driver, "Send us to a clinic nearby the studio."

Yannie, startled at this, looked at Luna. "Aren't we going to the studio?"

Luna sighed and looked at Yannie's bloody palm. "Do you think you can work with these hands? Let's treat your wound first, and you can take the rest of the day off to rest up."

Her eyebrows furrowed. "I think it takes more than a day for it to heal. Why don't I tell your mother that you have to work overtime in the studio and that you're staying for a few days? I'll send you to my friend's place to rest. My friend also hurt his hand, you see, but his condition is more severe than yours."

If Yannie went to Sean's place, both of them could keep each other company. Luna could tell that Sean might suffer heartbreak two times within a short period. The first one was with Bonnie, and the second was with Kate.

She saw the way Kate and Luke looked, and also the way Sean looked at Kate.

Suddenly, she felt pity for Sean. Bonnie was probably his first love, and Kate was his second. Every single time, however, it fell apart.

With that thought in her mind, Luna turned her head to the side to look at Yannie.

The young woman before her was wearing white—washed jeans and a white—colored shirt. With her long black hair cascading down her shoulder, she looked like the endearing girl—next—door kind of woman.

"Maybe...she's the type of girl Sean will like. They're almost the same age, too. Since both of them hurt their hands, they should have many common topics to talk about.' Hence, Luna smiled and patted Yannie's shoulder. "My friend is quite handsome. I think both of you will be a good match!"

Yannie was stunned at the suddenness before her cheeks seared in a dusty pink color. "N–Nevermind. I... I'm not a good match."