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Sasha even cut to the chase and asked for the reason she was called here.

Frederick nodded and answered honestly, "Sasha, I've given this matter some thought. I thought I had made the right decision when I arranged for you to marry into our family years ago, but now I've come to regret it. So, if you want to, I can have that reversed immediately."

Sebastian fell silent.

"Sure," the woman, who had just walked in, replied succinctly without any hesitation.

She had not even taken a side glance at Sebastian the whole time.

Sebastian clenched his fists but could not control the veins in his temples from popping violently.

"Alright, since that's what you wish, I'll get the household register right now. Once we have your identity restored at the registration office, you and Sebastian can get your divorce certificate right after."

Frederick was about to instruct someone to retrieve their household register when Sasha spoke, "Thanks, Frederick. But I think we should keep a low profile, just in case it damages the company's reputation."

"What do you mean?"

"Sebastian and I can just settle the matter at the civil affairs office at any time. But if he's not willing to, you may still have to come with me," Sasha suggested.

Once again, the old man was touched by the thoughtfulness of this woman who would soon cease to be his daughter-in-law and was prepared to agree to her suggestion.

Before Frederick could speak, his son beat him to it as he gritted the words through his teeth, "You're not seriously asking my father to go to the civil affairs office with you? It sounds like it's him you're divorcing!"

The atmosphere in the living room immediately turned frosty. The tension was so tangible in the air one could almost smell the explosives.

Frederick's eyes widened in intense fury; his fists balled up as he was about to teach his son some manners.

It was Sasha who maintained her composure and spoke matter-of-factly, "I don't blame you if you understood it that way since that was how we got married in the first place anyway."

"You—" Sebastian was so overcome with anger he was fumbling for more insults to hurl at the woman.

Being the president of the Hayes Corporation had not prevented Sebastian from being hit in the sore spot the second time in the same day.

The man was beside himself. "Sasha Wand! Do you have a death wish?"

This woman is not taking me seriously at all!

"I don't understand why you are so worked up, Sebastian. I thought you have always wanted my name to be taken off your household register so that you can replace it with your new partner's name. I think you should be thanking me for this."

Seeing Sebastian standing motionless, Sasha raised her voice and continued, "I don't know what is it that you're planning in your head against me, but let me be clear on one thing. Although you didn't wish to marry me in the first place, I've still given you two sons. So, if you insist on being a jack*ss about this and don't mind things getting ugly, I'll just see you in court!"

Sasha finally fixed her gaze on Sebastian.

Her glare was not only cold but also piercing sharp. Each of her words was filled with anger and hatred.

That must be why he's refusing to sign the divorce papers now. Before this, he was more than willing to pull out all the stops to get away from me. But now, he's changed his mind because Frederick is giving me an easy way out and he's worried that Xandra's reputation will be harmed if our divorce gets publicized. How cruel and selfish can this person be!

Sasha was still glaring at Sebastian; the corner of her eyes reddened, and her body was trembling from trying to suppress the numbing pain in her body. There was a hint of regret on top of resentment in her emotional eyes.

Sebastian was momentarily dumbstruck.

Am I seeing regret in her eyes? What's she regretting? Marrying me, or having met me in the beginning?

The intense hatred in Sasha's eyes had struck him hard. As the man's thin lips pursed together into a line, he wondered why he felt panicky and lost at the same time. These unfamiliar feelings scared him because, for the first time, Sebastian was losing control of his usual composure.

"Sasha Wand, have you gone crazy? I've never said that I didn't want to be divorced from you, so stop barking like a mad dog! Wait here, and I'll get somebody to prepare the divorce documents right now!" With great self-restraint, Sebastian hurled the most hurtful words he could think of at her and grabbed his car key before he stormed out of the living room.

Sasha stood still as she watched the fast-moving figure disappear from the corner of her eyes. Suddenly, she felt like the last ounce of energy had left her body as she slumped into the chair behind her.

"Sasha, are you okay?" Frederick was silent the whole time the couple exchanged curses. Her abrupt fall into the chair startled him.

Sasha opened her mouth in an attempt to say something, only to realize that she was too exhausted to utter another word.

Fatigue had overcome her.

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It was as though she was finally freed from the shackles of her past. The feeling of being liberated was so overwhelming that her whole body was trembling.

I'm finally free.

She would no longer allow herself to harbor the faint hope of reuniting with Sebastian and find excuses for him every time he hurt her, telling herself that he did those things for a good reason.

Who am I kidding? I was my own prisoner, but I no longer am. I'm going to have a new life after this.

While Sasha sat on that chair, tears started to roll down her cheeks. Clutching her chest, she wanted to cry her heart out. But as she took a deep breath, she realized that her aching heart did not allow her to do so.

She felt as though her heart had been pierced through with a dagger.

••••

Sasha remained at the Hayes residence the whole afternoon.

Since Sebastian had indicated that he would have the divorce papers sent over, she wanted to be there when the documents arrived.

But hours had passed, and there was still no sign of Sebastian.

After a while, Sasha grew drowsy from getting too worked up earlier on and fell asleep in the house.

When Matteo and Ian came over for their mother, they saw a sleeping Sasha. They then scuttled to their grandfather. "Grandpa, is Mommy sleeping?"

Frederick was looking intently at a booklet in his hand when a child's voice broke his daze. He quickly put down the booklet and replied, "Yeah, she's asleep. What are you guys doing here? I thought you were spending time with your uncle?"

"We did. But we've got to go back now," said Matteo smilingly after checking the time on his smartwatch.

It's about time to pick Vivian up from her preschool, or the crybaby will surely kick up a fuss if we're late.

After hearing that Matteo intended to go home, a hint of hesitation crept up the old man's face as he looked at his grandson and asked tentatively, "Well, I was thinking... maybe you could sleep here tonight and spend some time with me?"

"Huh?"

Frederick's unexpected suggestion startled the boys.

lan did not resist that idea as he had spent a lot of time here growing up. Matteo, on the other hand, was instantly filled with reluctance.

He was not used to sleeping in a strange place without his parents.

"But Mommy said that we need to go back home so that we won't be late for our preschool tomorrow. Grandpa, why don't we come back to visit you on the weekend?" Matteo had cleverly turned his rejection into a visit in his sweetest voice possible.

However, Matteo's suggestion only made the old man's heart grow heavier.

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Unbeknownst to the boys, the booklet their grandfather was holding onto was the Hayes family's household register. Frederick was just thinking about the custody of Matteo as they barged into his room.

Matteo is a Hayes, so it is without question that he will have to return to the Hayes family.

Moments before Matteo walked in, Frederick had tried to put himself in Sasha's shoes while considering who should get custody of the child.

After all, the Hayes family owed her that much.

Nevertheless, the moment he saw the boys walk in together, he was reminded of what a sweet and cheerful little person Matteo was compared to his frail twin brother. The old man now had second thoughts about letting him go.

"Oh, that won't be a problem. I can take you guys to school, and I promise that I won't be late. What do you think?" Frederick was insistent.

"Huh?"

"Alright, let's get the butler to show you to your room. I've re-decorated the room, and I think you'll like it."

Without waiting for a reply, Frederick beckoned his butler over and instructed him to bring the boys to their room.

lan's face darkened in an instant before he shouted, "I'm not going!"

"You—" Frederick was once again stumped by his elder grandson.

Sensing the rising tension in the room, Matteo was quick to defuse the situation. "Don't be upset, Grandpa. It takes time with Ian. Let me talk to him."

With that, Matteo pulled his brother out of the room before Frederick could stop them.

After they reached a deserted courtyard a few minutes later, Matteo asked his brother, "Ian, you did that on purpose just now, didn't you?"

"Hmm," Ian admitted while lowering his head in embarrassment, the back of his ears turning pink.

With a big grin on his face, Matteo patted his brother's shoulder to indicate a job well done.

He then attempted to analyze the situation. "Something must have happened between Daddy and Mommy. Otherwise, Grandpa wouldn't be acting this way."

"Hmm." Ian frowned in agreement.

"We can't both stay here. We've got to find out what's going on between the two of them. Didn't you see what Grandpa was trying to do just now? He was trying to keep me here. Me!"

Ian was rendered speechless by his brother's reasoning.

Matteo's voice turned solemn when he continued, "If Grandpa is really planning to fight with Mommy over me, things will definitely turn ugly. He's way more powerful than Daddy, and there's not much we can do to help Mommy in this matter."