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Evan recalled the first time he met Nicole, and a light flashed across his lifeless gaze.

Scene after scene, the things that happened between them, from the day he met her up till today, appeared in his mind. The more he recounted the events, the more puzzled he was.

What kind of person is she?

Evan could not figure her out.

As the night fell, he drove back to the Hillside Villa. A frown formed on his face as he watched the flickering bright neon lights from his car window that reminded him of the confusing string of unsolved questions.

When he returned home, Kyle and Juan were whispering to each other.

However, once they saw Evan, they immediately kept quiet.

"Daddy," Juan called sweetly.

In contrast, Kyle ignored Evan as he was upset that he was banned from seeing his mother.

"Daddy, can we go out for dinner today?" Juan whined like a baby as he ran to Evan and tugged on his clothes.

Slightly stunned, Evan nodded and gently asked, "What do you want to eat?"

"I want to eat fish, and I heard there is a winery that cooks the best fish," Juan replied.

Evan tenderly stroked Juan's head. "You sure know how to pick the right places. Let's go there then."

Then, he drove the twins to the winery. As soon as they got off the car, Evan spotted a familiar figure.

What is she doing here?

She is not with her children, and from the looks of what her companions are wearing, she is probably here for a business meeting.

To transform Lane Corporation from a hopeless business to an operational one will require much effort. Who knew she would actually put in this much effort?

Didn't she already take five hundred million from me? Yet this is the outcome?

"Daddy, let's go in."

The twins held their father's hands tightly as they knew that he had spotted their mother, and they were worried that he would leave.

Since we are already here, I should go with the flow.

Evan did not read too much into the situation. Holding onto the twins' hands, he headed in.

While choosing which private dining room to dine in, the twins took their time. After they saw Nicole entering room 604 with a few other people, they dragged Evan to the opposite room.

They thought that was the best place to monitor the situation in their mother's private dining room.

Though Evan could tell what the twins were up to, he said nothing.

Soon, the waiter came in and politely asked for their orders.

Evan glanced at the menu then passed it to the twins. He asked, "What do both of you want to eat?"

They happily ordered a variety of dishes with fish.

"Daddy, tonight we are feasting on all types of fish."

"Okay." After Evan replied, he looked toward the opposite room and saw a few bottles of alcohol on their table.

The light in his eyes dimmed. Is she here to drink with them?

Why did she not ask Rocky to entertain them for her but came here alone?

Moments later, the people in that room started to open the bottles. A shady middle-aged man personally poured a glass and pushed it towards Nicole.

The transparent liquid sloshed around in the cup. Nicole's pale face with slightly flushed cheeks made her look especially charming.

"Ms. Lane, let's have a drink first," The man requested.

Nicole was determined to close the deal, so she could not care less. Without much thought, she took the glass and downed it.

"You can really hold your liquor, Ms. Lane. Let me give you another toast then," the man suggested.

Nicole hesitated to take the second glass but still finished it.

The man grinned, "How satisfying! I love discussing business with people who are a good sport. Come, let's have a third glass..."

"Let's discuss some business first. My company..." Nicole tried to interrupt but was stopped.

"Ms. Lane, you only had two glasses earlier, but you have to give a toast to each person present here. I'll pour another glass for you."

Nicole stammered, "I...I don't have a high tolerance for alcohol. I think that's quite enough for me."

"How can we talk about our partnership when you are so insincere? You have to finish this glass to show your sincerity!"

Nicole looked at the glass of alcohol, then considered how much her company needed this partnership and the project. Worried that her chances to obtain this partnership would be affected, she forced the entire glass of drink down her throat.

Evan's face darkened as he watched Nicole downed numerous glasses from the other room.

Isn't she usually good at managing people?

Why is she allowing others to get her drunk without putting up a fight this time?

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Considering how she's seeking a partnership with these scums with hidden agendas shows that she has bad judgement.

The waiter walked in and served several delicious fish dishes to them.

"Please enjoy your meal."

Kyle and Juan looked at the table filled with food but neither salivated nor rushed to tuck in. Instead, they paid more attention to the opposite room.

Evan caught them looking, and he ordered, "Eat up!"

The twins reluctantly picked up their chopsticks and dug in.

While they ate, they occasionally glanced at the room opposite.

One could tell from their faces that they were eagerly trying to see their mother.

Nicole drank a few glasses of alcohol in a row and wanted to bring up the topic of their new project. However, the man beside her kept interrupting, finding various ways to encourage her to continue drinking.

"Sir, I have reached my alcohol tolerance. Let's talk about the project. Is Lane Corporation suitable to take it up?" Nicole said.

"I'll assume that you have no sincerity if you do not drink up. If you want to do business, you have to at least prove your sincerity, Ms. Lane, let's have another toast." The man insisted as he lifted the glass and passed it to Nicole.

Juan and Kyle were worried, and they whispered among themselves, "Will Mommy get drunk?"

"I think she will. That big bad guy keeps giving her more."

"He probably thinks that Mommy is pretty and wants to take advantage of her, so he is finding all sorts of excuses to make her drink."

"Exactly! Look at how smitten he looks. He keeps staring at Mommy."

The more the twins spoke, the more worried they became. Evan's expression darkened.

To him, it was Nicole's choice after all. Therefore, he forced himself to think that it was unnecessary to worry.

Sternly, he urged Juan and Kyle, "Quickly finish up so we can head home soon."

The twins looked at each other. How can we go home now? What if Mommy gets drunk?

Then, they exchanged looks and had a tacit understanding. Lowering their heads, they chewed on their food slowly, trying to extend their mealtime.

Evan narrowed his eyes and glared at Juan.

Juan could clearly finish the fish meat in a bite. However, he deliberately divided it into several parts and only ate after cutting them into such small pieces that he could barely pick up with the chopsticks.

"Are you trying to eat like an ant?" Evan questioned.

Juan laughed then explained, "Daddy, there is a saying that goes like this. One must eat slowly to enjoy the food. I am just following it." This rascal is still talking back to me.

Evan snorted coldly. He has such a glib tongue. He must have inherited it from his mother.

Then, he turned to Kyle, who went between sniffing the dish and taking a bite.

"Kyle, why are you eating like that?"

Kyle's reasoning was even simpler. He coolly looked at his father and retorted, "Daddy, some say that when you eat or sleep, you should not talk, so you should not be speaking to us now!"

His cold and dominating aura was a double of Evan's.

Evan choked and looked at the mischievous twins. He knew that they were doing this because they were worried for their mother. Maybe it is not a bad thing to let them see Nicole drunk. They will realize that she is not the good mother they think she is.

Evan did not rush them anymore and continued with his own meal.

In the opposite room, Nicole was already intoxicated. Feeling dizzy, she supported her forehead with one hand. Her curled hair rested on her shoulders, and her rosy cheeks made her look even more charming.

"Ms. Lane, have one more glass!"

Nicole waved her hand in protest. "I really can't have anymore."

After she spoke, she could feel her head spinning, and she groggily leaned against a chair.

Suddenly, several people in the room got up and left together after exchanging a few words.

Only Nicole and the man, who kept feeding her drinks, were left in the room.

The man tapped her shoulder and said, "Ms. Lane, shall we continue with more drinks?"

Nicole struggled to open her eyes and she could barely see the outline of the man's face in her drowsy state. She shook her hand and repeated, "No, I had enough to drink."

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Jack stared at her with a lecherous glint in his eyes. Then, he abruptly took out a packet of substance and poured it into the drink before extending it to her.

"Here. One last drink. After you've finished it, I'll collaborate with Lane Corporation. I'll sign the contract."

Collaborate. Sign the contract.

Upon hearing this, Nicole forced her eyes to stay open to meet his gaze. Jack was wearing a salacious smile on his face as he continued coaxing her to down the drink.

"Here, take it. Bottom up!"

Nicole accepted the drink from his hand and slowly lifted it to her lips. She was about to gulp it all down when suddenly, Juan dashed across the distance to grab the drink from her, then threw it harshly at Jack.

He was completely caught off guard as the contents in the glass splashed all over him.

Looking down at the sorry state he was in, Jack's blood boiled and he slammed his hand on the table at the same time he shot to his feet.

"Where did this little idiot come from?"

"Little idiot? Says the man who has an IQ lower than a child's!"

With that, Juan gave Jack a hard kick.

"Whose damned kid is this? Insolent! I'll teach you a lesson since your dad failed to do so!"

When Nicole saw that Jack was about to hurt Juan, she bolted up from her seat to stand in front of Juan.

"No... Don't... Don't hurt him!"

She leaned against the chair on unsteady feet, shaking her head vigorously to clear the fog in her mind.

Evan, who was by the door, narrowed his eyes at Nicole as she swayed on her feet.

Who would've thought that even blind drunk, she'd still protect her child? It seems like she's still useful in some ways.

Jack looked at an intoxicated Nicole with lust in his eyes.

"You can barely stand now, can you? After I deal with this damned kid, I'll take you to bed!"

The words had only left his lips when he let out a shriek of pain.

Juan and Kyle had each grabbed an unopened bottle of wine and smashed his legs with it.

A wave of excruciating pain swept through him. He could not even lift his foot to launch a kick at them. Hence, he bent down with the intention to grab them.

The twins nimbly dodged him. Juan even made a face at him just for the fun of it.

"Damn uncultivated kids! I'll skin the two of you alive!" Jack gritted the words through his pain as he shot them a ferocious glare.

"C'mon! Catch us if you can!"

Jack breathed through his pain while making his way towards both of them, one step at a time.

"C'mon! Come and get us!" Juan taunted him and stuck his tongue out.

Jack clenched his jaw in fury and tried to catch up to them.

Nicole felt like her head was about to spilt open from a pounding headache. She cracked open her eyes and pushed herself up onto her feet. However, she only made it two steps before she fell back onto the wooden chair.

"Why is... Why is the room spinning..." she mumbled in a daze.

"Can you get home on your own?" A deep and sexy voice sounded.

Nicole raised her head to look at the source of the voice.

She made an abrupt sound of surprise.

Then, she pointed a finger at him and slurred, "Why... Why do you look like that a**hole Evan Seet?"

That a**hole Evan Seet!

Is this damned woman cursing at me because she's drunk, or has she always been secretly calling me this?

Evan studied her with dark eyes before prodding further, "Do you hate him that much?"

"Him? Who?"

Nicole blinked unfocused eyes at him as she questioned him back.

Evan repeated his question, "Do you hate Evan Seet?"

Nicole nodded her head at first, but shook her head the next second, then nodded again.

Evan's brows creased in perplexity. *Does this woman hate me or not?*

Forget it. I should switch to another way of asking.

"Why do you hate Evan?"

Why?

Nicole mulled over the question for a while, then released a chuckle. "Because he's despicable! He... He's a jerk! A big jerk! Have you seen a jerk... that is this big?"

She drew an enormous circle with her hands as she said that.

Evan was speechless and his face darkened.

He suddenly recalled that time when Maya had called him a goodie. That little weirdo had indeed inherited her mother's genes.

"How is he despicable? What gives you the right to criticize him like that?"

Nicole thought about it for a moment before bolting out of her seat to clumsily shove Evan backward.

"You... You said that I stole money to buy a villa... Which... Which eye of yours saw me doing that, huh?"

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She staggered a few steps forward and grabbed the front of his shirt. After that, she pointed at his left eye and said, "Was it this eye that saw it," then pointed at his right eye and said, "or this one?"

Evan's brows knitted into a frown. Could it be that she really didn't take that five hundred million?

"If it wasn't you, then how did you buy Imperial Garden under your name?"

Nicole froze momentarily. "It wasn't me. I know who did it. It was... It was..."

"Who?" Evan pressed on.

Nicole suddenly pinched down hard on his cheeks and slurred, "It was your... It was my... It was our... our... I-I can't tell you..."

Evan was at a loss for your words.

He glanced at her with cold eyes. What gibberish is she saying? Looks like this woman is seriously drunk!

"Since you're already rich, don't mix around with people like him and get yourself drunk to the point that you can't even get home!"

"Home?"

Nicole curved her lips into an alluring smile. "Evan, can you take me home, please?"

"Why should I-"

Evan had not even finished speaking when Nicole burrowed into his chest and hugged him tightly.

Evan lowered his head to look at a very drunken Nicole, his eyes deepening with a maelstrom of emotions.

The scene before him seemed awfully familiar.

He could vaguely recall roses in their full bloom, and the little girl with glittering eyes hugging him the same way.

Back then, she had always been bullied by others. To protect her, he had been beaten black and blue.

Tears resembling crystal-clear pearls had rolled down her fair cheeks, soaking the fabric covering his chest and shooting straight to his heart.

He had brushed away her tears while saying, "Don't cry. It's alright. I'm here and I won't let them bully you."

However, the little girl had cried even harder after he said that.

He did not dare to say more, only silently wiping her tears away.

Those were memories from many years ago, but it felt as though all of that had just happened yesterday.

At the time, he was serious about wanting to protect that little girl for the rest of his life.

The little girl had always been a cry baby back then.

The corner of Evan's lips tugged upwards into a small smile as he dipped his chin down to look at Nicole again.

She was indeed different from the little girl back then. Now, she was stubborn and strong-willed. When they got into an argument, he would often be left speechless.

When young, she was weak.

Now, she was tough.

A groggy Nicole suddenly raised her eyes to his and asked, "Where are the children?"

Evan abruptly returned to his senses, recalling about Juan and Kyle.

He would not be surprised if the twins were still trying to deal with that horny b*stard, Jack.

Deciding to go check up on them, he grabbed Nicole's arm, tugging her to sit on the sofa.

Unexpectedly, Nicole clung to him and refused to let go.

"I'm going to go see the kids."

"Mm. Sure."

"So, let go."

"No. I'm not letting go."

"How am I supposed to look for them if you don't let go?"

"No! No! Not letting go!"

Evan pursed his lips.

He tried to push her out of his arms first, but she clung onto him like a koala bear. The more he tried to push her away, the tighter she hugged him.

Evan sigh helplessly and had no choice but to let her be.

Juan and Kyle lured Jack to the parking lot and begun looking for a place to hide.

Jack scanned the rows of luxury cars with eyes that were as wide as soccer balls, trying to pinpoint those two damnable children. He gnashed his teeth together when he thought about those faces they made at him earlier.

"Come here you b*stards!"

"I'll distract, you hide!"

Kyle took out the stone he picked up earlier, aimed it at Jack's head, and sent it flying towards him.

"Ouch! Rascals! Y-You stay right there!"

"Hey! I'm over here. Come get me!" Juan's voice sounded from behind Jack.

He pivoted around towards Juan, and Kyle quickly took the opportunity to hide. When Jack turned back around, he could not find Kyle anymore, so he could only go after Juan.

When Kyle saw that he was at Juan's heels, he threw another stone at him to get his attention, allowing Juan to escape.

The two children alternated between distracting and hiding, causing a very enraged Jack to stomp his foot in anger, unable to vent his pent-up frustrations.

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Suddenly, a crash sounded.

One of the stones smashed a car window. The car owner angrily got down from the car and spotted Jack walking in circles around the area.

"What's this? Were you the one who broke my window?"

"No, it wasn't me. It was those two b*stard kids. In fact, I'm looking for them too!"

Upon hearing this, the car owner cast his gaze around the parking lot. What b*stard kids? I obviously saw this nutjob circling the parking lot since just now. He's definitely up to no good.

"Look at you, you sleazeball. I think you're the one who's the b*stard here!"

"What did you say? How dare you speak like that to me? Do you know who I am?"

"I don't give a damn who you are. You broke my window, so I don't care if you're God Himself, you still have to compensate me!"

The car owner had no one else to blame and he did not want to suffer a loss for nothing. Hence, he forcefully demanded compensation from Jack.

Seeing that the two adults were in a heated argument, Juan and Kyle crouched low and used the cars as cover to slip away from the parking lot.

"Let's go and see Mommy now."

"Okay."

The twins ran back as fast as they could. By the time they reached the door of the private room, they were already panting hard. However, they abruptly stopped in their tracks.

They seemed to have witnessed something not meant for the eyes of children.

The twins hastily reached up with both hands to cover their eyes.

"I didn't see anything."

"Me neither."

Juan naughtily peeked at Evan through the gap in his fingers.

He was actually kissing Mommy's hair just now. He clearly saw us already, but he's still not letting her go. How inconsiderate of him.

"Daddy, are... are you done kissing Mommy already?" Juan asked with a mischievous grin.

"You're a pervert for taking advantage of Mommy when she's drunk!" Kyle added in a cool voice.

Evan glanced at the two of them, then transferred his gaze back to Nicole. He cleared his throat slightly before saying, "Time to go home."

He moved to push her out of his embrace.

"Don't move. Let's hug for a little longer. Just a little longer!"

Nicole snuggled against him and tightened her arms around his waist.

Both Juan and Kyle were rendered speechless.

They never expected that it was their mother who had taken the initiative to hug their father.

She was even holding on to him so tightly, reluctant to let go.

"Daddy, since Mommy is drunk, you should just let her hug you for a little longer," Juan suggested with a broad smile.

Kyle chimed in with that same monotonous voice, "Exactly. We must practice the habit of helping others."

Evan was dumbstruck.

He looked at Kyle, feeling mildly exasperated. Didn't this kid just say that I was taking advantage of his Mommy? But now he's saying I need to practice the habit of helping others?

He's clearly biased. Looks like when we're back home, I'll have to teach him a lesson on fair treatment and impartial opinions!

Ten minutes later, Nicole still held on to him even though she was fading out of consciousness. Left without a choice, Evan bent down and carried her bridal style.

Kyle and Juan exchanged glances as the same thought flashed across their minds. Daddy and Mommy seem to be getting along really well all of a sudden.

This is probably because Mommy is drunk.

So, whenever we matchmake Daddy and Mommy again next time, we have to make sure Mommy drinks. It could be a good strategy.

"Let's go home!"

The two children nodded and trailed after their father.

Evan placed Nicole in the backseat, then let Juan and Kyle watch over her.

He slid into the driver's seat and started the car.

Nicole, who had fallen asleep, opened her bleary eyes.

"Where is this?"

"Mommy, we're on the way home."

"Home?"

A frown appeared between Nicole's brows. "Didn't that jerk Evan say that he'd...he'd send me home? Where is he?"

As one, Juan and Kyle looked towards Evan who was currently driving.

Then, they pointed at him in unison.

Nicole followed the direction of their fingers and gasped in surprise. Suddenly, she threw herself forward to grab Evan's arm in a death grip.

"Take me home... Home!"

Evan was startled by her abrupt action, gritting his teeth with his heart in his throat.

"I am taking you home! Now let go!"

"Mommy, Daddy is driving. It's dangerous like this!"

"Yes, Mommy. You can hug Daddy when we're home, but not while he's driving! It's too dangerous!"