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"So how? Have you thought it through?" Harrison asked in a relaxed manner while sipping coffee after the call went through.

Natalie gripped her phone tightly and replied with a sneer, "My answer is still the same. I don't agree!"

Harrison's expression darkened and he put his cup down heavily on the coffee table. "You're still not willing to relent? Didn't you see those nasty comments targeted towards you on the Internet?"

"I did."

"Why are you still behaving in this manner since you have seen them? Do you want them to continue scolding you?" Harrison slammed the table furiously.

Shane still had his gaze fixed intently on the woman's phone.

Natalie noticed the man's interest in the conversation. In addition, because of the fact that he had also been dragged into the matter, she switched on the loudspeaker on her phone before replying, "Mr. Smith, you don't have to pretend that you're thinking for me. It's really fake. After all, aren't you the mastermind behind all these?"

"You..." Harrison was stumped at the woman's response but quickly composed himself. Letting out a cold snort, he said, "You were the one who forced me to take that step. If you were willing to compromise earlier, there wouldn't be a need for me to do that."

"Yup, you're making me suffer because I didn't compromise. But how about Mr. Shane? What did Mr. Shane do to offend you?" Natalie looked up at the man in front of her as she spoke into the phone.

Shane narrowed his eyes but remained silent.

On the other end of the phone, Harrison frowned as he replied in confusion, "What has this got to do with Shane?"

"Everything. You're tarnishing my image by saying that I'm shamelessly seducing Mr. Shane, causing him to break off his engagement with Jasmine. Have you ever considered if Mr. Shane is willing to be made use of by you?" Natalie scoffed.

Harrison's eyes widened when he heard that. He shuddered nervously and was at a loss for words.

Indeed, that had never crossed his mind.

He just wanted to use the most effective and direct reason to smear Natalie. While doing that, he had never considered that Shane would also be implicated and might be unhappy about it.

Natalie knew that she had hit the bull's eye when Harrison did not reply. As such, she continued speaking while looking at Shane, "Looks like you've indeed failed to consider that. If that's the case, do you think Mr. Shane would help me silent the netizens if I go to him for assistance?"

"Of course!" Shane suddenly answered, without any hesitation.

Harrison bolted up from the sofa when he heard the man's voice and asked, "Natalie, is Shane with you now?"

"Yup. Didn't you claim that I have seduced him? Wouldn't it be normal then that he's at my place?" Natalie said as she leaned against the sofa.

The woman's reply sent Harrison into a fluster.

If Shane's with her now, wouldn't that mean that he has also heard our conversation?

Harrison started panicking at once. Gripping tightly onto the dragon figurine on his walking cane, he quickly apologized, "Errr, Shane, I didn't mean to drag you into all these. I'm so... "

"Well, I had an eye-opening experience because of Mr. Smith." Shane interrupted the man sarcastically as he did not wish for him to continue, knowing what he was going to say. "I can't believe you're ruining the reputation of your other daughter just for Susan and her daughter."

Natalie nodded, agreeing with what Shane had just said.

She felt as if God was playing a joke on her by giving her a dad like Harrison.

Being lectured by his junior, Harrison's face immediately flushed red with embarrassment and he wished he could find a hole to bury his head in right away.

However, there was no hole for him and he did not dare to end the call just like that. As such, he could only force himself to endure the discomfort and replied, "Shane, I have didn't have a choice. I can't possibly leave my wife and daughter in the lurch right? I only did that as a last resort."

"Last resort? Your last resort is to trample on your other daughter to achieve your objective? You're still the same as you were seven years ago." A sneer appeared on Shane's face as he said that.

Fear flashed across Harrison's face when he heard that and his heart starting thumping faster. Instinctively, he replied, "Seven... seven years ago? What do you mean? I don't understand."

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"Yes, Mr. Shane? What happened seven years ago?" Natalie's curiosity was piqued.

He stole a glance at her, then stared at the cell phone on the table and coldly uttered, "Seven years ago, he spread rumors about you eloping with a man so that Jasmine can take your place and be engaged to me."

"What?" Natalie grabbed the phone and yelled into it, "Harrison Smith! So you are the one who tarnished my reputation seven years ago. How could you be so mean? What have I done to deserve a dad like you?" She was visibly emotional.

Harrison kept quiet. He could not answer her accusation. A deep sense of fear overcame him.

If Shane knew about this, could he also know about the incident five years ago, whereby Jas took credit for Natalie's efforts? If he did, what will happen to us?

Natalie was not aware of Harrison's thoughts and worry. She took his silence as a sign of guilt over what he did to her. "Harrison Smith, I will not forget what you did to me. You will get your retribution. Just wait and see," she warned.

With that, she hung up on him and flung the phone onto the sofa. She sat there and lowered her head as she was washed over in depression.

"Are you alright?" Shane asked with concern as he handed her a piece of tissue.

Natalie's eyes were red from crying. She took the tissue and dried her tears. "I am fine. I am just thinking, why did I not see his true colors seven years ago?"

"It is not too late now," Shane consoled her.

"Yup, you are right," Natalie concurred.

Shane poured a glass of water and offered it to her.

"Thank you." Natalie took the drink and calmed herself.

"Oh, Mr. Shane, you were about to say something when Harrison called. What was it?" she recalled.

"Nothing." His eyes briefly flickered.

That was the moment he wanted to tell her he was ready to be a dad to her two kids. Unfortunately, Harrison's call interrupted them. It looked like he would have to wait for another opportunity to confess his feelings.

Natalie did not suspect a thing seeing that Shane was quiet. She assumed it was nothing important.

She lightly massaged her temple, then called Joyce.

"Hey, Nat," Joyce greeted her.

"Joyce, please release a statement to the local media. Let them know I will be holding a press conference at nine tomorrow morning."

The issue had gone viral online. She could no longer maintain her silence and be undermined by all the negative comments.

She initially had the intention to hold back a little and spare Harrison during the press conference, as he's her father after all. After receiving these calls, she changed her mind. Seven years ago, when he stained her name, he never spared a thought for her. Therefore, she shall not show him any mercy. An eye for an eye!

"Sure. I will get going then," Joyce chirped. She knew Natalie well and could tell it was payback time for the Smiths.

Natalie looked at Shane after she ended her conversation with Joyce and appealed, "Mr. Shane, I will be counting on your support tomorrow morning."

"Don't worry. It is getting late. I shall make a move." Shane stood up and got ready to leave.

"Okay." Natalie saw him to the door.

As she was about to close the door, Shane called out to her. "Do you remember the conversation we had about getting a dad for your two kids? I feel you should give it serious consideration."

Natalie felt a pang of sadness. She looked down to hide the disappointment in her eyes.

She understood he meant well and wanted the best for her kids. However, she could not help feeling heavy-hearted. No woman would want to hear the man she loved prompting her to look for another man. That would be an obvious sign that he had no interest in her.

Natalie's face fell as she replied coldly, "Sure. I will give it serious thoughts."

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With that, she shut the door.

Shane sensed she was angry, but he had no idea why. He was about to knock on the door to check on her when Silas came out of the elevator. Silas' eyes lit up when he saw Shane and nipped over to him. "Mr. Shane."

"What's up?" Shane asked lackadaisically.

"This is from Mr. Jessie and Mr. Dylan." Silas handed him a black invitation card.

"Exhibition?" Shane took the invite and briefly read it.

"Yes. Mr. Jessie and Mr. Dylan collaborated on a collection. They are currently on a world tour and the next stop will be here at J City."

Mr. Jessie was a top jewelry designer while Mr. Dylan was world-renowned in the fashion industry. Their rare collaboration created quite a stir amongst those in the fashion industry.

Natalie was looking at them on the intercom. When she heard the news about the exhibition, she could not help but let out a soft yelp.

Oh my god! Mr. Dylan is coming to J City with his collection!

She was overwhelmed by the information and literally jumping with joy.

Her little brouhaha was audible through the intercom.

The two men paused and Silas looked around as he was puzzled.

"Did you hear that? What's that noise?" he asked.

Shane glanced at the flickering light on the intercom camera and knew it was Natalie. His lips curved to a slight grin. "Nothing. Anyway, who else was invited to the exhibition?" he asked as he closed the invitation card.

Silas shook his head. "No information so far. Do you want me to find out?"

Shane nodded.

If Natalie's name was not on the invite list, he would try to get her an invitation.

He remembered Mr. Dylan was her idol as it was recorded in her application form.

"Let's go." Shane tossed the invitation card back to Silas and turned to enter his apartment.

Silas quickly followed.

Natalie turned off the intercom only after they closed their apartment door.

The next morning, Natalie left the kids at the apartment and reminded them not to leave the place. She made a special effort to dress differently to be incognito and left for the press conference.

As she stepped out of the building, she immediately sensed she was being watched.

She frowned, looked around, and saw a number of people hiding behind some bushes nearby.

Those people saw her stopped and looked in their direction. They knew she had discovered them so they emerged from their hiding place and rushed towards her, cameras and microphones in tow.

"Hello Ms. Natalie, we are from the press. Could we have an interview with you?" A female reporter pushed a microphone right in front of her face. Even before Natalie could respond, she continued, "Is Mr. Smith's accusation that you came between his daughter and Mr. Shane true?"

The paparazzi started throwing questions at Natalie.

"Ms. Natalie, did you go public after exposing Ms. Jasmine's plagiarism during the finals because you are jealous of her engagement with Mr. Shane? You want to discredit her because of jealousy?"

"Ms. Natalie, do you think you will be able to win Mr. Shane's heart if you successfully ruin her?"

Natalie's face fell upon hearing all these sharp questions.

She pulled her cap lower to shield her face and asked sternly, "Who told you this is my address?"

"That is not important, Ms. Natalie. Could you kindly answer our questions?" The female reporter was pushy. She thrust the microphone even closer. If she could, she would have thrust it all the way into Natalie's mouth.

"No comments," Natalie replied gravely as she took a step back.

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"No comments? Does that mean you are guilty as charged?" the female reporter challenged.

Natalie was rather amused.

No comments meant guilty? What kind of logic is that?

"Please make way!" Natalie clenched her fist and growled.

The paparazzi ignored her and swarmed forward, pressing her for answers.

Natalie had to retreat backward and was almost cornered. She knew they would not back off without getting the answers they wanted.

Hence, she took a deep breath and fished out her phone to call security.

"Ms. Natalie..." The female reporter suddenly surged forward. That took Natalie by surprise. As a result, she tripped and fell backward.

Just as she was about to hit the ground, a man appeared behind her.

He extended his muscular arm, and caught her, breaking her fall. It was Shane.

"Are you injured?" Shane asked, eyes filled with concern, as he looked down upon the shocked and pale Natalie.

Natalie shook her head. "I am fine. Thank you, Mr. Shane."

"Thank goodness." Shane was relieved and let go of his grip on her.

Natalie swiftly moved aside to keep a distance between them.

Shane was disturbed by her reaction but he did not show his displeasure. He turned his attention to the paparazzi and glared at them.

The paparazzi were stunned by his sudden appearance. With that glare, they were all cowering in fear.

"Who pushed her?" Shane pointed at Natalie as he grilled the crowd.

They looked at one another and chorused, "We did not push Ms. Natalie."

"Is that true?" Shane turned to ask Natalie.

Natalie was tidying up her attire when she heard his query. She stopped and nodded in agreement. "They did not push me. I was just frightened by the lady reporter."

Lady reporter?

Shane immediately locked his eyes on the only female paparazzo in the crowd.

The female reporter froze and lowered her head to avoid his piercing gaze.

Shane pursed his lips and questioned, "Which media companies are you from?"

The paparazzi kept quiet.

"Silas!" Shane snorted and summoned Silas.

"Yes!" Silas came up from behind Shane and started checking the reporters' name tags, taking down their particulars and the companies they worked for.

"Mr. Campbell." Out of the blue, Natalie called out to Silas.

"Yes, Ms. Smith?" Silas turned to respond.

Shane also turned to look at her.

"Could you help me find out who gave them my address?" she requested.

This apartment was a high-end development, the price was only second to villas. Information about the owners and occupants of these apartments was highly confidential. They would not have managed to find out her address so easily.

Silas looked up to Shane for consent. When Shane gave the nod, he immediately acceded to her request. "Sure," and he started interrogating the paparazzi.

These paparazzi may have played hardball with Natalie, but in the presence of Shane, they were forthcoming with the information.

"It was from a woman."

"A woman?" Natalie was stumped.

"Who is this woman?" Shane was curious too.

A look of shock briefly flashed by Silas' expression. He fell silent and looked down, lost in thoughts.

"No idea. She called us on the phone, gave us Ms. Natalie's address, and hung up. We tried calling back but her line was no longer in use." Their replies were the same.

Natalie looked towards Shane and asked, "Mr. Shane, do you think it could be the woman who urged the kids to bully Sharon yesterday?"

"That's possible." Shane then turned to Silas for his opinion.

Silas shook his head and explained. "Mr. Shane, I did some investigations. Based on Harrison's bank records, he did not make any dubious fund transfers. His phone records and travel history were all clean as well. I doubt that woman's in cahoots with him, even though her action did benefit him."

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"What leads you to this conclusion?" Natalie was eager to know.

Silas adjusted his glasses and elaborated. "Harrison did spread the rumor about you and Mr. Shane at the press conference. Other than that, he did nothing. Those fake accounts and trolls were works of that woman."

"You are positive about this?" Shane peered at him.

"I have checked on those fake accounts and trolls. They were all recruited and paid by a woman. Her modus operandi is always contacting via phone then disabling her line.

"She had the ability to mobilize so many different trolls and media, then disappeared without a trace. I think she has a powerful backer." Natalie clenched her fist and concluded.

She was convinced this was the same woman who bullied Sharon and maybe the one who destroyed her warehouse too.

She had no idea what wrong she had done to this woman nor why she was so bent on harassing her. However, it did not matter anymore for she vowed to get to the bottom of things. Once she gathered sufficient evidence, this woman would be thrown in jail, just like Alice.

"Excuse us...Mr. Shane and Ms. Natalie. We told you everything we knew. Can we leave now?" The paparazzi looked pleadingly at the two and asked haltingly.

"Check their cameras." Shane looked up and gave the instruction.

"Noted." Silas took over and went through their cameras. They took many photos of Natalie.

He removed all the memory cards and declared, "Alright, these stay with me."

The paparazzi could only watch on helplessly.

"Scoot!" bawled Shane.

The paparazzi were about to scurry away when Natalie called them back. Shane watched her with curiosity.

"Yes, Ms. Natalie?" The paparazzi turned back sulkily.

They deeply regretted acting on that woman's tip-off. They did not manage to get the scoop they wanted. On top of that, they even offended Shane.

It was not a wasted trip though. They saw Shane and Natalie came out of the same apartment building. They speculated there must be something going on between the two and the rumor about Natalie seducing Shane could be true. They secretly planned to send some juicy stories out once they get away from Shane.

Natalie walked up to where Shane was standing. She gave him a nodding smile, looked at the paparazzi, and announced, "If you wish to get answers for the questions you asked just now, join me at Sky Towers. I will be holding a press conference there to present my side of the story."

Her side of the story?

The paparazzi looked at one another, surprised.

They saw a plot twist coming up and they were excited.

"Definitely! We will be there!" With that promise, they hurried away.

After they left, Shane gave Silas an instruction. "After the press conference, contact the media companies and get those few paparazzi fired."

"Got it," Silas answered.

Natalie pretended she did not hear that. Those paparazzi stalked and harassed her, so they deserved it.

Natalie gave her forehead a quick rub, then turned to take leave from the men. "Mr. Shane, I am running late. I will make a move and head to the studio now."

"Go ahead." Shane nodded.

Natalie gave him a slight bow, headed towards her car, and drove off.