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Jason frowned immediately. "What happened to your hand?" "Nothing." Mayaboy was too afraid to meet his gaze as she spoke. "Show me!" He forcefully tugged on her hand before he gently rolled her sleeve up to reveal her arms. They were covered in scars that looked like they had been made by a whip!

"How did this happen?" Jason felt his heart thundering at the sight of the brutal scars. Some of them looked fresh as they were still bloody, while scabs had already formed over others.

There were a number of scars that looked like they had been around for an even longer time, and the old and new wounds overlapped each other in a random, disorganized pattern.

She quickly pulled her hand away. "It's nothing. My mother-in-law has a bad temper. She beat me after I accidentally dropped a bowl during dinnertime. That's all." The smile hadn't left her face as she told Jason about the incident; she made it sound as if it was nothing more than a common matter.

Jason felt his heart aching for the girl before him. "Your mother-in-law beat you up so badly over a bowl?" "Well, all married women have to deal with their in-laws' tempers, right?" She continued to smile.

"How did things end up like this..." Jason couldn't help but blame himself. "This wouldn't have happened if I had brought you away back then." He sank into a pit of guilt. If I had managed to run away with her in the past; if I had returned to look for her after I left this place; if... Well, there's no use for wishful thinking now...

He didn't understand the culture in Mayaboy's village, but he had hoped that her life would improve after she got married. All he knew back then was how poor her own family was, so he had assumed that her quality of life would've improved after she got married to the clan leader's more affluent family, but he had no idea that she would turn out in the state that she was in right then.

The smile hadn't left Mayaboy's face even then. "I should really thank you for what you did then, townsman. I'm really thankful that you were willing to bring me along with you back then. Although we didn't manage to leave in the end, just the fact that you were willing to bring me along already meant a lot to me. Some other guy would have just treated me like I was crazy."

Jason couldn't seem to return her smile. "I should have brought you away from this place. It's all my fault. I didn't have the ability to bring you along with me at that time."

She quickly shook her head. "Don't say that. All of this is fate. I'm fated to stay here, and I'm fated to live this way for the rest of my life. Oh, by the way, I forgot to ask you this earlier. What brought you here again? Are you still here on a trip this time?"

He shook his head in response. "No. I'm here to look for you." "You were looking for me?" She stared at him confusedly.

"I've always felt some unresolved feelings within me since I failed to bring you away in the past." His gaze was gentle as he looked at the woman before his eyes.

Even though she was no longer the beautiful young girl he had met all those years ago, he realized that he was still in love with her, and that his love seemed to grow with every second. He liked her determination and her toughness, and he admired her optimism and her cheerfulness.

She gave him a bashful smile as she seemed rather embarrassed upon hearing his words. Women were generally sensitive creatures, and she seemed to understand the message he was conveying through his gaze. "It's getting late. I should leave now. You should get some rest too." She stood up to leave after she finished her sentence.

"Hold on!" Jason hastily turned around to retrieve the first-aid kit from his luggage. He had a habit of bringing a first-aid kit around whenever he was traveling, and it contained all the basic medication and ointments that were used. Then, he pulled her hand over and began to apply some ointment for her.

In the meantime, she quietly peeked at Jason while he worked on her arm. He didn't change at all. He still looks as handsome as he did in the past. I had been infatuated with him since the first time I met him, but I'm nothing more than a poor village girl, whereas he's a rich man from town. How would I dare to wish for anything to happen between us? She felt her face turning red as she thought about it.

"Make sure this doesn't get wet. You should stop doing heavy-duty tasks for a while. Wait until this recovers a little," Jason said after he finished treating her wounds.

"I'll leave now, then." She kept her head low as she spoke, and she hurried off right after that.