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Joyce looked up from her laptop and cheered. "Nat, this is wonderful! Most of the demeaning online comments and posts directed at you were deleted."

"I expected that. After my clarification, those netizens with a conscience would have deleted their posts. As for those who did not wish to do so initially, they would have also deleted after hearing that my threat to sue each and every one of them. I am sure every single negative comment about me would disappear soon." Natalie chirped after she took a sip of water. She was thirsty after a long press conference.

Just then, her phone rang. "It's a call from the police station," Joyce told her after she took a glance at the caller ID.

"Give it to me." Natalie took the phone from Joyce and answered, "Hello. I am Natalie."

"Hello Ms. Natalie, Ms. Susan's sentence is out. She will be detained for 10 days as punishment for voluntarily causing hurt. As for Ms. Jasmine, her case will be brought to court three days later. Please be there on time," the policeman updated.

"Sure. Thank you." Natalie acknowledged.

After she hung up, she relayed the information to Joyce. "What? Only ten days? She got off easy." Joyce was displeased with the sentence.

"Let it go, my friend. By the way, are you heading back to the hospital?" Natalie asked.

"Yes." Joyce closed her laptop and got ready to go.

"Please make a detour to the court and submit this list. Once we settle Jasmine's case, we can go after these trolls and netizens." Natalie handed her the list.

"No problem. I'll make a move then." Joyce packed it in her bag and left.

Natalie stayed on to update her designers so they can get back to work at the studio. After that was done, she got ready to leave as well. She was worried as she had left her two kids home alone in the apartment.

At that time, there was a knock on the door and a security guard peeped in. "Ms. Smith, there is a package for you."

"Package? Who is it from?" Natalie stopped packing her desk and asked him.

"I can't read, so I can't tell." The security guard replied sheepishly.

"It is alright. Thank you." Natalie walked over to him and smilingly received the parcel. He humbly handed over the parcel with both hands then left.

It was a big thick envelope. Natalie could not tell what was inside.

As she was walking back to her desk, she flipped over the envelope and saw the sender's details.

Her eyes sparkled and she gasped!

Oh my god! The package is from Mr. Dylan!

Natalie raised her fists and started hopping with excitement. She would have let out a scream if she was not in the office and had to mind her image.

After a while, Natalie took a deep breath to calm herself before opening the package. A tasteful black invitation card dropped out and fell to the floor.

Natalie quickly bent down to pick it up. She carefully dusted it off before opening the card. "Isn't this the same invitation to the exhibition that Mr. Shane received last night?" she exclaimed. "Yippee! I didn't expect to get it as well!" She held the invite lovingly to her chest.

Since she heard from Shane and Silas last night that Mr. Dylan was coming to J City for an exhibition, she was bemoaning she would not have the opportunity to meet him. She had never expected to get a personal invitation from Mr. Dylan!

Natalie happily kissed the invitation card, carefully kept it in her bag, and left the studio.

Natalie was home watching TV with her kids in the afternoon. They were laughing and enjoying the show when the phone rang. She fished her cell phone from her pocket. Her smile froze when she saw the caller ID.

"Connor and Sharon dear, can you please go play in your room for a while?" Natalie sent the kids back to their room, her eyes still fixed on the caller ID.

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Harrison suddenly called her. He must be calling me because of the press conference earlier today.

Knowing that there was a chance that the call would turn ugly, she asked her kids to leave.

Connor saw the incoming call on Natalie's phone. Mommy won't let us listen to this. Sighing, he pulled Sharon back to their room.

Natalie only picked up the call after the room door was closed. "Mr. Smith, can I help you with something?"

"You ungrateful child!" Harrison bellowed through the phone. Undertones of weakness in his voice made him sound a lot less imposing than he intended.

Natalie picked up the remote and switched off the TV. She answered nonchalantly, "Mr. Smith, if I were an ungrateful child, what does that make you? A horrible father?"

"Y-You," Harrison stuttered with anger at her words. He took in several deep breaths before he was able to suppress his rage. He asked fiercely, "Why did you reveal Jasmine's real identity at the press conference?"

"Because you forced me to," Natalie replied lightly, flicking her nails.

Ah, my nails are getting a little too long. I should invite Joyce to get a new manicure with me tomorrow.

"I forced you?" Harrison choked on his words. Her reply invoked a sense of déjà vu; didn't he say the same thing to her yesterday when she called him about the rumors he'd spread of her and Shane on the Internet?

How dare she used my words against me!

"Of course you did. You used public outcry to pressure me to drop my charges against Susan and falsify my testimony against Jasmine. Frankly, I've run out of options, and this is my only way out." Shrugging, Natalie expressed her helplessness.

Harrison found himself at a loss for words. His face twitched with anger as he yelled, "Fine, you are right. But did you think about how your actions are going to affect the Smith family and the Smith Group? The stock prices for the Smith Group are falling like mad!"

Natalie moved the phone slightly further from her ear as she replied, "Mr. Smith, surely you're joking. The stock prices fell because of you. None of this would've happened if you didn't cheat on my mom in the past. Also, it doesn't bother me if the stock prices fall. In fact, I hope it falls so low you're forced to declare bankruptcy!"

The Smith Group was established by both Harrison and her mom. Furthermore, her mom had put more effort into the venture than Harrison ever did.

Harrison tricked her mom into signing an equity transfer agreement seven years ago, effectively robbing her mom of all her shares. Natalie had lost her loyalty towards Smith Group since then.

"Y-You..." Harrison stuttered as he tightened his grip on his walking cane. He sounded like he had more to say.

Natalie let out a faux yawn as she ran out of patience. "Mr. Smith, it's late. Let's end the call here. It's time for my beauty sleep. Goodbye!"

She hung up and threw her phone aside.

"Hello? Hello?" Harrison continued shouting into the phone.

"Stop yelling. She has already hung up," Jasmine spoke behind him.

Harrison looked at his phone and realized she'd already cut the call short. Angrily, he said, "That b*stard! Does she have no respect for her own father!"

Jasmine snorted at his words. "Dad, I don't mean to take her side, but it's a fact that you've been treating her like nothing more than a piece of trash. Why would she ever show you any respect? Isn't this ironic?"

The corner of his lips twitched as he appeared embarrassed.

Suddenly, the doors of the interrogation room opened. Dressed in prison scrubs, Susan was escorted in by an inspector.

Susan had lost a lot of weight even though it'd only been two days. She looked frail, and her complexion was sallow. Her bone structure appeared sharper, which only accentuated her meanness.

She glanced at an equally frail-looking Jasmine, before turning to look at Harrison, who looked exhausted. She immediately burst into tears. "Darling, you must get me out of here! I can't stay here any longer! It's so uncomfortable! I can't eat or sleep well, and I'm being bullied too!"

Jasmine lowered her head in disgust when she heard her wails.

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Harrison's head started to pound at Susan's loud crying. The nerves at his temple bulged with discomfort. "Alright, stop crying already. They've already handed out your sentence, so what else can I do? Just put up with it; it's only ten more days."

"Ten days," Susan repeated listlessly. When she saw Jasmine, she perked up slightly and asked, "What about Jas? You can't save me, but you can help Jas, right? At least try to reduce her sentence by a few years."

"It's hopeless. Natalie hasn't agreed to falsify her testimony." Jasmine lifted her head, her eyes narrowing into fearsome slits. "But it's ok if she doesn't want to give false testimony. I'll just have to make sure she can't attend the hearing."

Harrison and Susan looked at each other when they heard her words. Then they both turned to look at Jasmine. "Jas, what are you going to do?"

Jasmine ignored Susan but beckoned Harrison over instead. "Dad, this is what we're going to do."

After hearing her plan, shock flashed through Harrison's eyes. He soon steeled his nerves and nodded. "Alright, I'll get it done."

He left the police station after that.

The next day after breakfast, Natalie lifted Sharon's bag as she got ready to send her to school.

Suddenly, Sharon ran into her room and locked herself in.

Natalie knocked on the door, coaxing, "Sharon, what are you doing? Open the door."

"I don't want to! If I open the door, Mommy's going to send me to kindergarten," Sharon replied sadly while shaking her head, as she sat with her back against the door.

Natalie was stunned for a moment.

Sharon's locking herself in the room because she doesn't want to go to kindergarten?

Natalie lowered her gaze as she pondered for a while. She thought she knew why Sharon refused to go to school.

Looks like the incident a couple of days ago really traumatized Sharon. She's still not over it today.

Natalie sighed as she said, "Sharon, how will you learn new things if you don't go to school today? All the other kids will be at school today. Do you want to fall behind them?"

Sharon stiffened for a bit when she heard Natalie's words. She soon relaxed as she replied, "Let it be then. I won't go even if I'm way behind all of them. If I go to school, they'll just bully me and call me a bastard with no dad," Sharon trailed off as she started to sob.

Sharon wouldn't stop crying, and nothing Natalie said could make her open the door.

Natalie felt helpless.

Suddenly, Connor's voice piqued up behind her. "How about asking Mr. Shane to send you to school? Then they won't bully you anymore."

"Huh?" Natalie turned around and saw Shane, who looked like he'd been dragged here by Connor. She couldn't help but raise her eyebrows at him. "Mr. Shane, what a surprise."

"Connor dragged me here." Shane tilted his jaw towards Connor.

He was about to leave for work when Connor rang his doorbell.

Mrs. Wilson had barely opened the door before Connor had zoomed straight towards his room, dragging him here on a favor.

"You rascal!" Natalie jokingly tapped Connor's head as she scolded softly, "Mr. Shane is a busy man. How can you ask him to send Sharon to school?"

Shane already knew what was up when Connor dragged him here. He said casually, "It's not a bother. I was just getting ready to leave. I can send Sharon to school on the way."

"But—" Before Natalie could finish her sentence, the room door suddenly burst open. Sharon ran out and hugged Shane's leg, crying, "Mommy, I want Mr. Shane to send me!"

Connor seemed exceedingly pleased with himself. "See, my plan worked. Sharon will come out once Mr. Shane is here."

Natalie side-eyed him, and he immediately clamped his mouth shut.

Natalie looked at Shane and said apologetically, "Mr. Shane, I'm so sorry to trouble you again."

"It's no problem," Shane replied gently as he stroked Sharon's head.

"Dad, I want a hug!" Sharon opened her arms and gazed at Shane with puppy eyes.

Natalie almost choked from surprise. She gave Sharon a light smack on her back. "You're supposed to call him Mr. Shane."

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"I don't want to!" Sharon wrapped her arms around Shane's neck as she said petulantly, "I want to call him dad. Mommy, since you won't tell Connor and me who our real dad is, then I'm going to call Mr. Shane dad from now on."

"You—" Natalie's face reddened as she struggled to come up with a reply.

The corner of Shane's mouth twitched with humor. "It's fine; just let them be. I'm quite happy to be their Dad."

Connor's sharp eyes blinked several times at his words as if he was in serious contemplation.

A moment later, Connor tugged on the corner of Natalie's blouse and said, "Mommy, I'll go to school with Sharon. I haven't been there in a long time."

"Ok." Knowing it was pointless to stop him, Natalie agreed.

I guess it'd be good if he went to school. I'll feel a bit more at ease if he was with Sharon.

"Yay!" Connor clapped his hands in glee.

Shane pulled Connor along with him as he carried Sharon in one arm. "We'll leave now," he said to Natalie.

"Ok," replied Natalie, and she walked with them to the elevator lobby.

The elevator arrived at their floor quickly, and the two kids kissed Natalie goodbye before following Shane into the elevator.

As the elevator doors closed, Connor poked Shane in his waist to catch his attention. "Mr. Shane, just now you said that you would be happy to be our dad, right?"

Shane put Sharon down before looking intently at Connor. "That's right."

"So what Uncle Stanley said is true," said Connor as he nodded thoughtfully.

Shane's eyes narrowed with a hint of displeasure when he heard Stanley's name. "What did he say?"

"A few days ago, I heard Uncle Stanley talking about you and mommy when he was on the phone. He said that you like mommy."

"I heard that too," Sharon cut in with a raised hand, not wanting to be left out.

Connor smiled brightly at Shane. "I didn't believe him at first until I heard what you said just now. Now I'm sure Uncle Stanley was right. If you don't like Mommy, why would you be happy to be our dad? I know you like us because you like our mommy."

Connor's deduction caught Shane by surprise.

I always knew this kid was smart, but I didn't know he was so smart he could be a relationship guru.

A feeling akin to pride rose in Shane as he knelt to look at Connor in the eyes.

He wasn't treating Connor as a kid then but as an equal conversation partner.

"You're right. I do like your mommy, and I want to be your dad. Will the both of you be ok with that?" asked Shane.

Before Connor could reply, Sharon butted in excitedly, "Yes!"

"He's not talking to you!" Connor shot an annoyed glance at her and pulled Sharon behind himself. He looked at Shane and asked, "If I say no, will you give up?"

Shane shook his head. "No, I won't."

"Then why are you asking us for our permission?" Connor rolled his eyes before looking back at Shane. "Mr. Shane, what will you do for us if you become our dad?"

"I'll treat both of you as if you were my own kids, and I promise to be a good father. Is that good enough?" Shane asked.

Sharon blinked a few times, not really understanding what he was saying. So she asked the first thing on her mind, "Will you send us to school and fetch us home?"

"Of course!" Shane nodded.

Sharon smiled in delight. "Will you bring us to fun places? Will you protect us if Connor and I get bullied?"

"Definitely," Shane answered without hesitation as he stroked her head.

Sharon launched herself into Shane's arms and cried, "Connor, I want Mr. Shane to be my dad!"

Connor shrugged as he said, "Even if I say yes, we'll still need to let mommy decide. Mommy needs to accept Mr. Shane first before he can become our dad. Otherwise, he can only be our godfather."

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"Then I'll tell mommy after school, so mommy agrees," Sharon said brightly.

"You're so silly." Connor pinched his lips. "Do you think mommy will just say yes if you ask her too?"

This made sense to Sharon, and her bright mood dimmed. "Then what are we going to do, Connor?"

"Don't worry. Just make sure you and Connor always bring up my name in front of your mommy. I'm sure she'll say yes eventually," Shane replied as he looked at Sharon.

A twinkle returned to Sharon's eyes again, and she nodded eagerly. "Ok, I'll keep talking about dad in front of her!"

As if to prove her sincerity on the matter, she patted her chest determinedly.

Shane couldn't help but laugh at her antics, and he gave her a light kiss on her forehead.

Connor had been silent this whole time, though he couldn't deny that he was moved by Shane's words. He wanted a dad as much as Sharon did, and he thought Mr. Shane was the best person for the job.

Maybe it's good to have Mr. Shane as our dad. Mommy said before that Mr. Shane likes someone else and will marry her, but I don't think it's true. Uncle Stanley and even Mr. Shane

himself said that he likes mommy. If mommy thinks that Mr. Shane likes someone else, then she must've been tricked.

Ding! The elevator had arrived at the level of the parking lot.

Shane got out of the lift with the two kids in tow and drove them to the kindergarten.

He arrived at Thompson Group two hours later after he finally dropped the kids off at kindergarten.

Silas handed a document to Shane while explaining, "Mr. Shane, here's a list of the major assembly lines that are still active under the Smith Group."

Shane flipped through the document and returned it to Silas. "This is good, very detailed work. We'll follow our original plan to pressure them. I want to see the Smith Group out of the market in three days."

"Got it," Silas replied. As if he suddenly remembered something else, he said, "Half an hour ago, Ms. Smith sent us the finalized blueprint from the bidding exercise. Mr. Plumlee has forwarded it to your inbox."

"Alright, I'll take a look at it now," Shane replied as he pushed open the doors to the office. He switched on his computer as he settled down at his desk.

He nodded with satisfaction as he took in the vivid, eye-catching designs presented in the blueprint. He sent his assessment of the design to Mr. Plumlee, who passed it on to Natalie.

Natalie heaved a huge sigh of relief when she saw that her blueprint was approved. She began working on the printing with a bright smile on her face.

Three days passed by in the blink of an eye. It was time for Jasmine's trial.

Natalie received a call early in the morning as she was eating breakfast.

She set down her fork and picked up her phone. She quickly answered the call when she saw that it was Mr. Horner.

"Nat, have you prepared all the materials? What time are you coming to the courthouse later?" Mr. Horner asked.

Natalie eyed the folders on the coffee table and replied, "Everything is ready. I'll be there at one."

"Great! Give me a call when you arrive. I'll send someone to get you so we can have a meeting before the trial starts. There are some designers here whose works have also been plagiarized by Jasmine, and they would like to ask you some questions," explained Mr. Horner.

Natalie replied, "Sure, that's fine."

She ended the call and put down her phone.

Shane, who was seated opposite her, served Connor and Sharon each a slice of pancake. He asked, "Who was that?"

"Mr. Horner." Natalie briefly explained what Mr. Horner had told her on the call, and she picked up her fork to continue eating.

Suddenly another fork reached towards her, and an extra pancake appeared on her plate.

"Thanks." Surprised, Natalie thanked him with a smile.

The twins had begun inviting him for breakfast daily since two days ago. There was nothing she could say to dissuade them.

After all, he'd been the one sending the kids to school over the past three days.

"No worries, just eat your breakfast." Shane couldn't tell what Natalie was thinking, and he took back his fork coolly.