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"Mr. Shane was the one who picked us up!" Sharon pointed in the direction of the man who was behind them.

The moment Natalie raised her head, she spotted Shane.

He had his eyes glued to her swollen cheek. His expression darkened because it was evident that she had been slapped in the face by someone. "Have you been slapped?"

As soon as Connor heard their conversation, he rushed over and perused Natalie's face. As soon as he detected the slap mark on her face, the little boy asked coldly, emanating a presence of an intimidating adult, "Mommy, who did this!"

Eventually, Sharon broke down into tears when she noticed her mother had been slapped in the face.

Natalie held her beloved children in her arms and answered their queries, "My father."

Pursing his lips, Shane probed further, "Did Harrison drop by?"

She nodded in return.

"Harrison..." Meanwhile, Connor muttered the name of his grandfather over and over again.

The determined look he had indicated he was up to something in his mind, yet the adults weren't aware of the change in his expression.

Shane asked once more, "Why did he come here?"

Natalie brought herself up and replied, "Why else would he drop by? He wants me to apologize to Jasmine and Susan."

"Have you given in to his request?"

"Nope. Why would I apologize for the things I have never done?"

Connor cast a confused gaze at her mother and asked, "Mommy, why does he want you to apologize?"

His mother tapped on his head and instructed, "Hey, you're not supposed to poke your nose into adult's business! I want you to bring your sister back to the room and keep an eye on her."

Although Connor was frustrated because he didn't get the answer to his query, he brought his sister back to their room as instructed.

Meanwhile, Natalie bowed and expressed her gratitude. "Mr. Shane, thank you for bringing them home on my behalf."

He took a good look at her and asked, "Are you feeling better?"

"Mmm... Although I'm still feeling lightheaded every now and then, but my fever has subdued."

"That's good to hear."

"Mr. Shane, since you're here, why don't you come in and have a seat?"

Shane hesitated for a moment before bringing himself into Natalie's place.

She proceeded to serve him a glass of water and said, "Mr. Shane, actually, I have been keeping this to myself, but Jasmine was the one who pushed Susan."

"W-What?" Shane shuddered, causing the glass of water he had in his hand to vibrate unwittingly.

She looked at him in the eyes and repeated herself, "Jasmine was the one who pushed Susan. Susan attempted to assault me after I provoked her with my words. Coincidentally, Jasmine showed up out of nowhere and wanted to help her mother, but I managed to evade their assaults. As a result, she pushed Susan accidentally. In the end, she tried to accuse me when she was the one at fault." Narrowing his eyes in return, Shane queried in a serious manner, "Do you have any evidence to back your words?"

"Of course! I couldn't believe no one was aware of the existence of the surveillance cameras that had been installed. Ever since Ashley got her hands on my drafts, I had been on my guards against everyone from the design department. Therefore, once I received the fabrics for Project Rebirth, I requested those from the security department to install a few surveillance cameras."

Shane finally linked the missing pieces of the puzzles together and figured out the reason she didn't seem to be anxious right after she regained consciousness.

It turned out she had something hidden up her sleeves to prove herself innocent all along.

He put the glass of water aside and asked, "What are you going to do? Are you going to publish the security recordings?"

"That's my initial plan, but since Jasmine is your fiancée, I'm afraid you will be adversely impacted by the recordings as well if I proceed to publish it. Therefore, I think it's necessary to tell you the plan I have in mind in advance. Are you going to stop me, Mr. Shane?"

Natalie had her eyes glued to him. Unable to decide on his next best course of action, he frowned and remained silent.

Frankly, he should get in Natalie's way and stop her. Casting his reputation aside, it was the impact on the company's image that concerned him.

However, Shane wasn't in any position to stop her since she had been wrongly accused when she was the real victim. It was natural for her to seek vengeance after the misfortunes she had gone through.

Seeing as Shane couldn't make up his mind, Natalie lowered her gaze to conceal the disappointment in her eyes as she said, "Mr. Shane, I believe you're not aware of the incident that Sharon and Connor have gone through, right? Previously, Jasmine instigated the kid's classmates to mock Connor and Sharon for being illegitimate children."

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His pupil constricted while his face darkened upon hearing that. "What? Are you serious?"

Natalie replied in a serious manner, "Do I look like I'm kidding? As a mother, I will not tolerate my children to go through such humiliation. Therefore, I will defend the truth until death. Even if my action would get me fired, I still want Jasmine to face justice."

All of a sudden, rage pulsed through Shane's veins. It was not because of Natalie's words, but rather, Jasmine's nasty tricks towards two innocent children to achieve her goal.

I must have been lenient towards her over the years, huh? That must be the reason she has the audacity to challenge my limits. I believe it's time to teach her a lesson and let her know her place.

Once he made up his mind, Shane got up from the couch and assured Natalie, "Alright. I'll deal with the necessary arrangement and allow you to prove yourself innocent tomorrow."

The confused woman blinked and asked, "Does that mean you're not going to stop me, Mr. Shane?"

"Mmm..."

Her eyes brimmed with tears as she expressed her gratitude. "T-Thanks..."

He moved his lips as though he was about to say something, but he received a call out of the blue. He picked it up and heard Silas' voice. "Mr. Shane, Susan has regained consciousness. One of our men heard the conversation she had with Ms. Jasmine. Ms. Jasmine apologized for the things she had done and told her to insist Ms. Smith was the culprit. In other words, Ms. Jasmine was the one who pushed Susan."

Shane instructed, "Alright. I want you to inform every one of the conference that will be held tomorrow."

Silas took note of his instructions and hung up the call.

Meanwhile, Shane set his phone aside and told Natalie, "I'll give you the chance to prove your innocence during the conference tomorrow."

She nodded in a serious manner and said, "Thanks."

Since it was getting late, Natalie showed Shane the way out as he was about to leave.

In the meantime, Connor, who had been eavesdropping on the adults' conversation, moved away from the door and instructed his sister in a serious tone, "Sharon, I need you to keep an eye on Mommy. You're not allowed to let her in without my permission."

His sister asked with a confused look, "What are you trying to do?"

He clenched his fists and explained himself, "I'll teach our so-called grandfather as well as the woman who has bullied Mommy a lesson!"

When he returned to his room earlier, he ran a check on Harrison's information. It turned out that the latter was their grandfather—the man who had shown up at the kindergarten.

Judging by the dispassionate look he had when he showed up in front of them, Connor was certain their so-called grandfather didn't appreciate their presence. Since he had resorted to violence against their mother, Connor was determined to avenge her.

After he came up with the perfect plan, he was ready to execute it as he ran his fingers across the keyboard.

Ten minutes later, he looked at the submission confirmation and grinned viciously.

I can't wait to see their response! I'm pretty sure they're going to have the best time of their life!

Suddenly, Natalie knocked on the door. "Connor, Sharon, come out and have some fruits."

"Coming!" Connor switched off his computer and returned to his usual innocent self as he made his way out of their room with his sister.

As Natalie made her way into Thompson Group the next day, she paid no heed to the odd looks her colleagues had on their faces.

She headed to the conference room with a USB drive and encountered Jasmine the moment she reached the conference room.

Natalie smirked and reached out to her proactively. "Ms. Jasmine!"

Jasmine brought herself to a halt and turned around. She was utterly dumbfounded the moment she saw Natalie. "What are you doing here when you're supposed to be in the police station?"

Although the police officers didn't have enough evidence to charge her, she shouldn't have been released since she was the main suspect of the incident. Usually, she would be imprisoned for at least twenty-four hours.

All of a sudden, Jasmine had a bad feeling about it because it felt as though things were spinning out of her control.

Grinning, Natalie explained, "Oh! Mr. Shane was the one who bailed me out!"

"What?" Jasmine's voice was an octave higher than her usual tone.

Shane was the one who bailed her out? Since when did he drop by the police station? Why did he bail her out without my consent? Why didn't he mention anything about it in front of me?

He has been defending her and insisted on having her as the chief designer of Project Rebirth during the conference that was held yesterday! Does he really have a thing for her?

Jasmine could barely suppress her jealousy when she thought of the things Shane had done for Natalie's sake.

On the other hand, Natalie was delighted because Jasmine's emotions were written all over her face. "Ms. Jasmine, I believe it's about time. Shall we go in? After all, there's a great show we can't afford to miss."

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After Natalie finished her sentence, she tapped on Jasmine's shoulder and entered into the conference room.

Casting a skeptical gaze at Natalie's back, Jasmine couldn't help but rack her brain to rule out the meaning behind her words.

What show is she referring to?

Jasmine stood right where she was and turned the idea over in her brain, but her effort was to no avail. In the end, she sneered and decided to neglect Natalie's words, making her way into the conference room as well.

As soon as she walked into the conference room, she caught a glimpse of Silas standing behind a woman in a wheelchair at the corner of the conference room. The pale and haggard woman in the wheelchair could barely sit upright and had an IV pole by her side.

What's going on?

Jasmine was taken aback and almost brought herself up from her seat when she saw her mother—she couldn't figure out the reason Silas brought Susan over.

Natalie smiled as she detected Jasmine's anxious look. After a few seconds, using a mic, she announced, "Hello, everyone. I believe all of you are curious about the reason we invite Mrs. Smith from Smith Group to take part in the conference of Thompson Group."

Everyone present nodded in return.

As Natalie approached Susan, Silas walked away from Susan and returned to Shane's side.

Natalie smiled courteously because she was aware Silas was trying to do her a favor. Soon, she placed her hand on Susan's shoulder.

In return, Susan stared at her wide-eyed and tried to shrug Natalie's hand off her shoulder, yet the latter held on to her firmly and fastened her grip as she announced, "Allow me to explain everything! I was irritated because Ms. Jasmine over there lodged a police report and told the police officers I have pushed and injured Mrs. Smith. Therefore, I begged Mr. Shane to invite Mrs. Smith to join us in order to prove myself innocent. Since she has regained consciousness, I believe she should tell us the truth of the entire incident!"

After Natalie finished her sentence, Jasmine got up from her seat abruptly as she detected the former's wry smile.

"Natalie, why are you looking at me? Are you trying to imply I was the one who had pushed her?"

Smirking, Natalie asked rhetorically, "Isn't it obvious? Are you trying to deny your responsibility?"

The moment the room heard their conversation, they were shocked and engaged themselves in another round of heated discussion with those by their sides.

As there was a round of commotion in the conference room, Shane got irritated and tapped on the table. "Silence! Please!"

Everyone finally regained their composure and kept their mouth shut as requested.

Jasmine clenched her fists and rebuked, "Stop accusing me! Do you have any evidence to prove your words?"

Susan nodded and played along with her daughter. "She's right! How dare you accuse others? As the victim of the incident, I'm aware of the identity of the culprit!"

Those from the design department nodded and asserted, "Actually, they are right. Do you have any evidence to prove your words?"

Natalie shrugged her shoulders nonchalantly and announced, "Since everyone seems to have their fair share of doubts, let's cut the small talk. I'll show all of you the evidence you guys have been longing for."

Evidence?

Jasmine and Susan were on pins and needles when they heard Natalie's words. They felt a chill running down their spines as they were engulfed by a strong sense of guilt.

Taking a peek at the anxious mother and daughter duo, Natalie plugged in the USB drive she brought along with her to the mainframe of the company.

A few seconds later, a video popped up on the screen behind her.

The video lasted for half an hour and those who were involved, including Susan and Jasmine, showed up and departed one after another. In short, the entire incident had been recorded.

After they finished watching the video, everyone in the conference room fell silent for a few minutes. It took them some time to collect their thoughts.

A few minutes later, someone broke the silence and said, "It turns out Ms. Natalie has been accused! She didn't seduce Mr. Shane either! All this while, Mrs. Smith and Ms. Jasmine were the ones pulling the string behind the scene to frame Ms. Natalie."

"That's right! Have you guys seen Ms. Jasmine's expression when she tried to push Ms. Natalie? Oh, God! It's so horrifying!"

"I know, right? I had the shock of my life as well!"

Jasmine and Susan's faces turned pale as they heard the conversation of those present in the conference room.

Susan's face puckered in disappointment because she heard the conversation Jasmine had with Natalie, and her daughter said she hated her.

Natalie looked in Shane's direction and said, "Mr. Shane, I believe I have proven my innocence, right? It's your turn to announce Ms. Jasmine's punishment."

As the one who had initiated the conference, Shane placed his interlaced fingers on the table and gave it a thought before deciding on Jasmine's punishment.

A few minutes later, he brought himself up and cast a stern gaze at Jasmine. "From now onwards, Jasmine will be terminated from Thompson Group. Is anyone against the suggestion?"

Naturally, no one dared shake their head after Natalie showed them the evidence and proved her innocence.

Jasmine bit her lips because there wasn't anything she could do to turn the tables since things had gotten to the point of no return. Albeit reluctantly, she had to do as instructed.

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I should have been more careful! I can't believe she has surveillance cameras installed there! Natalie is such a cunning b****!

Susan couldn't remain her composure anymore since her daughter would be chased out of Thompson Group soon. "Shane..."

He turned around and asked in a callous tone, "Yes, Mrs. Smith? You do realize you have no say in Thompson Group, don't you?"

As a result, Susan shuddered in fear and fell silent all of a sudden.

He looked at Natalie and asked in a gentle manner, "Is there anything else?"

Spinning the pen she had with her, she slammed it on the table all of a sudden. "Actually, yes! Aren't you guys curious about Ms. Jasmine and Mrs. Smith's relationship?"

Jasmine had a bad feeling about the things Natalie was going to bring up in front of others. The former couldn't keep her cool anymore and yelled hysterically, "Natalie! Don't you dare!"

Seeing this, Susan too became anxious, and she passed out as a result.

On the other hand, Shane was slightly flabbergasted by Natalie's words. Is she going to expose Susan's identity as Jasmine's biological mother?

Natalie crossed her arms and asked in a sarcastic manner, "Are you trying to threaten me? Since you have the audacity to ridicule my children, allow me to return the favor! I'm sure everyone is aware that Susan over there isn't Mr. Smith's first spouse, right? Although Ms. Jasmine has been addressing her as her stepmother in front of us, she seemed to have addressed her as her biological mother in the video, didn't she?"

After Natalie brought it up, those who were present finally recalled the content of the conversation that had occurred.

One of the senior shareholders got up from his seat and queried, "Ms. Natalie, does that mean Ms. Jasmine is Harrison and Susan's daughter? That makes her the illegitimate child of the Smith family, right?"

"Exactly! The legitimate child of the Smith family has long departed with Mr. Smith's first wife. Ms. Jasmine is merely a replacement to the position of the Smith family's legitimate child. Mr. Smith has lied to everyone and said her daughter changed her name to Jasmine."

Staring at Natalie with strong murderous intent, Jasmine appeared as if she would devour the former without any hesitation. "Natalie! How dare you!"

Natalie smiled as though it wasn't a big deal at all. "Are you trying to threaten me again?"

Natalie was aware of Jasmine's pet peeve-her identity as an illegitimate child.

Therefore, Jasmine felt a strong urge to take Natalie out since the latter had exposed her in front of others.

The senior shareholder thought of something and looked at Shane in the eyes, asserting in a serious manner, "Shane, the one you're supposed to marry is the legitimate child of the Smith family. Since Jasmine isn't the one your grandfather has appointed, she's not your fiancée!"

What?

Natalie's jaw dropped open and stared at Shane in disbelief because she couldn't believe this kind of marital arrangement still existed.

We are in an arranged marriage?

On the other hand, Shane didn't expect the old man would bring up such a thing out of the blue.

He massaged his temples and was about to say something, but Jasmine got ahead of him and yelled hysterically, "Shut up, you senile old fool! What sort of nonsense are you talking about? I'm the only child of the Smith family! I'm Shane's fiancée! Don't you try to sow discord between us!"

The horrendous woman could no longer keep her cool. She went berserk in front of everyone because she was afraid the old man would get Shane to call off their engagement.

No! Never! I will never allow Shane to call off our engagement!

"Y-You! D-Did you just call me a senile old f—" The old man pointed at Jasmine with his trembling hand. In the end, he passed out abruptly.

Shane's face puckered in irritation and instructed Silas to rush him to the infirmary at once. The conference was brought to an abrupt halt following that.

As everyone walked out of the conference room, they took a peek at Natalie and Jasmine. It would take them some time to process the turn of events.

They were shocked to discover Jasmine's actual identity. They couldn't believe she was the one who accused Natalie in an attempt to frame her.

Most importantly, their minds were blown away the moment they realized Jasmine wasn't supposed to be Shane's fiancée since she was the illegitimate child of the Smith family.

Inevitably, the truth that had been revealed in the conference room would soon be the gossipmongers' favorite topics.

Eventually, Shane, Jasmine, and Natalie were the only ones left behind in the conference room. Silas had arranged for others to bring Susan away.

Shane turned around and looked at Natalie. "Actually, Mr. Blackwood was speaking the truth. We're supposed to get married because of the deal my grandfather had with the Smith family. The deal had been struck before he passed on."

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It took Natalie a few minutes to collect her thoughts. In the end, the confused woman asked, "Why haven't I heard about this before?"

"You're not aware of the arrangement because before we get to inform you, you have already—"

Halfway through his speech, Jasmine interrupted him and yelled, "Shane!"

She couldn't allow him to continue as he would bring up the claim that Natalie had eloped with another man.

In that case, Jasmine's lies would be out of the closet.

As she thought about it, she rushed over and held on to his sleeves. Forcing a smile, she assured him, "Shane, shall we let bygones be bygones? After all, I'm the one who's supposed to get married to you as of now. I'm your one and only fiancée!"

Squinting his eyebrows, he shrugged her off and warned her sternly, "Currently, you're my fiancée, but I'm warning you for one last time! Don't you try anything foolish behind my back

again! If not, although you were the one who had saved me five years ago, I'll call off the engagement without a second thought!"

"Don't worry! I'll definitely keep that in mind and refrain from doing anything foolish in the future! I swear!"

Natalie smirked in contempt because she was sure it was merely another one of Jasmine's many lies to deceive Shane.

Since she had exposed Jasmine in front of others, Natalie was certain the latter would want to get her revenge in the near future.

Suddenly, Jasmine received a call from her father.

She wiped her tears dry and took out the phone to answer the call. "Dad."

"Jasmine, something bad has happened! Someone lodged a report against our company and said the quality of our products is subpar. Apart from that, we have been charged with tax evasion and financial statement manipulation. A few departments have dropped by the company to gather evidence."

"What?"

Shane and Natalie exchanged glances because they weren't sure of the reasons Jasmine became worked up all of a sudden.

Jasmine clenched her fist and asked, "Who's the person behind this!"

"I'm calling you because I have no idea! Can you get Shane to get his hands on the mastermind behind this?" Harrison hung up the call right after he finished his request.

Jasmine put her phone aside and said, "Shane, something bad has happened in my father's company."

She repeated the content of the conversation she had with her father and requested his aid as her father had instructed.

Natalie furrowed her brows upon hearing that before she broke into a sneer. Look at the state of the company now!

Back then, none of these had occurred under her mother's management.

Since her mother left the company, Smith Group had encountered all sorts of hardships and was accused of tax evasion and financial statement manipulation. Perhaps that was the reason Smith Group failed to advance over the past seven years.

Shane adjusted his wrinkled sleeves and replied nonchalantly, "I'll investigate the identity of the mastermind behind, but what exactly do you want me to do?"

"What do you mean?" Jasmine certainly didn't expect that question from him.

Natalie chuckled and replied on Shane's behalf, "Mr. Shane is trying to say it doesn't really matter if he manages to get his hand on the identity of the mastermind or not because it won't help to turn the tables for Smith Group. Tax evasion and manipulation of financial statements are serious offence. If your father doesn't want to be sent behind bars, he will have to pay the fine that comes in multiple folds. However, in that case..." Natalie's voice trailed off at that as the consequences were clear.

On the other hand, Jasmine figured out the meaning behind Shane's words after she heard Natalie's explanation.

If her father were to pay for the fine, Smith Group as well as the Smith family would be on the verge of bankruptcy. In other words, she would be left with nothing. She would not allow that to happen—not especially after going through all the hardship to replace Natalie as the successor of the Smith family.

"Shane, you're going to help me, aren't you?" Jasmine put on a pitiable front as she stared at Shane.

He put his hands in his pocket and asked, "How am I supposed to help? Even if Harrison pays the fine and gets himself off the hook, no one in the corporate world will trust him anymore. In fact, the relevant departments will keep a record of his deeds. If I offer him a loan, Thompson Group will be targeted by the relevant departments too. Do you think I'll put my company at stake for his sake?"

Jasmine's heart sank to the bottom of her stomach because Shane had made himself clear he wouldn't offer his help.

Meanwhile, Natalie remained calm throughout their conversation.

No one in the right mind would offer them their aid. Everyone was aware of the consequences it might bring.

Helping the Smith Group would mean getting themselves involved in this sticky situation.

Nonetheless, Jasmine refused to give up just yet and started weeping. "Shane, you're my fiancé! How could you be so crue!!"