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"No way. I'm going for the most expensive one out there so as not to lose out to her!" Susan shot Yulia's black clutch a look of disdain as she took a crocodile leather bag that sells for six figures off the shelf.

Yulia couldn't help but laughed as she whispered in Natalie's ear. "Is she dumb or what, Baby Girl? The purpose of Mr. Lanner's charity gala is to raise funds for wildlife animals. Wouldn't it be like a slap to Mike's face if she chose that bag? Things are going to get interesting tonight."

"Well then, you'll have to tell me all about it tonight, Mom."

"Don't worry, I will." Yulia winked.

Susan didn't know what the both of them were talking about as she walked over with the bag. "I want this, darling."

Harrison frowned when he saw the price. He was about to deny her the bag and get her to pick a new one when her face changed. She wasn't about to let him off the hook if he denies her the bag.

Hence, Harrison agreed to it as he was sick and tired of her antics.

Susan threw a victorious smile in Yulia's and Natalie's direction. "Someone never receives a gift this expensive besides being his wife of twenty over years."

Yulia's face darkened upon hearing that.

"Mom..." Natalie gave her a worried look.

Yulia shook her head to indicate that she was fine. She looked at Susan coldly and said, "You're right, I've never received any of those, not that I care either. You should enjoy it while you can."

"What do you mean?" Susan felt disturbed by her words.

Yulia ignored her as she turned to face Harrison. "Harrison, you should look into what your wife has been up to these days. I heard that wives of wealthy men like to spend their money on young hunks these days. I wonder if your wife is into it as well?"

She left with Natalie right after driving a wedge between them.

One could easily imagine just how intense Susan and Harrison's quarrel will be in a bit.

"Mom, you're amazing. Susan must hate you after this." Natalie gave Yulia a thumbs up.

Yulia harrumphed. "Whatever, I don't care. Let's go. I want to buy some more new clothes since I'm in a good mood today."

Natalie was nonplussed.

However, Yulia picked out clothes for Natalie instead of herself and even urged her to try them on when they arrived at a clothing store.

Natalie didn't want to dampen her mood. Hence, she resigned herself to fate and entered the changing room with a pile of clothes.

Meanwhile, at the VIP changing room located on the second floor of the clothing store, Jacqueline emerged from the changing room dressed in a white dress. She smoothed her dress down and asked in a soft voice, "Shane, what do you think of this dress?"

Nobody answered.

Jacqueline paused and raised her head quizzically. She started feeling anxious when there was no one in sight in the waiting area. Jacqueline quickly scanned the floor and finally found him by the curved railing.

He was looking down at something from the railing.

Jacqueline pursed her pale lips disapprovingly. Nevertheless, she pulled herself together in the next moment and walked over with a gentle smile. "Shane, what are you looking at? Didn't you hear me calling out for you?"

Shane heard her and turned around. "It's nothing. Are you done?"

"Yes." Jacqueline nodded. She took the hem of her dress up, made a slow-motion twirl, blushed, and asked, "What do you think? Is it pretty?"

"It's not bad." Shane raised his chin.

Jacqueline smoothed her dress down. "It's been almost 10 years since I last wore a dress. I still can't quite get used to it."

"Don't worry, you can wear anything you like once you make a full recovery," Shane said with his hands in his pockets.

"You sure know how to make me happy," Jacqueline said in a coy, teasing tone.

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"I'm not. Anyways, let's go. Do you have anything else you want to try on?" Shane asked with a smile.

"No, that's all. You'll pay by way of an apology since you stood me up last night," Jacqueline shook her head and said.

Shane nodded. "Ok."

Jacqueline smiled. She looked down the railing subconsciously when she heard a familiar voice in the next moment.

It was Natalie dressed in a white dress twirling in front of the mirror.

The white dress looked amazing on Natalie's curvy figure as compared to hers since the illness had reduced her to skin and bones.

This shattered Jacqueline's confidence.

She lowered her eyes to hide her jealousy and envy. "Shane, were you looking at Ms. Smith just now?" Jacqueline said disparagingly.

Shane's eyes flickered as he murmured an affirmative reply. "I happened to see her at the store."

"Really?" Jacqueline mumbled as she dug her nails into her palms. "Ms. Smith is so pretty. I wish I could have a healthy body like hers and stroll through the streets in a beautiful dress. What a pity... This wish of mine will never come true."

Shane frowned. "Don't say that, it will."

Jacqueline smiled wryly. "Shane, you're well aware of my condition. Dr. Quinn said I can't live more than ten years even if I recover from this illness."

With that, she turned around and left dejectedly.

Shane pursed his lips as he gave Natalie a final look before catching up with Jacqueline.

Down at the first floor, Natalie paused the merry conversation she was having with Yulia and looked up at the second floor. She felt puzzled when there wasn't a single soul in sight.

"What happened, Baby Girl?" Yulia noticed something was wrong with Natalie and followed her gaze. However, there was no one in sight.

Natalie shook her head and said, "It's nothing. I felt like someone was watching me just now, must have been my imagination."

"I don't think it's your imagination," Yulia said as she tidied Natalie's hair.

Natalie blinked. "Mom, you saw?"

"No, but it makes sense for people to be watching since I have such a beautiful daughter," Yulia said with a smile.

Natalie was at a loss for words. "Mom!"

"Ok, are you done?" Yulia opened the changing room door to have a look.

Natalie nodded. "Yes."

"I'll take all of these then," Yulia waved her hands and said.

Natalie quickly stopped her. "Mom, these garments are going to break the bank. Besides, I already have lots of clothes since I'm a designer, I don't need all these."

"You're right." Yulia stroked her chin and agreed that she had a point.

Natalie picked a few garments from the pile. "These will do."

"Sure, we'll do as she says," Yulia said smilingly to the shop attendant.

Soon, the mother-daughter pair left the clothing store with their new clothes. They wandered around the mall for quite a while before they took the cab home.

It was only 2 p.m. when they reached home. They still had two more hours to themselves before it was time to pick up the kids.

Natalie placed the shopping bags down and headed into the kitchen while massaging her own shoulders. She was getting ready to make some tea as she emerged from the kitchen with a kettle when her phone rang.

Natalie quickly placed the kettle down and fished out her cell phone from her bag. The caller ID showed that it was a local unknown number. Natalie hesitated for a few seconds before picking up.

"Hello, is this Ms. Smith?" A gentle and polite female voice sounded from the other end.

Natalie nodded slightly. "I am. And you are?"

"I'm Style Loft's store manager," the voice replied.

Natalie arched her brow at that.

Style Loft. Isn't that the clothing store I went to with Mom just now?

"How can I help you?" Natalie sat down on the sofa, cradled the phone against her shoulder, and poured herself a glass of water.

The shop manager answered with a smile. "We have a special promotion going on at Style Loft today. As our customer, you've won first prize. Congratulations!"

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"What?" Natalie wasn't the least bit happy when she heard the news. Instead, she frowned, puzzled. "First-prize? But I didn't see any special promotions going on at your store when I went there earlier, nor did I participated in any lucky draws either."

She's not a scammer, is she?

The store manager turned around and gave the man behind her a look when faced with Natalie's skepticism.

The man raised his chin slightly and the store manager nodded in acknowledgment. She continued with a smile, "It was a hidden promotion. As for the lucky draw, we did it in the customer's place."

"Really?" Natalie took a sip of water. She still felt that something was off but couldn't quite put a finger on it.

The store manager then verified the address Yulia left behind at the store before hanging up the call.

Yulia yawned as she emerged from the washroom. "Who is it, darling?"

"Style Loft. They said I won first prize, but that's not possible." Natalie put her phone down with a smile. She didn't take the phone conversation to heart.

Yulia nodded. "Definitely impossible. How could these branded stores run any promotional activities when they're so stingy?"

"That's right." Natalie picked up the kettle and continued making tea.

However, after about half an hour, the doorbell rang.

Yulia was the one who opened the door while Natalie was sketching some design drafts.

Suddenly, Natalie heard Yulia screaming. She quickly put her sketchbook and pencil down and armed herself with a flower vase before running towards the entrance.

However, there was no danger in sight, but only a few of Style Loft's employees standing at her doorway with exquisite gift boxes in hand while smiling at both of them.

Natalie was bewildered at the sight before her.

So, the phone call just now was real? I really won some prize?

Yulia was the first to come back to her senses as she quickly allowed the employees to place the gift boxes in the house while Natalie was still in a trance.

The employees filed in, placed the gift boxes down with Yulia's instructions, and pulled out the receipt for Yulia to sign.

They left soon after.

"Baby Girl, come on over!" Yulia beckoned Natalie over.

Natalie walked over

Yulia opened the gift boxes one by one and exclaimed, "Gosh, aren't these all the clothes you've tried at the store? Except for these red garments. Darling, do you want to try them on?"

Natalie shook her head. "No thanks. I can tell it suits me just by looking at it."

She was staring at the red garments with mixed feelings.

Why is it that all the others were chosen by Yulia except for these few garments? And most importantly, why is it red?

Red wasn't her favorite color. However, Shane once said red suits her well.

"It can't be..." Natalie bit her lips and mumbled.

Yulia placed the garments down, turned around, and asked, "What is it?"

"I'm thinking, could it be that Mr. Shane was the one who gifted all of these instead of me actually winning some prize?" Natalie pointed at the red garments and guessed.

Yulia knocked her forehead lightly. "That's not possible. Style Loft doesn't belong to Thompson Group. Besides, it was an impromptu shopping trip. How would he even know we're there? Don't tell me he was there at the store as well?"

"You're right." Natalie nodded since it made sense to her.

Seemed like she was thinking too much.

"Alright, let's put everything away and go pick the kids up," Yulia urged.

Natalie moved the gift boxes into her room with a smile, changed her clothes, and went out with Yulia to pick up the kids from school.

After that, Yulia headed for Mr. Lanner's charity gala while Natalie brought her two kids to a restaurant near their kindergarten for lunch.

However, an unexpected visitor suddenly showed up just as they were having lunch.

"Hi, Nat. What a coincidence." Sean grinned, waved at her, and discreetly shot her two kids a contemplative look.

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"Hi," Natalie greeted with a smile.

Sean sighed as if he was disappointed with her response. "Tch, you're still as cold to me as ever."

Natalie drank a mouthful of soup and asked, "Is there anything I can help you with?"

"No, I'm just here to meet an important client when I saw you. Are those two your kids?" Sean pointed at the two children. "I've always known about their existence, but this is my first time actually meeting them."

"Mommy, do you know this Mister?" asked Connor as he pulled Sharon's hand and gave Sean a cautious look.

Natalie murmured an affirmative reply. "He's my ex-supervisor."

"Nat, we're more than boss and subordinate, right?" Sean looked at Sharon who was staring at him with her big eyes. He suddenly felt the urge to caress her cute face.

However, Connor slapped his hand away before he could even reach Sharon. "Don't touch my sister."

"Oh, little guy here has quite a temper." Sean looked at his hand and smiled even brighter. "Little guy, do you know who I am?"

"No I don't, I don't want to either!" Connor wrapped his arms around Sharon and said coldly.

Sean adjusted his glasses as he stared at Connor's face. He looks exactly like Shane.

This is so annoying.

He preferred the little girl.

"Little girl, did you just call me Mister just now?" Sean's eyes twinkled as he smiled gently at Sharon.

Natalie realized something was off as her face darkened. "Mr. Thompson, what are you trying to do?"

Sean ignored her as he trained his gaze on Sharon.

Sharon nodded subconsciously and murmured a weak reply.

The corner of Sean's lips curled up. "Little girl, you're mistaken. I'm not some mister. I'm your uncle, your father's big brother."

"What?"

"Mr. Thompson!"

Natalie and Connor shouted in unison.

The difference was that Connor was shocked whereas Natalie was flustered.

What is he trying to do? Is he going to tell them their identity?

Natalie stood up while still holding on to her spoon and looked at Sean nervously.

Sean pretended not to see her as he turned to face Connor.

Connor let go of Sharon, balled his fists, and stared at him. "Are you really our uncle?"

"In the flesh," Sean crossed his arms.

Connor trembled. "Then can you tell us who our Dad is?"

"Connor!" Natalie frowned in disapproval.

Connor gave her a look but did not give up on wanting to know more about his biological father.

Sharon was the only one who had yet to return to her senses as she was still trying to make heads or tails of what uncle meant.

"I can tell you all about him. But it seems like your mom disapproves." Sean waved his hand and pretended to be sorry.

Natalie scowled at him as she tried to figure out what he was getting at.

First, he piqued the kids' curiosity. Then, he refused to get straight to the point. Crazy fella!

"Mommy..." Connor looked at Natalie hopefully.

Natalie hardened her heart and turned away from him.

Connor's eyes dimmed.

Sean shrugged. "Well little guy, looks like your Mom disapproves of it. Forget it."

With that, he patted the back of Connor's head, grinned meaningfully at Natalie, and left.

Except for Sharon, Connor and Natalie had lost their appetite. Sean had ruined their family bonding time.

Connor lowered his head and fell deep into his thoughts. After a while, he raised his head and stared at Natalie seriously. "Mommy, is Dad's last name Thompson?"

He recalled Natalie had referred that guy as Mr. Thompson just now.

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If he's Dad's big brother, then Dad's last name must be Thompson.

Just as he thought, Natalie nodded.

Connor finally broke into a smile. "That's great. I finally get to know a little bit more about Dad."

Natalie almost burst into tears upon hearing that. She quickly covered her mouth and stared at her children apologetically. "I'm sorry, darlings..."

"It's ok. We'll forget about it since Mommy doesn't want us to find out." Connor toyed with his fork and consoled Natalie as if he had thought things through.

Natalie felt even more guilty and was about to say something else when Sharon burped. "Mommy, I need to pee."

"Come on, I'll take you. Connor, sit here and wait for us, ok?" Natalie instructed.

Connor nodded in acknowledgement.

Natalie then left with Sharon for the restroom.

However, Connor wasn't seated at the table upon their return.

"Mommy, where's Connor?" Sharon tilted her head and asked.

Natalie didn't reply as she frowned and quickly scanned the floor for Connor. She started to panic when Connor wasn't anywhere in sight. Natalie picked Sharon up and headed towards the front of the outlet.

"Excuse me, have you seen my son? He was sitting over there by the window." Natalie pointed towards the dining table she was sitting at and asked nervously.

The cashier nodded. "I've seen him. I think he was whisked away by some men."

Natalie's heart skipped a beat upon hearing that. She clenched her fists and shouted, "Why didn't you stop them then?"

The cashier visibly shuddered and paled. "I-I noticed the kid wasn't struggling when he left with those men, so I thought he knew them and let him be..."

"You..." Natalie was fuming but she couldn't put the blame on the cashier anymore.

The reason was that Connor left with them without putting up a fight. Anyone would have thought they were acquaintances. Moreover, the cashier was just an employee at the restaurant. There wasn't much he could do.

Hence, she only had herself to blame for Connor's abduction.

Upon that thought, Natalie tightened her arms around Sharon. Sharon turned pale with fright. "Mommy, it hurts..."

Natalie came back to her senses and quickly loosened her arms. "I'm sorry, darling. I'm just worried about Connor."

Sharon shook her head. "I'm fine, Mommy. Where is Connor?"

Natalie had no answer to that. She bit her lip and asked the cashier, "Excuse me, is it a man or a woman who had taken my kid away?"

"It's a man."

"A man..." A figure flashed through her mind.

Could it be Sean?

Natalie held on to Sharon's hand and headed towards the private room upstairs. She recalled Sean had headed in that direction when he left.

Natalie didn't know which room Sean was in, but it must be a big fancy room since he was meeting an important client.

Hence, Natalie searched the big private rooms and finally found him after a few tries.

She walked straight into the room and shouted, "Sean Thompson!"

Everyone in the private room fell silent and turned their gaze towards her, including Shane.

Natalie noticed him as shock flashed through her eyes. She wasn't aware that he was in the room as well.

However, she didn't have time to think it through as she quickly averted her gaze away from Shane and focused on Sean instead. She waved at him and said, "Come out, I need to speak with you!"

With that, she bowed apologetically at everyone in the room and left.

Sean arched a brow whereas Shane narrowed his eyes.

Why is she here looking for Sean?

Someone in the room joked, "Looks like Mr. Sean has a lot of luck with the ladies. The woman just now looked fabulous. You have a good eye, Mr. Sean!"