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Deep in thought, she raised her hand to touch him again.

Yoda tried to stop her and whipped out his phone and typed out his response. "Mrs. Seet, I'm afraid it's inappropriate for you to tease me like this."

Tease?

What the hell? He's thinking too much.

If she had any intention to tease, she wouldn't even make a move on a scarred and scary face like his.

Could it be that he thought that he looked handsome?

That would mean he thought wrongly of himself, and he misunderstood her as well.

"Yoda, I just wanted to see if there's anything we can do for that scar on your face. I'll find you a good plastic surgeon some other day."

Yoda typed out his response, "Mrs. Seet, there's no need for that. I look fine."

Fine?

Nicole furrowed her brows.

He didn't want her to see or touch his face. Was he resisting because he was afraid?

Nicole narrowed her eyes and walked out of the study room. Then, she came back with a basin of water and two bottles of cleansing oil.

"Let's wash your face."

Yoda appeared puzzled. Was Nicole suspecting that there's something wrong with his face?

He didn't think she'd be this smart.

Yoda dilly-dallied. Standing by the side, Nicole crossed her arms and waited as she watched him.

The more he dawdled, the more Nicole felt that there was a problem.

Could it be that his face was heavily made-up? Did he do something to his face?

Would his appearance change after he washed his face?

Would it turn into the face she thought about night and day?

Nicole felt a little excited as she watched him roll up his sleeves and started washing his face. She stared intently at him, expecting a miracle to happen.

After washing his face, Yoda lifted his head and looked at her.

Nicole studied his face carefully. His face remained unchanged. It was the same as before. So, there's no makeup on his face?

"Your face, is it real?"

Yoda nodded.

Nicole refused to give up and said, "Wash your face one more time."

Yoda was startled at first and then did as she requested. He washed his face several times under her watchful gaze.

But his face did not change at all. It was still the same as before.

There was disappointment in Nicole's eyes.

Yoda wiped off the water on his face and hands, took out his phone, and typed out a sentence. "No matter how many times I wash, it won't become the face that you want to see."

His words made her lost all hope and expectations.

Her heart sank.

That's right.

What is wrong with her?

What Lisa had said earlier made her thought that Evan was still alive, and it made her suspect that Yoda was Evan in disguise.

What's gotten into her?

Nicole was silent for a moment. Her eyes shimmered with unshed tears.

She fought hard to contain her emotions, refusing to let her tears fall.

Then, she turned around and tightened her fist, and made a difficult decision.

"Yoda, please leave. My children do not need your care anymore."

This decision was totally out of the blue for Yoda.

He walked up to her and handed the phone to her. There was one word on the screen, "Why?"

Suddenly, Nicole laughed.

Yoda's appearance always reminded her of Evan. However, he was not Evan.

She was afraid that the children and herself would get Yoda and Evan mixed up after a while. That would be unfair to Evan.

"No reason."

Yoda's face was solemn.

He typed a sentence on his phone, "What's wrong with having someone to take care of you and the children?"

What's wrong?

Yes, she felt something was wrong.

She had to keep reminding herself that he was not Evan.

Oh, her poor tormented heart.

"Please leave first thing tomorrow morning. I will pay you an extra month of salary."

Nicole was determined, and her decision was final.

Having said that, she walked straight out of the study room and towards her bedroom.

As Yoda watched her leave, a dark look flashed past his eyes.

Did she really want him to leave?

The next day.

Once the four children had woken up, they came to know about the news of Yoda's departure, and their eyes were wide as saucers.

"Mommy, why did you let Yoda go?"

"Yeah, Yoda takes great care of us."

"Yes, Yoda is great. He not only knows the way to our kindergarten, but he also knows the way to Seet Residence without any navigation."

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Nicole's heart stirred as she listened to her four children chiming one after another.

How did Yoda know the way to Seet Residence?

Seet Residence was a villa in the suburbs, with several forks along the way. Those who had never been there before would get lost without navigation.

How did he...

"Mommy, please let Yoda come back."

"That's right."

The children's voices pulled her out from her deep thoughts. She sighed and mentally kicked herself for overthinking. Yoda had his own reasons for knowing the way to Seet Residence. She couldn't always think that there was any relation to Evan.

"I have made up my mind. Alright, go and eat first."

The four young children sat at the dining table with their heads bowed in dejection. No one spoke, and the atmosphere was somber.

Nicole simply ignored them. After breakfast, the driver sent the children to the kindergarten.

She tidied up a little, put on some makeup, and headed straight to the company.

Nicole felt on edge throughout the whole morning. She was afraid that Levant would show up all of a sudden and bother her with nonsense.

However, it was noon, and Levant was nowhere in sight. She began to breathe a sigh of relief.

After lunch, she received a call from Sylphiette, asking her to beg Davin to let Zane go.

Nicole found it hilarious. "Sylphiette, I would have forgotten if you didn't call. Aren't you the one telling me that I'm not his daughter? So what has he got to do with me? Why should I save him?"

"Nicole, he may not be your biological father, but he raised you well. You have lived with the Lane family for so many years. Besides, he married your mother when she had no other way out. Shouldn't you be grateful?"

Raised her well.

Grateful.

Nicole found that amusing.

"My mother died because of him. You and I know very well how he treated me for so many years. Why should I be grateful to him? And don't call me anymore with this crap." A snort was heard coming from the other end of the call.

"Nicole, no one is born cold-blooded and wicked. There must be a reason why Dad did that. When dad hit someone with the car, your mother took the blame for it by sitting in the driver's seat. Do you know why? That's because your mother felt sorry and wanted to atone for her wrongdoings."

"Sylphiette, stop this nonsense. It was he who betrayed my mother by getting back with your mother. My mother did nothing wrong to him. It was he who wronged my mother."

"Did nothing wrong? Then where did you come from? You are illegitimate."

"You are the one who is illegitimate. How dare you slander my mother? She's not that kind of person."

"Nicole, I don't want to argue with you anymore. If you have a heart, please beg Davin to let Dad go. All of your grievances with him will be wiped clean. Just treat that as repaying and atonement for your mother. How about that?"

"Repaying? Atonement? Sylphiette, what are you talking about?"

"My dear sister, when Dad is back safe and sound, he will eventually tell you everything that you want to know."

After ending the call, Nicole fell deep into her thoughts.

Sylphiette and Levant both had said that she was not Zane's daughter. What did they know that made them said that?

If that was true, then whose daughter was she? Levant had said that she was related to the Musgrave family. Could that be true?

And what did Sylphiette meant by repaying and atonement?

The more she thought about it, the more upset she became. She picked up the phone and called Davin.

"Zane is in your hands?"

"Yes, Nicole. I'm not going to kill him, don't worry. When Evan was still alive, he told me to spare Zane's life."

"I want to see him."

"See him? Nicole, I can't let him go. After all, Grandma lost her life because of him. I have to avenge her."

"You've misunderstood me. I only want to ask him some questions."

Davin hesitated and finally agreed. "Fine, then I'll accompany you to see him."

When Nicole saw Zane, he was in tattered clothes, and he had wounds on his body and face. He looked like a mess.

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He looked a totally different person.

The difference was night and day.

It was clear as day that Davin had allowed his men to act against him.

After all, it was a life they're talking about. It would be natural for them to punish him.

Looking at Nicole, he showed some signs of excitement, as if he had just seen his savior descending from the heavens.

"Nicole, I knew that you won't ignore me just like that. Davin is barbaric. Look at how he lets others torture me! I had really suffered. Quick! Get me out of here this instance!"

Even after seeing Zane pled in such a manner, Nicole still felt indifferent.

After all, when she was being tortured by Sylvia and Sylphiette, Zane himself had stood by indifferently without saying a word.

As the saying went, what goes around comes around. She felt that Zane was heartless. Therefore she couldn't care less too.

"The reason I drop by to see you today is to ask you a few questions."

Zane was a little surprised to hear that.

"Nicole, let's leave here first. After leaving here I'll answer whatever questions you'll have."

"No! You will answer my questions here!" Nicole bellowed resolutely as both her furious eyes were fixed on him.

Witnessing the frustration, Zane secretly tried to guess what she wanted to ask.

In the current unfavorable situation, it would be wise not to provoke her. Instead, it was imperative that he let her have her way then gently coaxed her to take him out of here.

"Okay, Nicole. Ask away," said Zane with feigned resignation.

"Am I your biological daughter?"

Hearing these words, Zane's expression changed drastically. He did not understand why Nicole would suddenly come up with this question.

Only a few knew about the incident back then, and years had passed since. How did she find out?

At this moment, it was more prudent to convince her of their father-daughter blood relation to get her to help him escape this place.

If he had told her the truth, on what basis would she help him get away?

"Oh my, Nicole. What are you talking about? Of course you are my daughter!" he pleaded.

"Really? Then why did Sylphiette said otherwise?" She shot back.

Sylphiette, that damned idiot! Is she trying to get me killed?

How could she say such a thing? Especially to Nicole?

He was cursing Sylphiette in his heart and slapping her viciously in his mind. The moment I manage to get out, I'll be teaching that big mouth a lesson!

"Nicole, how can you believe Sylphiette's words so easily? She has been mirroring her mother since young, full of gossips and nonsense, provoking and sowing discord in the family. You can't listen to anything she said." Zane reasoned.

"…"

Nicole carefully observed Zane, trying to read his mind through his facial expressions. He knew Sylphiette's character after all.

Whether his words were true or otherwise, she still could not tell.

However...

Nicole adamantly declared, "Since you said that her words are not credible, then to prove that yours are credible, we shall do a paternity test! Let the result speaks for itself!"

"What? Nicole, you... How can you propose a paternity test merely based on Sylphiette's words? You, you..."

His impassive look thus far suspiciously changed. Seeing the panic in Zane's eyes, Nicole suddenly felt that Sylphiette's words contained some grains of truth in them after all.

"I sense that you're scared," prodded Nicole as she stared at Zane intently.

Zane quickly defended himself, trying to reason that he was not scared, but rather he just felt that the procedure was unnecessary. According to him, this lack of trust would hurt the father-daughter relationship between them.

Nicole ignored his nonsensical excuse and called for someone to take a sample of his blood for testing.

"Nicole, get me out from here. You can't simply leave your father here alone. This is a living hell, Nicole!" Zane pleaded as desperation set in. With each passing moment, his flaming hope for escape seemed dimmer and dimmer.

"A person like you deserves to be thrown straight into hell!"

Having uttered such vehement words, Nicole turned and walked away, turning a deaf ear to Zane's yelling behind her. Soon, his shouts and pleas were out of her earshot.

She went off in a car and sped towards the nearest paternity testing center.

No matter what, she was determined to get to the bottom of the matter.

After having her blood sample taken, she walked out of the testing center, feeling a heavy weight on her chest.

She was eager to know the result, but at the same time afraid of the truth.

If she was really not Zane's daughter, then what was her mother trying to hide from her?

What was the secret that kept Mother from ever mentioning anything about my biological father? Throughout her life, she had not uttered a single word about this matter.

As the night fell, she drove back to Imperial Garden.

As soon as she walked in through the door, she saw Yoda and her four children playing games.

She stared stupefyingly at the scene before her.

Is there something wrong with her eyes?

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Last night, he was obviously sent away.

Quickening her pace, she hastily walked into the living room. She saw that the person beside Maya was indeed Yoda, thus proving beyond all doubts that her eyesight was not impaired!

Damn, I have just sent him off last night and he dares to come back today?

Is he genuinely trying to taunt me?

Did he take her words as mere passing winds?

How despicable!

Rushing over and standing in front of Yoda, Nicole glared at him fiercely and questioned, "Who asked you to come back?"

Yoda glanced at each of the four children in front of him, wondering who he should push under the bus.

Maya?

Juan?

Kyle?

Yoda coughed and gazed at Nina.

Nicole turned her head and followed his gaze. Zeroing in on Nina, her expression sank as she blurted out, "Nina! Are you the one who asked him to come back?"

Nina was speechless. Obviously, it was their brilliant idea which they cooked up together. Why was she the one shouldering the blame now?

Rolling her eyes, she looked at Juan with an unspeakable expression.

"Juan, so it's you?"

Huh?

The blame was shifted so suddenly and had now landed on him.

Juan crossed his arms as his clear eyes took a round trip before landing on Kyle.

Kyle had expected Juan to direct his gaze at him. Hence he was fully prepared to own up.

Out of the blue, Maya, whose mouth was full of cheese, suddenly stood up.

"Mommy, I want Yoda to stay. Don't you send him away, okay?"

Nicole looked intently at Maya, then glanced at the rest of her children.

Among these cubs, Maya was the honest one. Even though she did not want to disappoint Maya, she had her principles and should stick to her word.

"Maya, it is not good for Yoda to stay. Let him go, okay? Mommy will find you all a new play buddy tomorrow."

Maya rubbed her plump little hands gingerly as her dark eyes turned around. A bright idea suddenly popped into her head as she steadied herself to put her brilliant notion into motion.

Plonking herself to the floor, she opened her mouth and started to wail. Tears streamed down her cheeks like a curtain of rain.

"Maya, get up. The floor is cold," advised Nicole.

"If Mommy doesn't allow Yoda to stay, then I won't get up. I'll continue crying. Boo hoo hoo..."

"Maya, are you threatening your own mother?" Nicole walked over and tried to pick her up.

Flailing her hands and feet around, Maya struggled to keep Nicole away.

Yoda meanwhile walked over to her and picked her up. Maya clung to his neck firmly without letting go.

"Mommy, just let Yoda stay. Look at how badly Maya is crying."

"That's right. Mommy, don't you feel heartbroken watching Maya bawling her eyes out?"

Nicole felt conflicted deep inside her heart.

After all, Maya was her flesh and blood. How could she not feel distressed seeing her cry?

All these conflicts and dilemmas - all because of Yoda!

If it weren't for him, Maya would not be like this.

Furthermore, Maya was not as clever as the other three kids. Was she being instigated to do so by Yoda?

If this were the case, it was really terrible of him to resort to even manipulating the children in order to stay. She had to be on her guard from now on!

Okay. I'll let him stay for the time being on behalf of Maya.

However, don't even think of getting off so easily!

Just wait and see!

Nicole proceeded to console, "Maya, don't you cry. Mommy agrees to let Yoda stay. Let him play with you all from now on, okay?"

Upon hearing Nicole agreeing, Maya instantly stopped crying.

In between her sobs, she asked, "Mommy, will you keep your words?"

"Of course! I'll keep my promise!"

Immediately after saying that, Nicole looked up and gave Yoda a death glare.

That glare made Yoda felt uneasy.

Obviously, she was definitely unwilling but was forced to let him stay.

With her temper and way of handling matters, she definitely would not tolerate him for long. However, he was really curious as to how far this would go and what she had in store for him.

Maya got down from Yoda's arms and was soon surrounded by the other three children, each could not help but secretly gave her a thumbs up.

"Such an unexpected outcome! We certainly did not know that Maya had it in her to pull off this kind of stunt. She really did manage to make Mommy agree to let Yoda stay."

This was the first time that Maya had been praised by her brothers and sister. Needless to say, she was over the moon.

As her twitching mouth was about to burst into a grin, her eyes caught the sight of Nicole's unpleasant face. Instantly she became timid and lowered her head.

"That's enough. All of you go wash your hands and prepare for your meal."

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"Mommy, we want Yoda to eat together with us."

"…"

Hrmph, these rascals are indeed cashing in on the opportunity and pushing the limits.

If I don't agree to it...

Training her eyes on all of them, Nicole felt that if she did not agree to their request, someone would be throwing another tantrum on the floor again.

Forget it. No matter which one, all of them were her flesh and blood after all.

Since they were all children, she would settle the scores with Yoda.

I'll wait for him to run away with his tail tucked between his legs before I properly teach these brats a lesson.

"Sure, Mommy agrees."

"That's great! Mommy is the best!"

"Yoda, we can have a meal together once again."

Maya grinned. After all, Yoda would put food on her plate and even feed her his own portion of shrimps, just like Daddy.

During the dinner, Yoda was taking care of the children as he was eating. While eating, Nicole was contemplating on how to get rid of this shameless and scheming man with unpredictable motives. Perhaps the best way was to make him leave on his own volition?

To nip the problem in its bud, I'll have to find Yoda's weakness first before I make my move.

Meanwhile, Yoda was peering at her warily from time to time. From her thoughtful look coupled with her occasional glances in his direction, he was sure he smelled danger.

Why was she so adamant about him staying?

After dinner, Yoda took Maya out for a walk. The other three lined up to follow as well.

Nicole took the opportunity to secretly inspect the place where Yoda lived.

Unexpectedly, he was quite a hygienic and tidy person. The small room was spotless.

After inspecting his room, she explored around and began to rummage through Yoda's personal belongings.

His belongings were no different from those owned by other servants.

Spotting a drawer, she opened it quietly. Looking through the content carefully, she found that only daily necessities were contained therein.

Just as she was about to close the drawer, suddenly a box caught her attention.

"What is this?"

The squarish box which was about the size of her palm looked exquisite.

Nicole held it in her hand and shook it gently a few times, but she could not hear anything inside.

Since the box had been secured with a hidden lock, it would definitely require a passcode to open. Surely it would not contain intelligence of some sort?

With her mounting curiosity, she tried a few random possible passcodes that she could come up with. Failing each time, she conceded that she would not be able to open the box for quite a while.

Looking out and around, she was fearful of being spotted. Seeing no one around, she took advantage of the situation and snatched the box.

Better to sneak it back so she could study it slowly.

On her way back to her room, she was looking around anxiously.

Grasping her stolen loot tightly in her arms like a mouse, she hoped fervently that no one would notice her nor greet her.

Finally, full of jitters, she arrived at her bedroom. Just as she stored the stolen box in her closet, she heard Yoda bringing her four little ones back from their walk.

"Mommy!"

"Mommy!"

"Mommy, I want to sleep."

""

Nicole swiftly rushed out of her bedroom, just in time for Maya to pounce and hug her leg, asking her for a bath.

Recovering her composure, Nicole readily agreed. "Okay, Mommy will take you all for a bath."

Having said that, she took Maya and Nina's cute, chubby hands in hers and headed to their bedroom, ignoring Yoda completely.

Yoda frowned at her brusque attitude. Is she ignoring him?

As he looked on at her back, frowning and deep in thought, he noticed Nicole, who had walked a few meters away, suddenly looked back before quickly turning her head away once more.

Yoda felt puzzled. The look in her eyes as well as her reactions were odd.

As Nicole was giving Nina and Maya their bath, she noticed the latter's round, plump belly. She felt a sudden dilemma.

As much as she wanted Maya to be happy, Nicole was also worried that letting Maya eat whatever she wanted would affect her child's health.

Fortunately, Maya was no longer a glutton, for she had learned to exercise some self-restraint.

"Mommy, in a few more months, I'll be losing some weight," said Maya, breaking Nicole's contemplation, as if she was reading her mind.

Maya's little pudgy hand gently patted her chubby belly as she flashed her adorable and cute smile at her mother.