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She pointed at Ruka. "I-I can't believe you did something so foul. You disappoint me. You're supposed to be my daughter. Scarlet's your godmother. How could you even do this."

Ruka was shocked. She had no idea what her mother was talking about, but seeing her so sad made Ruka sad too. "C-Calm down, Mom. We can talk this through." She tried to hug Claire.

Claire shoved her away. "Tell me, why are you dating Ren? What were you thinking? You're not supposed to be a gold digger. You're not supposed to date someone just because they're rich, so why did you?"

Ruka blushed even harder, but then she blanched. How did Mom find out about that?

"I saw everything. You hugged and kissed him. How could you do that? Have you no shame? He's your uncle! You're tarnishing our name!" Claire was still crying from anger. She was furious and disappointed.

Ruka was panicking. She was too ashamed to face her mother. The girl pursed her lips, and tears welled up in her eyes. Her mother's disappointment was too heavy for her to bear. She had no idea how to console Claire either.

She didn't even have the courage to tell her the truth. There was no way she could tell her that they were in love with each other, and not because she was seducing him. That would just make things worse for Mom.

"I'm sorry, Mom. I'm sorry I disappointed you," she apologized. Ruka was on the verge of tears as well.

"How far have you two gone? Did you…"

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"No! No, of course not. It's still platonic. Nothing sexual." She was embarrassed and nervous, but she had to make that clear.

"Did you fall for him after you stayed with him the last time?" she asked. Claire thought this started because her daughter wanted to marry a rich and powerful man. Ruka shook her head. "Mom, it's not-"

"Swear... Swear you won't ever get near him. Swear you won't even get any ideas about him, or I'll disown you and kick you out of the house." Claire was starting to threaten Ruka.

Ruka closed her eyes and held her tears in. She could feel her heart getting torn into a million pieces, but she didn't show it, or her mother might go deeper into her rage.

Ruka nodded. "Don't worry, Mom. I won't go near him anymore."

Claire felt a stab of pain in her chest. She sat down on the bed while clutching her chest. Ruka quickly came forward to check on her. "Don't hurt yourself because of this, Mom. It's not as serious as you think. I'll just stay away from him. I'll do as you say, alright?"

"I owe you a lot, but I also owe Scarlet and her family a mountain of gratitude. I can't believe you're doing something like this. How do you expect me to feel?" Claire was angry at her daughter for doing something so preposterous.

Ruka realized things were not as simple as she thought. There were too many things to take into account, for example, her parents being indebted to the Hussons because they raised her.

"Do you have any idea who Ren is? He's the VP, and what you're doing is going to ruin his future in the political scene!" Claire felt her heart getting crushed by anger again.

Ruka blanched. She was shivering in fear, and she held Claire. "I'm sorry, Mom. I won't ever see him again, I promise."

Claire angrily slapped Ruka's back. "How could you do this, Ruka? What did I tell you? We owe the Hussons a mountain of gratitude, and you repay them with... this?"

Ruka's eyes reddened. She stared at the ground and let her mother hit her. The pain wasn't physical as much as it was emotional. Tears slid down her cheeks silently as her dreams went up in smoke.

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Ruka blamed herself for angering her mother so much.

Claire held her in her embrace. Her heart ached for Ruka, and she heaved a sigh. "I don't want you ruining your life either." Charlotte had been taken into the emergency room when Ren came. Scarlet, her husband, Richard, and Angela were waiting outside in the corridor. They looked worried as well.

"Why did she faint all of a sudden?" Ren asked Scarlet.

"I don't know. The servant called for me all of sudden. She already fainted when I got to the tea room."

Angela wanted to tell him what happened, but Richard held her back. The announcement of Ren's relationship with Ruka now would hit Scarlet like a bullet train.

The doctor finally came out of the emergency room. Charlotte had awakened, and she was lying on the bed that was being wheeled out of the room. When she saw Ren, the lady closed her eyes and sighed.

She was taken to a ward, and Scarlet went inside alone. She was worried a crowd might affect her mother's rest. Not long after she went inside, she came back out. "Mom wants you inside," she told Ren.

He nodded. The moment his mother looked at him, he knew he must be the reason why she fainted.

Ren went into the ward. Charlotte had sat up, and she was giving her son a look of complaint. He took a seat. "How are you doing, Mom?"

"Fine, no thanks to you." She turned her head away angrily.

Ren moved closer to the bed and wrapped his arm around her shoulder. He pressed his check against his mother's hair, and he cooed, "I'm sorry, Mom. Please don't stay mad at me. Tell me what happened."

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Charlotte loved him the most ever since he was a kid. He could easily calm her when nobody else could. His apology wiped out most of her anger, but still she shot him a glare. "You told me you have a lady you like. It's Ruka, isn't it?"

Ren was surprised, but only for a moment. He nodded. "Yes, it is."

"Why." Charlotte felt her chest tightening up. "Are you trying to make everyone

mad: Out of all the women in this world, and you pick Ruka?"

Just like Ruka's parents thought the fault lay with their daughter, Charlotte thought ühe fault lay with Ren. She didn't blame Ruka for this; she thought her son must have done something to make this happen.

Ren caressed his mother's back while calming her down. "It's not what you think, Mom. We love each other, Ruka and I."

Charlotte let out another big sigh. "She's your sister's goddaughter. Can't you at least stay away from her?"

"But I thought you wanted me to marry someone." Ren picked the exact conversation she would love to have.

"Yeah, but you can't just..." No matter how she looked at it, Charlotte was still miffed. She had watched over Ruka ever since she was a child, and she used to come over to play really often. Charlotte thought of her as a granddaughter, so this came as a shock for her.

Not to mention she was very conservative and traditional. Of course it was hard to accept a girl whom she thought of as a granddaughter marrying her son. She shook her head and looked away. It was a silent protest.

Her son held her in his embrace and rested his chin on her shoulders. He went with the 'act like a child' tactic. "I'm not gonna marry anyone but her. You refuse, and no grandkids for you."

The last time he acted like a child was, well, back when he was a literal child asking for a candy. She couldn't believe her thirty-three year-old son would do the same thing again, but this time, he was asking for a wife instead of a candy.

Charlotte couldn't hold back anymore. She chuckled and turned back to thump her son. "You shouldn't threaten me, you know."

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Alright, she's feeling a lot happier now. He sat up straighter and looked at Charlotte seriously. "Mom, I really like her, and she likes me as well. Yes, it's gonna be controversial, but we'll face it together."

Charlotte was surprised for a few moments. Oh yeah. He's in a precarious position. One scandal is all it needs to destroy his political career.

"You have to think this through, son. The court of public opinion isn't the only thing you have to face if you date Ruka; your political career's destruction is too," she advised him while holding his hand tightly. Ren had always been brilliant. They were never worried about him.

"I've thought this through. Now I need your support. Everyone's support." He looked at her with an unspoken plea. His parents' support was what he needed most. He didn't care about the public's opinion. He only cared about his family's.

"You should call Scarlet and the others inside now." Charlotte thought they had to discuss this together.

Ren opened the door. Everyone was looking worried. He said, "Come in, you guys."

Scarlet came in first. She sat down beside Charlotte. "How do you feel, Mom? Are you hurt or unwell anywhere?"

"I'm fine. The problem now is your brother." She sighed.

"What? What's wrong with him?" Scarlet quickly looked at him.

Ren was silent for a few moments, and then he looked at Scarlet. "I need to tell you something, but promise me you'll stay calm."

"Go ahead." Scarlet was surprised, but also curious. Ren was looking serious for once.

"I... like Ruka, and I want to date her," he said honestly.