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If Joyce were to learn about Stanley's true colors, her love for him might die a tragic death, and that isn't what I want. Rather, I want to help her so that she'd take the initiative to pursue him, for only when that happens will he be too busy to pester Natalie!

Naturally, Silas had no inkling of Shane's thoughts. He rubbed his chin as a wave of resentment surged within him. "Are you planning to keep Ms. Smith in the dark?"

Shane stuck a hand into his pocket. "How's the investigation I asked you to do on Stanley?"

At this, Silas shook his head. "He's rather mysterious. All I can find is his rich resume and the superficial information that is meant for public consumption. There isn't much progress with the covert stuff. It's as though it has been buried."

"Really?" Turning back, Shane started walking forward again.

He'd thought that someone like Stanley, who was an expert in putting on a front and had psychological problems, would have certainly done despicable things covertly. Thus, he wanted to dig up dirt on him and hand the information to Natalie so that she'd see his true colors.

But from the look of things now, that wouldn't work. I can only wait until he makes a move again next time and ensure that Natalie witnesses it!

That night, Natalie went to the hospital once more with her two children.

The moment Connor and Sharon stepped into the hospital room, they both ran over to the hospital bed. Wailing, they begged Stanley to wake up.

Natalie didn't stop them either, allowing them to do as they pleased. She handed the thermal food jar in her hand to Joyce. "I made you some mushroom soup, so do have some."

However, Joyce shook her head and placed the mushroom soup aside. "I've got no appetite since Stanley hasn't yet regained consciousness."

Natalie stared at her. "Did the doctor say when he's going to regain consciousness?"

Upon hearing this, Joyce massaged her throbbing temples. "Yeah. It's either the middle of the night or the next morning."

"That's not too bad." Natalie then pulled a chair over and sat down.

Likewise, Joyce sat beside her. "Oh yes, Mr. Shane's assistant came over in the afternoon and told me that Stanley's accident was happenstance. The driver only hit Stanley because he was driving under the influence."

"I see." Natalie breathed a soft sigh of relief, her heart that had been in her throat finally settling back into her chest.

Phew! I'm glad it was an accident. She was afraid that it wasn't an accident but a deliberate act by the mastermind who had wanted to kill her previously.

If it were deliberately, then I would've dragged Stanley into my mess, and my culpability would have been unabsolvable. But while it's an accident this time, I still have to bear the responsibility since he was only hit because he drove me home.

"Stay for a bit, Nat. I want to go over to Stanley's house and pack him some necessities while he's hospitalized," Joyce blurted as she abruptly got to her feet.

At this, Natalie looked up at her. "You're planning to stay and look after him?"

Joyce murmured in assent. "I want to take care of him until he recovers. As you know, he usually ignores me, so it's only in such a situation will I be able to get close to him."

"Got it. Go on. I'll stay here and wait for you to come back." Natalie stood up as well.

Perhaps this is a golden opportunity to improve the relationship between Joyce and Stanley, she mused.

"Alright, I'll be going, then." After saying that, Joyce snagged her handbag and left the hospital room.

Natalie trailed behind her before stopping at the door of the hospital room. It was only when Joyce had disappeared around the corner of the corridor did she close the door and head back.

Meanwhile, the two children were still crying at this time.

Walking over, Natalie placed her hands on their shoulders. "Okay, stop crying, or you'll lose your voice later."

Connor's sobs halted. Then, he lifted his eyes that were shimmering with tears and gazed at her. "Mommy, Uncle Stanley will be fine, yes?"

Sharon likewise looked at her while sniffling.

Natalie ruffled their heads. "He'll be fine, so don't worry."

The two children believed her, so they both nodded their tiny heads profusely.

At this precise moment, a knock sounded on the door of the hospital room.

Removing her hands from the children's heads, Natalie pivoted and called out toward the door, "Who's there?"

"It's me." A gentle female voice drifted in from outside the door.

All at once, Natalie's eyes narrowed.

It's Jacqueline Graham! Why is she here?

Having no time to mull it over, Natalie took the children's hands, one on either side of her, and dragged them over to the bathroom while replying, "Hold on. I'll be there right away."

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After saying that, Natalie led the two children into the bathroom. Under their bewildered gazes, she bent down a fraction and whispered, "My darlings, stay here quietly and don't make a single sound, okay?

When she was at Shane's villa yesterday, she realized that she couldn't allow anyone else close to Shane to learn of the two children's existence. After all, the more people who knew about them, the faster their identities would come to light.

As Jacqueline is the person who'll be marrying Shane in the future, I've got to keep her from seeing them all the more!

"Why?" Connor stared at her.

Likewise, Sharon tilted her head.

All of a sudden, Natalie didn't know how to explain things to them. After racking her brains for a moment, she answered smilingly, "Because the lady outside doesn't like kids. Thus, you've got to stay quiet. When we go home later, I'll buy you both ice cream. How about that?"

"Yay! I want ice cream!" Sharon instantly jumped for joy when she heard that there would be food.

"All you do is eat!" Connor rolled his eyes at his sister. Although he could tell that Natalie wasn't telling the truth, he nodded in acquiescence upon seeing his sister's delight.

"Great!" After kissing her two children, Natalie closed the bathroom door before striding to the door of the hospital room and opened it.

Dressed in a blue and white hospital gown, Jacqueline waved at her with a smile. "Good evening, Ms. Smith."

"Good evening." Natalie flashed her a smile in return. Then, she inquired, "Is something the matter, Ms. Graham?"

"I heard from Jackie that Dr. Quinn met with an accident, so I came over to visit him. I'm not bothering him at this hour, am I?" Jacqueline cast her gaze behind Natalie.

"Not at all. Stanley hasn't regained consciousness yet. Anyway, do come in, Ms. Graham." Dropping her hand from the doorknob, Natalie slanted her body and allowed Jacqueline in.

Jacqueline nodded in response. After uttering a word of thanks, she stepped into the room.

Natalie then closed the door and followed behind her.

Jacqueline headed straight for the hospital bed while Natalie went to the water dispenser at the corner to fetch some water.

After getting the water, she returned to Jacqueline's side and handed the disposable cup to her. "Here, Ms. Graham."

"Thank you." Jacqueline quickly took it with a smile. However, a flash of disdain flittered across her eyes.

Natalie didn't notice it, so she waved a dismissive hand. "You're welcome. Please have a seat, Ms. Graham."

"Sure," Jacqueline murmured. Setting the cup aside, she sat down, making it glaringly obvious that she didn't intend to drink it.

Nonetheless, Natalie didn't think much of it, assuming that Jacqueline was probably not thirsty, so it was no surprise that she wasn't drinking the water.

"I hope Dr. Quinn is fine, Ms. Smith?" Jacqueline asked as she stared at Stanley, who was on the hospital bed with a pale countenance, an IV drip on the back of his hand.

At this, Natalie shook her head. "He's fine. He only needs to recuperate for a month or two."

"Looks like Dr. Quinn won't be able to continue being my doctor-in-charge anymore." Jacqueline heaved a sigh even as a hint of disappointment showed on her pallid and frail face.

At this time, Natalie pulled a chair over and sat down as well. "You like having Stanley as your doctor, Ms. Graham?"

"I suppose you can say so. His medical skills are superb. Back when I'd first regained consciousness, I suffered from splitting headaches every day, but I hadn't had another headache ever since he operated on me. It's all thanks to him that I'm able to get out of bed and walk in such a short time. Besides, he's also an excellent collaborator."

At this point, Jacqueline pulled the covers higher on Stanley.

As Natalie looked on, her alluring brows furrowed slightly. "A collaborator? Did you have a collaboration with him, Ms. Graham?"

"Yeah." Jacqueline nodded.

This had Natalie feeling all the more curious, and she bit her lip for a while before blurting, "May I know the nature of the collaboration?"

One is a doctor, and the other is a patient, so I truly can't think of any collaboration they could have.

A flicker of light flashed across Jacqueline's eyes even as she put on a conflicted expression. "I'm afraid not since this is a secret between me and Dr. Quinn. However, you'll know in the future, and you'll definitely be very much surprised at that time. Plus, you'll even see a different side of him."

"Oh?" Natalie arched an eyebrow.

I feel as though her words and tone are threaded with a hint of craftiness. Or am I imagining things?

Natalie lowered her head in contemplation.

Upon seeing that she'd suddenly gone silent, the corners of Jacqueline's lips curved into a smirk, and she leaned close to her. "What are you thinking, Ms. Smith?"

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Snapping back to her senses, Natalie suffered a fright when the first thing that greeted her was Jacqueline's magnified face. She shuddered for a moment. It was only after a few seconds had passed did she manage to school her expression and reply with a forced smile, "Nothing."

"Okay, it's alright if you're not willing to tell me, Ms. Smith. Anyway, it's late, so I should be going back. Otherwise, I'll be scolded later if Jackie doesn't see me when he does his rounds." Jacqueline chuckled wryly as she stood up while supporting herself on the edge of the bed.

At this, Natalie got to her feet as well. "I'll see you out."

Jacqueline didn't decline, so Natalie saw her to the door.

With a hand propped against the wall, Jacqueline slowly ambled forward.

Jacqueline had just taken a few steps when something suddenly occurred to Natalie, and she called out to her, "Ms. Graham."

Upon hearing her name, Jacqueline looked over her shoulder at Natalie. "Is there anything else, Ms. Smith?"

Natalie's nails dug into her palms. "Well, it's about the conversation we had yesterday on Mr. Shane's cell phone. I..."

"I know what you want to say." Jacqueline cut her off with a smile. "Shane has already explained things to me, so don't worry. I've already forgotten about it."

When Natalie heard that, she immediately breathed a sigh of relief, her nerves easing as well.

Yet in the next moment, the smile on Jacqueline's face vanished, and her voice turned sharp. "However, Ms. Smith, it's important that you know your place. Since you're aware of the situation between Shane and me, you should keep your distance from him. Although I'm a gentle person, I'll still be jealous. So..."

At this, she narrowed her eyes. "I can't say what I might do to you if my jealousy flares, Ms. Smith. Thus, Ms. Smith, I hope you won't approach him again in the future. Do you understand?"

Natalie was shellshocked for a moment. Then, her lips parted, and she hastily explained, "You've misunderstood, Ms. Graham. I've never approached Mr. Shane."

"I know that, but you often interact with him. Is this not true?" Jacqueline stared at her as though she wanted to discern something from her face.

At her intent gaze, a lump lodged in Natalie's throat.

Out of the blue, words eluded her because she couldn't deny that she was indeed rather close to Shane recently. While we merely met by coincidence every single time, our interaction inevitably increased after bumping into each other.

When Jacqueline saw her hanging her head in contrition, she nonchalantly averted her gaze. "Ms. Smith, since you think that I'm speaking the truth, please do as I said earlier so that you won't have any regrets in the future."

After saying that, she turned back to the front and continued ambling toward the elevator while supporting herself against the wall.

Meanwhile, Natalie stared at her back with pursed lips and a grim expression on her face.

Was that a threat? Or was it a warning? Or maybe... it's both!

Then, she lowered her eyes, knowing full well that she should indeed put some distance between her and Shane regardless of whether it was a threat or warning.

While I've always said the same thing in the past, yet never once succeeded in doing so because I always failed after standing my ground for a while. Hence, I must do it this time! I can't allow the situation to persist, for Jasmine is already more than enough for me to handle! If Jacqueline targets me as well, my life will be inconceivably dangerous in the future!

Heaving a long sigh, Natalie closed the hospital room door and went back into the room.

At the same time, the bathroom door swung open, and Connor came out while dragging along Sharon, who was all drowsy.

Upon seeing this, Natalie stepped forward and scooped Sharon into her arms. Then, she patted her back gently, coaxing her to sleep.

Connor, on the other hand, stood before her and looked up at her. "Mommy, did that lady left?"

"Yup." Dipping her head, Natalie looked at him. When she glimpsed the displeasure on his face, she couldn't help quirking an eyebrow. "You don't like the lady earlier, Baby?"

At this, Connor wrinkled his tiny nose. "Yeah, I don't like her."

"Why?" Natalie questioned as she placed Sharon, who was asleep, on the sofa.

Climbing on the chair, Connor parked his butt down. "I don't know. Anyway, I just don't like her."

"Alright, then." Natalie gave up asking further when she saw that he couldn't explain why.

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Never mind if he doesn't like Jacqueline since he won't be meeting her anyway!

"Are you sleepy, Baby?" Natalie didn't forget to glance over her shoulder and ask Connor this even as she took a blanket and draped it over Sharon.

At her question, Connor shook his head in denial.

Thus, Natalie no longer bothered about him. She took out her cell phone and sat down beside Sharon before she started surfing the Internet.

About two hours later, Joyce returned, laden with bags.

All at once, Natalie put her cell phone away and helped to arrange the bags.

After having done all this, Natalie decided to bring her two children home. After all, it was almost midnight now, and they still had to go to bed.

"Here, take this." Joyce handed her a car key.

Knowing that Natalie wanted her to drive home, a wealth of warmth suffused her as she took the car key. "Thank you."

At that, Joyce chuckled and waved a dismissive hand. "No worries. But Nat, you should buy a car."

Natalie nodded in agreement. "That's true. It'll be convenient to travel around, and I won't need to hail a cab or have someone else drive me all the time."

Stanley's accident today, in particular, was a bucket of cold water that jolted her awake.

If someone else gets hurt again because he or she drives me, I'll truly go mad. Hence, it's better if I buy a car myself. At least I won't drag anyone else down with me, even if there's an accident.

As Natalie silently listed the matter of buying a car on the agenda, she scooped up the sleeping Sharon with a hand and took Connor's hand with the other. Then, she left the hospital.

The next day, Natalie went to a 4S dealership store with Connor after sending Sharon to the kindergarten.

She wasn't planning on buying too expensive a car, merely one that cost a few hundred thousand. It was just for everyday travel, after all, so it didn't really matter.

While holding Connor's hand, Natalie circled around the plain cars before finally settling on a white car.

"This one, please," she said to the sales representative at the side while patting the front of the car.

Just when the sales representative was about to respond, a flippant male voice sounded from behind. "Give the white car at the back to this lady."

"Mommy, it's Uncle Thompson!" Connor exclaimed as he tugged at Natalie's hand.

"I know," Natalie murmured, staring past the sales representative at Sean, who was heading this way.

Stopping before Natalie, Sean flashed her and Connor a smile. Subsequently, his smile faded, and he turned to the sales representative. "Did you not hear me earlier? Move!" he barked.

"Understood!" The sales representative nodded fervently and scurried away to prepare the contract since he recognized Sean.

After he had left, Sean shifted his gaze back to Natalie and Connor. "It's been a long time, Nat."

Natalie flashed him a smile in response. "It's been a long time, Mr. Sean. Why are you here?"

It's indeed been a while since I saw him. It seems as though he'd disappeared ever since the blood donation.

"This is one of the stores I invest in. I came over to inspect the performance today and happened to spot you, so I came over to greet you. Oh yes, how's this little guy here? Is he all recovered?" Sean lowered his head and stared at Connor beside Natalie.

Then, he reached out to pat him on the head, but Connor released his grip on Natalie's hand and dodged behind her.

As a result, Sean's hand hung in the air, and his expression stiffened for a second.

Upon seeing this, Natalie bowed to him in mortification. "I'm sorry, Mr. Sean. He's timid, so..."

"It's okay." Sean's expression reverted to his usual smiling mien. He retracted his hand and slipped it into his pocket. "This is only the second time we're meeting, so it's normal that he's wary of me. It'll be fine when we're familiar with each other in the future. After all, I'm his biological uncle."

At this, a lightbulb went off in his head. He abruptly crouched and stared at Connor. "Connor, why don't you call me Uncle Thompson?"

Naturally, Connor ignored him. Instead, he continued gazing at him warily while hugging Natalie's leg.

Nonetheless, Sean wasn't angered, merely straightening in disappointment. "Ah, looks like I won't be hearing him call me Uncle Thompson, after all."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Sean..." Natalie opened her mouth and apologized again.

It stood to reason that she should help Sean and persuade Connor to call him Uncle Thompson since he saved Connor back then.

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However, Natalie was afraid that Connor would get accustomed to addressing Sean as his uncle. If we bump into Shane in the future, and he happens to hear Connor addressing Sean as Uncle Thompson, he'll definitely suspect Connor's identity again!

"It's okay. Never mind if he's not willing to call me Uncle Thompson." Sean waved a dismissive hand as though he didn't mind it. Then, he even had the other employees in the store get Connor some snacks.

Despite his maturity and intelligence, Connor was still a kid, so he was riveted the moment he saw the myriad of snacks.

Her heart softening, Natalie bent down slightly and patted him on the shoulder. "Go on."

"Okay." Connor nodded joyfully before going to the lounge area a near distance away to have some snacks.

At this time, the sales representative, who had just left, came back with the contract. He handed it to Natalie.

After glancing through it, Natalie's brows furrowed. "This isn't the car I want."

"This is the car Mr. Sean chose for you," the sales representative explained with a smile.

"That's right. I told him earlier to give you the car at the back, no? That car's design and performance are much better than the one you wanted." Sean pointed at the car he chose.

Casting a glance in that direction, Natalie pursed her red lips. "I've taken a look at that car, Mr. Sean, but its price exceeded my budget. For that reason, I decided against it."

"How about I sell it to you at the price of this car?" Sean patted the car Natalie chose.

All at once, Natalie's eyes narrowed. In the next moment, she shook her head. "No thanks, Mr. Sean. I don't want any favors."

After saying that, she handed the contract in her hand to the sales representative. "Please exchange it with the contract for this car."

At this, the sales representative looked at Sean conflictedly.

In the end, Sean nodded lightly. "Just do as she says."

"Sure." The sales representative then left again.

When he'd left, Sean stared at Natalie as he rubbed his chin. "Are you that reluctant to accept a favor from me?"

Conversely, Natalie flipped her hair and chortled. "I understand your personality, Mr. Sean. You're the kind of person who'll never allow yourself to be on the losing end, so you'll definitely demand that I help you with something or other if I were to accept your favor this time. I already owe you a favor because of Connor, and I don't want to owe you another one!"

Upon hearing this, Sean was startled for a moment before amusement flooded him, and he burst out laughing.

"Nothing gets past you, Nat." He nudged his glasses. "So, are you willing to help me out?"

Without an ounce of hesitation, Natalie shook her head at once. "I'm really sorry, Mr. Sean, but I'll only agree if you're asking me with the favor I owe you for saving Connor. Otherwise, I don't think I'm obliged to help you out."

"You're truly ruthless." Sean chuckled bitterly. But in the next moment, his eyes lit up, and his tone changed as well. "Well, I don't mind if you decline this time, Nat. However, the snacks Connor ate aren't cheap since they're all imported. You've got to compensate me somehow, no? I'm a businessman, so I never give away anything for free. Therefore, Nat..."

He looked at Natalie with a half-smile on his face.

Natalie's petite face instantly darkened. "You're really insidious, Mr. Sean."

Sean could naturally hear the mockery in her voice, but he wasn't at all bothered. Instead, he guffawed. "Ah, that's a bit too serious a word. I merely knew that you'd decline, so I prepared an ace up my sleeve in advance."

Natalie's hands clenched into fists at that. "How much are those snacks? I'll pay you back double."

"I don't want money." Sean waved a dismissive hand. "I only want your help. Don't worry, for it's only an insignificant matter."

Upon seeing that he was unmoved by force or persuasion, Natalie yielded. Taking a deep breath, she forcefully suppressed the fury within her and snapped coldly, "Well? What do you want me to do?"

"It's very simple. You only need to..." Sean leaned close to her and whispered a few words into her ear.

Natalie's eyes went wide after hearing his demand. "What? You want me to pretend to be your wife and have Connor fake being your son to help you drive away your blind date?"

"Hmm?" Connor, who was at the lounge area, swung his gaze over in curiosity when he heard Natalie mentioning his name, blinking his eyes.

Sean nodded. "Yup. Simple, right?"