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Carter's face turned severe. "Are you sure this is what you want?" "Try me." Carter gritted his teeth. "You asked for it!" The moment his voice trailed off, Carter raised his other hand and swung a swift punch that blitzed through the air and right at Vinson's face. When Vinson jerked back to avoid the blow, Carter seized the chance to free his own restrained right hand and shove Vinson away before he raced toward the bed. Just before Carter's fingers were upon the needles on top on the man's head, Vinson grabbed onto the back of the former's collar and yanked him away.

Then the two men became entangled in a heap. As the men were both familiar with the other's tendencies in a fight, neither was able to break the deadlock. Jordan could only stand by in distress. "Why have you started fighting? Stop it!" But neither Vinson nor Carter were listening.

It was Carter who realized that he had a helper in Jordan, and called out while he grappled with Vinson, "Go, Jordan! Pull out the needles!" "I..." Jordan was in a dilemma. "Get on with it!" Carter cried. Jordan bit down and made a dash for the man's bed. Vinson's attempt to intercept was forced back by Carter's aggressive advances. He recovered after dodging only to see that Jordan had already reached his target.

"I'm sorry, Ms. Moore. I can't risk it..." Jordan mumbled under his breath before he reached for the charged copper-plated needles. At this instant, a white silhouette drifted past and wrapped itself around Jordan's waist, dragging him away. A startled Jordan turned around to see Klaus' apologetic face. "I'm sorry, Mr. Baker. You can't touch that needle..." "Damn you!" Jordan cursed, "Are you betraying us now? Get your hands off! Doesn't the needles on his head scare you?"

"We can't let anything happen to him, so let go!" Klaus clung onto Jordan as if his life depended on it and refused to budge. Carter had not expected Klaus to turn on him. "Do you understand what you're doing, Dr. Jankowitsch!" The doctor continued to hang on. "I believe that this acupuncture therapy can work, Mr. Morgan. Please trust me on this one!" "Do you know the cost of failure here? Do you have any idea how important this man is to us!"

Sticking needles on the body is fine, but it could kill if placed in the head!" "I... can't..." Klaus wavered. Just then, the man on the bed jolted awake. "Ahem! Ahem..." When everyone froze and turned toward the bed, the dazed man's deep blue eyes flickered and he asked in Ustranasian, "Where am I?" His voice was clear and his eyes lively; a radical departure from the slurred speech and confused look he had from before.

Everyone was stunned as they wondered if he was fully self-aware. Klaus released his own grip, ignoring Jordan completely as he threw himself onto the

side of the bed. "How are you feeling, sir?" The man replied with some difficulty, "I feel... sore all over. Where is this place?"

Klaus was beside himself. "Are you able to understand my question? Are you back to normal?" "Why wouldn't I be. How did I get here? Aren't I supposed to be at sea?" Klaus turned to Carter in delight and switched to speaking in Chanaean. "He's speaking coherently, Mr. Morgan.

He's cured! I can't say for sure if he's completely well, but you should have no problems getting the answers you're looking for." Carter's eyes widened behind his gold-rimmed spectacles.

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How is this possible? Jordan, who stood not far from the patient's bed, reacted as though it was all surreal to him. On the other side, Vinson regarded Carter who had firmly trapped his wrist. "Will you let go now?" Carter did as asked, and self-consciously cleared his own throat. *Who would've guessed that a few needles placed by a young lass into the patient would be able to cure him. She has proven herself to be infinitely more capable than the internationally renowned Dr. Jankowitsch! But didn't she say that she only understood a little? How could this be considered just little?* By now, Arielle's fingers moved and she frailly opened her eyes. What greeted her was a scene of carnage in the room; the smashed fragments of the vase that used to stand by the door laid all over the floor; the television turned over—it was as though some fierce battle had taken place. She sat up, confounded. "What just happened?"

Vinson strode toward her, but did not give her a straight answer. "How are you feeling?" Arielle shook her head and was about to speak when the man in the bed next to hers exclaimed in Ustranasion, "It's y'all!" Carter chopped down on the man's neck with his back of his hand posthaste, causing the man's eyeballs to roll into his skull and fall into unconsciousness. That shocked Arielle but she quickly recovered. "Was he conscious?" "Yeah." Vinson nodded as he glanced meaningfully at the discomfited Carter before withdrawing his gaze. "All thanks to you.

Otherwise, we might have to tend to him for an entire year." The increasingly embarrassed Carter pulled out his phone and made a call. "Send a few guys upstairs and move the fella back to my place." Since the man was able to communicate normally, it was time for him to begin his "interrogation".

Full of admiration, Klaus came before Arielle to laud her with praise. "Your medical expertise is truly astonishing! My two teachers were right in commending the profundity of traditional Chanaean medicine, and truly, there is much from which our modern medicine can learn from.

To be honest, I did not think much of it in the beginning and thought they were just wasting time making the long trip to this backwater, but it would seem that I was too ignorant." Arielle replied in way that was neither servile nor overbearing, "Indeed, there's quite a lot that modern medicine could learn from traditional Chanaean medicine,

but to me, the two have always been complementary in nature. It's just the prejudices of some that prevented them from being more open to exploring it." Carter was pertinent when he heard that, but he was not the type too prideful to admit his own mistake.

After a brief pause, he regarded Arielle solemnly. "The truly ignorant one is me, Ms. Moore. Please accept my sincere apologies! I hope that you would be able to forgive me for my transgressions." Arielle could sense Carter's sincerity and decided to let things slide. "It's okay since you just didn't understand it before, but I hope that you would eventually be able to let go of your apprehensions against traditional Chanaean medicine." "Sure thing."

Carter seemed quite invigorated. "I'll go speak to my father first thing tomorrow morning and ask him to include plans for a traditional Chanaean medicine hospital in our developmental blue-print." Arielle twitched her lower lip weakly. "If traditional Chanaean medicine could find greater development within your family, it can only be a good thing."

Vinson's brows became bound in a tight furrow. "What has traditional Chanaean medicine's development to do with you? Dr. Janokowitsch, go get the nurse to put her on a drip." Arielle instinctively rejected it. "I'm fine..." Vinson was expressionless while he remained cautionary.

"Don't push yourself. Remember that you'll still need to climb your way back into the hotel." Arielle fell silent upon hearing that. She knew her own body well, and understood that it needed attention owing to the delicate state it was in. Vinson's expression seemed to soften after seeing that she was no longer resistant. "Alright, you should rest up. Try to speed up the DNA processing on your end, Carter."

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Carter nodded promptly as whatever misgivings he had against Arielle from before had become a thing of the past. "I'm going over there myself to expedite it, but no matter the level of urgency, processing will still take up to a day. I believe that if I were to head down personally, we should be able to get the results before tomorrow morning." "Thank you." "You've been a great help to us, so that's the least I could do," Carter said while he looked to the man in the bed. "When will we be able to remove the needles?" Jordan pouted at Carter for stealing all the lines. *Who was it who ordered to have the needles removed in the*

first place? Arielle glanced at the man. "If he's already conscious and you don't need me to complete the treatment, then you can remove them now. I'll..." "Stay put!" Vinson held her down by the shoulder. "Allow me." Jordan warily eyed the hand Vinson placed on Arielle, feeling a little jealous inside.

He very much wanted to say something, but lost his courage to do so when he recalled how he distrusted Arielle just as Carter did. Thus, he decidedly slinked away quietly to the sidelines. Just then, Harvey led a few bodyguards through the door. "I heard that the man has been cured?" In the next second, his attention was caught by the sight of Arielle on the bed and the mess in the room, and that prompted him to glare at Carter.

"What the hell did you do?" "I..." Carter scratched his nose uncomfortably. Vinson had just finished removing the needles. "Go out, all of you. Arielle needs to rest." Harvey asked with a grimace, "What actually happened here?" "It's nothing. Carter's going to have nowhere to hide himself if you keep asking. Come on. Let's get him out of here. His head's fixed, so we should get down to business," Jordan said as he nudged Harvey along.

Soon, it was just Vinson and Arielle left inside the ward. Looking at the drip bag hanging above her head, Arielle said weakly, "It's getting late, so you should go back and rest. I can watch it myself." Vinson remained poker-faced. "I don't like owing anyone favors, so don't mind me. Go to sleep."

Arielle seemed to have wanted to say something but ultimately did not do so as she was far too weary, and so instead, she quietly closed her eyes to get rested.

It did not take long before her breath steadied and she fell into a deep sleep. Initially seated with his back to Arielle, Vinson slowly turned around when he heard her breathing settled. His gaze then fell upon her face. The slumbering woman was completely unguarded, and as docile as a snoozing Persian cat. It was as though Arielle's face had some sort of magnetic draw to it, because by the time he came to his senses, his hand was already almost upon her cheeks.

Bemused, Vinson quickly withdrew it, feeling quite annoyed with himself. Had deprivation made him that desperate for a woman? Come to think of it, Arielle was really more outstanding than those lame socialites and heiresses that his mother had been introducing to him. If it was her, he would not have been so averse to spending the rest of his life with a woman.

The way Arielle occupied his every thought made him shake his own noggin in frustration. He did not want to continue being alone in Arielle's company, lest he needed to take another cold shower. Hence, Vinson got up and walked to the window for a smoke.

He pushed the window wide open to prevent the fumes from drifting inside, but this let in the chilling night air which gave him quite a headache. Just as Vinson was wrapping up his smoke break, a call from his mother Susanne came through.

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Vinson sounded a little impatient. "I've no plans to get married these few years, so don't bother introducing women to me." That got Susanne vastly worried. "My dear boy, why are you talking like that? What do you mean you have no plans to get married? It's not like I'm asking you to do so right away. I'm only suggesting for you to keep an eye out for prospective partners, that's all, cause you're always either working or hanging out with those three friends of yours. What about yourself, seeing how they've been swapping one girlfriend after the other?" "I've my own plans," he stated plainly. "Tsk! Your plans are exactly what I left you to the last two years, and what happened after that? I've organized so many banquets for you, and yet you've shown no interest in anyone. So, how do you expect me not to worry? You should know for yourself that things have not been dandy inside the company, and it's only by bearing me a grandson could we stabilize things." "You can rest assured that I won't allow things to go sideways there." "I... Ah, there are some things that I can't share with you right now, but you absolutely have to bear this in mind—get married as soon as you can." Amidst his own vexation, Vinson found his gaze falling upon Arielle. "Don't think you could wriggle yourself out of this by staying silent. If you won't find a partner for yourself, then I will..." Before Susanne could finish speaking, someone else was heard urging her along over the other end. "Are you done inside yet, Mrs. Southall? It's your turn to deal." "I'll be right there..." Susanne then continued in a hushed tone, "Are you listening? Hurry up and get yourself back here!" "I won't be coming home today." "What? Not coming home? I'm doing my best to stall them, so you better get yourself in no matter what!" "Like I said, I'm not coming home cause I'm outside with your future daughter-in-law." "What!" Susanne howled in horror. He could not be bothered to continue prattling, Vinson hit the end-call button, and looked quite dour when he walked over to Arielle's side. Since it was Arielle's wish for him to repay her by virtue of marriage, and with his own family also piling on the pressure, he thought he might as well choose Arielle in spite of his own reluctance. He figured that since the whole point was to get married, why should he not just settle for someone who was easier on the eyes? As the hours whiled away, dawn had crept up upon them. Arielle was awoken by a knocking at the door. The moment she opened her eyes, she was greeted by the sight of Vinson hunched over the side of the bed with his face laid on the inside of her palm. He appeared to be fast asleep. He flinched, perhaps because he heard the knocks too. Arielle took the opportunity to withdraw her hand and whisper, "Someone's out there." "Okay..." The man's half-sober voice was languid yet alluring. He stood up nonchalantly to answer the door. "Vin..." In came Carter with two set of reports in hand.

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A quick glance at the time showed that it was already three in the morning, so he wondered why she might be calling at this ungodly hour. Vinson answered blandly wearing a frown on his face. "What is it?" Susanne's displeasure seeped through the receiver from the other end. "Didn't I tell you to come home earlier tonight? I have Mrs. Greene over for cards and have held her back until now, so why aren't you back yet?"

Vinson replied with indifference, "I was at a dinner and had a little too much to drink, so I'll be putting up at a hotel tonight." Susanne's voice elevated several notches. "Dinner? Don't you start bringing some loose woman back from there! The Greenes' young lady seems to be of good breeding and is highly educated, and not bad looking as well. Their whole family would be returning to Horington tomorrow so you must come have a look at her right away!"

Vinson sounded a little impatient. "I've no plans to get married these few years, so don't bother introducing women to me." That got Susanne vastly worried. "My dear boy, why are you talking like that? What do you mean you have no plans to get married? It's not like I'm asking you to do so right away. I'm only suggesting for you to keep an eye out for prospective partners, that's all, cause you're always either working or hanging out with those three friends of yours. What about yourself, seeing how they've been swapping one girlfriend after the other?" "I've my own plans," he stated plainly. "Tsk! Your plans are exactly what I left you to the last two years, and what happened after that? I've organized so many banquets for you, and yet you've shown no interest in anyone. So, how do you expect me not to worry? You should know for yourself that things have not been dandy inside the company, and it's only by bearing me a grandson could we stabilize things." "You can rest assured that I won't allow things to go sideways there." "I... Ah, there are some things that I can't share with you right now, but you absolutely have to bear this in mind—get married as soon as you can." Amidst his own vexation, Vinson found his gaze falling upon Arielle. "Don't think you could wriggle yourself out of this by staying silent. If you won't find a partner for yourself, then I will..." Before Susanne could finish speaking, someone else was heard urging her along over the other end. "Are you done inside yet, Mrs. Southall? It's your turn to deal." "I'll be right there..." Susanne then continued in a hushed tone, "Are you listening? Hurry up and get yourself back here!" "I won't be coming home today." "What? Not coming home? I'm doing my best to stall them, so you better get yourself in no matter what!" "Like I said, I'm not coming home cause I'm outside with your future daughter-in-law." "What!" Susanne howled in horror. He could not be bothered to continue prattling, Vinson hit the end-call button, and looked quite dour when he walked over to Arielle's side. Since it was Arielle's wish for him to repay her by virtue of marriage, and with his own family also piling on the pressure, he thought he might as well choose Arielle in spite of his own reluctance. He figured that since the whole point was to get married, why should he not just settle for someone who was easier on the eyes? As the hours whiled away, dawn had crept up upon them. Arielle was awoken by a knocking at the door. The moment she opened her eyes, she was greeted by the sight of Vinson hunched over the side of the bed with his face laid on the inside of her palm. He appeared to be fast asleep. He flinched, perhaps because he heard the knocks too. Arielle took the opportunity to withdraw her hand and whisper, "Someone's out there." "Okay..." The man's half-sober voice was languid yet alluring. He stood up nonchalantly to answer the door. "Vin..." In came Carter with two set of reports in hand.

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Arielle's drowsiness dissipated. She jumped right off the bed and approached Carter. "Are the results out yet?" "Yeah." Carter nodded as he regarded Arielle with mixed feelings. "Don't mind me asking, but apart from your own hair, does the other sample... belong to your father Henrick Southall?" Arielle nodded. "Yes. That's right." Carter looked troubled. "The results... I'm not sure how to put this, but you should take a look at it for yourself." Arielle was quite mystified when she received the report, and appeared flummoxed when she finished scrutinizing it. It

said that her genetic type did not match that of the other report, which meant to say that Henrick was not her biological father. "This... How..." The rosiness that returned to Arielle's face after her rest seemed to have turned ashen again. One reason why she did a paternity test was because Vinson had asked about it twice. Another stemmed from a vengeful impulse which arisen from her disappointment with Henrick. In her own heart, she had never doubted that he was her birth father, so the contents of the report came to her as a bolt out of the blue. She had thought Henrick to be her only remaining blood relation but unexpectedly, even he was not. *Who exactly am I then?* If not for the grains of childhood memories she had retained, she was almost beginning to believe that she might not even be Arielle Moore.

At the side, Vinson, who also saw what was written on the report, felt it unexpected. Nevertheless, he thought it logical as well. It seemed inconceivable to him how a flaw-riddled man like Henrick who bore not one sliver of virtue could have had an almost perfect daughter like Arielle.

Not that he thought Arielle was actually perfect. It was just an impartial appraisal. Moreover, when Maureen was around, rumors were abound within the Jadeborough circle... Vinson scrutinized Arielle's expression before he spoke, "Don't be so upset, as this may not necessarily be a bad thing."

An anemic looking Arielle bit her lip. "I'm not upset... It's just that I don't know how I should feel about this. If I'm not his biological daughter, then could my mother still be my own birth mother?" Carter followed up right after Arielle. "Would you like to see the other report?" Arielle looked up at Carter, a little surprised. "The other report?"

He then passed along the paternity report he had in his hand. Arielle read the header and discovered that it had her mother's and her own name written on it. "A paternity test report for my mother and myself?" "Yes," Carter said. "We've kept your mother's blood samples like we do with the rest of our hospital's VIP clientele, in case of emergencies.

I was just as surprised at the results of the test between Henrick and yourself, so I took the liberty of having my guys do one for your mother and you." Arielle could feel her own heart-rate pick up. If it turned out that even her mother was not her own, then she would have lost all purpose returning here. Even her existence would become devoid of meaning.

She was apprehensive about reading the conclusion of this report, and took a deep drawl before she mustered the courage to do so. The statement of results was as follows: *The alleged mother cannot be excluded as the biological parent of the tested child. Based on the analysis as listed above, the probability of paternity is ninety-nine point nine percent.*