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"That wasn't what I meant. Can you stop thinking of me that way?" Joyce had tears welled up in her eyes as she looked at him. It was obvious that she was upset.

"Don't think of you that way?" Stanley did not bother to hide the resentment and disgust in his eyes. "You're just someone who likes to snitch on people right? If it wasn't for you, my parents wouldn't be dead because of your parents!"

Joyce closed her eyes in anguish as tears streamed down her face. "Stanley, how many times do you need me to repeat for you to believe that your parents' death has got nothing to do with my parents. It wasn't me who ratted out on them. I didn't know how those people found out where your parents were. My parents did not participate in it. They were there to save your parents."

"That's enough!" Stanley grimaced in anger as he interrupted her. "I don't want to hear you coming up with excuses. You have no right to talk about my parents!"

Joyce was taken aback by the man's ferocious gaze. She instantly went pale and was not able to say anything else.

When Natalie came back from disposing of the flowers and glass shards, she was shocked to see Stanley glaring at Joyce with deep hatred. "What happened? Did you guys fight?" She asked.

Upon hearing the woman's voice, Stanley immediately retracted his gaze and returned to his usual gentle and graceful self.

It was the same for Joyce. She lowered her head and wiped off her tears. Forcing a smile, she replied, "Don't worry. Stanley and I were just having a small argument."

"Is that true?" Natalie looked towards Stanley.

Judging by the looks on their faces just now, it didn't seem like it was just a "small argument".

Especially the look of hatred in Stanley's eyes as he gazed at Joyce. His expression was so frightening that it made Natalie's heart skip a beat.

"Of course," Stanley replied Natalie with a smile after casting a side glance at Joyce, agreeing with her statement.

However, Natalie could tell that those two people were not telling the truth, but she also felt that she shouldn't pursue it any further.

After all, they had too much history with each other which made things complicated.

"OK, I shan't ask anymore since that's what you two insist. I'm heading back to the kitchen first," Natalie said, as she pointed towards the direction of the kitchen.

"Sure," Joyce replied while Stanley merely responded with a nod.

After eating, the two of them returned to the hospital while Natalie continued working on the blueprint in her study.

When she was done with her work and complied the papers, it was already time for her to pick Sharon up from the kindergarten.

Just when Natalie was about to get dressed to pick her daughter up, her phone, which was in her pocket, rang.

While browsing through her wardrobe for suitable clothes, she took a glance at her phone and realized that it was Shane who was calling. Without hesitation, she picked up and greeted, "Mr. Shane."

"I'm just calling to inform you that I'll be sending Sharon back later," Shane said in a gentle voice while sitting in the car. With one hand holding his phone up to his ear, his fingers on his other hand tapped on his knees rhythmically.

Natalie could hear that he was in a car and stopped her actions. "Mr. Shane, are you already on your way to the kindergarten?" she asked.

"Yup," Shane answered as he lifted his chin slightly.

As such, Natalie closed her wardrobe and replied, "Oh OK. Thanks then, Mr. Shane."

"No problem," Shane simply replied before ending the call.

Just then, Silas had already parked the car and turned around to inform Shane," Mr. Shane, we've reached the kindergarten."

"Got it." Shane put his phone back into his pocket and got off the car. After entering the kindergarten, he found Sharon's classroom effortlessly.

Right before he stepped into her classroom, he could already hear the girl's cries, "All of you are spouting nonsense. I have a dad!"

Shane, who was just about to push open the door, stopped his actions. At the same time, he narrowed his eyes and looked fierce instantly.

Silas, who arrived a while later, did not know what happened. Seeing that his boss was just standing outside the classroom without going in, he asked curiously, "Mr. Shane, aren't you here to pick Sharon up? Why are you standing here?"

Without replying, Shane merely lifted his hand, signaling for Silas to keep quiet.

The assistant nodded and stopped talking at once. Right after that, they heard Sharon's cries once more, as well as another kid speaking, "We are not talking nonsense. It's true that you don't have a dad. A lady told us that children without a father are basta\*ds. That makes you a basta\*d."

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That child who just spoke had a childish and sweet voice, but the words that came out of his mouth was so vicious that it was unnerving.

A shiver went down Silas' spine and he spoke solemnly, "Mr. Shane, Sharon is being bullied."

"I know," Shane replied in a frosty voice as he clenched his fists, which were in his pocket.

He adored the little girl and was extremely furious that she was being picked on.

"I'm not a basta\*d, you are! I have a dad. My dad came to school a couple of days back for our meet-the-parent session. I have a dad!" Sharon got even more worked up after being called a basta\*d. She finally broke down and her cries got even louder.

A few chubby kids started laughing at her, seeing her in such a plight.

"That man isn't your dad. That lady told us that the man who came previously was the CEO of Thompson Group and he doesn't have children. So how is it possible that you're his daughter? Besides, your mom is a bad woman who goes around seducing men. Since your mom is a bad woman, that makes you a bad girl as well!"

"Yup, you're a bad girl! Bad girl!" The rest of the chubby kids clapped their hands and exclaimed in unison.

"You are the bad ones! I am not a bad girl! Boohoo... "Sharon's face was flushed red with anger. She clenched her small fists and was ready to fight against the other kids.

That was when Shane kicked the door open forcefully. The impact was so huge that the door rebounded as it hit the wall, scaring the kids who were in front of the classroom.

Sharon was shocked and frightened from the sudden entry of the man as well. But when she composed herself and saw that it was Shane who had just arrived, she pouted and ran towards him. "Dad... "

Shane immediately softened his expression as he squatted down to lift up the girl. Using his thumb to wipe away her tears, he replied gently, "It's OK now. Dad's here."

After hearing Shane's words, Sharon suddenly burst out crying while putting her arms around the man's neck, letting all her grievances out.

She couldn't stop burping while she cried. Shane's heart ached for the girl, seeing her so upset.

He tried to calm her down by patting her back lightly. At the same time, he instructed Silas coldly, "Go and get their teacher here at once!"

"Understood!" Silas nodded and left immediately to carry out his instructions.

After the assistant left, Shane walked towards those few chubby kids while carrying Sharon in his arms.

The little bullies were already terrified when the man kicked the door open. With the man standing right in front of them with such a grim expression while exuding a threatening aura, they were shaking with fear and asking for their moms.

As Shane's head was throbbing from the noise, he pursed his lips and ordered coldly, "Keep quiet!"

At once, those kids stopped crying and did not dare to make a single sound.

At the same time, Sharon's sobs had also subsided. As such, Shane put her down and held her hand while saying, "Sharon, tell dad, who's the one who started bullying you first?"

"It's him!" Sharon pointed to the chubbiest boy among the group and said angrily, "Dad, he's the one who kept picking on me and said that I'm a basta\*d who doesn't have a dad."

Shane immediately shot a blazing gaze at that boy and asked in a demanding manner, "Why did you bully my daughter?"

The boy froze and was so terrified that even his chubby cheeks were quivering. Finally, he started bawling as he was not able to withstand the pressure and fear. "I didn't want to do that... Boohoo... It was a lady who told us to say those things to Sharon. She said that as long as we call Sharon a basta\*d in school, she'll buy us lots of nice snacks... "

"A lady?" A dangerous glint flashed across Shane's eyes as he clenched his fists tighter.

Initially, the man had thought that it was purely a fight between kids. After all, he understood that not all kids could get along well with each other.

However, he had never imagined that it was a calculated scheme instead.

"How does that lady look like? Where did you kids meet her?" Shane asked while looking down, staring intently at the group of chubby kids.

The kids did not dare to hide anything from Shane and told him everything truthfully. "We met her outside the school gate. She stopped us when we came to school this morning and

instructed us to do that. We couldn't see clearly how she looked like as she was wearing a cap."

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Shane was not the least surprised at that answer as he had already guessed it.

Just then, Silas arrived together with the teacher.

Silas had already briefed the teacher on what happened on the way there. As such, once the teacher saw Shane, she immediately bowed and apologized, "Mr. Shane, I'm so sorry, I didn't know that these kids would… "

"Enough." Shane, who was holding Sharon's hand, cut the teacher off and continued, "I don't want to listen to all these. I want you to contact the parents of these kids at once. Their parents should be responsible for their kids' misbehavior. I'm not going to punish the kids as their parents are the ones to be blamed."

"OK, sure," the teacher had no choice but to agree at once as he knew that the man was deeply offended and furious by what happened. There was no way he would let the matter slide if he didn't meet the kids' parents. As such, she contacted those parents right away.

Shortly after, the parents arrived. They rushed to the school as soon as possible after knowing that the CEO of Thompson Group wanted to meet them.

Upon arrival, when those parents were informed that their children had bullied the daughter of the CEO of Thompson Group after being incited by a random bit\*ch, they were so mad that they started spanking their kids.

When Sharon saw her bullies being punished by their parents and were crying, she finally smiled.

Shane's anger was appeased after seeing the smile on the little girl's face. As such, he did not make things difficult for those parents and accepted their apologies. His only condition was for their kids to transfer schools.

With that, Sharon's bullying incident came to a conclusion.

After that, Shane walked out of the kindergarten with Sharon, holding her hand.

When they got into the car, he looked at Silas, who was at the driver's seat and said in a low voice, "Check if Harrison was involved in this!"

Shane had that suspicion as Sharon's bullying incident happened on the same day that Natalie was being attacked online.

It could be that Harrison was using a two-pronged approach to force Natalie to relent.

"Understood," Silas replied while starting the car engine at the same time.

Sharon had a glum face and kept her head lowered on the way back to the apartment, without speaking a single word.

When Shane tried to strike a conversation with her, she merely responded by shaking or nodding her head.

The man knew that Sharon was deeply hurt by the bullies' words earlier on.

In the first place, children were more fragile than adults and would be more sensitive to what others said about them, often believing everything they heard. Not to mention being exposed to such vicious comments, which would naturally affect the little girl deeply.

As such, silence ensued in the car all the way back to the apartment.

Holding Sharon's hand, Shane pressed the doorbell.

Looking at the time, Natalie guessed that it must be Shane sending the girl back. Feeling happy, she put down the television remote control and went to open the door together with Connor.

Once the door opened, Sharon let go of Shane's hand immediately and dashed towards Natalie. Hugging her mother's thighs, she asked while sobbing, "Mommy, why is it that everyone else has a dad but not Connor and I?"

When Natalie heard her daughter's words, the smile on her face froze at once.

Connor's face fell as well, as he downcast his eyes.

Natalie looked at her daughter, who was still crying uncontrollably, before looking at Shane, who was still standing outside the door with a complicated expression on his face. Feeling her throat close up with emotions, she asked, "Mr. Shane, did anything happen to Sharon?"

Shane nodded briefly and narrated everything that happened at the kindergarten earlier on.

Natalie was already trembling in fury when the man finished speaking.

She squatted down and held Sharon and Connor tightly in her arms. With her heart aching and feeling bad for her daughter, she said, "Darling, don't take those words to heart. You are not basta\*ds, you have a dad too."

"Where's our dad then? Why did he abandon us!" Sharon looked up at Natalie and asked with her face covered in tears.

Shane looked towards Natalie as well, waiting to hear her answer.

Even Connor had fixed his gaze on her.

Even though their mommy had said before that their dad would have his own family in the future and the boy had also promised his mommy that he would never reunite with his dad, he had always wanted to know who his dad was as well as his whereabouts.

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The reason for that was because the boy wanted to find out why their dad had abandoned their mommy!

Faced with the kids' expectant gazes, Natalie opened her mouth but was at a loss for words. "Mommy doesn't know as well," she replied while stroking Sharon's head apologetically.

What a liar!

Shane narrowed his eyes. He could easily tell that the woman was not speaking the truth.

Sharon started crying again as she clutched tightly onto Natalie's collar. Burying her head into her mommy's arms, the girl's sobs grew louder. "Boohoo... I want my dad... I want my dad!"

Her daughter's cries were like a dagger that pierced through Natalie's heart, causing her much pain.

Just then, Connor clenched his tiny fists and looked at Natalie calmly while speaking, "Mommy, do you know why Sharon wants our dad so much?"

Natalie moved her lips and was about to answer before Connor spoke ahead of her, "Because today isn't the first time Sharon heard other kids saying that we don't have a dad."

"What?" Natalie's expression changed as a look of disbelief crossed her face.

Shane's eyes flickered as well, as he pursed his lips.

Connor patted Sharon's back lightly while explaining, "When we were overseas, other kids had both their parents sending them to school and fetching them, but not us. Those kids would always brag about the places they've been to with their dads but we didn't have anything to share. As such, they always made fun of us for not having a dad."

When Natalie heard that, she swayed on her feet and almost fainted.

Shane immediately stepped forward to steady her, preventing the woman from falling down.

"Why didn't both of you tell your mommy about it?" Shane looked at Connor and asked the boy.

That was also what Natalie wanted to know. Holding her son's hand, she said, "Exactly! Connor, why didn't you tell me about it?"

Connor lowered his head and replied, "Because mommy is already having a hard time bringing us up. We don't want mommy to be sad because of us."

When Natalie heard that, she was deeply guilty for not being aware of what the kids had gone through instead of feeling glad to have two such sensible children. She felt bad that her two young kids had endured the bullying by other kids silently out of care for her.

If Sharon had not been bullied by those kids earlier on and had not heard such vicious words, the girl would not have lost control and asked for her dad. If that was the case, Natalie would never have known the suffering her kids had gone through.

The woman couldn't help but blame herself at that thought. Stroking her children's heads, she apologized continuously, "Sorry, my darlings, mommy is so sorry... "

When the kids heard their mommy's apology, they were suddenly overwhelmed by the grievances which were stored in their hearts and the three of them clung to each other as they sobbed.

Even Connor was bawling out loud.

Although the boy was very mature and extremely sensible for his age, he was, ultimately, only a five-year-old boy. He would also cry when he felt aggrieved.

Shane's heart tightened at the scene in front of him. At that moment, he really wanted to take all three of them into his arms and comfort them.

However, his rationality held him back from doing that. He knew that it wasn't the time for him to do that yet.

After what seemed like a long time, the kids' crying subsided and they fell asleep in Natalie's arms.

The woman wanted to carry them back to their rooms but she was unable to do so alone.

Just when she was about to wake one of them up, Shane suddenly bent down and lifted Connor up. "I'll help you carry one of them."

Natalie was stunned for a moment before smiling in gratitude as she replied, "Thanks, Mr. Shane"

"Please lead the way," Shane said, raising his chin.

"Sure," Natalie replied before carrying Sharon and started walking towards the kids' bedroom.

When they reached the room, Natalie and Shane placed the two kids gently onto the bed and covered them with a blanket.

After that, Natalie gave Shane a look, indicating that the both of them should leave the room.

Shane nodded in understanding and followed the woman out of the room.

When they reached the living room, Shane looked at Natalie, who had sat down on the sofa and was rubbing her temples, and asked, "Why did you keep it from them and choose not to tell them who their father is?"

Natalie froze at the man's questions. After a few seconds, she looked down and replied, "Because I don't want to make things difficult for Connor and Sharon."

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"What do you mean by that?" Shane frowned.

Natalie looked up at him with an unfathomable gaze in her eyes and replied, "Their dad has a woman he loves and they will start their own family sooner or later. They will eventually have their own children. By then, my kids will become illegitimate children. That's not good for Connor and Sharon!"

"You're right," Shane moved his lips slightly and agreed.

Even though they were just kids and there were a lot of things that they could not understand yet, they would still be aware, from the reactions of people around them, that they were different from other kids whose parents were happily together.

When it came to that, there was no difference between the upper echelons or ordinary folks. Illegitimate children would still be scorned upon.

"Besides, I've tested waters by asking their dad. He said that he would take the kids away if he was aware of any children he has." Natalie said that while she clenched her fists.

Shane cocked his eyebrow as he remembered hearing the same thing somewhere before.

The woman had asked him the same question last time and he had given the same answer as well.

So her reason for asking me was to see if all men are the same?

Natalie bit her lips and said, "I can't let him take my kids away. If he did that, not only will the kids feel out of place in his family, his future wife might not be able to accept them as well. Even if she did, there's no guarantee that she will treat them well."

Shane nodded, agreeing with the woman's analysis.

It was true that hardly any woman would be able to accept her husband having illegitimate children.

"That was why I didn't tell Connor and Sharon who their dad was. I also didn't tell their dad that he had two children," Natalie said, while rubbing her cheeks and taking a deep breath.

Shane crossed his arms in front of his chest and looked at the woman. "But you won't be able to keep it from them forever. They'll still know about it one day."

Natalie looked down, averting the man's gaze as she replied, "I know. I'm just trying to keep it from them for as long as I can."

"It's easier to keep it from the children's dad, but not Connor and Sharon. Sharon was really hurt by what the other kids said to her earlier today and it seems to have affected her deeply. What would you do if she keeps asking for her dad?"

Shane narrowed his eyes and fixed his gaze on Natalie, before continuing, "Besides, a father is a central character in a child's life and development."

The woman covered her face with her hands and replied helplessly, "I really don't know what to do."

She had never expected to be faced with a situation like that. Her two kids were usually joyful and had never asked for their dad. As such, Natalie had always assumed that they didn't need a dad, as long as they had their mom with them. She thought that as long as she remained by their side, the kids would grow up happily and healthily.

However, the woman suddenly realized that she was wrong. Even though it was important for the children to be with their mom, having their dad with them was also essential. Many times, a dad's role in a child's life could not be replaced by a mom.

Shane's eyes flickered when he noticed that Natalie was in agony and straightened his back instinctively.

"Even though I'm not sure why you're separated from the kids' dad and chose to give birth to them alone, you mentioned just now that their dad already has a partner he loves. That means that it's not possible for all of you to reunite as a family. If that's the case, have you ever thought of finding a new dad for the kids?"

"A new dad?" Natalie was slightly startled at that suggestion.

That had indeed never crossed her mind.

"Yup, that's right." Shane nodded and continued, "They are still young. At this age, they need both their parents around. I think it's perfectly fine for you to think about that."

Natalie shook her head and let out a bitter smile. "It's not that easy. Who would be willing to accept a woman with two kids?"

Shane made a fist with his hand in his pocket and said, "I'm sure there are many. If you don't mind, I... "

Before he could complete his sentence, he was interrupted by the sound of a phone ringing.

The man frowned and glared at Natalie's pocket in annoyance. A cold glint flashed across his eyes as he pursed his lips.

Not noticing the subtle changes in the man's demeanor, Natalie took out her phone from her pocket. Her expression sank immediately when she saw that it was Harrison calling.